

Mineral Industry Surveys

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IRON ORE IN DECEMBER 2017

U.S. mine production and shipments of iron ore in December 2017 were 4.36 million metric tons (Mt) and 4.67 Mt, respectively (fig. 1, table 1). Average daily production of iron ore was 141,000 metric tons (t), 6% less than that of November and 24% more than that of December 2016. Average daily shipments of iron ore were 151,000 t, 5% more than those in November and 13% more than those in December 2016. Mine stocks at the end of December 2017 were 5% less than those held at the end of November 2017 and slightly less than those held at the end of December 2016.

Total mine production of iron ore in 2017 was 47.6 Mt, 19% more than that of 2016. Average daily production was 131,000 t, 20% higher than that of 2016. Total shipments of iron ore in 2017 were 46.8 Mt, 13% more than those of 2016. Average daily shipments were 128,000 t in 2017, 13% higher than those in 2016.

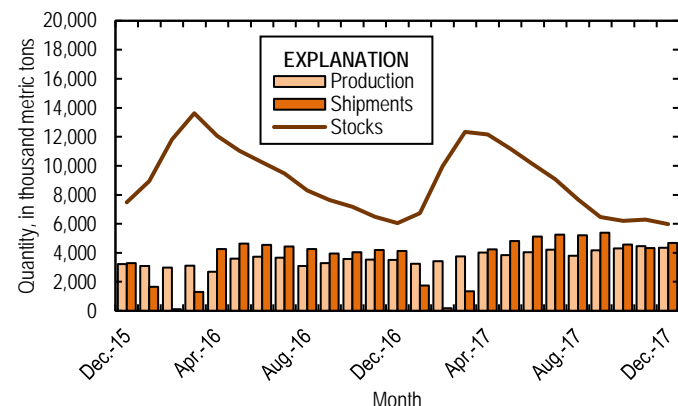


Figure 1. Monthly domestic production, shipments, and stocks of iron ore from December 2015 through December 2017.

Monthly iron ore data are reported as gross weight unless otherwise noted and do not include iron metallics such as pig iron, direct-reduced iron, hot-briquetted iron, or iron nuggets.

U.S. exports of iron ore were 668,000 t in December 2017, 29% less than those in November 2017 and 28% less than those in December 2016. U.S. imports of iron ore were 524,000 t in December 2017, 64% more than those in November and nearly five times those in December 2016 (fig. 2).

Total exports of iron ore in 2017 were 10.6 Mt, 21% more than those of 2016. Total imports were 3.70 Mt, 23% more than in 2016.

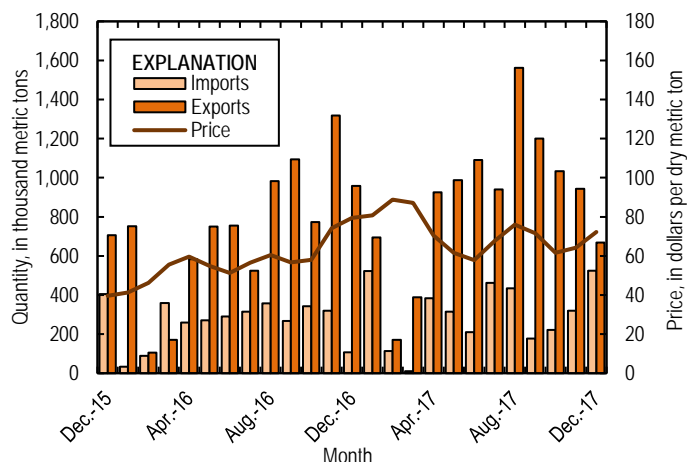


Figure 2. Monthly domestic imports and exports of iron ore and spot prices for iron ore import fines, 62% iron content, cost and freight (CFR), at Tianjin Port, from December 2015 through December 2017. Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Index Mundi, undated.

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TABLE 1
U.S. PRODUCTION, SHIPMENTS, AND STOCKS OF IRON ORE^{1,2}
(Exclusive of ore containing 5% or more of manganese)

(Thousand metric tons, usable ore)

Period	Production		Shipments ³		Stocks
	Monthly	Year to date	Monthly	Year to date	End of Month
2016:					
December	3,510	39,900	4,140	41,500	6,050
2017:					
January	3,240	3,240	1,740	1,740	6,730
February	3,420	6,660	179	1,920	9,970
March	3,760	10,400	1,340	3,260	12,400
April	4,020	14,400	4,250	7,510	12,200
May	3,840	18,300	4,820	12,300	11,200
June	4,050	22,300	5,120	17,400	10,100
July	4,210	26,500	5,240	22,700	9,080
August	3,810	30,300	5,210	27,900	7,670
September	4,180	34,500	5,380	33,300	6,470
October	4,300	38,800	4,570	37,800	6,210
November	4,470	43,300	4,330	42,200	6,300 ^r
December	4,360	47,600	4,670	46,800	5,980

^rRevised.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits.

²Excludes byproduct ores and iron metallics.

³Includes rail and vessel.

TABLE 2
U.S. PRODUCTION OF PIG IRON AND RAW STEEL, BY TYPE OF FURNACE¹

(Thousand metric tons)

Period	Pig iron production		Raw steel production			
	Basic oxygen furnace		Blast furnace		Electric furnace	
	Monthly	Year to date	Monthly	Year to date	Monthly	Year to date
2016:						
December	1,810	24,100	2,090	24,100	4,370	52,600
2017:						
January	1,940	1,940	2,240	2,240	4,740	4,740
February	1,930	3,870	2,140	4,380	4,280	9,020
March	1,960	5,830	2,250	6,630	4,640	13,700
April	1,870	7,700	2,150	8,780	4,540	18,200
May	1,940	9,630	2,210	11,000	4,690	22,900
June	1,830	11,500	2,090	13,100	4,700	27,600
July	1,860	13,300	2,200	15,300	4,760	32,400
August	1,930	15,300	2,250	17,500	4,850	37,200
September	1,850	17,100	2,160	19,700	4,490	41,700
October	1,690	18,800	2,000	21,700	4,860	46,500
November	1,770	20,600	1,980	23,700	4,660	51,200
December	1,840	22,400	2,120	25,800	4,620	55,800

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits.

Source: American Iron and Steel Institute.

TABLE 3
U.S. EXPORTS OF IRON ORE, BY COUNTRY OR LOCALITY AND TYPE ^{1,2}
(Exclusive of ore containing 20% or more manganese)

Country or locality and type of product	2016	2017	
	January–December	December	January–December
	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value ³ (thousand dollars)
Canada	7,060	491	36,800
Japan	364	135	8,230
Mexico	352	42	4,990
Other	998 ^r	(4)	37
Total	8,770 ^r	668	50,000
Concentrates	78	(4)	101
Fine ores	119	(4)	12
Pellets	8,360 ^r	668	49,900
Other	214	(4)	36
Total	8,770 ^r	668	50,000

^rRevised.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

²All countries with less than 5,000 metric tons of exports per month included in "Other."

³Free alongside ship (FAS) value.

⁴Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 4
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF IRON ORE, BY COUNTRY OR LOCALITY AND TYPE ^{1,2}
(Exclusive of ore containing 20% or more manganese)

Country or locality of origin and type of product	2016	2017	
	January–December	December	January–December
	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value ³ (thousand dollars)
Brazil	1,760 ^r	272	29,200
Canada	557	161	17,600
Chile	62	57	4,230
Other	636 ^r	35	3,330
Total	3,010 ^r	524	54,400
Concentrates	719 ^r	57	4,230
Fine Ores	265	35	3,330
Pellets	2,010 ^r	433	46,800
Other	22	--	--
Total	3,010 ^r	524	54,400

^rRevised. -- Zero.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

²All countries with less than 5,000 metric tons of imports per month included in "Other."

³Customs value. Excludes international freight and insurance charges.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 5
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF IRON ORE, BY CUSTOMS DISTRICT^{1,2}
(Exclusive of ore containing 20% or more manganese)

(Thousand metric tons)

Customs district (code no.)	Pellets			Total, all products		
	January–December		December	January–December		December
	2016	2017	2017	2016	2017	2017
Houston-Galveston, TX (53)	63	63	30	104	63	30
New Orleans, LA (20)	1,940	2,240	403	2,150	2,630	494
Other	5 ^r	28	--	757 ^r	1,000	(3)
Total	2,010 ^r	2,330	433	3,010 ^r	3,700	524

^rRevised. -- Zero.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

²Customs Districts with less than 5,000 metric tons of imports per month included in "Other."

³Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.