

Mineral Industry Surveys

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IRON ORE IN APRIL 2018

U.S. mine production and shipments of iron ore in April 2018 were 3.81 million metric tons (Mt) and 4.18 Mt, respectively (fig. 1, table 1). Average daily production of iron ore was 127,000 metric tons (t), about 3% less than that of March and 5% less than that of April 2017. Average daily shipments of iron ore were 139,000 t, more than three times those in March and slightly less than those in April 2017. Mine stocks at the end of April 2018 were slightly less than those held at the end of March and 18% more than those held at the end of April 2017 (fig. 1, table 1).

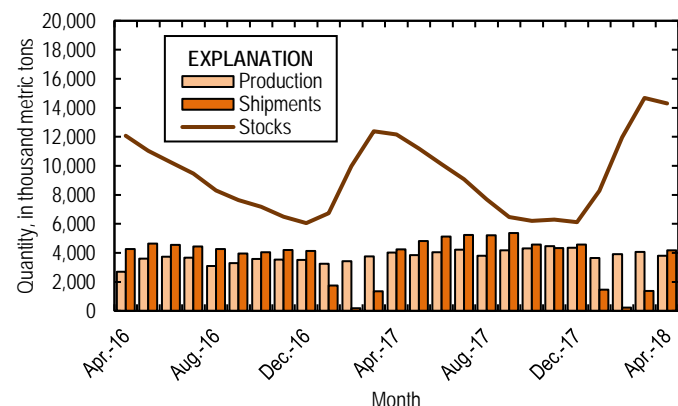


Figure 1. Monthly domestic production, shipments, and stocks of iron ore from April 2016 through April 2018.

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 1.05 Mt in April 2018, more than three times those in March and 14% more than revised

exports in April 2017 (fig. 2, table 3). U.S. imports of iron ore were 386,000 t in April 2018, more than double those in March and nearly the same as those in April 2017 (fig. 2, table 4).

Seasonal variations of shipments, imports, and exports during the winter months are attributed to freezing of waterways and the closing of the Soo Locks, which are used to transport iron ore in the Great Lakes region through the St. Lawrence Seaway.

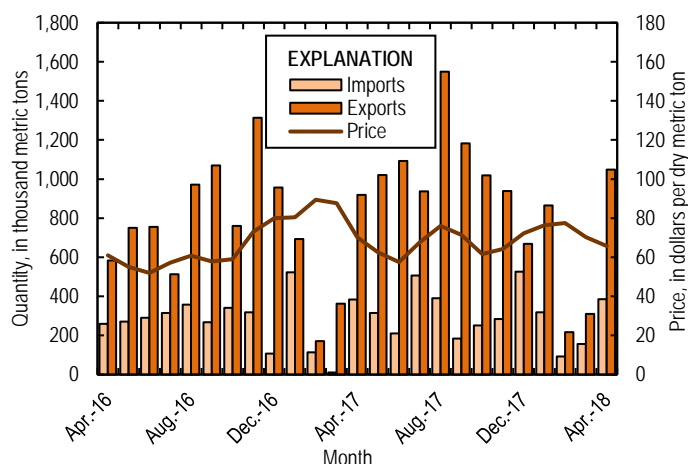


Figure 2. Monthly domestic imports and exports of iron ore and spot prices for iron ore import fines, 62% iron content, cost and freight (CFR), at Tianjin Port, from April 2016 through April 2018. Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Index Mundi, undated.

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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 |
| 2017: | | | | | |
| 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 |
| December | 4,360 | 47,600 | 4,560 | 46,700 | 6,120 |
| 2018: | | | | | |
| January | 3,640 | 3,640 | 1,470 | 1,470 | 8,290 |
| February | 3,900 | 7,540 | 214 | 1,680 | 12,000 |
| March | 4,070 | 11,600 | 1,360 | 3,050 | 14,700 |
| April | 3,810 | 15,400 | 4,180 | 7,230 | 14,300 |

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 |
| 2017: | | | | | | |
| 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 |
| 2018: | | | | | | |
| January | 1,920 | 1,920 | 2,240 | 2,240 | 4,650 | 4,650 |
| February | 1,790 | 3,710 | 1,980 | 4,210 | 4,620 | 9,270 |
| March | 1,970 | 5,680 | 2,270 | 6,490 | 5,060 | 14,300 |
| April | 1,930 | 7,600 | 2,200 | 8,690 | 4,720 | 19,000 |

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 | 2017 | 2018 | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| | January–April | April | | January–April | | |
| | Quantity (thousand metric tons) | Quantity (thousand metric tons) | Value ³ (thousand dollars) | Quantity (thousand metric tons) | Value ³ (thousand dollars) | Value ³ (dollars per ton) |
| Canada | 1,590 | 743 | 57,800 | 1,830 | 137,000 | 75.06 |
| Japan | 444 ^r | 250 | 17,000 | 278 | 18,900 | 68.14 |
| Mexico | 54 | 55 | 5,700 | 253 | 24,900 | 98.56 |
| Other | 60 | (4) | 148 | 80 | 6,050 | 75.66 |
| Total | 2,150 ^r | 1,050 | 80,600 | 2,440 | 187,000 | 76.69 |
| Concentrates | 6 ^r | 4 | 662 | 41 | 5,040 | 123.02 |
| Fine ores | 30 | (4) | 18 | (4) | 55 | 13.75 |
| Pellets | 2,040 ^r | 1,040 | 79,900 | 2,360 | 181,000 | 76.60 |
| Other | 68 | (4) | 28 | 42 | 1,560 | 37.10 |
| Total | 2,150 ^r | 1,050 | 80,600 | 2,440 | 187,000 | 76.69 |

^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 | 2017 | 2018 | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| | January–April | April | | January–April | | |
| | Quantity (thousand metric tons) | Quantity (thousand metric tons) | Value ³ (thousand dollars) | Quantity (thousand metric tons) | Value ³ (thousand dollars) | Value ³ (dollars per ton) |
| Argentina | -- | 28 | 1,920 | 28 | 1,920 | 68.61 |
| Brazil | 475 | 144 | 17,000 | 634 | 73,800 | 116.36 |
| Canada | 169 | 111 | 11,200 | 184 | 19,400 | 105.29 |
| Chile | 151 | 37 | 3,100 | 37 | 3,100 | 83.76 |
| Sweden | 152 | 65 | 7,340 | 65 | 7,340 | 112.98 |
| Other | 85 | 1 | 88 | 7 | 1,100 | 157.14 |
| Total | 1,030 | 386 | 40,700 | 955 | 107,000 | 111.63 |
| Concentrates | 151 | 68 | 5,060 | 86 | 7,020 | 81.63 |
| Fine Ores | 43 | 28 | 1,930 | 29 | 2,020 | 69.79 |
| Pellets | 837 | 290 | 33,700 | 840 | 97,600 | 116.15 |
| Other | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Total | 1,030 | 386 | 40,700 | 955 | 107,000 | 111.63 |

-- 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–April | | April 2018 | January–April | | April 2018 |
| | 2017 | 2018 | | 2017 | 2018 | |
| Chicago, IL (39) | -- | -- | -- | -- | 28 | 28 |
| Houston-Galveston, TX (53) | -- | -- | -- | -- | 21 | 3 |
| New Orleans, LA (20) | 837 | 840 | 290 | 1,020 | 906 | 355 |
| Other | -- | -- | -- | 11 | (3) | (3) |
| Total | 837 | 840 | 290 | 1,030 ^r | 955 | 386 |

^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.