

Mineral Industry Surveys

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IRON ORE IN MAY 2018

U.S. mine production and shipments of iron ore in May 2018 were 4.12 million metric tons (Mt) and 5.42 Mt, respectively (fig. 1, table 1). Average daily production of iron ore was 133,000 metric tons (t), about 5% more than that of April and 7% more than that of May 2017. Average daily shipments of iron ore were 175,000 t, about 25% more those in April and 12% more than those in May 2017. Mine stocks at the end of May 2018 were 9% less than those held at the end of April and 16% more than those held at the end of May 2017 (fig. 1, table 1).

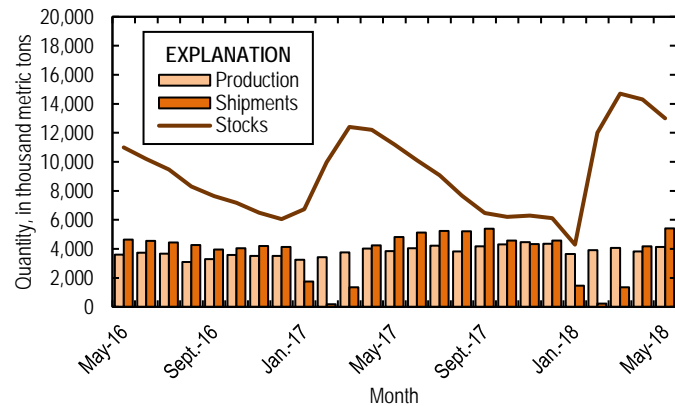


Figure 1. Monthly domestic production, shipments, and stocks of iron ore from May 2016 through May 2018.

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 1.63 Mt in May 2018, 55% more than those in April and 65% more than those in May 2017

(fig. 2, table 3). U.S. imports of iron ore were 247,000 t in May 2018, 36% less than those in April and 22% less than those in May 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.

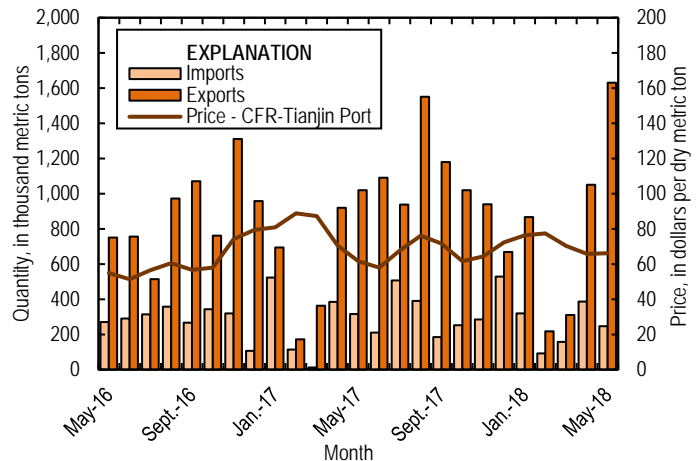


Figure 2. Monthly domestic imports and exports of iron ore and spot prices for iron ore import fines, 62% iron content, cost and freight (CFR), at Tianjin Port, from May 2016 through May 2018. Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Index Mundi, undated.

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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:					
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
May	4,120	19,500	5,420	12,600	13,000

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:						
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
May	2,070	9,680	2,400	11,100	4,860	23,900

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–May	May		January–May		
	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	2,380	1,370	92,500	3,200	230,000	71.91
Germany	--	42	1,510	113	4,580	40.50
Japan	584 ^r	164	9,870	443	28,800	65.03
Mexico	65	55	6,080	316	33,900	107.13
Other	139 ^r	(4)	124	1	266	266.00
Total	3,170	1,630	110,000	4,070	297,000	73.09
Concentrates	29	8	1,320	50	6,360	127.28
Fine ores	30	(4)	12	(4)	67	16.75
Pellets	3,040	1,580	107,000	3,940	288,000	73.15
Other	68	42	1,550	84	3,110	37.01
Total	3,170	1,630	110,000	4,070	297,000	73.09

^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 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–May	May		January–May		
	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)
Brazil	790	189	17,900	823	91,700	111.36
Canada	169	39	2,810	222	22,200	99.91
Sweden	152	19	1,890	85	9,340	109.92
Other	236 ^r	1	92	72	6,100	84.76
Total	1,350	247	22,700	1,200	129,000	107.55
Concentrates	217	183	14,500	269	21,500	80.08
Fine Ores	44	(4)	35	29	2,060	71.00
Pellets	1,090	63	8,050	903	106,000	116.95
Other	(4)	1	67	1	67	67.00
Total	1,350	247	22,700	1,200	129,000	107.55

^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 imports per month included in "Other."

³Customs value. Excludes international freight and insurance charges.

⁴Less than ½ unit.

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–May		May	January–May		May
	2017	2018	2018	2017	2018	2018
Chicago, IL (39)	--	--	--	67	112	84
Houston-Galveston, TX (53)	--	--	--	--	120	99
New Orleans, LA (20)	1,090	903	63	1,270	903	63
Other	--	--	--	11	67	1
Total	1,090	903	63	1,350	1,200	247

-- 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."

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.