

# Mineral Industry Surveys

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## IRON ORE IN MARCH 2019

U.S. mine production and shipments of iron ore in March 2019 were 3.71 million metric tons (Mt) and 1.30 Mt respectively (fig. 1, table 1). Average daily production of iron ore was 120,000 metric tons (t), a slight decrease from that of February and 9% less than that of March 2018. Average daily shipments of iron ore were 41,800 t, nearly four times those in February and 5% less than those in March 2018. Mine stocks were 12.7 Mt at the end of March 2019, 23% more than those held at the end of February and 13% less than those held at the end of March 2018 (fig. 1, table 1).

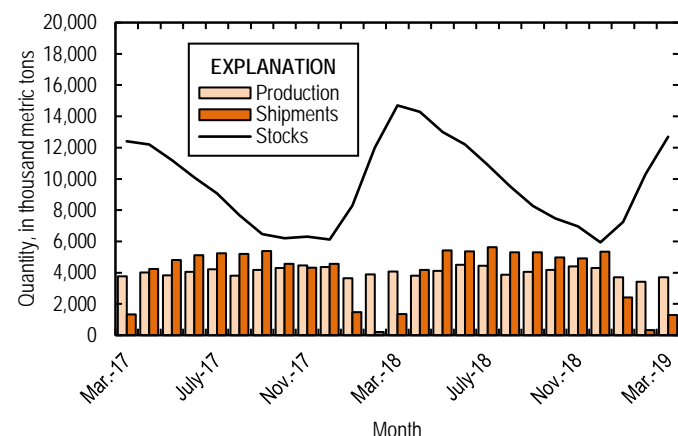


Figure 1. Monthly domestic production, shipments, and stocks of iron ore from March 2017 through March 2019.

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 938,000 t in March 2019, nearly five times those in February and three times those in March 2018 (fig. 2, table 3, 6). U.S. imports of iron ore were 231,000 t in March 2019, a 20% decrease from those in February and a 47% increase from those in March 2018 (fig. 2, table 4, 6). The spot price for imported iron ore fines, 62% iron content, cost

and freight, at Tianjin Port, China was \$86.47 per dry metric ton in March 2019, a slight decrease from \$88.22 per dry metric ton in February and a 23% increase from that of March 2018 (fig. 2).

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

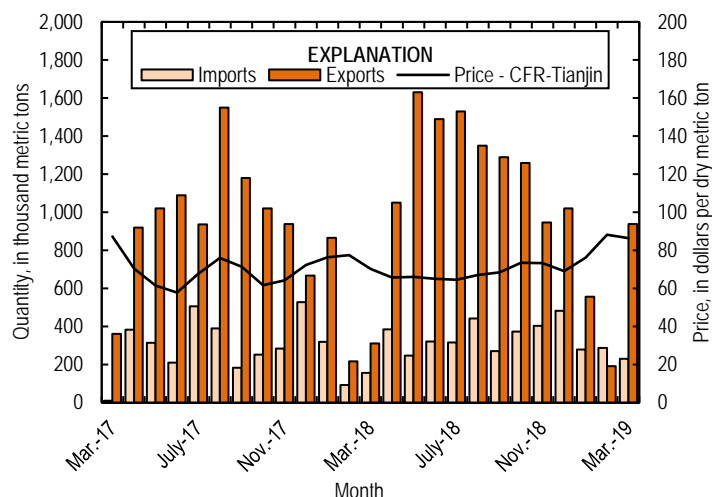


Figure 2. Monthly domestic imports and exports of iron ore and spot prices for imported iron ore fines, 62% iron content, cost and freight (CFR), at Tianjin Port, China, from March 2017 through March 2019. Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Index Mundi, undated.

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TABLE 1  
U.S. PRODUCTION, SHIPMENTS, AND STOCKS OF IRON ORE<sup>1, 2</sup>  
(Exclusive of ore containing 5% or more of manganese)

(Thousand metric tons, usable ore)

Period	Production		Shipments <sup>3</sup>		Stocks
	Monthly	Year to date	Monthly	Year to date	End of Month
2018:					
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
June	4,510	24,000	5,370	18,000	12,200
July	4,440	28,500	5,640	23,700	10,900
August	3,880	32,400	5,310	29,000	9,520
September	4,050	36,400	5,300	34,300	8,270
October	4,180	40,600	4,970	39,200	7,480
November	4,400	45,000	4,910	44,100	6,970
December	4,310	49,300	5,340	49,500	5,940
2019:					
January	3,710	3,710	2,410	2,410	7,240
February	3,430	7,130	326	2,740	10,300
March	3,710	10,800	1,300	4,040	12,700

<sup>1</sup>Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits.

<sup>2</sup>Excludes byproduct ores and iron metallics.

<sup>3</sup>Includes rail and vessel.

TABLE 2  
U.S. PRODUCTION OF PIG IRON AND RAW STEEL, BY TYPE OF FURNACE<sup>1</sup>

(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
2018:						
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
June	2,060	11,700	2,330	13,400	4,730	28,600
July	2,100	13,800	2,370	15,800	5,010	33,700
August	2,030	15,900	2,340	18,100	5,140	38,800
September	2,010	17,900	2,350	20,500	4,910	43,700
October	2,060	19,900	2,360	22,800	5,190	48,900
November	2,030	22,000	2,380	25,200	5,020	53,900
December	2,100	24,100	2,490	27,700	4,990	58,900
2019:						
January	1,880	1,880	2,330	2,330	5,190	5,190
February	1,840	3,720	2,140	4,470	4,810	10,000
March	2,080	5,800	2,390	6,870	5,290	15,300

<sup>1</sup>Data 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 <sup>1,2</sup>  
(Exclusive of ore containing 20% or more manganese)

Country or locality and type of product	2018	2019		2019		
	January–March	March		January–March		
	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value <sup>3</sup> (thousand dollars)	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value <sup>3</sup> (thousand dollars)	Value <sup>3</sup> (dollars per ton)
Canada	1,090	163	14,600	835	71,900	86.14
Japan	28	27	1,510	27	1,510	56.00
Mexico	206	(4)	35	33	4,140	125.39
Other	71	(4)	3	43	1,570	36.40
Total	1,390	191	16,200	938	79,100	84.37
Concentrates	37	(4)	41	12	1,480	123.42
Fine ores	(4)	(4)	16	(4)	37	9.25
Pellets	1,320	190	16,100	883	76,100	86.14
Other	42	(4)	3	43	1,560	36.21
Total	1,390	191	16,200	938	79,100	84.37

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

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

<sup>3</sup>Free alongside ship (FAS) value.

<sup>4</sup>Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

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

Country or locality of origin and type of product	2018	2019				
	January–March	March		January–March		
	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value <sup>3</sup> (thousand dollars)	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value <sup>3</sup> (thousand dollars)	Value <sup>3</sup> (dollars per ton)
Brazil	489 <sup>r</sup>	161	22,700	397	53,600	135.06
Canada	73	2	171	214	28,200	131.72
Russia	--	62	8,630	130	17,500	134.55
Other	6 <sup>r</sup>	6	641	58	4,810	82.98
Total	569	231	32,100	799	104,000	130.30
Concentrates	18	14	1,510	70	6,040	86.27
Fine Ores	(4)	(4)	36	(4)	7	1.75
Pellets	551	217	30,600	729	98,000	134.40
Other	--	--	--	(4)	83	20.75
Total	569	231	32,100	799	104,000	130.30

<sup>r</sup>Revised. -- Zero.

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

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

<sup>3</sup>Customs value. Excludes international freight and insurance charges.

<sup>4</sup>Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

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

(Thousand metric tons)

Customs district (code no.)	Pellets			Total, all products		
	January–March		March	January–March		March
	2018	2019	2019	2018	2019	2019
Houston-Galveston, TX (53)	--	--	--	18	19	14
New Orleans, LA (20)	551	726	213	551	776	213
Other	--	3	3	(3)	3	3
Total	551	729	216	569	799	231

-- Zero.

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

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

<sup>3</sup>Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 6  
U.S. IRON ORE TRADE SUMMARY<sup>1</sup>

(Thousand metric tons and thousand dollars)

Period	Exports		Imports	
	Quantity	Value <sup>2</sup>	Quantity	Value <sup>3</sup>
2018:				
January–March	1,390	107,000	568	65,900
March	311	25,300	157	18,800
April	1,050	80,600	386	40,700
May	1,630	110,000	247	22,700
June	1,490	105,000	322	33,100
July	1,530	103,000	316	29,600
August	1,350	107,000	442	49,400
September	1,290	103,000	271	23,100
October	1,260	100,000	373	35,200
November	946	77,200	403	38,500
December	1,020	82,900	482	50,400
January–December	12,900	975,000	3,810	388,000
2019:				
January	556	48,600	280	33,300
February	192	14,400	288	38,700
March	191	16,200	231	32,100
January–March	939	79,100	799	104,000

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

<sup>2</sup>Free alongside ship (FAS) value.

<sup>3</sup>Customs value. Excludes international freight and insurance charges.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.