

Mineral Industry Surveys

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IRON ORE IN APRIL 2019

U.S. mine production and shipments of iron ore in April 2019 were 3.78 million metric tons (Mt) and 4.36 Mt respectively (fig. 1, table 1). Average daily production of iron ore was 126,000 metric tons (t), a 5% increase from that of March and essentially unchanged from that of April 2018. Average daily shipments of iron ore were 145,000 t, more than three times those in March and 4% more than those in April 2018. Mine stocks were 12.2 Mt at the end of April 2019, 5% less than those held at the end of March and 15% less than those held at the end of April 2018 (fig. 1, table 1).

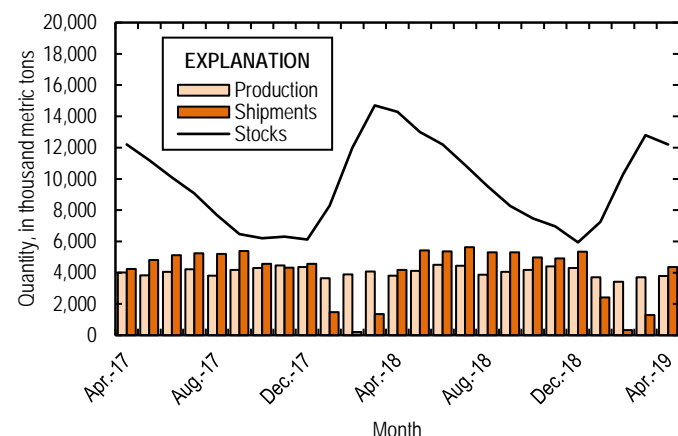


Figure 1. Monthly domestic production, shipments, and stocks of iron ore from April 2017 through April 2019.

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 1.32 Mt in April 2019, nearly seven times those in March and 26% more than those in April 2018 (fig. 2, table 3, 6). U.S. imports of iron ore were 301,000 t in April 2019, a 30% increase from those in March and a 22% decrease from those in April 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 \$93.70 per dry metric ton in April 2019, an 8.4% increase from \$86.47 per dry metric ton in March and a 43% increase from \$65.75 in April 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.

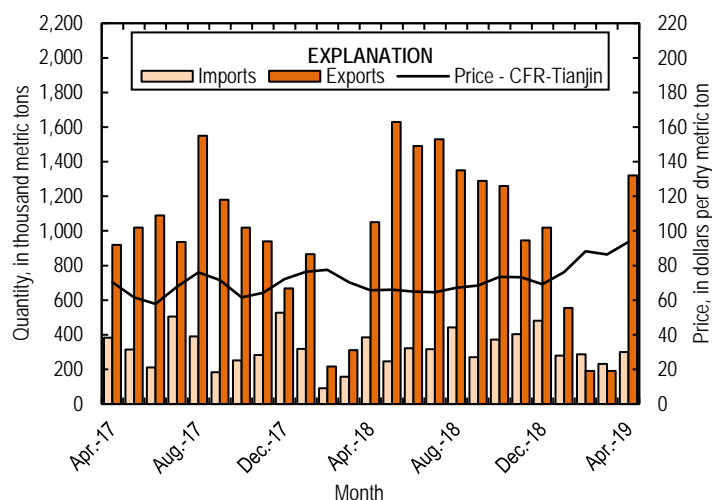


Figure 2. Monthly domestic imports and exports of iron ore and spot prices for imported iron ore fines, 62% iron content, cost and freight (CFR), at Tianjin Port, China, from April 2017 through April 2019. Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Index Mundi, undated.

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TABLE 1
U.S. PRODUCTION, SHIPMENTS, AND STOCKS OF IRON ORE^{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
2018:					
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	12,800 [†]
April	3,780	14,600	4,360	8,400	12,200

[†]Revised.

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
2018:						
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
April	1,860	7,670	2,170	9,040	5,190	20,500

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	2018	2019				
	January–April	April		January–April		
	Quantity	Quantity	Value ³	Quantity	Value ³	Value ³
	(thousand metric tons)	(thousand metric tons)	(thousand dollars)	(thousand metric tons)	(thousand dollars)	(dollars per ton)
Canada	1,830	931	84,100	1,770	156,000	88.37
Japan	274 ^r	339	20,800	367	22,300	60.88
Mexico	261 ^r	(4)	60	33	4,200	127.21
Other	72 ^r	52	2,630	95	4,200	44.18
Total	2,440	1,320	108,000	2,260	187,000	82.62
Concentrates	42 ^r	6	1,470	18	2,950	164.11
Fine ores	(4)	(4)	20	(4)	57	9.25
Pellets	2,350 ^r	1,270	104,000	2,150	180,000	83.90
Other	42	49	1,760	92	3,310	36.02
Total	2,440	1,320	108,000	2,260	187,000	82.62

^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	2018	2019				
	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)
Brazil	634	106	13,500	503	67,100	133.46
Canada	184	96	11,200	310	39,400	127.03
Chile	37	(4)	2	50	3,970	79.38
Russia	--	62	9,340	192	26,800	139.73
Sweden	66 ^r	6	672	13	1,430	109.92
Other	34 ^r	31	2,580	31	2,670	86.00
Total	955	301	37,300	1,100	141,000	128.55
Concentrates	86	96	8,130	165	14,200	85.85
Fine Ores	29	(4)	5	(4)	88	22.00
Pellets	840	201	29,000	930	127,000	136.50
Other	--	5	192	5	198	39.60
Total	955	301	37,300	1,100	141,000	128.55

^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.

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–April		April 2019	January–April		April 2019
	2018	2019		2018	2019	
Chicago, IL (39)	--	--	--	28	34	34
Houston-Galveston, TX (53)	--	--	--	22 ^r	66	46
Los Angeles, CA (27)	--	--	11	--	--	--
Mobile, AL (19)	--	--	6	--	--	--
New Orleans, LA (20)	840	230	183	906	980	204
Other	--	20	--	(3)	20	17
Total	840	250	201	955	1,100	301

^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.

TABLE 6
U.S. IRON ORE TRADE SUMMARY¹

(Thousand metric tons and thousand dollars)

Period	Exports		Imports	
	Quantity	Value ²	Quantity	Value ³
2018:				
January–April	2,440	187,000	955	107,000
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
April	1,320	108,000	301	37,300
January–April	2,260	187,000	1,100	141,000

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

²Free alongside ship (FAS) value.

³Customs value. Excludes international freight and insurance charges.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.