

Mineral Industry Surveys

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IRON ORE IN MAY 2019

U.S. mine production and shipments of iron ore in May 2019 were 4.54 million metric tons (Mt) and 4.71 Mt, respectively (fig. 1, table 1). Average daily production of iron ore was 146,000 metric tons (t), a 16% increase from that of April and a 10% increase from that of May 2018. Average daily shipments of iron ore were 152,000 t, a 5% increase from those in April and a 13% decrease from those in May 2018. Mine stocks were 12.0 Mt at the end of May 2019, a slight decrease from those held at the end of April and 8% less than those held at the end of May 2018 (fig. 1, table 1).

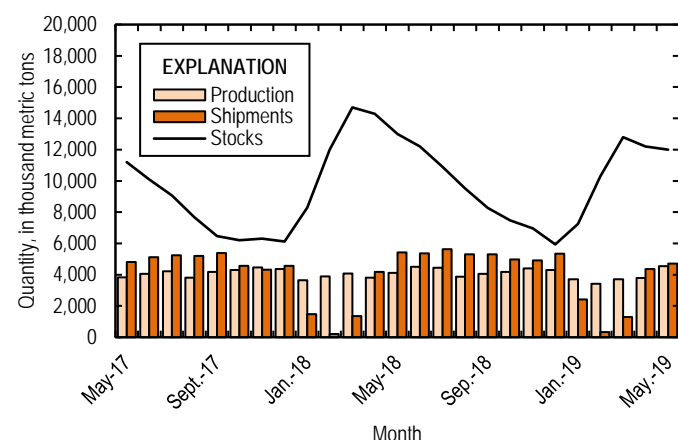


Figure 1. Monthly domestic production, shipments, and stocks of iron ore from May 2017 through May 2019.

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 1.28 Mt in May 2019, a 4% decrease from those in April and a 22% decrease from those in May 2018 (fig. 2, table 3, 6). U.S. imports of iron ore were 493,000 t in May 2019, a 64% increase from those in April and double those in May 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 \$100.15 per dry metric ton in May 2019, a 6.9% increase from \$93.70 per dry metric ton in April and a 50% increase from \$66.75 per dry metric ton in May 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.

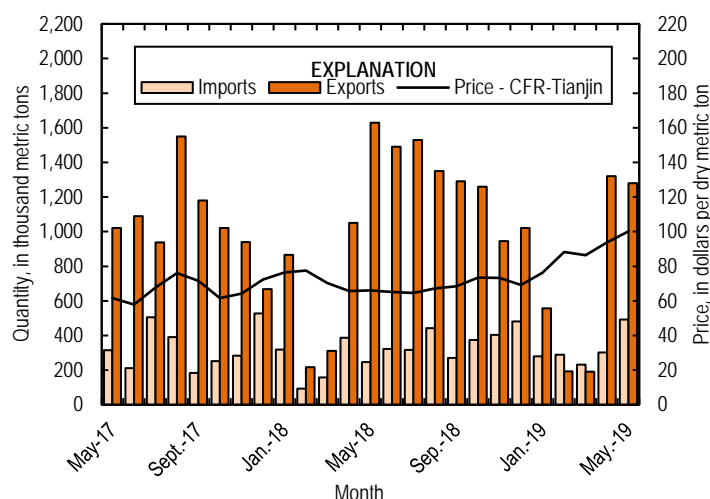


Figure 2. Monthly domestic imports and exports of iron ore and spot prices for imported iron ore fines, 62% iron content, cost and freight (CFR), at Tianjin Port, China, from May 2017 through May 2019. Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Index Mundi, undated.

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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:					
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
May	4,540	19,200	4,710	13,100	12,000

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
2018:						
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
May	1,930	9,600	2,430	11,500	5,120	25,600

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		2019		
	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	3,200	859	77,300	2,630	466,000	177.70
Japan	445 ^r	335	20,800	702	86,300	122.91
Mexico	316	(4)	55	33	8,510	257.76
Other	114 ^r	80	29,700	174	67,800	389.77
Total	4,070	1,280	128,000	3,530	629,000	178.01
Concentrates	49 ^r	83	30,300	101	66,500	658.51
Fine ores	(4)	(4)	30	(4)	174	9.25
Pellets	3,940	1,190	97,500	3,340	556,000	166.35
Other	84	(4)	4	92	6,640	72.14
Total	4,070	1,280	128,000	3,530	629,000	178.01

^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		2019		
	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	823	322	40,800	826	108,000	130.62
Canada	222	107	12,900	417	52,300	125.35
Chile	37	52	6,310	102	10,300	100.75
Russia	--	--	--	192	26,800	139.73
Sweden	85	5	556	18	2,000	110.94
Other	35 ^r	7	1,040	38	3,690	97.08
Total	1,200	493	61,500	1,590	203,000	127.40
Concentrates	269	166	15,300	331	29,400	88.90
Fine Ores	29	(4)	21	(4)	109	22.00
Pellets	903	326	46,200	1,260	173,000	137.89
Other	1	1	32	5	230	46.00
Total	1,200	493	61,500	1,590	203,000	127.40

^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–May		May 2019	January–May		May 2019
	2018	2019		2018	2019	
Chicago, IL (39)	--	--	--	112	121	87
Houston-Galveston, TX (53)	--	--	--	121 ^r	93	27
Los Angeles, CA (27)	--	--	--	--	12	1
Mobile, AL (19)	--	--	12	--	21	12
New Orleans, LA (20)	903	1,220	314	969 ^r	1,350	366
Other	(3) ^r	32	--	1 ^r	(3)	(3)
Total	903	1,260	326	1,200	1,590	493

^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–May	2,750	213,000	1,110	125,000
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	13,300	1,000,000	3,970	407,000
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
May	1,280	128,000	493	61,500
January–April	3,540	315,000	1,590	203,000

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.