

Mineral Industry Surveys

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IRON ORE IN FEBRUARY 2021

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. mine production and shipments of iron ore in February 2021 were estimated to be 4.06 million metric tons (Mt) and 490,000 metric tons (t), respectively (fig. 1, table 1). Average daily production of iron ore was 145,000 t, a 12% increase from that in January and a 10% increase from that of February 2020. Average daily shipments of iron ore were 17,500 t, a 68% decrease from those in January 2020 and decreased slightly from those in February 2020. Mine stocks were estimated to be 9.41 Mt at the end of February 2021, a 61% increase from those held at the end of January and a 16% increase from those held in February 2020 (fig. 1, table 1).

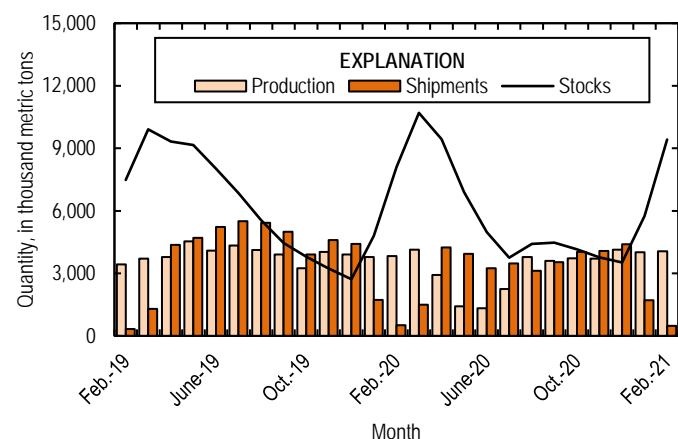


Figure 1. Monthly domestic production, shipments, and stocks of iron ore from February 2019 through February 2021.

U.S. exports of iron ore were 382,000 t in February 2021, an 8% decrease from those in January and more than double those in February 2020 (fig. 2, tables 3, 6). U.S. imports of iron ore were 246,000 t in February, a 39% decrease from those in

January and a 6% increase from those in February 2020 (fig. 2, tables 4, 6). The spot price for imported iron ore fines, 62% iron content, cost and freight, at Tianjin Port, China, was \$164.77 per dry metric ton in February 2021, a 3% decrease from \$169.63 per dry metric ton in January but an 88% increase from \$87.68 in February 2020 (fig. 2).

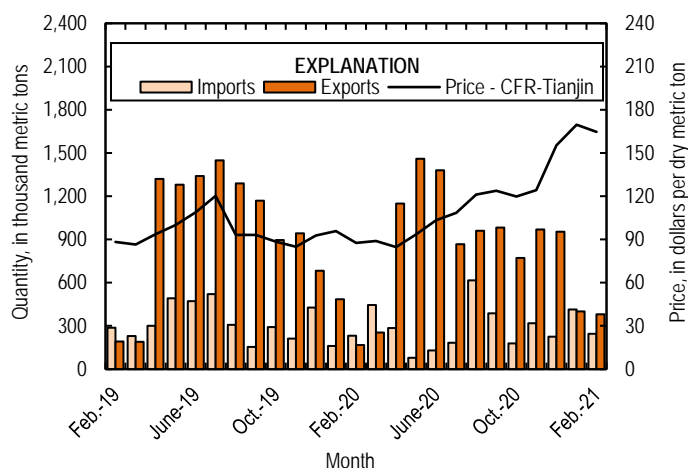


Figure 2. Monthly domestic imports and exports of iron ore and spot prices for imported iron ore fines, 62% iron content, cost and freight (CFR), at Tianjin Port, China, from February 2019 through February 2021. Source: U.S. Census Bureau and IndexMundi, undated.

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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
2020:					
February	3,830	7,620	520	2,240	8,100
March	4,140	11,800	1,490	3,720	10,700
April	2,930	14,700	4,250	7,980	9,430
May	1,420	16,100	3,940	11,900	6,900
June	1,320	17,400	3,240	15,200	4,980
July	2,250	19,700	3,470	18,600	3,760
August	3,780	23,400	3,120	21,700	4,410
September	3,600	27,000	3,540	25,300	4,470
October	3,720	30,800	4,030	29,300	4,150
November	3,700	34,500	4,080	33,400	3,770
December	4,140	38,600	4,390	37,800 ^r	3,530
2021: ^e					
January	4,020	4,020	1,710	1,710	5,840
February	4,060	8,080	490	2,200	9,410

^eEstimated. ^rRevised.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits.

²Excludes byproduct ores and iron metallica.

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
2020:						
February	1,920	3,600	2,270	4,540	4,800	10,200
March	1,910	5,510	2,230	6,770	4,770	14,900
April	1,110	6,620	1,240	8,010	3,580	18,500
May	949	7,570	1,100	9,110	3,820	22,300
June	1,170	8,740	1,230	10,300	3,690	26,000
July	1,310	10,000	1,500	11,800	3,930	30,000
August	1,520	11,600	1,710	13,500	4,220	34,200
September	1,610	13,200	1,840	15,400	4,140	38,300
October	1,700	14,900	1,960	17,300	4,270	42,600
November	1,700	16,600	1,910	19,200	4,390	47,000
December ^c	1,660	18,200	1,910	21,200	4,560	51,500
2021:						
January	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
February	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

^cEstimated. NA Not available.

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	2020			2021		
	January–February	February		January–February		
	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)
Austria	--	36	5,320	36	5,320	147.64
Canada	--	95	10,600	268	29,000	108.28
China	604	140	20,400	210	29,000	138.26
Mexico	(4)	49	4,200	50	4,240	84.82
Slovakia	--	62	3,760	62	3,760	60.63
Other	49 ^r	(4)	25	171	10,200	59.76
Total	654	382	44,200	795	81,600	102.63
Concentrates	(4)	176	25,700	245	34,400	140.36
Fine ores	(4)	(4)	26	(4)	67	16.75
Pellets	604	195	16,400	445	41,800	93.83
Other	49	11	2,090	105	5,380	51.25
Total	654	382	44,200	795	81,600	102.63

^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	2020	2021				
	January–February	February		January–February		
	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)
Brazil	157	158	26,000	464	67,000	144.43
Canada	74	73	12,200	167	24,400	146.38
Sweden	78	15	1,660	15	1,660	110.93
Other	85 ^r	(4)	44	(4)	74	18.50
Total	395	246	39,900	646	93,200	144.27
Concentrates	5	--	--	(4)	28	70.00
Fine Ores	8	15	1,630	15	1,650	109.80
Pellets	381	231	38,300	631	91,500	145.01
Other	--	(4)	21	(4)	21	5.25
Total	395	246	39,900	646	93,200	144.27

^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–February		February 2021	January–February		February 2021
	2020	2021		2020	2021	
Houston-Galveston, TX (53)	35	31	9	40	31	9
Los Angeles, CA (27)	--	--	--	--	15	15
New Orleans, LA (20)	346	600	222	354	600	222
Other	(3) ^r	--	(3)	-- ^r	(3)	(3)
Total	381	631	231	395	646	246

^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
2020:				
January–February	654	57,100	395	54,200
February	168	11,200	233	32,700
March	254	18,800	446	52,300
April	1,150	89,000	286	29,400
May	1,460	110,000	78	7,150
June	1,380	101,000	129	15,700
July	867	72,000	183	21,500
August	960	73,200	617	67,900
September	983	78,900	387	46,800
October	772	67,900	179	21,700
November	969	87,200	318	42,100
December	953	88,000	225	30,200
January–December	10,400	842,000	3,240	389,000
2021:				
January	414	37,400	400	53,300
February	382	44,200	246	39,900
January–February	795	81,600	646	93,200

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.