

# Mineral Industry Surveys

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## IRON ORE IN SEPTEMBER 2021

Monthly iron ore data are reported as gross weight unless otherwise noted and do not include iron metallics such as direct-reduced iron, hot-briquetted iron, iron nuggets, or pig iron.

U.S. mine production and shipments of iron ore in September 2021 were estimated to be 3.8 million metric tons (Mt) and 4.7 Mt, respectively (fig. 1, table 1). Average daily production of iron ore was 127,000 metric tons (t), a slight decrease from that in August and a 6% increase from that in September 2020. Average daily shipments of iron ore were 156,000 t, a 5% decrease from those in August 2021 and a 32% increase from those in September 2020. Mine stocks were estimated to be 6.0 Mt at the end of September 2021, a 13% decrease from those held at the end of August and a 34% increase from those held at the end of September 2020 (fig. 1, table 1).

Production and shipments were higher than those in September 2020 because the industry has recovered to some extent from the effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

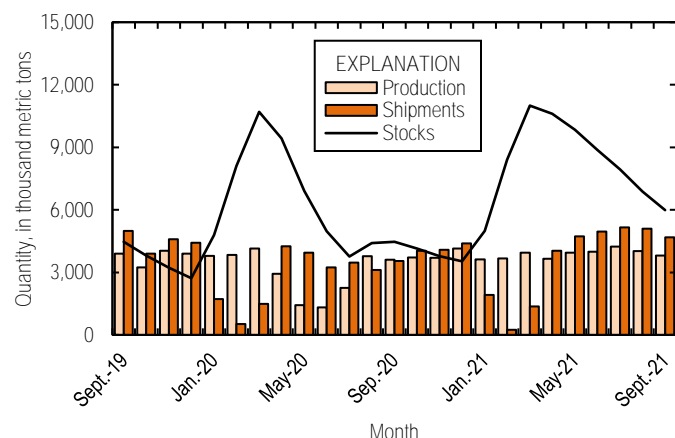


Figure 1. Monthly domestic production, shipments, and stocks of iron ore from September 2019 through September 2021.

U.S. exports of iron ore were 1.33 Mt in September 2021, an 18% decrease from those in August and a 36% increase from

those in September 2020 (fig. 2, tables 3, 6). U.S. imports of iron ore were 348,000 t in September, a 7% decrease from those in August and a 10% decrease from those in September 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 \$124.52 per dry metric ton in September 2021, a 23% decrease from \$162.16 per dry metric ton in August and nearly unchanged from \$123.75 in September 2020 (fig. 2).

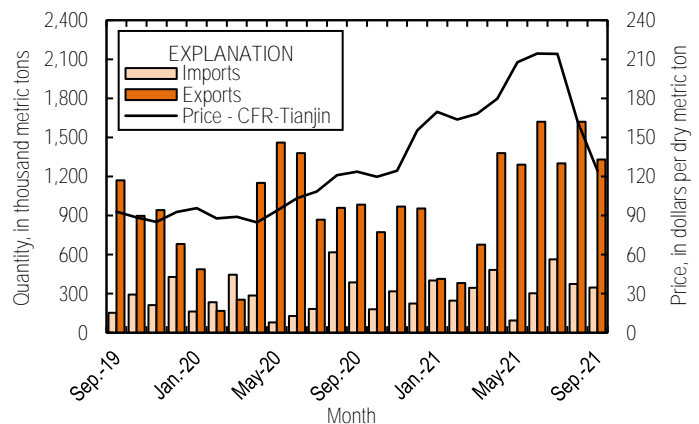


Figure 2. Monthly domestic imports and exports of iron ore and spot prices for imported iron ore fines, 62% iron content, cost and freight (CFR), at Tianjin Port, China, from September 2019 through September 2021. Source: U.S. Census Bureau and IndexMundi, undated.

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TABLE 1  
U.S. PRODUCTION, SHIPMENTS, AND STOCKS OF IRON ORE<sup>1,2</sup>  
(Exclusive of ore containing 20% 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
<b>2020:</b>					
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	3,530
Total <sup>4</sup>	XX	38,100	XX	38,000	3,290
<b>2021:<sup>5</sup></b>					
January	3,620	3,620	1,920	1,920	4,990 <sup>6</sup>
February	3,670	7,290	250	2,170	8,410
March	3,940	11,200	1,370	3,540	10,980
April	3,660	14,900	4,030	7,570	10,610
May	3,950	18,800	4,720	12,300	9,840
June	3,990	22,800	4,960	17,300	8,870
July	4,230	27,100	5,160	22,400	7,940
August	4,020	31,100	5,090	27,500	6,870
September	3,800	34,900	4,680	32,180	5,990

<sup>6</sup>Estimated. XX Not applicable.

<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.

<sup>4</sup>Total for 2020 as reported by mines may vary from monthly production totals.

<sup>5</sup>Data are estimated based on reported employment hours and historical ratios.

<sup>6</sup>Monthly stock adjustment for January based on 2020 annual reporting total.

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 <sup>2</sup>		Raw steel production	
	Monthly	Year to date	Monthly	Year to date
2020:				
September	1,610	13,200	5,980	53,700
October	1,700	14,900	6,230	59,900
November	1,700	16,600	6,300	66,200
December <sup>c</sup>	1,660	18,200	6,470	72,700
2021:				
January	1,870 <sup>c</sup>	1,870	6,970	6,970
February	1,760 <sup>c</sup>	3,630	6,320	13,300
March	1,950 <sup>c</sup>	5,580	7,100	20,400
April	1,920 <sup>c</sup>	7,500	7,130	27,500
May	2,020 <sup>c</sup>	9,520	7,370	34,900
June	1,970 <sup>c</sup>	11,500	7,170	42,100
July	2,040 <sup>c</sup>	13,500	7,480	49,500
August	2,050 <sup>c</sup>	15,600	7,520	57,100
September	1,950 <sup>c</sup>	17,500	7,150	64,200

<sup>c</sup>Estimated.

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

<sup>2</sup>Pig iron data are estimated based on historical ratios. In 2021, market consolidation resulted in the need to withhold reported information to avoid disclosing company proprietary data.

Source: American Iron and Steel Institute, estimated by the U.S. Geological Survey using reported data.

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	2020			2021		
	January–September	September		January–September		
	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value <sup>3</sup> (thousand dollars)	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value <sup>3</sup> (thousand dollars)	Unit value <sup>3</sup> (dollars per ton)
Belgium	--	75	4,750	220	14,100	64.07
Canada	5,070	854	90,900	5,560	528,000	94.91
China	(4)	152	24,800	1,220	172,000	141.25
Japan	1,570	166	9,870	1,190	70,200	59.06
Mexico	1	13	3,390	549	37,300	67.91
Netherlands	--	33	3,300	286	19,300	67.51
United Kingdom	208	40	1,750	250	13,700	54.92
Other	855 <sup>r</sup>	(4)	11	735	66,600	90.67
Total	7,710	1,330	139,000	10,000	921,000	92.06
Concentrates	4	153	25,500	1,310	189,000	144.47
Fine ores	1	(4)	59	1	375	375.00
Pellets	7,500	1,130	108,000	8,260	709,000	85.78
Other	209	53	5,030	434	22,900	52.73
Total	7,710	1,330	139,000	10,000	921,000	92.06

<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 receiving less than 5,000 metric tons of U.S. 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	2020		2021			
	January–September	September		January–September		Unit value <sup>3</sup> (dollars per ton)
	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value <sup>3</sup> (thousand dollars)	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value <sup>3</sup> (thousand dollars)	
Bahrain	142	149	40,000	221	55,200	249.91
Brazil	1,210	104	27,300	1,880	357,000	190.35
Canada	616	73	19,300	584	114,000	194.98
Sweden	246	16	3,340	294	60,500	205.69
Other	309 <sup>r</sup>	7	1,640	181	29,900	165.24
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,520</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>91,600</b>	<b>3,160</b>	<b>617,000</b>	<b>195.36</b>
Concentrates	174	26	4,040	169	24,500	144.91
Fine Ores	210 <sup>r</sup>	20	4,440	182	31,200	171.37
Pellets	2,130	302	83,100	2,790	559,000	200.39
Other	12	(4)	64	17	2,380	139.94
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,520</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>91,600</b>	<b>3,160</b>	<b>617,000</b>	<b>195.36</b>

<sup>r</sup>Revised.

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

<sup>2</sup>All countries shipping less than 5,000 metric tons of imports per month to the United States 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–September		September	January–September		September
	2020	2021	2021	2020	2021	2021
Baltimore, MD (13)	--	--	--	9	7	7
Charleston, SC (16)	--	--	--	31	9	9
Chicago, IL (39)	--	--	--	169	133	26
New Orleans, LA (20)	1,940	2,690	302	2,060	2,810	300
Other	187 <sup>r</sup>	101	1	252 <sup>r</sup>	199	6
Total	2,130	2,790	302	2,520	3,160	348

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

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>
2020:				
January–September	7,710	599,000	2,520	295,000
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
March	676	61,400	345	56,500
April	1,380	109,000	482	82,700
May	1,290	109,000	95	19,300
June	1,620	138,000	302	58,700
July	1,300	132,000	564	123,000
August	1,620	152,000	374	91,800
September	1,330	139,000	348	91,600
January–September	10,000	921,000	3,160	617,000

<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.