

Mineral Industry Surveys

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IRON ORE IN OCTOBER 2021

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

U.S. mine production and shipments of iron ore in October 2021 were estimated to be 3.2 million metric tons (Mt) and 3.7 Mt, respectively (fig. 1, table 1). Average daily production of iron ore was 102,000 metric tons (t), a 20% decrease from that in September and a 15% decrease from that in October 2020. Average daily shipments of iron ore were 118,000 t, a 25% decrease from those in September 2021 and a 9% decrease from those in October 2020. Mine stocks were estimated to be 5.5 Mt at the end of October 2021, an 8% decrease from those held at the end of September and a 32% increase from those held at the end of October 2020 (fig. 1, table 1).

In 2021, production and shipments, on a year-to-date basis, were higher than those in the same time period in 2020 because the industry has recovered to some extent from the effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

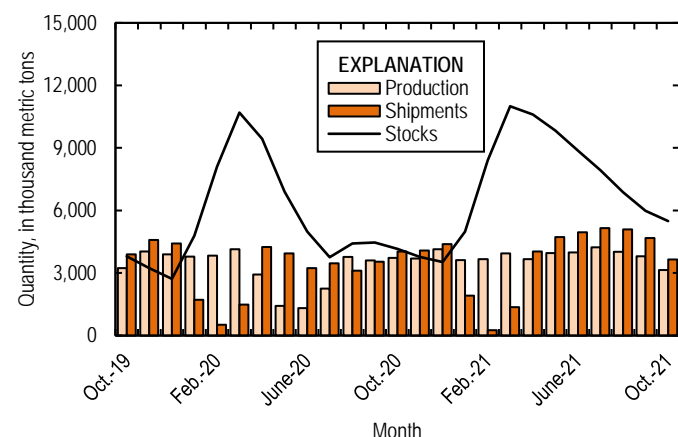


Figure 1. Monthly domestic production, shipments, and stocks of iron ore from October 2019 through October 2021.

U.S. exports of iron ore were 1.56 Mt in October 2021, a 17% increase from those in September and more than double those in

October 2020 (fig. 2, tables 3, 6). U.S. imports of iron ore were 142,000 t in October, a 59% decrease from those in September and a 21% decrease from those in October 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 \$122.91 per dry metric ton in October 2021, a slight decrease from \$124.52 per dry metric ton in September and a slight increase from \$119.78 in October 2020 (fig. 2).

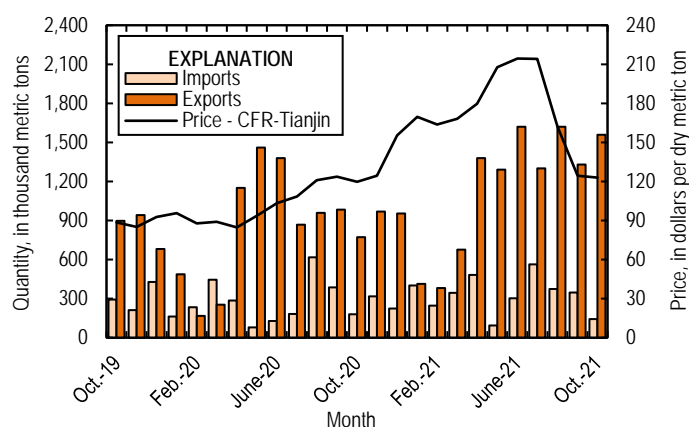


Figure 2. Monthly domestic imports and exports of iron ore and spot prices for imported iron ore fines, 62% iron content, cost and freight (CFR), at Tianjin Port, China, from October 2019 through October 2021. Source: U.S. Census Bureau and IndexMundi, undated.

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TABLE 1
U.S. PRODUCTION, SHIPMENTS, AND STOCKS OF IRON ORE^{1,2}
(Exclusive of ore containing 20% 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:					
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 ⁴	XX	38,100	XX	38,000	3,290
2021: ^{e,5}					
January	3,620	3,620	1,920	1,920	4,990 ⁶
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	32,200 ^r	5,990
October	3,150	38,000	3,650	35,800	5,490

^eEstimated. ^rRevised. XX Not applicable.

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

²Excludes byproduct ores and iron metallics.

³Includes rail and vessel.

⁴Total for 2020 as reported by mines may vary from monthly production totals.

⁵Data are estimated based on reported employment hours and historical ratios.

⁶Monthly stock adjustment for January based on 2020 annual reporting total.

TABLE 2
U.S. PRODUCTION OF PIG IRON AND RAW STEEL, BY TYPE OF FURNACE¹

(Thousand metric tons)

Period	Pig iron production ²		Raw steel production	
	Monthly	Year to date	Monthly	Year to date
2020:				
October	1,700	14,900	6,230	59,900
November	1,700	16,600	6,300	66,200
December ^e	1,660	18,200	6,470	72,700
2021:				
January	1,870 ^e	1,870	6,970	6,970
February	1,760 ^e	3,630	6,320	13,300
March	1,950 ^e	5,580	7,100	20,400
April	1,920 ^e	7,500	7,130	27,500
May	2,020 ^e	9,520	7,370	34,900
June	1,970 ^e	11,500	7,170	42,100
July	2,040 ^e	13,500	7,480	49,500
August	2,050 ^e	15,600	7,520	57,100
September	1,950 ^e	17,500	7,150	64,200
October	2,010 ^e	19,500	7,380	71,600

^eEstimated.

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

²Pig 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 ^{1,2}
(Exclusive of ore containing 20% or more manganese)

Country or locality and type of product	2020	2021				
	January–October	October		January–October		
	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value ³ (thousand dollars)	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value ³ (thousand dollars)	Unit value ³ (dollars per ton)
Canada	5,760	1,140	88,700	6,700	616,000	92.07
China	(4)	157	28,100	1,380	201,000	145.41
Japan	1,570	81	4,820	1,270	75,000	59.08
Netherlands	--	38	3,950	324	23,300	71.77
Spain	--	80	5,040	391	36,100	92.44
United Kingdom	208	70	7,000	320	20,700	64.78
Other	940 ^r	(4)	82	1,190	87,000	72.94
Total	8,480	1,560	138,000	11,600	1,060,000	91.52
Concentrates	4	162	29,400	1,470	219,000	148.57
Fine ores	1	(4)	39	1	414	414.00
Pellets	8,270	1,360	104,000	9,630	813,000	84.47
Other	209	38	3,950	471	26,800	56.96
Total	8,480	1,560	138,000	11,600	1,060,000	91.52

^rRevised. -- Zero.

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

²All countries receiving less than 5,000 metric tons of U.S. 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–October		October		January–October	
	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value ³ (thousand dollars)	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value ³ (thousand dollars)	Unit value ³ (dollars per ton)
Bahrain	142	76	20,400	296	75,600	255.46
Chile	61	57	9,170	186	35,000	188.23
South Africa	39	6	1,620	18	2,770	154.11
Other	2,460 ^r	3	587	2,800	535,000	191.18
Total	2,700	142	31,800	3,300	649,000	196.58
Concentrates	196	63	10,800	233	35,300	151.58
Fine Ores	214 ^r	3	551	185	31,700	171.57
Pellets	2,280	76	20,400	2,860	579,000	202.27
Other	12	--	--	17	2,380	139.94
Total	2,700	142	31,800	3,300	649,000	196.58

^rRevised. -- Zero.

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

²All countries shipping less than 5,000 metric tons of imports per month to the United States included in "Other."

³Customs value. Excludes international freight and insurance charges.

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–October		October	January–October		October
	2020	2021	2021	2020	2021	2021
New Orleans, LA (20)	2,090	2,760	76	2,210	2,950	142
Other	189	101	--	488 ^r	349	(3)
Total	2,280	2,860	76	2,700	3,300	142

^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–October	8,480	667,000	2,700	317,000
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
October	1,560	138,000	142	31,800
January–October	11,600	1,060,000	3,300	649,000

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.