

Mineral Industry Surveys

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IRON ORE IN NOVEMBER 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 November 2021 were estimated to be 3.9 million metric tons (Mt) and 4.3 Mt, respectively (fig. 1, table 1). Average daily production of iron ore was 131,000 metric tons (t), a 29% increase from that in October and a 6% increase from that in November 2020. Average daily shipments of iron ore were 144,000 t, a 22% increase from those in October 2021 and a 6% increase from those in November 2020. Mine stocks were estimated to be 5.1 Mt at the end of November 2021, a 7% decrease from those held at the end of October and a 35% increase from those held at the end of November 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.

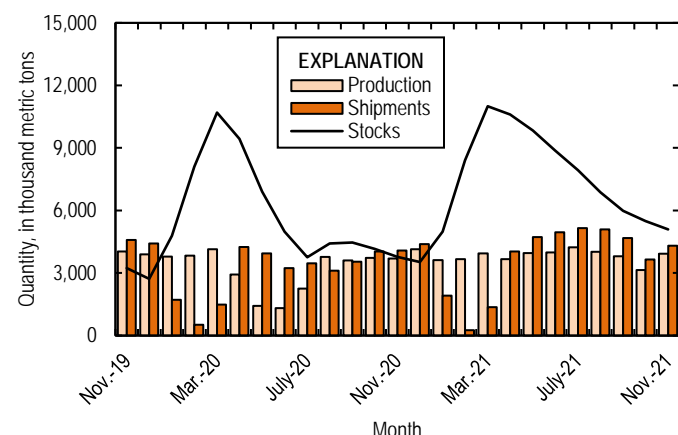


Figure 1. Monthly domestic production, shipments, and stocks of iron ore from November 2019 through November 2021.

U.S. exports of iron ore were 1.50 Mt in November 2021, a 4% decrease from those in October and a 55% increase from

those in November 2020 (fig. 2, tables 3, 6). U.S. imports of iron ore were 207,000 t in November, a 46% increase from those in October and a 35% decrease from those in November 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 \$96.24 per dry metric ton in November 2021, a 22% decrease from \$122.91 per dry metric ton in October and a 23% decrease from \$124.36 in November 2020 (fig. 2).

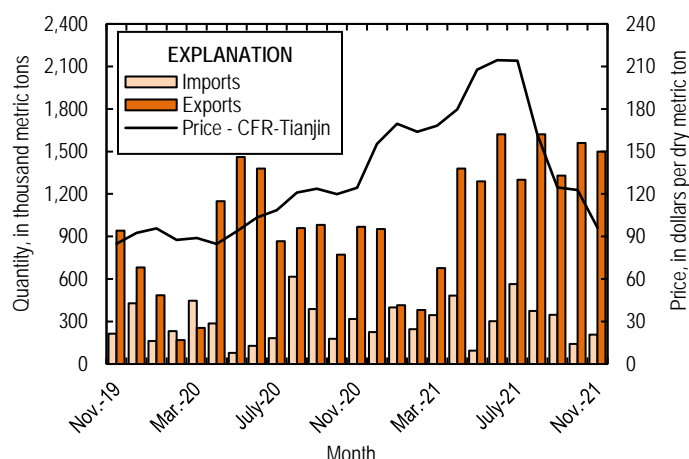


Figure 2. Monthly domestic imports and exports of iron ore and spot prices for imported iron ore fines, 62% iron content, cost and freight (CFR), at Tianjin Port, China, from November 2019 through November 2021. Source: U.S. Census Bureau and IndexMundi, undated.

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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:					
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: 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	32,180	5,990
October	3,150	38,000	3,650	35,800	5,490
November	3,920	42,000	4,310	40,100	5,100

⁶Estimated. 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:				
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
November	1,930 ^e	21,500	7,100	78,700

^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–November		November	January–November		Unit value ³ (dollars per ton)
	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Quantity (thousand metric tons)		Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value ³ (thousand dollars)	
Belgium	--	53	3,330	273	17,400	63.82
Canada	6,430	1,130	78,800	7,820	695,000	88.90
China	64	74	14,600	1,450	215,000	148.07
Japan	1,710	188	11,200	1,460	86,200	59.13
United Kingdom	253	60	6,010	380	26,700	70.37
Other	992 ^r	(4)	136	1,690	132,000	78.46
Total	9,450	1,500	114,000	13,100	1,170,000	89.75
Concentrates	68	75	15,200	1,550	234,000	151.17
Fine ores	2	(4)	75	2	488	244.00
Pellets	9,130	1,430	98,800	11,100	912,000	82.52
Other	254	(4)	8	471	26,800	56.98
Total	9,450	1,500	114,000	13,100	1,170,000	89.75

^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–November		November		January–November	
	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)
Brazil	1,440	78	18,600	1,960	376,000	192.26
Canada	699	76	19,700	659	134,000	202.73
Sweden	386	53	7,600	348	68,100	195.62
Other	494 ^r	(4)	45	543	117,000	215.31
Total	3,020	207	45,900	3,510	694,000	198.07
Concentrates	196	(4)	16	233	35,300	151.65
Fine Ores	287 ^r	45	6,100	231	37,800	163.79
Pellets	2,510	153	38,200	3,020	617,000	204.68
Other	22	9	1,570	26	3,950	152.00
Total	3,020	207	45,900	3,510	694,000	198.07

^rRevised.

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.

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–November		November	January–November		November
	2020	2021		2020	2021	
Los Angeles, CA (27)	--	--	--	11	30	15
New Orleans, LA (20)	2,320	2,910	151	2,510	3,130	179
Tampa, FL (18)	--	--	--	23 ^r	17	10
Other	196 ^r	103	2	474 ^r	330	3
Total	2,510	3,020	153	3,020	3,510	207

^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."

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–November	9,450	754,000	3,020	359,000
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
November	1,500	114,000	207	45,900
January–November	13,100	1,170,000	3,510	694,000

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.