

# Mineral Industry Surveys

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## IRON ORE IN JANUARY 2022

Monthly and annual 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. Data estimates for 2021 were updated in January 2022 to reflect year-end data as reported by the companies. Production, shipments, and trade were impacted from January through March owing to seasonal closures of the Soo Locks, the primary shipping route for iron ore in the Great Lakes region.

U.S. mine production and shipments of iron ore in January 2022 were estimated to be 3.4 million metric tons (Mt) and 1.7 Mt, respectively (fig. 1, table 1). Average daily production of iron ore was 110,000 metric tons (t), a 3% decrease from that in December and a 20% decrease from that in January 2021. Average daily shipments of iron ore were 54,5000 t, a 61% decrease from those in December 2021 and a 31% decrease from those in January 2021. Mine stocks were estimated to be 3.1 Mt at the end of January 2022, more than double those at the end of January 2021 (fig. 1, table 1).

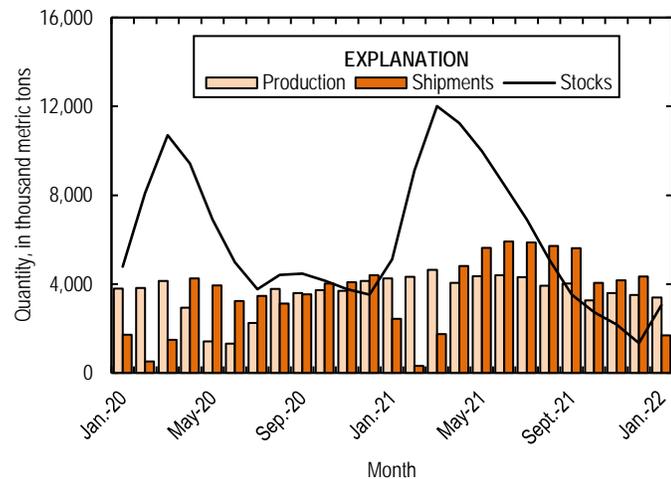


Figure 1. Monthly domestic production, shipments, and stocks of iron ore from January 2020 through January 2022.

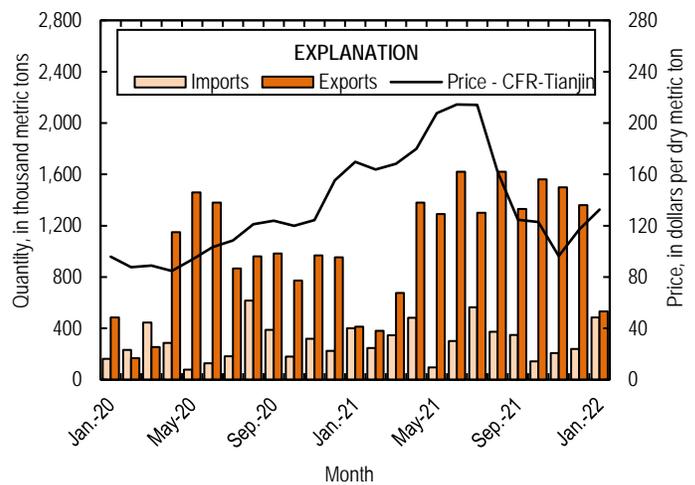


Figure 2. Monthly domestic imports and exports of iron ore and spot prices for imported iron ore fines, 62% iron content, cost and freight (CFR), at Tianjin Port, China, from January 2020 through January 2022. Source: U.S. Census Bureau and IndexMundi, undated.

U.S. exports of iron ore were 531,000 t in January 2022, a 61% decrease from those in December 2021 and a 28% increase from those in January 2021 (fig. 2, tables 3, 6). U.S. imports of iron ore were 484,000 t in January 2022, more than double those in December 2021 and a 21% increase from those in January 2021 (fig. 2, tables 4, 6). The spot price for imported iron ore fines, 62% iron content, cost and freight, at Tianjin Port, China, was \$132.53 per dry metric ton in January 2022, a 13% increase from \$116.96 per dry metric ton in December 2021 (fig. 2).

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TABLE 1  
 U.S. PRODUCTION, SHIPMENTS, AND STOCKS OF IRON ORE<sup>1,2</sup>  
 (Exclusive of ore containing 5% 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
2021, <sup>5, 6, 4</sup>					
January	4,260	4,260	2,440	2,440	5,110
February	4,320	8,580	320	2,760	9,110
March	4,640	13,200	1,740	4,500	12,000
April	4,050	17,300	4,810	9,310	11,300
May	4,360	21,600	5,630	14,900	9,980
June	4,400	26,000	5,910	20,900	8,470
July	4,310	30,300	5,870	26,700	6,910
August	3,920	34,300	5,710	32,400	5,120
September	4,020	38,300	5,620	38,100	3,520
October	3,270	41,600	4,050	42,100	2,740
November	3,600	45,200	4,170	46,300	2,170
December	3,510	48,700	4,340	50,600	1,340
2022, January	3,400	3,400	1,690	1,690	3,050

<sup>6</sup>Estimated. <sup>5</sup>Revised.

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

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
2021:				
January	1,870 <sup>e</sup>	1,870	6,970	6,970
February	1,760 <sup>e</sup>	3,630	6,320	13,300
March	1,950 <sup>e</sup>	5,580	7,100	20,400
April	1,920 <sup>e</sup>	7,500	7,130	27,500
May	2,020 <sup>e</sup>	9,520	7,370	34,900
June	1,970 <sup>e</sup>	11,500	7,170	42,100
July	2,040 <sup>e</sup>	13,500	7,480	49,500
August	2,050 <sup>e</sup>	15,600	7,520	57,100
September	1,950 <sup>e</sup>	17,500	7,150	64,200
October	2,010 <sup>e</sup>	19,500	7,380	71,600
November	1,930 <sup>e</sup>	21,500	7,100	78,700
December	1,940 <sup>e</sup>	23,400	7,100	85,800
2022, January	1,740 <sup>e</sup>	1,740	6,970	6,970

<sup>e</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	2021	2022	
	January	January	
	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value <sup>3</sup> (thousand dollars)
Canada	173	341	29,900
China	69	73	8,670
Mexico	(4)	39	1,460
Netherlands	51	71	7,130
Spain	--	7	1,000
Other	120 <sup>r</sup>	(4)	27
Total	414	531	48,200
Concentrates	69	73	8,710
Fine ores	(4)	(4)	88
Pellets	251	419	38,000
Other	94	39	1,360
Total	414	531	48,200

<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 with less than 5,000 metric tons of 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	2021	2022	
	January Quantity (thousand metric tons)	January Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value <sup>3</sup> (thousand dollars)
Bahrain	--	67	15,900
Brazil	306	232	51,800
Canada	94	77	19,600
Macedonia	--	27	5,110
Sweden	(4)	76	18,100
Ukraine	--	5	1,300
Other	(4)	(4)	31
Total	400	484	112,000
Concentrates	(4)	(4)	30
Fine Ores	(4)	27	5,180
Pellets	400	456	107,000
Other	--	(4)	49
Total	400	484	112,000

-- 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 with less than 5,000 metric tons of imports per month 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 IN JANUARY<sup>1,2</sup>  
 (Exclusive of ore containing 20% or more manganese)

(Thousand metric tons)

Customs district (code no.)	Pellets		Total, all products	
	2021	2022	2021	2022
Houston-Galveston, TX (53)	22	5	22	5
New Orleans, LA (20)	378	451	378	478
Other	--	--	(3)	1
Total	400	456	400	484

-- 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."

<sup>3</sup>Less than ½ unit.

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>
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
December	1,360	115,000	239	55,700
January–December	14,400	1,290,000	3,740	750,000
2022, January	531	48,200	484	112,000

<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.