

Mineral Industry Surveys

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U.S. PRODUCTION OF SELECTED MINERAL COMMODITIES IN THE FIRST QUARTER 2011

U.S. mine and plant production data for selected mineral commodities are provided monthly (or quarterly) by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to the Board of Governors, Federal Reserve System (FRS), for use in preparing its index of industrial production and the related capacity indexes and capacity utilization rates. These measures cover manufacturing, mining, and electric and gas utilities, and they are among the key economic indicators monitored by the FRS in determining monetary policy. The data in this report include current and prior months' data provided to the FRS, some of which have been revised.

In the first quarter of 2011, domestic production for selected construction materials (cement, construction sand and gravel, and crushed stone) decreased significantly compared with those of the fourth quarter of 2010 (table 1), primarily owing to seasonal variation. Production of iron ore in first quarter of 2011 increased by 25% compared with that of the first quarter 2010 because of increased demand for steel, as economic activity increased from its level in the same quarter 1 year ago. Production of soda ash, used mainly in glass, chemicals, and

soap and detergents, experienced a 3% year-on-year quarterly increase owing to an upturn in the global economy. Decreases in production for some mineral commodities in the first quarter of 2011 compared with production in the same quarter of 2010 may be attributed to decreases in total construction spending, which declined by 7.8% during the same period (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). The U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (2011) reported that privately owned housing starts for the first quarter 2011 were 9.9% below those for the same period of 2010.

References Cited

U.S. Census Bureau, 2011, March 2011 construction at \$768.9 billion annual rate: Washington, DC, U.S. Department of Commerce, May 2, 4 p. (Accessed May 12, 2011, at <http://www.census.gov/const/C30/release.pdf>.)
 U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2011, New residential construction in March 2011: Washington, DC, U.S. Department of Commerce, April 19, 6 p. (Accessed May 12, 2011, at <http://www.census.gov/const/newresconst.pdf>.)

| Mineral commodity | Percentage change, first quarter 2011 vs. fourth quarter 2010 ¹ | Percentage change, first quarter 2011 vs. first quarter 2010 ¹ |
|-------------------------------|---|--|
| Aluminum (secondary) | -2 | -6 |
| Cement | -26 | 3 |
| Gypsum | 13 | -3 |
| Iron ore | -11 | 25 |
| Phosphate rock | 11 | 11 |
| Sand and gravel, construction | -36 | -3 |
| Soda ash | -6 | 3 |
| Stone, crushed | -29 | 2 |
| Zinc | 5 | 4 |

¹Percentage change based on unrounded data.

TABLE 1
U.S. PRODUCTION OF SELECTED MINERAL COMMODITIES, BY QUARTER^{1,2}

| Mineral commodity | | 2010 | | | | Total | 2011 | | |
|--|----------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| | | First quarter | Second quarter | Third quarter | Fourth quarter | | First quarter | January-March | |
| | | | | | | | 2010 | 2011 | |
| Aluminum ³ | thousand metric tons | 193 ^r | 183 ^r | 180 ^r | 184 ^r | 739 ^r | 181 ^e | 193 ^r | 181 ^e |
| Cement ⁴ | million metric tons | 11.3 | 18.3 | 19.1 ^r | 15.7 ^r | 64.4 ^r | 11.7 ^e | 11.3 | 11.7 ^e |
| Gypsum ⁵ | do. | 3.2 | 3.3 | 3.0 | 2.7 | 12.2 | 3.1 ^e | 3.2 | 3.1 ^e |
| Iron ore ⁶ | do. | 9.9 | 12.0 | 13.6 | 13.9 | 49.5 | 12.4 | 9.9 | 12.4 |
| Phosphate rock ⁷ | do. | 6.3 | 6.9 | 6.3 | 6.2 | 25.7 | 6.9 ^e | 6.3 | 6.9 ^e |
| Sand and gravel, construction ⁸ | do. | 129 ^r | 232 | 263 ^r | 195 ^r | 820 ^r | 125 ^e | 129 ^r | 125 ^e |
| Soda ash ⁶ | do. | 2.5 | 2.6 | 2.6 | 2.7 | 10.4 | 2.6 ^e | 2.5 | 2.6 ^e |
| Stone, crushed ⁸ | do. | 198 ^r | 342 ^r | 362 ^r | 283 ^r | 1,190 ^r | 202 ^e | 198 ^r | 202 ^e |
| Zinc ⁹ | thousand metric tons | 179 | 181 | 186 | 177 ^r | 723 ^r | 185 ^e | 179 | 185 ^e |

^eEstimated. ^rRevised. do. Ditto.

¹Based on data available as of May 12, 2011.

²Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

³Aluminum alloys produced at secondary smelters in the United States.

⁴Data are shipments of domestically produced portland and blended cement, including cement made from imported clinker, as a proxy for actual domestic cement production.

⁵Calcined production.

⁶Mine production.

⁷Marketable mine production.

⁸Sold or used; quarterly survey based on sample survey.

⁹Recoverable mine production.