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Mineral Industry Surveys

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U.S. PRODUCTION OF SELECTED MINERAL COMMODITIES IN THE FOURTH 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 for guidance in determining national monetary policy. The data in this report include current and prior months' data provided to the FRS, some of which have been revised.

Decreases in domestic production for construction materials (cement, construction sand and gravel, and crushed stone) were large compared with production of the third quarter of 2011 (table 1) but partly seasonal. Total construction spending during 2011 was 2.0% less than that in 2010; this was reflected in the slight decline in production of construction materials between 2010 and 2011 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). The U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (2012) reported that privately owned housing starts for 2011 were 3.4% higher than those in 2010.

The fourth quarter decline in phosphate rock production partly reflects a seasonal downturn in fertilizer production. The 9% increase from 2010 to 2011 was because of strong demand during the agricultural growing season. Iron ore production in 2011 was 8% higher than that in 2010, reflecting an increase in U.S. steel production of 7% (World Steel Association, 2012). Secondary aluminum production in 2011 rose significantly compared with that of 2010 because of increased availability of secondary material compared to primary material.

References Cited

U.S. Census Bureau, 2012, December 2011 construction at $816.4 billion annual rate: Washington, DC, U.S. Department of Commerce, February 1, 5 p. (Accessed February 14, 2012, at http://www.census.gov/const/C30/release.pdf.)

U.S. Census Bureau and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2012, New residential construction in December 2011: Washington, DC, U.S. Department of Commerce, January 19, 6 p. (Accessed February 14, 2012, at http://www.census.gov/const/newresconst.pdf.)

World Steel Association, 2012, World crude steel output increases by 6.8% in 2011: Brussels, Belgium, World Steel Association, January 23. (Accessed February 14,2012, at http://www.worldsteel.org/media-centre/press-releases/2012/2011-world-crude-steel-production.html.)

Mineral commodity	Percentage change, fourth quarter 2011 vs. third quarter 2011[1]	Percentage change, 2011 total vs. 2010 total[1]
Aluminum (secondary)	-10	37
Cement	-16	4
Gypsum	-2	-2
Iron ore	-1	8
Phosphate rock	-7	9
Sand and gravel, construction	-28	-1
Soda ash	2	1
Stone, crushed	-22	-3
Zinc	-6	3

[1]Percentage change based on unrounded data.

TABLE 1

U.S. PRODUCTION OF SELECTED MINERAL COMMODITIES, BY QUARTER[1, 2]

Mineral commodity		2010				2011				January–December	
		First quarter	Second quarter	Third quarter	Fourth quarter	First quarter	Second quarter	Third quarter	Fourth quarter	2010	2011
Aluminum[3]	thousand metric tons	158	156	161	161	201	221	237 r	214 e	636	873 e
Cement[4]	million metric tons	11.3	18.3	19.0	15.7	11.8	17.9	20.0 r	16.9 e	64.4 r	66.7 e
Gypsum[5]	do.	3.2	3.3	3.0	2.7	3.1	2.9	3.0	2.9 e	12.2	11.9 e
Iron ore[6]	do.	9.9	12.0	13.6	13.9	12.4	13.7	13.9	13.7	49.5	53.6
Phosphate rock[7]	do.	6.3	6.9	6.3	6.2	7.0	6.8	7.4	6.9	25.8 r, 8	28.1
Sand and gravel, construction[9]	do.	131	234	264	197	127 r	223 r	271 r	195 e	825	816 e
Soda ash[6]	do.	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.6	2.6	2.7	2.8	10.6	10.7
Stone, crushed[9]	do.	195 r	332 r	352 r	277 r	197 r	311	348 r	273 e	1,160	1,130 e
Zinc[10]	thousand metric tons	179	181	186	177	186	184	194 r	182	723	744

eEstimated. rRevised. do. Ditto.

[1]Based on data available as of February 14, 2012.

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

[3]Aluminum alloys produced at secondary smelters in the United States, less primary aluminum consumed, primary silicon consumed, and other alloying ingredients consumed.

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

[5]Calcined production.

[6]Mine production.

[7]Marketable mine production.

[8]Total does not equal sum of year's quarterly data owing to adjustments to annual data that are not broken out by quarter.

[9]Sold or used; quarterly survey based on sample survey.

[10]Recoverable mine production.