

Mineral Industry Surveys

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U.S. PRODUCTION OF SELECTED MINERAL COMMODITIES IN THE FOURTH QUARTER 2016

U.S. mine and plant production data for 14 selected mineral commodities are provided monthly (or quarterly) by the U.S. Geological Survey 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.

Construction Materials

The combined production of construction materials (cement, construction sand and gravel, crushed stone, and gypsum) in the fourth quarter of 2016 was 18% lower compared with that in the third quarter of 2016 but total production in 2016 was slightly higher for cement, 2% higher for construction sand and gravel, 3% higher for crushed stone, and 10% higher for gypsum compared with 2015 (fig.1, table 1).

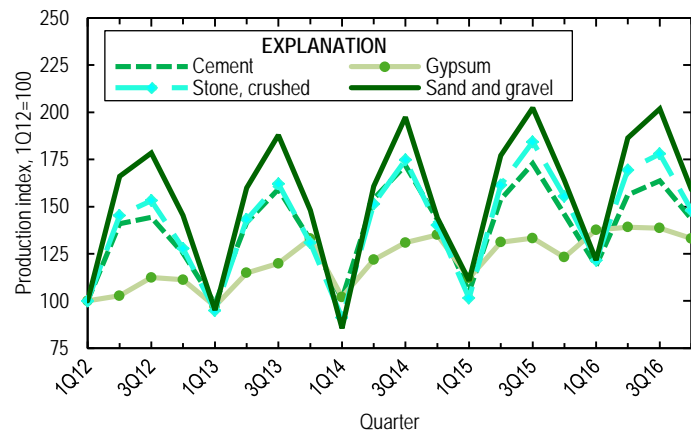


Figure 1. U.S. production of selected construction-related mineral commodities from the first quarter of 2012 through the fourth quarter of 2016, indexed to the first quarter of 2012. Source: U.S. Geological Survey.

Base Metals

Production of iron ore increased in the fourth quarter of 2016, whereas secondary aluminum production was essentially unchanged, and copper, lead, and zinc production decreased by 3%, 16%, and 8%, respectively, compared with the third quarter of 2016 (fig. 2, table 1).

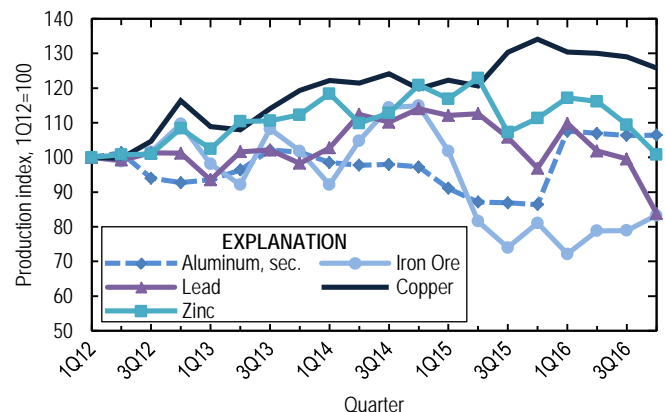


Figure 2. U.S. production of selected base metals from the first quarter of 2012 through the fourth quarter of 2016, indexed to the first quarter of 2012. Source: U.S. Geological Survey.

Precious Metals

During the fourth quarter of 2016, gold production increased by 4% and silver production decreased by 3% compared with production in the third quarter of 2016 (fig. 3, table 1). Gold and silver production has generally trended upward since the second and third quarters of 2015, respectively.

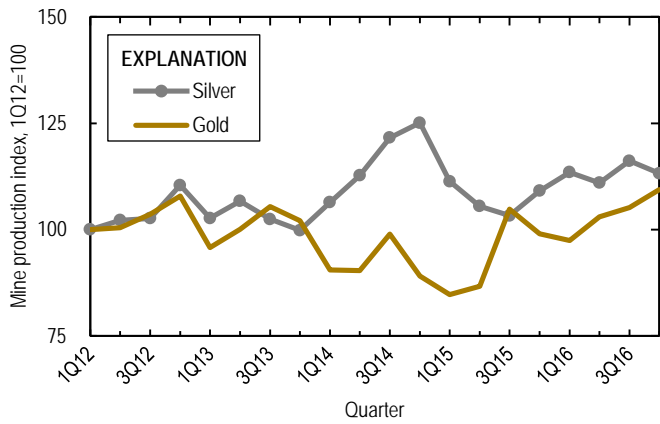


Figure 3. U.S. mine production of gold and silver from the first quarter of 2012 through the fourth quarter of 2016, indexed to the first quarter of 2012. Source: U.S. Geological Survey

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TABLE 1
PRODUCTION TRENDS FOR SELECTED MINERAL COMMODITIES

Mineral commodity	Percent change, 4th quarter 2016 vs. 3d quarter 2016 ¹	Percent change, 2016 Total vs. 2015 Total ¹
Aluminum (secondary)	(2)	-2
Cement	-12	1
Copper	-3	2
Gold	4	11
Gypsum	-4	10
Iron ore	6	-7
Lead	-16	-8
Molybdenum	14	-29
Phosphate rock	-12	(2)
Sand and gravel, construction	-21	2
Silver	-3	6
Soda ash	(2)	2
Stone, crushed	-17	3
Zinc	-8	-3

¹Based on data available as of February 28, 2017.

²Less than 0.5 percent.

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

Mineral commodity		2015				2016				1st quarter- 4th quarter	
		1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	4th quarter	1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	4th quarter	2015	2016
Aluminum ³	thousand metric tons	230 ^r	230 ^r	229 ^r	228 ^r	226	224	223	223	916 ^r	896
Cement ⁴	million metric tons	14.9	21.8	24.5	20.8	16.9	22.2	23.2	20.4	81.9	82.7
Copper ⁵	thousand metric tons	339	335	361	372	362	361	358 ^r	349	1,410	1,430
Gold ⁵	metric tons	48.3	49.4	59.7	56.4	55.5 ^r	58.6 ^r	59.9 ^r	62.3	214	236
Gypsum ⁶	million metric tons	3.4	3.9	4.0	3.7	4.1	4.2	4.2	4.0	15.0	16.4
Iron ore ⁷	do.	13.0	10.4	9.4	10.3	9.2 ^r	10.0 ^r	10.1	10.6	43.1	39.9
Lead ⁵	thousand metric tons	93.9	94.2	88.8	81.0	91.8	85.1 ^r	83.3 ^r	70.1	358	330
Molybdenum ⁵	do.	13.8	13.6	12.6	10.5	8.8	8.8	8.5	9.7	50.6	35.8
Phosphate rock ⁸	million metric tons	6.2	7.6	7.0	7.0	6.2	6.7	7.7 ^r	6.8	27.4	27.3
Sand and gravel, construction ⁹	do.	159	254	290	235	174 ^r	267	289 ^r	228	937	959
Silver ⁵	metric tons	283	268	262	277	288	282 ^r	295 ^r	288	1,090	1,150
Soda ash ⁷	million metric tons	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	3.0	3.0	11.6	11.8
Stone, crushed ⁹	do.	223 ^r	356 ^r	405 ^r	342 ^r	269 ^r	375 ^r	395 ^r	328	1,330	1,370
Zinc ⁵	thousand metric tons	203	214	187	194	204 ^r	202 ^r	190 ^r	175	797	772

¹Revised. do. Ditto.

²Based on data available as of February 28, 2017.

³Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

⁴Aluminum alloys produced at secondary smelters in the United States, less primary aluminum consumed, primary silicon consumed, and other alloying ingredients consumed.

⁵Data are shipments of domestically produced portland and blended cement, including cement made from imported clinker, as a proxy for actual domestic cement production.

⁶Recoverable mine production.

⁷Calcined production.

⁸Mine production.

⁹Marketable mine production. First to fourth quarter total may not add to quarterly data owing to annual adjustments that are not broken out by quarter.

⁹Sold or used; quarterly survey based on sample survey. Quarterly data may not add to totals shown because of independent rounding and differences between projected totals by States and by division.