Mineral Industry Surveys

For information, contact:
Elizabeth S. Sangine, Chief, Mineral Commodities Section
National Minerals Information Center
U.S. Geological Survey
989 National Center
Reston, VA 20192
Telephone: (703) 648-7720, Fax: (703) 648-7757
Email: escottsangine@usgs.gov

Joseph M. Krisanda (Data)
Telephone: (703) 648-7946
Fax: (703) 648-7975
Email: jkrisand@usgs.gov

Internet: http://minerals.usgs.gov/minerals/

U.S. PRODUCTION OF SELECTED MINERAL COMMODITIES IN THE FIRST QUARTER 2017

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 first quarter of 2017 was 22% lower compared with that in the fourth quarter of 2016 due to cyclical seasonal fluctuations (fig.1, table 1).

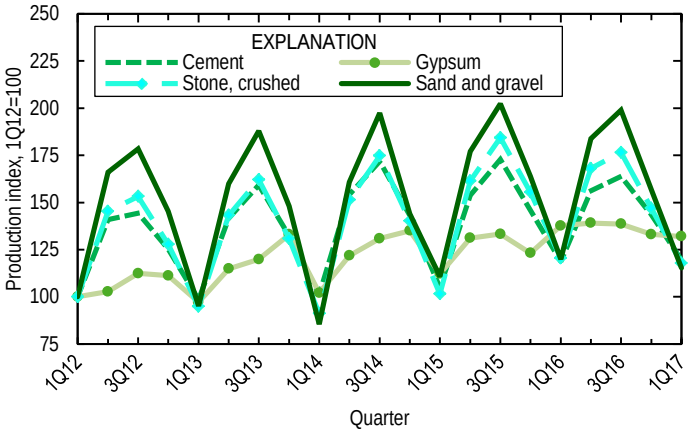

Figure 1. U.S. production of selected construction-related mineral commodities from the first quarter of 2012 through the first quarter of 2017, indexed to the first quarter of 2012. Source: U.S. Geological Survey.

Base Metals

Production of copper, iron ore, and zinc decreased by 7%, 2%, and 6%, respectively in the first quarter of 2017, whereas secondary aluminum production increased by 2% compared with the fourth quarter of 2016 (fig. 2, table 1).

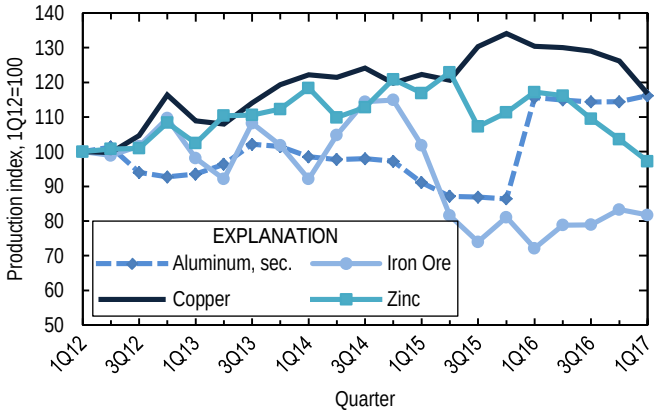

Figure 2. U.S. production of selected base metals from the first quarter of 2012 through the first quarter of 2017, indexed to the first quarter of 2012. Source: U.S. Geological Survey.

Precious Metals

During the first quarter of 2017, gold production decreased by 5% and silver production increased by 4% compared with production in the fourth quarter of 2016 (fig. 3, table 1). silver production has generally trended upward since the second quarter of 2015.

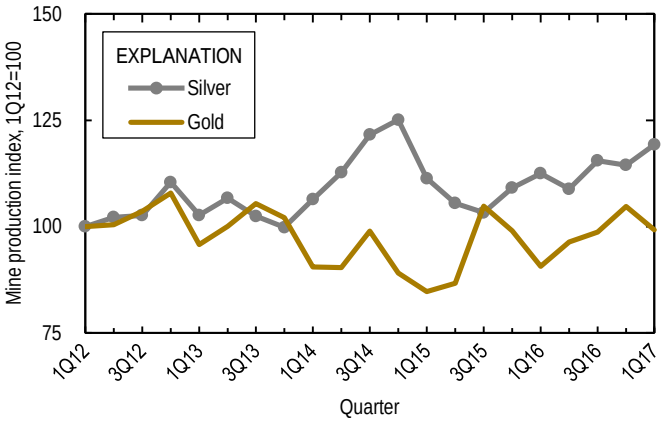

Figure 3. U.S. mine production of gold and silver from the first quarter of 2012 through the first quarter of 2017, indexed to the first quarter of 2012. Source: U.S. Geological Survey.

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TABLE 1
PRODUCTION TRENDS FOR SELECTED MINERAL COMMODITIES

Mineral commodity	Percent change, 1st quarter 2017 vs. 4th quarter 2016[1]	Percent change, 1st quarter 2017 vs. 1st quarter 2016[1]
Aluminum (secondary)	2	(2)
Cement	-17	1
Copper	-7	-10
Gold	-5	9
Gypsum	-1	-4
Iron ore	-2	13
Lead	19	-9
Molybdenum	-1	14
Phosphate rock	-1	8
Sand and gravel, construction	-26	-4
Silver	4	6
Soda ash	-5	-1
Stone, crushed	-20	-2
Zinc	-6	-17

[1]Based on data available as of June 6, 2017.
[2]Less than 0.5 percent.

TABLE 2

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

Mineral commodity		2016				1st quarter–4th quarter	2017	1st quarter	
		1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	4th quarter		1st quarter	2016	2017
Aluminum[3]	thousand metric tons	242 r	241 r	240 r	240 r	963 r	244	242 r	244
Cement[4]	million metric tons	16.9	22.2	23.3 r	20.4	82.7	17.0	16.9	17.0
Copper[5]	thousand metric tons	362	361	358	350 r	1,430	324	362	324
Gold[5]	metric tons	51.6 r	54.9 r	56.2 r	59.6 r	222 r	56.5	51.6 r	56.5
Gypsum[6]	million metric tons	4.1	4.2	4.2	4.0	16.4	4.0	4.1	4.0
Iron ore[7]	do.	9.2	10.0	10.1	10.6	39.9	10.4	9.2	10.4
Lead[5]	thousand metric tons	91.8	85.1	83.3	70.1	330	83.2	91.8	83.2
Molybdenum[5]	do.	8.7 r	8.7 r	8.3 r	10.0 r	35.7 r	9.9	8.7 r	9.9
Phosphate rock[8]	million metric tons	6.2	6.7	7.7	6.8	27.3	6.7	6.2	6.7
Sand and gravel, construction[9]	do.	172 r	263 r	285 r	225 r	945 r	165	172 r	165
Silver[5]	metric tons	286 r	277 r	294 r	291 r	1,150	303	286 r	303
Soda ash[7]	million metric tons	2.9	2.9	3.0	3.0	11.8	2.9	2.9	2.9
Stone, crushed[9]	do.	267 r	372 r	391 r	326 r	1,360 r	261	267 r	261
Zinc[5]	thousand metric tons	204	202	191 r	180 r	777 r	169	204	169

[r]Revised. do. Ditto.

[1]Based on data available as of June 6, 2017.

[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]Recoverable mine production.

[6]Calcined production.

[7]Mine production.

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

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