

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: escottssangine@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 FOURTH 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 fourth quarter of 2017 was 13% lower compared with that in the third quarter of 2017. The combined production for 2017 was essentially unchanged from 2016 (figure 1, table 1).

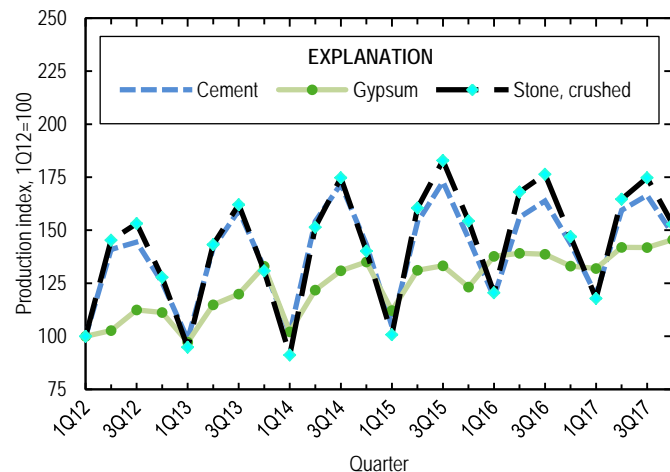


Figure 1. U.S. production of selected construction-related mineral commodities from the first quarter of 2012 through the fourth quarter of 2017, indexed to the first quarter of 2012. Source: U.S. Geological Survey.

Base Metals

Production of secondary aluminum and copper decreased slightly in the fourth quarter of 2017, whereas iron ore and zinc increased by 8% and slightly, respectively, compared with that in the third quarter of 2017. Secondary aluminum production remained essentially unchanged in 2017 compared with 2016. Copper production decreased throughout 2017 and was 12% lower than that in 2016, continuing the decline that began in 2016. Iron ore production increased by 19% in 2017 compared with that in 2016 and surpassed the indexed production value for the first time since the first quarter of 2015. Zinc production in 2017 was 4% lower than that in 2016, but production trended upward from the second quarter through the fourth quarter of 2017 (fig. 2, table 1).

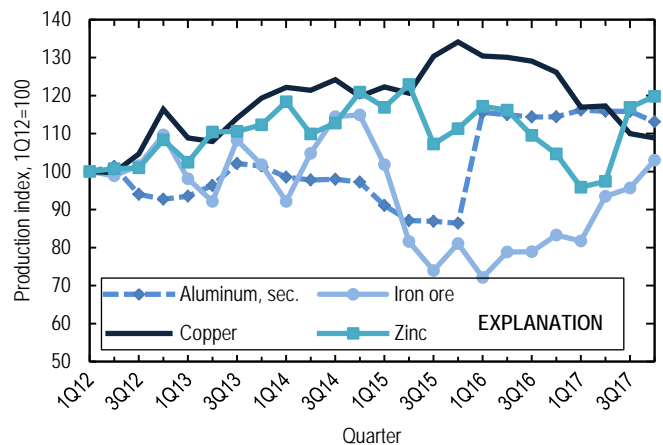


Figure 2. U.S. production of selected base metals from the first quarter of 2012 through the fourth quarter of 2017, indexed to the first quarter of 2012. Source: U.S. Geological Survey.

Precious Metals

During the fourth quarter of 2017, gold production was essentially unchanged and silver production increased by 4% compared with production in the third quarter of 2017. Gold production fluctuated in 2017 but overall it increased by 3% as compared with 2016 whereas silver production decreased by 10% compared with 2016 (fig. 3, table 1). The continued strike at a polymetallic silver and lead mine in Idaho contributed to the decreased silver production in 2017.

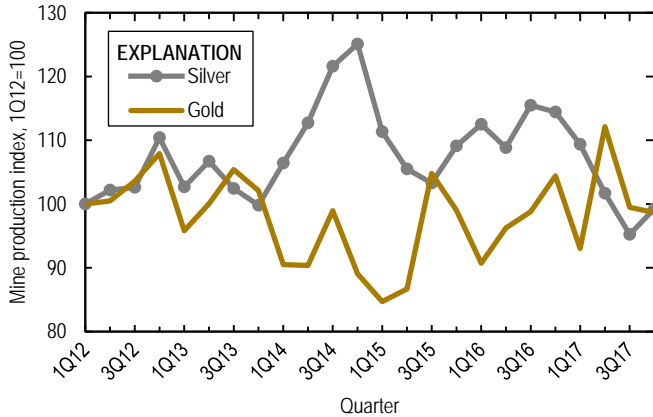


Figure 3. U.S. mine production of gold and silver from the first quarter of 2012 through the fourth quarter of 2017, indexed to the first quarter of 2012. Source: U.S. Geological Survey.

List services and web feed subscribers are the first to receive notification of USGS minerals information publications and data releases. For information on how to subscribe, go to <http://minerals.usgs.gov/minerals/>.

TABLE 1
PRODUCTION TRENDS FOR SELECTED MINERAL COMMODITIES

Mineral commodity	Percent change, 4th quarter 2017 vs. 3d quarter 2017 ¹	Percent change, 2017 total vs. 2016 total ¹
Aluminum (secondary)	-2	(2)
Cement	-11	2
Copper	-1	-12
Gold	-1	3
Gypsum	3	2
Iron ore	8	19
Lead	6	-10
Molybdenum	3	13
Phosphate rock	-3	-1
Sand and gravel, construction	-13	2
Silver	4	-10
Soda ash	4	1
Stone, crushed	-13	(2)
Zinc	2	-4

¹Based on data available as of March 13, 2018.

²Less than 0.5 percent.

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

Mineral commodity		2016				2017				1st quarter- 4th quarter	
		1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	4th quarter	1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	4th quarter	2016	2017
Aluminum ³	thousand metric tons	242	241	240	240	244	243	243	237	963	967
Cement ⁴	million metric tons	16.8	22.2	23.3	20.4	17.0	22.6	23.6	21.1	82.6	84.3
Copper ⁵	thousand metric tons	362	361	358	350	324	325	305 ^r	302	1,430	1,260
Gold ⁵	metric tons	51.7	54.8	56.3	59.5	53.0 ^r	63.9 ^r	56.7 ^r	56.2	222	230
Gypsum ⁶	million metric tons	4.1	4.2	4.2	4.0	4.0	4.2	4.2	4.4	16.4	16.8
Iron ore ⁷	do.	9.2	10.0	10.1	10.6	10.4	11.9	12.2	13.1	39.9	47.6
Lead ⁵	thousand metric tons	91.8	85.1	83.3	75.9	81.3	76.2	70.2 ^r	74.4	336	302
Molybdenum ⁵	do.	8.7	8.7	8.3	10.0	9.9 ^r	9.3	10.5	10.8	35.7	40.5
Phosphate rock ⁸	million metric tons	6.2	6.7	7.7	6.8	6.6	7.1	6.8 ^r	6.6	27.3	27.1
Sand and gravel, construction ⁹	do.	162	249	269	212	156	248	269	233	892	906
Silver ⁵	metric tons	286	277	294	291	278	258 ^r	242 ^r	252	1,150	1,030
Soda ash ⁷	million metric tons	2.9	2.9	3.0	3.0	2.9	3.0	3.0	3.1	11.8	12.0
Stone, crushed ⁹	do.	267	373	391	326	261	365	387	339	1,360	1,350
Zinc ⁵	thousand metric tons	204	202	191	182	167	169	203 ^r	208	778	748

¹Revised. do. Ditto.

²Based on data available as of March 13, 2018.

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.