

Mineral Industry Surveys

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U.S. PRODUCTION OF SELECTED MINERAL COMMODITIES IN THE FIRST QUARTER 2019

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-related mineral commodities (cement, construction sand and gravel, crushed stone, and gypsum) in the first quarter of 2019 decreased by 24% compared with that in the fourth quarter of 2018, although the combined production of construction-related materials was 8% higher than that in the first quarter of 2018 (tables 1, 2). Production of cement was slightly higher, construction sand and gravel was 3% higher, crushed stone was 13% higher, and gypsum was 11% higher in the first quarter of 2019 as compared with the first quarter of 2018 (fig. 1, table 1).

Base Metals

Production of most selected base metals, except secondary aluminum, decreased in the first quarter of 2019 compared with that in the fourth quarter of 2018 (fig. 2, table 1). Copper production was 4% lower in the first quarter of 2019 than that in the fourth quarter of 2018 but was 4% higher than that in the first quarter of 2018. Secondary aluminum production was slightly higher in the first quarter of 2019 than that in the fourth quarter of 2018 but was essentially unchanged from that of the first quarter of 2018. Zinc production was 22% lower in the first quarter of 2019 compared with that of the fourth quarter of 2018 and was 5% lower in the first quarter of 2019 compared with that of the first quarter of 2018. Lead production increased in the second, third and fourth quarters of 2018, but decreased in the first quarter of 2019; actual data was withheld to avoid

disclosing company proprietary data. Iron ore production decreased by 16% in the first quarter of 2019 compared with that in the fourth quarter of 2018 and was 7% lower than that in the first quarter of 2018 (fig. 2, table 1).

Precious Metals

During the first quarter of 2019, gold and silver production decreased by 7% and by 6%, respectively, compared with production in the fourth quarter of 2018. Gold and silver production in the first quarter of 2019 were 3% and 12% higher, respectively, than production in the first quarter of 2018 (fig. 3, table 1).

Other Mineral Materials

In the first quarter of 2019, production of molybdenum, phosphate rock, and soda ash all decreased compared with that in the fourth quarter of 2018. Molybdenum production was 6% lower in the first quarter of 2019 than that in the fourth quarter of 2018 and was slightly lower than that in the first quarter of 2018. Phosphate rock production was slightly lower in the first quarter of 2019 than that in the fourth quarter of 2018 and was 18% lower than that in the first quarter of 2018. Soda ash production was 7% lower in the first quarter of 2019 compared with that of the fourth quarter of 2018 and was 5% lower in the first quarter of 2019 compared with that of the first quarter of 2018 (table 1).

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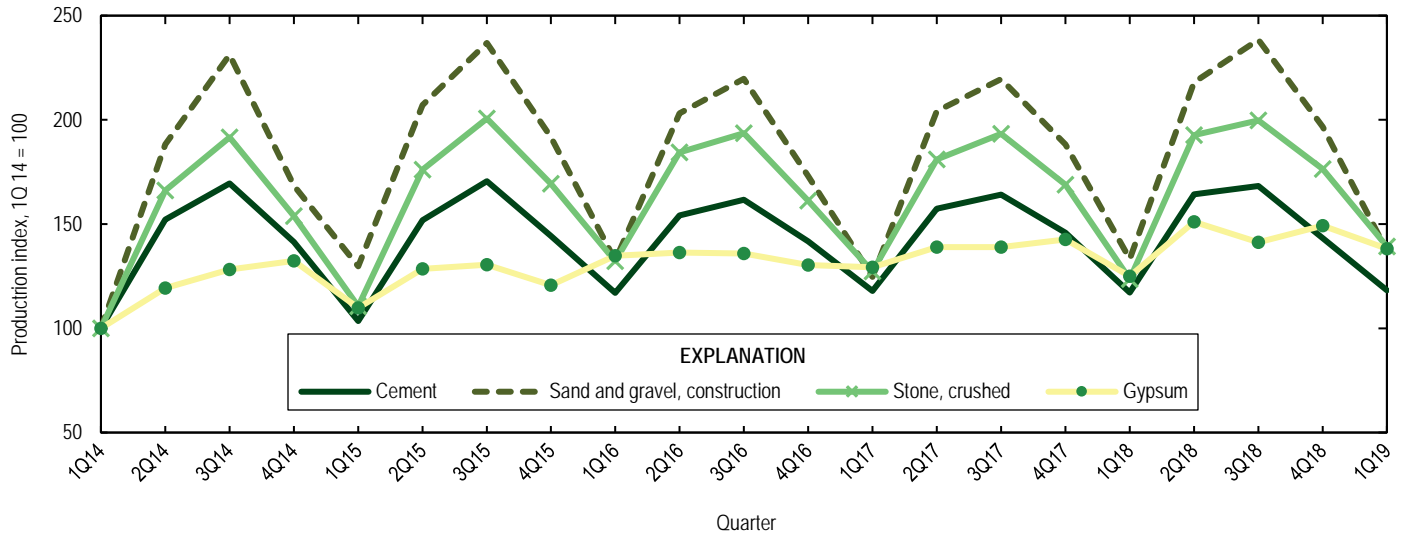


Figure 1. U.S. production of selected construction-related mineral commodities from the first quarter of 2014 through the first quarter of 2019, indexed to the first quarter of 2014.

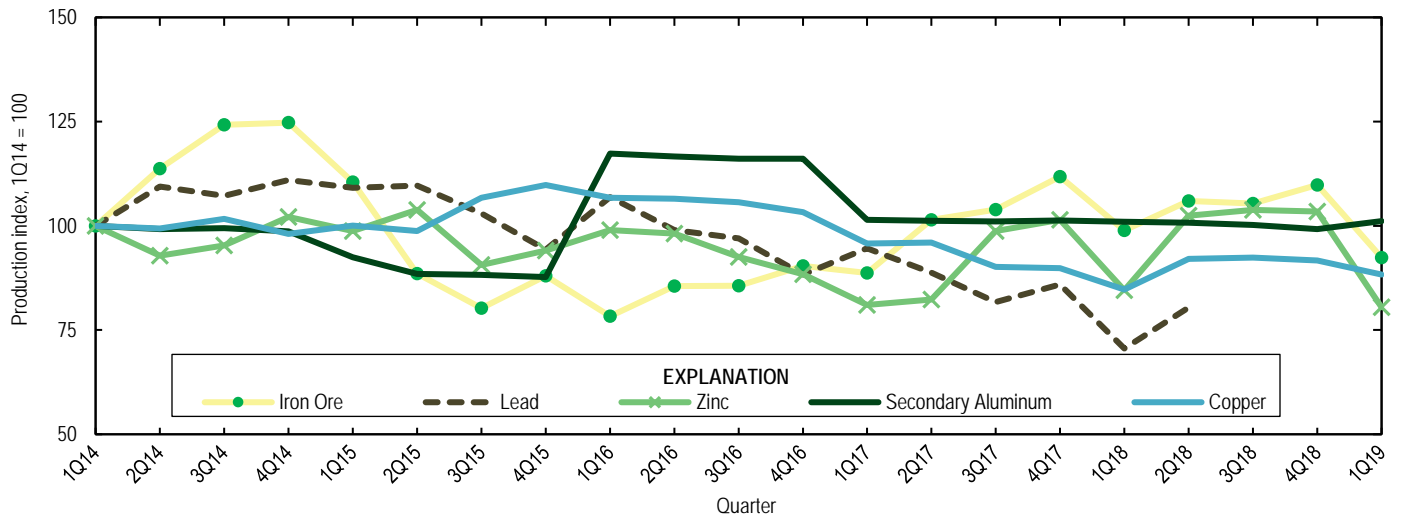


Figure 2. U.S. production of selected base metals from the first quarter of 2014 through the first quarter of 2019, indexed to the first quarter of 2014.

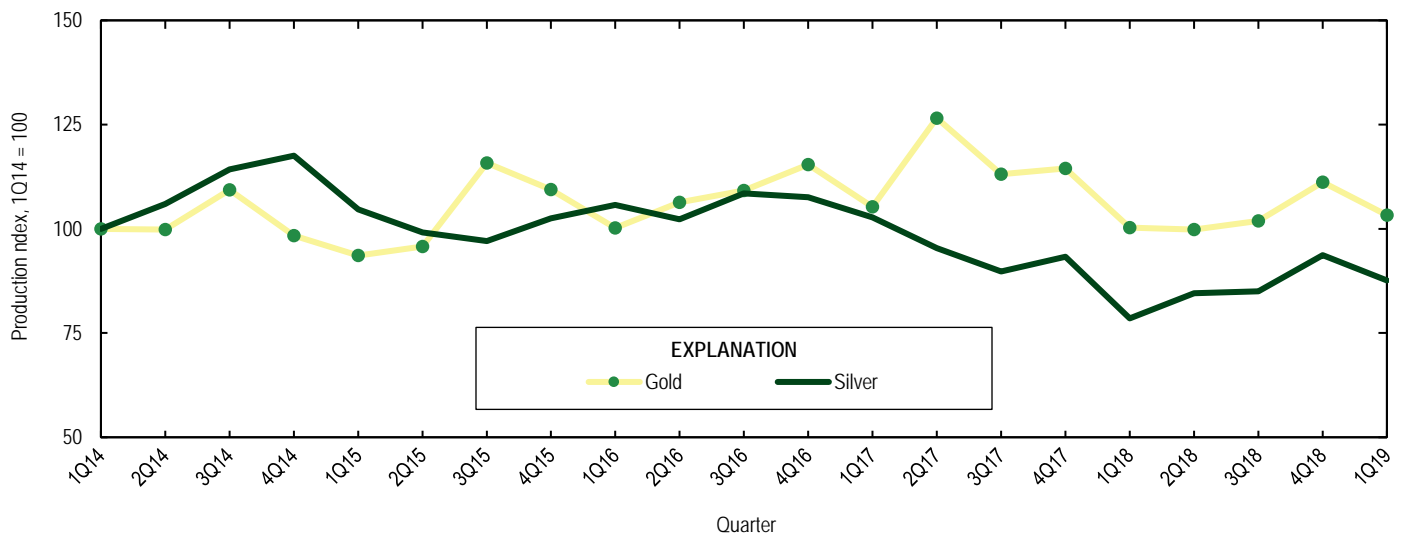


Figure 3. U.S. mine production of gold and silver from the first quarter of 2014 through the first quarter of 2019, indexed to the first quarter of 2014.

TABLE 1
PRODUCTION TRENDS FOR SELECTED MINERAL COMMODITIES¹

Mineral commodity	Percent change, 1st quarter 2019 vs. 4th quarter 2018	Percent change, 1st quarter 2019 vs. 1st quarter 2018
Aluminum (secondary)	2	(2)
Cement	-17	1
Copper	-4	4
Gold	-7	3
Gypsum	-7	11
Iron ore	-16	-7
Lead	W	W
Molybdenum	-6	-2
Phosphate rock	-2	-18
Sand and gravel, construction	-30	3
Silver	-6	12
Soda ash	-7	-3
Stone, crushed	-21	13
Zinc	-22	-5

W Withheld to avoid disclosing company proprietary data.

¹Based on data available through June 2019.

²Less than 0.5 percent.

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

Commodity		2018					2019 1st quarter	1st quarter	
		1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	4th quarter	1st quarter- 4th quarter		2018	2019
Aluminum ³	thousand metric tons	209	208	207	205	829	209	209	
Cement ⁴	million metric tons	16.8	23.6	24.2	20.6	85.3	17.0	16.8	
Copper ⁵	thousand metric tons	287	312	313	311 ^r	1,220	299	287	
Gold ⁵	metric tons	51.7 ^r	51.4 ^r	52.5 ^r	57.3 ^r	213 ^r	53.2	51.7 ^r	
Gypsum ⁵	million metric tons	3.8	4.6	4.3	4.6	17.3	4.2	3.8	
Iron ore ⁷	do.	11.6	12.4	12.4	12.9	49.3	10.8	11.6	
Lead ⁵	thousand metric tons	60.6	68.6	W	W	W	W	W	
Molybdenum ⁵	do.	10.7	10.1	10.0	11.2	41.9	10.5	10.7	
Phosphate rock ⁸	million metric tons	6.5	7.1	6.6	5.5	25.7	5.3	6.5	
Sand and gravel, construction ⁹	do.	163 ^r	267 ^r	292 ^r	241	963 ^r	168	163 ^r	
Silver ⁵	metric tons	212 ^r	229	230	253	924 ^r	237	212 ^r	
Soda ash ⁷	million metric tons	3.0	2.9	3.0	3.1 ^r	11.9 ^r	2.9	3.0	
Stone, crushed ⁹	do.	250 ^r	389 ^r	404 ^r	357 ^r	1,400 ^r	281	250 ^r	
Zinc ⁵	thousand metric tons	174	211	214	213	812	166	174	

¹Revised. do. Ditto. W Withheld to avoid disclosing company proprietary data.

²Based on data available through June 2019.

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.

⁵Shipments 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.

¹⁰Sold or used; quarterly survey based on sample survey. Includes all 50 States. Data may not add to totals shown because of independent rounding and differences between projected totals by States and by divisions.