Mineral Industry Surveys

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U.S. PRODUCTION OF SELECTED MINERAL COMMODITIES IN THE THIRD 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 third quarter of 2019 increased by 9.9% compared with that in the second quarter of 2019 and the combined production of construction-related materials was 7.6% higher than that in the third quarter of 2018 (tables 1, 2).

Base Metals

Production of most base metals, except lead and zinc, increased or were essentially unchanged in the third quarter of 2019 compared with that in the second quarter of 2019 (fig. 2, table 1). Secondary aluminum production was essentially unchanged in the third quarter of 2019 compared with that in the second quarter of 2019 and was slightly more than that of the third quarter of 2018. Copper production increased by 9.8% in the third quarter of 2019 as compared with that in the second quarter of 2019 and was 9.6% more than that in the third quarter of 2018. Zinc production was 4.1% lower in the third quarter of 2019 compared with that of the second quarter of 2019 and was 3.4% lower compared with that in the third quarter of 2018. Lead production decreased by 5.7% in the third quarter of 2019 compared with that of the second quarter of 2019 but was slightly higher than that of the third quarter of 2018. Iron ore production was essentially unchanged in the third quarter of 2019 compared with that in the second quarter of 2019 and the third quarter of 2018 (fig. 2, table 1).

Precious Metals

During the third quarter of 2019, gold and silver production each decreased slightly compared with production in the second quarter of 2019. Gold production in the third quarter of 2019 was 11% lower than production in the third quarter of 2018. Silver production in the third quarter of 2019 was 16% higher than production in the third quarter of 2018 (fig. 3, table 1).

Other Mineral Materials

Molybdenum production was 17% lower in the third quarter of 2019 than that in the second quarter of 2019 and was 3.9% lower than that of the third quarter of 2018. Phosphate rock production was slightly higher in the third quarter of 2019 than that in the second quarter of 2019 but was 7.4% lower than that in the third quarter of 2018. Soda ash production was slightly lower in the third quarter of 2019 compared with that of the second quarter of 2019 and was 4.0% lower than that of the third quarter of 2018 (table 1).

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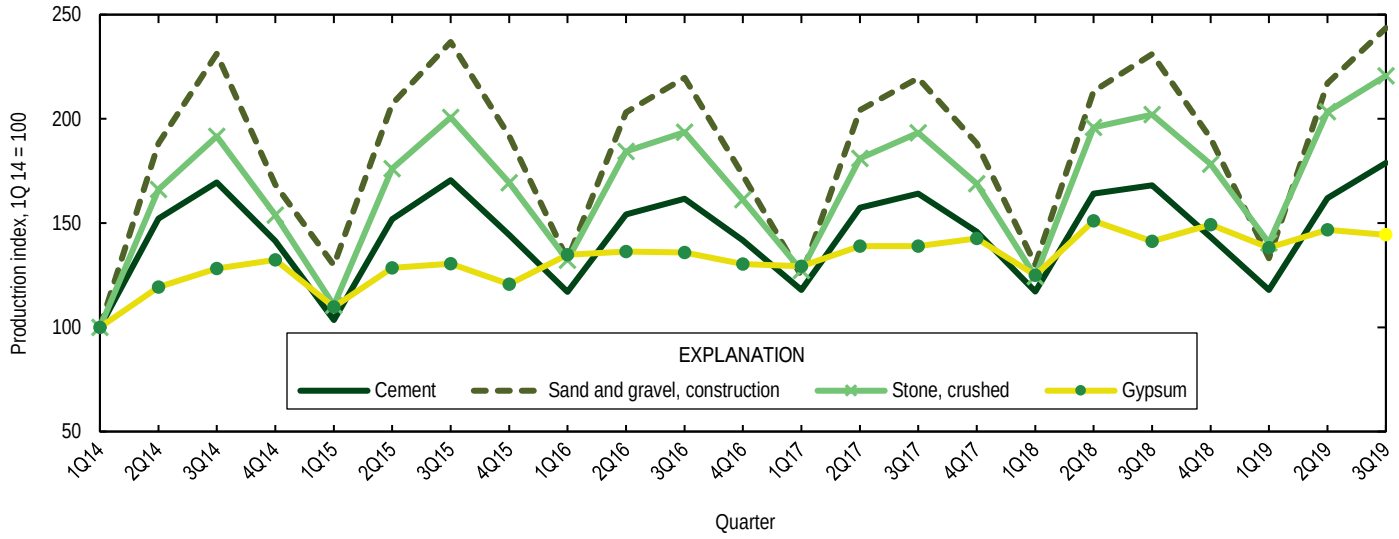

Figure 1. U.S. production of selected construction-related mineral commodities from the first quarter of 2014 through the third quarter of 2019, indexed to the first quarter of 2014.

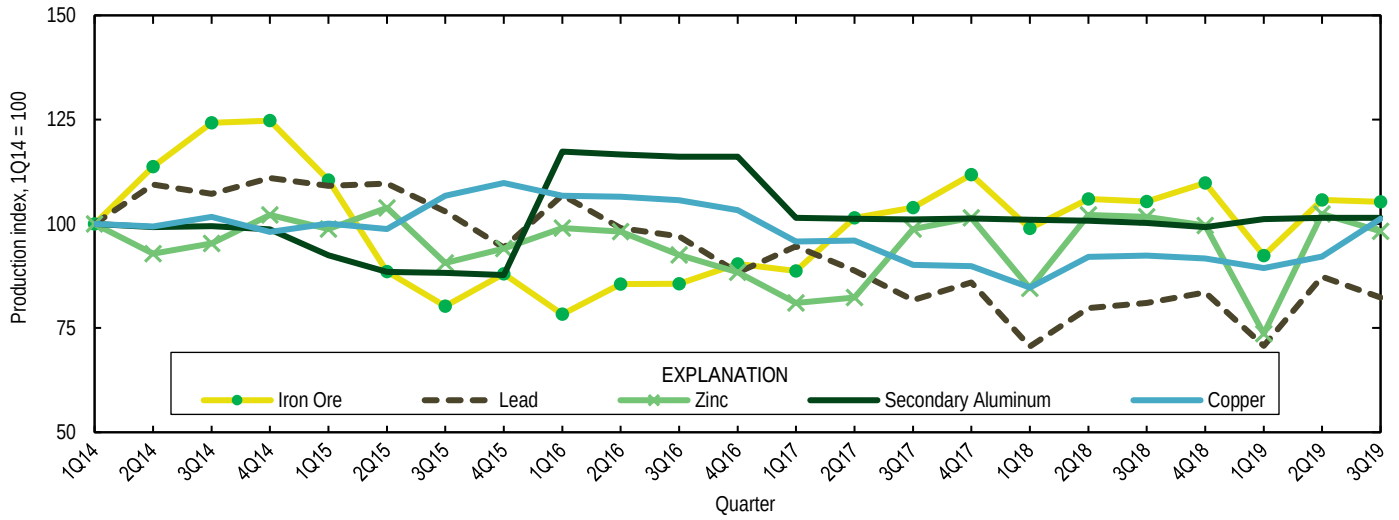

Figure 2. U.S. production of selected base metals from the first quarter of 2014 through the third quarter of 2019, indexed to the first quarter of 2014.

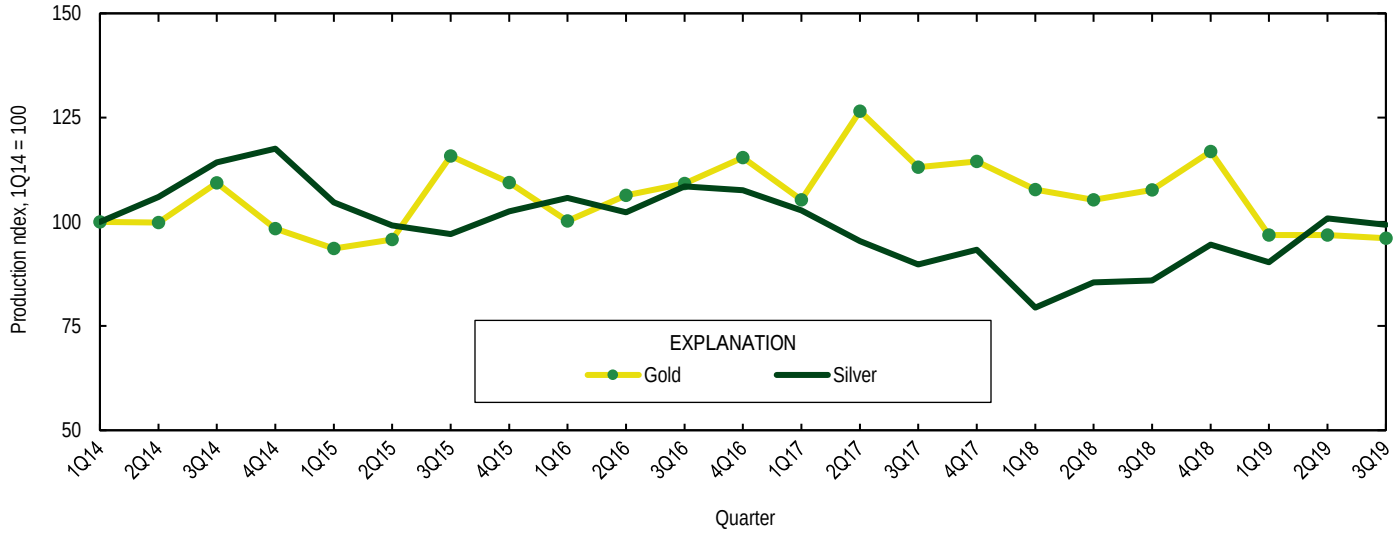

Figure 3. U.S. mine production of gold and silver from the first quarter of 2014 through the third quarter of 2019, indexed to the first quarter of 2014.

TABLE 1

PRODUCTION TRENDS FOR SELECTED MINERAL COMMODITIES[1]

Mineral commodity	Percent change, 3d quarter 2019 vs. 2d quarter 2019	Percent change, YTD 2019 vs. YTD 2018
Aluminum (secondary)	--	1
Cement	11	2
Copper	10	5
Gold	-1	-10
Gypsum	-2	3
Iron ore	(2)	-2
Lead	-6	4
Molybdenum	-17	3
Phosphate rock	2	-14
Sand and gravel, construction	12	3
Silver	-2	16
Soda ash	-2	-2
Stone, crushed	9	8
Zinc	-4	-5

-- Zero.

[1]Based on data available through December 2019.

[2]Less than 0.5 percent.

TABLE 2

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

Commodity		2018				1st quarter-4th quarter	2019			1st quarter-3d quarter	
		1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	4th quarter		1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	2018	2019
Aluminum[3]	thousand metric tons	209	208	207	205	829	209	210	210	624	628
Cement[4]	million metric tons	16.8	23.6	24.1 r	20.5 r	85.0 r	17.0	23.3	25.7	64.5	66.0
Copper[5]	thousand metric tons	287	312 r	313	311	1,220	303 r	312 r	343	912	958
Gold[5]	metric tons	55.5	54.3	55.5	60.3	226	49.9 r	49.9 r	49.5	165	149
Gypsum[6]	million metric tons	3.8	4.6	4.3	4.6	17.3	4.2	4.5	4.4	12.8	13.1
Iron ore[7]	do.	11.6	12.4	12.4	12.9	49.3	10.8	12.4	12.4	36.4	35.6
Lead[5]	thousand metric tons	60.6	68.6	69.6	71.8	271	60.7	75.0	70.7	199	207
Molybdenum[5]	do.	10.7	10.1	10.0	11.2	41.9	10.5	11.5	9.6	30.7	31.6
Phosphate rock[8]	million metric tons	6.5	7.1	6.6	5.5	25.7	5.3	6.0	6.1	20.2	17.5
Sand and gravel, construction[9]	do.	159 r	261 r	283 r	234 r	937 r	163 r	266 r	298	704	727
Silver[5]	metric tons	215	231	232	256	934	244	273 r	269	678	786
Soda ash[7]	million metric tons	3.0	2.9	3.0	3.1	11.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	8.8	8.7
Stone, crushed[9]	do.	251 r	396 r	408 r	360 r	1,420 r	284 r	411 r	446	1,060	1,140
Zinc[5]	thousand metric tons	174	210	209	205	799	152 r	211 r	202	594	565

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[1]Based on data available through December 2019.

[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]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. Includes all 50 States.