

Mineral Industry Surveys

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

U.S. mine and plant production data for 14 selected mineral commodities are provided on a monthly (or quarterly) basis 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 materials (cement, construction sand and gravel, crushed stone, and gypsum) in the fourth quarter of 2019 decreased by 21% compared with that in the third quarter of 2019 (tables 1, 2). The combined production of construction-related materials during 2019 increased by 5% compared with production in 2018; production of cement was 3% higher, construction sand and gravel was slightly higher, crushed stone was 6% higher, and gypsum was slightly higher (fig. 1, table 1).

Base Metals

Production of most selected base metals, except secondary aluminum, decreased in the fourth quarter of 2019 compared with that in the third quarter of 2019 (fig. 2, table 1). Copper production was 8% lower in the fourth quarter of 2019 compared with that in the third quarter of 2019, but production in 2019 was 4% higher than production in 2018. Iron ore production decreased by 10% in the fourth quarter of 2019 compared with that in the third quarter of 2019, and 2019 production was 6% lower than production in 2018. Lead production decreased by 15% in the fourth quarter of 2019 compared with that in the third quarter of 2019, and 2019 production was slightly lower than production in 2018.

Secondary aluminum production was unchanged in the fourth quarter of 2019 compared with that in the third quarter of 2019 and production in 2019 was slightly higher than production in 2018. Zinc production was 18% lower in the fourth quarter of 2019 compared with that of the third quarter of 2019 and was 9% lower in 2019 compared with that of 2018 (fig. 2, table 1).

Precious Metals

During the fourth quarter of 2019, gold production increased by 3% but silver production decreased by 6% compared with production in the third quarter of 2019. Gold production in 2019 was 11% lower but silver production was 4% higher than production 2018 (fig. 3, table 1). A strike continued at a silver and lead mine in Idaho throughout 2019.

Other Mineral Materials

In the fourth quarter of 2019, production of molybdenum and soda ash were 24% and 7% higher, respectively, than those in the third quarter of 2019, and production of phosphate rock was essentially unchanged from that of the third quarter of 2019. Molybdenum had a 5% increase in production in 2019 as compared with that of 2018, and phosphate rock and soda ash production were 9% lower and slightly lower, respectively, in 2019 compared with those of 2018 (table 1).

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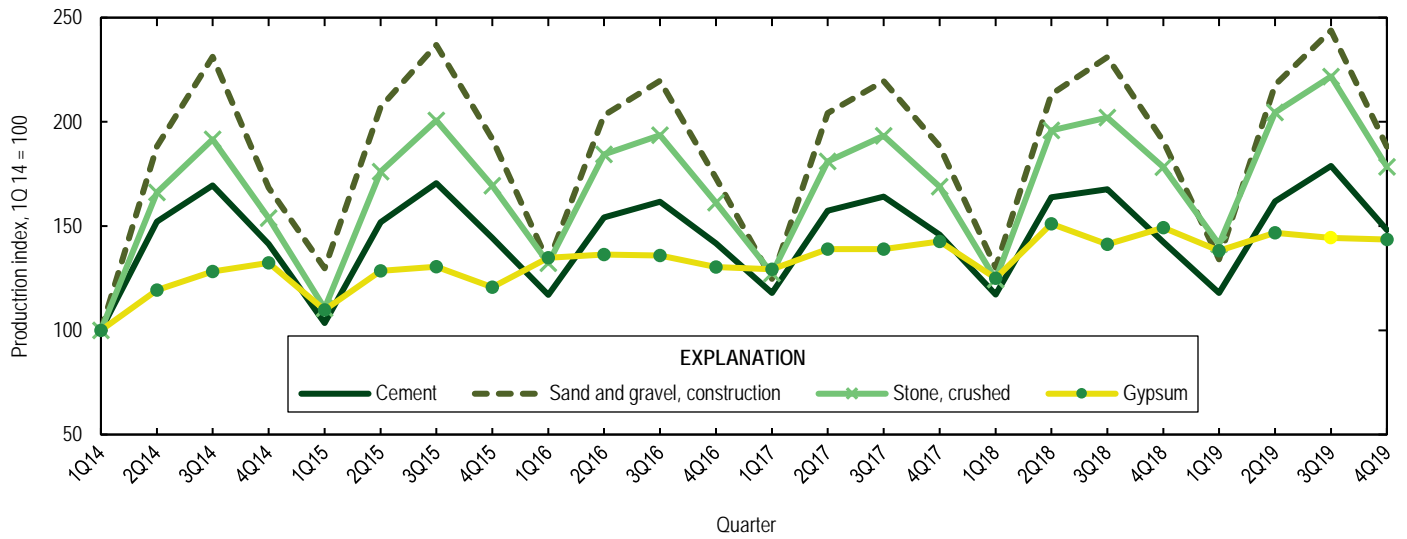


Figure 1. U.S. production of selected construction-related mineral commodities from the first quarter of 2014 through the fourth quarter of 2019, indexed to the first quarter of 2014.

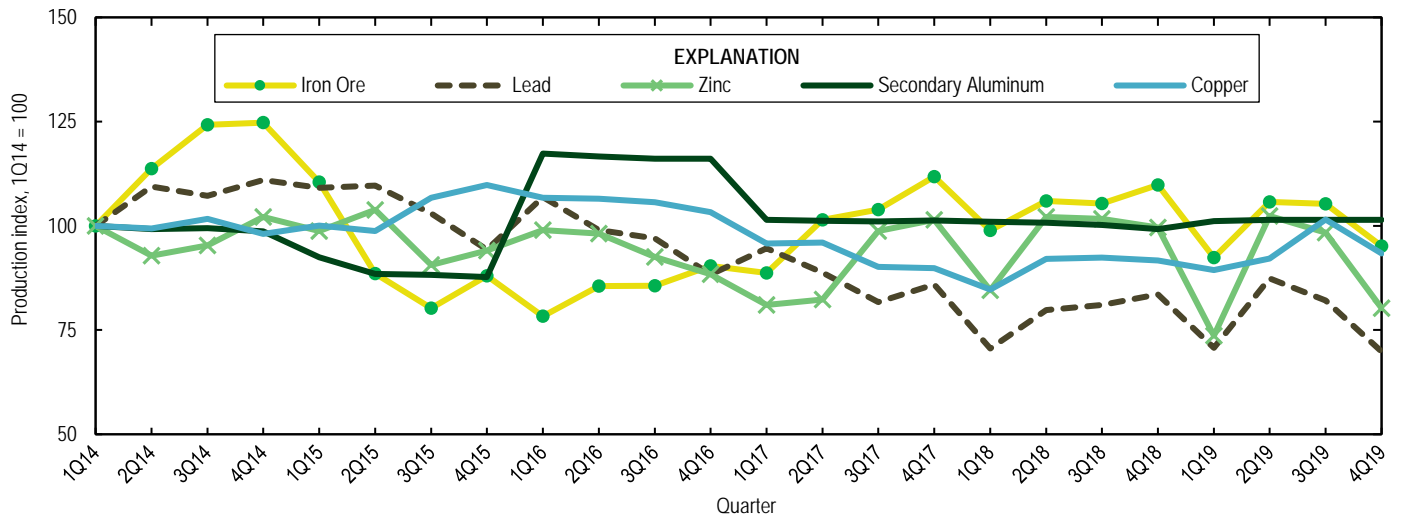


Figure 2. U.S. production of selected base metals from the first quarter of 2014 through the fourth quarter of 2019, indexed to the first quarter of 2014.

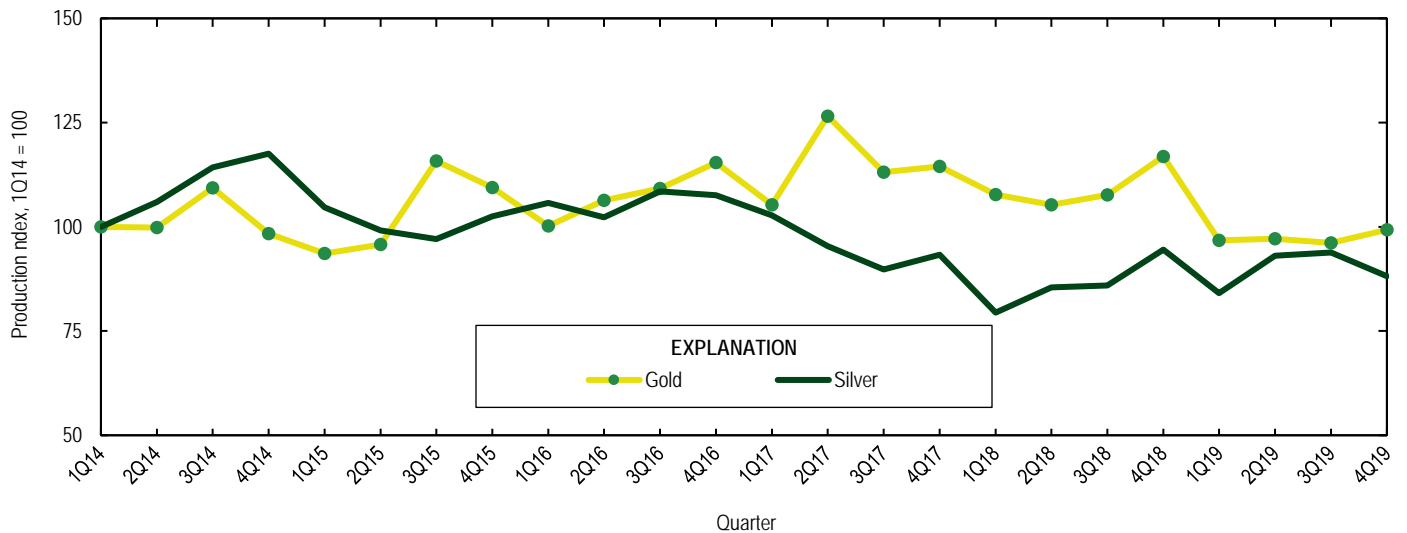


Figure 3. U.S. mine production of gold and silver from the first quarter of 2014 through the fourth quarter of 2019, indexed to the first quarter of 2014.

TABLE 1
PRODUCTION TRENDS FOR SELECTED MINERAL COMMODITIES¹

| Mineral commodity | Percent change, 4th quarter 2019 vs. 3d quarter 2019 | Percent change, 2019 Total vs. 2018 Total |
|-------------------------------|---|--|
| Aluminum (secondary) | -- | 1 |
| Cement | -17 | 3 |
| Copper | -8 | 4 |
| Gold | 3 | -11 |
| Gypsum | -1 | 1 |
| Iron ore | -10 | -6 |
| Lead | -15 | -2 |
| Molybdenum | 24 | 5 |
| Phosphate rock | (2) | -9 |
| Sand and gravel, construction | -23 | 2 |
| Silver | -6 | 4 |
| Soda ash | 7 | -1 |
| Stone, crushed | -20 | 6 |
| Zinc | -18 | -9 |

-- Zero.

¹Based on data available through April 20, 2020.

²Less than 0.5 percent.

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

| Commodity | | 2018 | | | | 2019 | | | | 1st quarter– 4th quarter | |
|---|----------------------|-------------|-------------------|------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| | | 1st quarter | 2d quarter | 3d quarter | 4th quarter | 1st quarter | 2d quarter | 3d quarter | 4th quarter | 2018 | 2019 |
| Aluminum ³ | thousand metric tons | 209 | 208 | 207 | 205 | 209 ^e | 210 ^e | 210 ^e | 210 ^e | 829 | 838 ^e |
| Cement ⁴ | million metric tons | 16.8 | 23.6 | 24.1 | 20.5 | 17.0 | 23.3 | 25.7 | 21.3 | 85.0 | 87.3 |
| Copper ⁵ | thousand metric tons | 287 | 312 | 313 | 311 | 303 | 312 | 344 ^f | 316 | 1,220 | 1,280 |
| Gold ⁶ | metric tons | 55.5 | 54.3 | 55.5 | 60.3 | 49.9 | 50.1 ^f | 49.6 ^f | 51.2 | 226 | 201 |
| Gypsum ⁶ | million metric tons | 3.8 | 4.6 | 4.3 | 4.6 | 4.2 | 4.5 | 4.4 | 4.4 | 17.3 | 17.5 |
| Iron ore ⁷ | do. | 11.6 | 12.4 | 12.4 | 12.9 | 10.8 | 12.4 | 12.4 | 11.2 | 49.5 ⁸ | 46.8 |
| Lead ⁸ | thousand metric tons | 60.6 | 68.6 | 69.6 | 71.8 | 60.7 | 75.1 ^f | 70.6 ^f | 60.0 | 271 | 266 |
| Molybdenum ⁵ | do. | 10.5 | 10.0 ^f | 9.8 | 11.0 ^f | 10.5 | 11.5 | 9.6 | 11.9 | 41.4 | 43.5 |
| Phosphate rock ⁹ | million metric tons | 6.5 | 7.1 | 6.6 | 5.5 | 5.3 | 6.0 | 6.0 ^f | 6.0 | 25.7 | 23.3 |
| Sand and gravel, construction ¹⁰ | do. | 159 | 261 | 283 | 234 | 164 ^f | 267 ^f | 299 ^f | 230 | 937 | 960 |
| Silver ⁷ | metric tons | 215 | 231 | 232 | 256 | 227 ^f | 252 ^f | 254 ^f | 238 | 934 | 971 |
| Soda ash ⁷ | million metric tons | 3.0 | 2.9 | 3.0 | 3.1 | 2.9 | 2.9 | 2.9 | 3.1 ^e | 11.9 | 11.7 ^e |
| Stone, crushed ¹⁰ | do. | 251 | 396 | 408 | 360 | 285 ^f | 413 ^f | 448 ^f | 360 | 1,420 | 1,510 |
| Zinc ⁵ | thousand metric tons | 174 | 210 | 209 | 205 | 152 | 211 | 203 ^f | 165 | 799 | 730 |

¹Estimated. ²Revised. do. Ditto.

³Based on data available through April 20, 2020.

⁴Data are rounded to no more than one decimal place; may not add to totals shown.

⁵Aluminum alloys produced at secondary smelters in the United States, less primary aluminum consumed, primary silicon consumed, and other alloying ingredients consumed.

⁶Shipments of domestically produced portland and blended cement, including cement made from imported clinker, as a proxy for actual domestic cement production.

⁷Recoverable mine production.

⁸Calculated production.

⁹Mine production.

¹⁰May include revisions to previously published data.

¹¹Marketable mine production. First to fourth quarter total may not add to quarterly data owing to annual adjustments that are not broken out by quarter.

¹²Sold or used; quarterly survey based on sample survey. Includes all 50 States.