

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 2020 increased by 7.9% compared with that in the second quarter of 2020 (tables 1, 2). Production of construction sand and gravel, crushed stone, and gypsum were lower in the first 9 months of 2020 than during the same time period in 2019. Cement production was essentially the same during the first 9 months of 2020 and 2019.

Base Metals

Production of most base metals, except secondary aluminum, increased in the third quarter of 2020 compared with that in the second quarter of 2020 (fig. 2, table 1); however production for the year through September was lower than that in 2019 for all base metals except lead. Secondary aluminum production was unchanged in the third quarter of 2020 compared with that in the second quarter of 2020, and production during the first 9 months of 2020 was 3% lower than that of the same time period in 2019. Copper production increased slightly in the third quarter of 2020 compared with that in the second quarter of 2020, but production during the first 9 months of 2020 was 5% less than that of the same time period in 2019. Zinc production was 45% higher in the third quarter of 2020 compared with that of the second quarter of 2020, but production during the first 9 months of 2020 was 11% lower compared with the same time period in 2019. Lead production increased by 16% in the third quarter of 2020 compared with that of the second quarter of 2020, and production during the first 9 months of 2020 was 4% higher

than that of the same time period in 2019. Iron ore production was 70% higher in the third quarter of 2020 compared with that in the second quarter of 2020, but production during the first 9 months of 2020 was 24% lower than that of the same time period in 2019 (fig. 2, table 1).

Precious Metals

During the third quarter of 2020, gold production was 3% lower than production in the third quarter of 2020, and production during the first 9 months of 2020 was 8% less than that of the same time period in 2019. Silver production in the third quarter of 2020 was 11% higher than production in the second quarter of 2020 and was 6% higher during the first 9 months of 2020 compared with the same time period in 2019 (fig. 3, table 1).

Other Mineral Materials

Molybdenum production was 22% lower in the third quarter of 2020 than that in the second quarter of 2020, but production during the first 9 months of 2020 was 31% higher than that of the same time period in 2019. Phosphate rock production was 6% lower in the third quarter of 2020 than that in the second quarter of 2020, but production during the first 9 months of 2020 was 3% higher than that in the same time period in 2019. Soda ash production was 13% higher in the third quarter of 2020 compared with that of the second quarter of 2020, but production during the first 9 months of 2020 was 17% lower than that of the same time period in 2019 (table 1).

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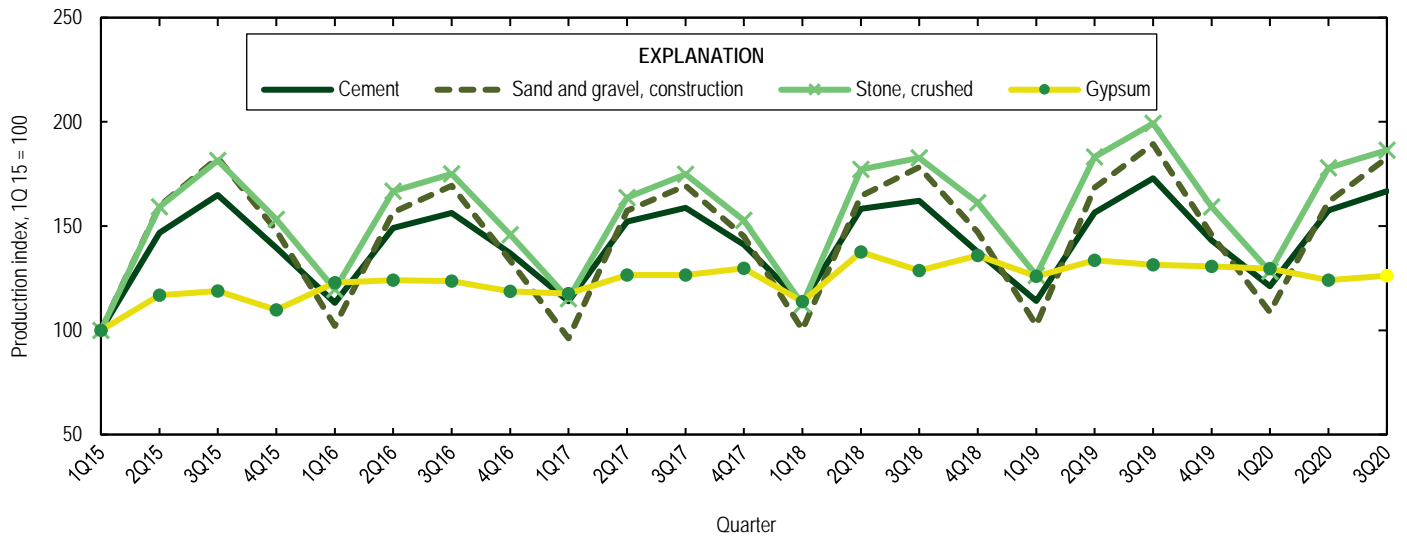


Figure 1. U.S. production of selected construction-related mineral commodities from the first quarter of 2015 through the third quarter of 2020, indexed to the first quarter of 2015.

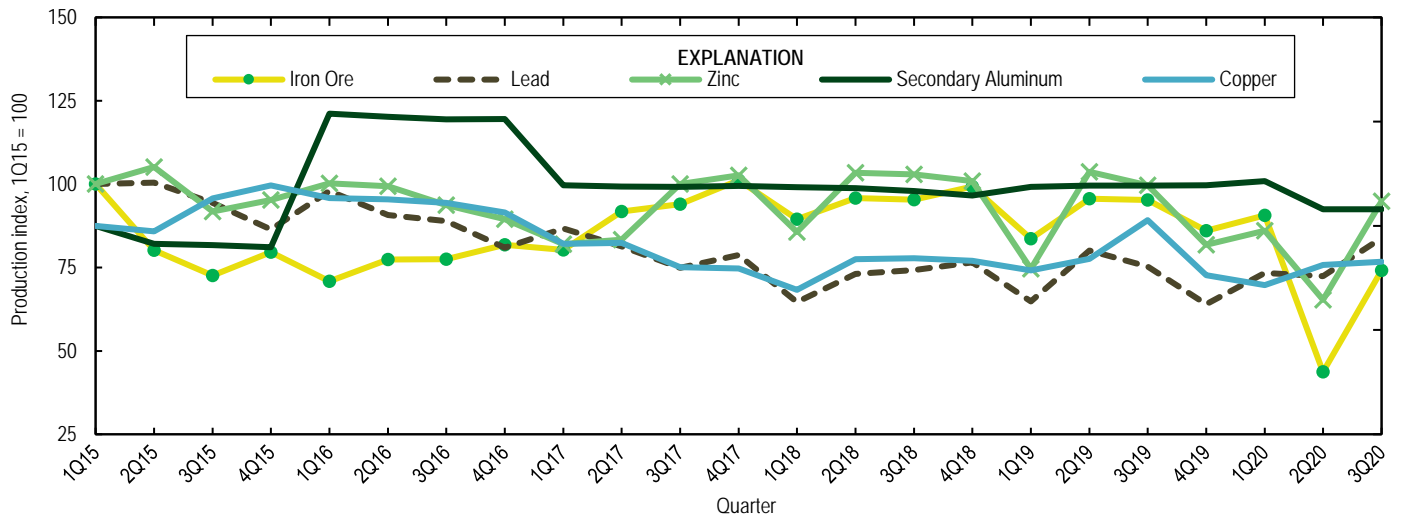


Figure 2. U.S. production of selected base metals from the first quarter of 2015 through the third quarter of 2020, indexed to the first quarter of 2015.

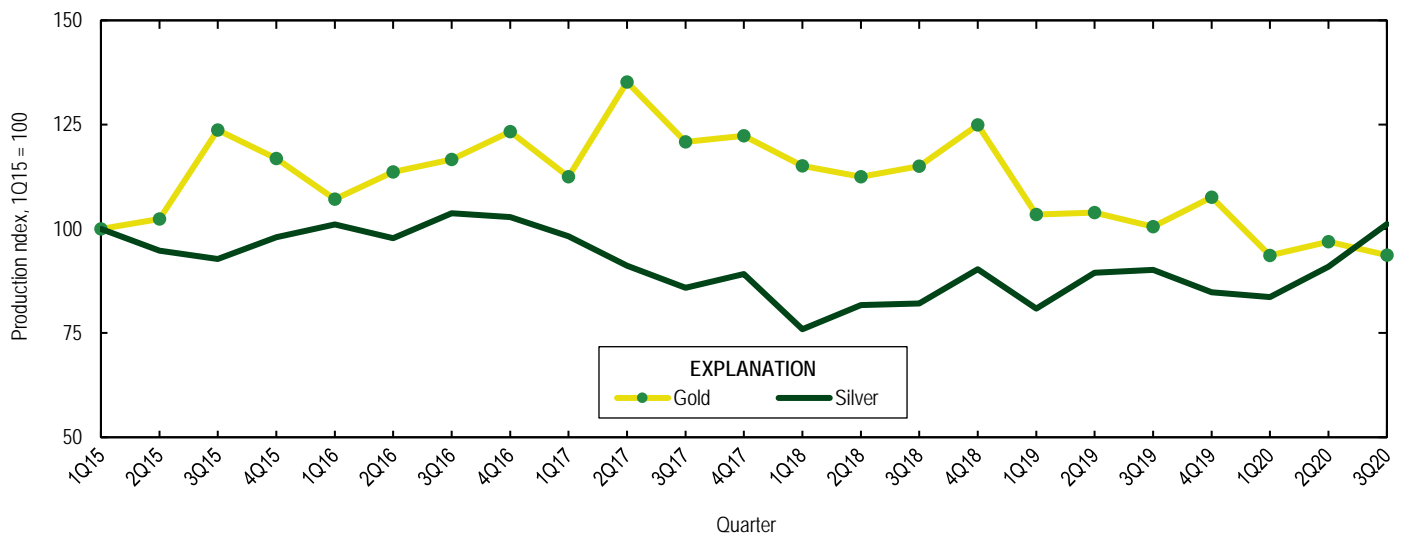


Figure 3. U.S. mine production of gold and silver from the first quarter of 2015 through the third quarter of 2020, indexed to the first quarter of 2015.

TABLE 1
PRODUCTION TRENDS FOR SELECTED MINERAL COMMODITIES¹

Mineral commodity	Percent change, 3d quarter 2020 vs. 2d quarter 2020	Percent change, YTD 2020 vs. YTD 2019
Aluminum (secondary)	--	-3
Cement	6	(2)
Copper	1	-5
Gold	-3	-8
Gypsum	2	-3
Iron ore	70	-24
Lead	16	4
Molybdenum	-22	31
Phosphate rock	-6	3
Sand and gravel, construction	13	-2
Silver	11	6
Soda ash	13	-17
Stone, crushed	5	-3
Zinc	45	-11

-- Zero.

¹Based on data available through December 7, 2020.

²Less than 0.5 percent

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

Commodity		2019					2020			1st quarter– 3d quarter	
		1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	4th quarter	1st quarter– 4th quarter	1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	2019	2020
Aluminum ^{6,3}	thousand metric tons	209	210	210	210	838	212	199	199	628	609
Cement ⁴	million metric tons	17.0	23.3	25.7	21.3	87.3	18.0	23.4	24.8	66.0	66.3
Copper ⁵	thousand metric tons	303	312	344	299 ^r	1,260	291 ^r	307 ^r	310	959	908
Gold ⁵	metric tons	49.9	50.1	48.5	51.9	200	45.2	46.8	45.2	148	137
Gypsum ⁶	million metric tons	4.2	4.5	4.4	4.4	17.5	4.4	4.2	4.2	13.1	12.8
Iron ore ⁷	do.	10.8	12.4	12.4	11.2	46.8	11.8	5.7	9.6	35.6	27.0
Lead ⁵	thousand metric tons	60.7	75.1	70.6	60.0	266	68.8	67.9	78.6	206	215
Molybdenum ⁵	do.	10.3	11.4	10.2	11.7	43.6	13.1	16.1 ^r	12.5	31.9	41.7
Phosphate rock, marketable	million metric tons	5.4	6.0	6.0	6.0	23.3	5.7	6.3	5.9	17.3	17.9
Sand and gravel, construction ⁸	do.	163	267 ^r	301 ^r	231	962	173	257 ^r	290	731	719
Silver ⁵	metric tons	229	253	255	240	977	237 ^r	257 ^r	286	737	780
Soda ash ⁷	million metric tons	2.9	2.9	2.9	3.0	11.7	2.9	2.0 ^{r,e}	2.3 ^e	8.7	7.2 ^e
Stone, crushed ⁸	do.	282 ^r	409 ^r	445 ^r	356 ^r	1,490 ^r	286 ^r	397 ^r	416	1,140	1,100
Zinc ⁵	thousand metric tons	152	211	203	166	731	175	133	193	565	501

^rEstimated. ^rRevised. do. Ditto.

¹Based on data available through December 7, 2020.

²Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

³Aluminum alloys produced at secondary smelters in the United States, less primary aluminum consumed, primary silicon consumed, and other alloying ingredients consumed.

⁴Shipments of domestically produced portland and blended cement, including cement made from imported clinker, as a proxy for actual domestic cement production.

⁵Recoverable mine production.

⁶Calcined production.

⁷Mine production.

⁸Sold or used; quarterly survey based on sample survey. Includes all 50 States.