

# Mineral Industry Surveys

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## U.S. PRODUCTION OF SELECTED MINERAL COMMODITIES IN THE FIRST QUARTER 2021

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 first quarter of 2021 decreased by 23% compared with that in the fourth quarter of 2020 following the typical seasonal trend (fig. 1, tables 1, 2). All construction-related materials had lower production in the first quarter of 2021 compared with that in the fourth quarter of 2020 except for gypsum, which had a 4% increase in production. In the first quarter of 2021 compared with the first quarter of 2020, production of cement was essentially unchanged, construction sand and gravel production was 6% higher, crushed stone production was slightly lower, and gypsum production was 7% higher (fig. 1, table 1).

### Base Metals

Production of copper, iron ore, lead, and secondary aluminum increased in the first quarter of 2021 compared with that in the fourth quarter of 2020 but production of zinc decreased for the same time period (fig. 2, table 1). The following describes each base metal production change in the first quarter of 2021 compared with that in the fourth quarter of 2020: copper production was slightly higher, iron ore production increased by

5%, lead production increased slightly, secondary aluminum production increased by 6%, and zinc production decreased by 15%. Comparing production in the first quarter of 2021 with that in the first quarter of 2020, the largest increases in production were lead (17%), secondary aluminum (6%), and copper and iron ore (3% each). Zinc was the only base metal to have decreased production (7%) in the first quarter of 2021 compared with that in the first quarter of 2020 (fig. 2, table 1).

### Precious Metals

During the first quarter of 2021, gold production decreased by 11% and silver production decreased slightly compared with production in the fourth quarter of 2020. Gold production in the first quarter of 2021 was 7% lower but silver production was 12% higher than that in the first quarter of 2020 (fig. 3, table 1).

### Other Mineral Materials

In the first quarter 2021, production of molybdenum and phosphate rock were each 4% lower, but soda ash production was 12% higher than those in the fourth quarter of 2020. Molybdenum and phosphate rock production were 3% and 9% lower, respectively, in the first quarter of 2021 compared with that in the first quarter of 2020, but soda ash production was 4% higher (table 1).

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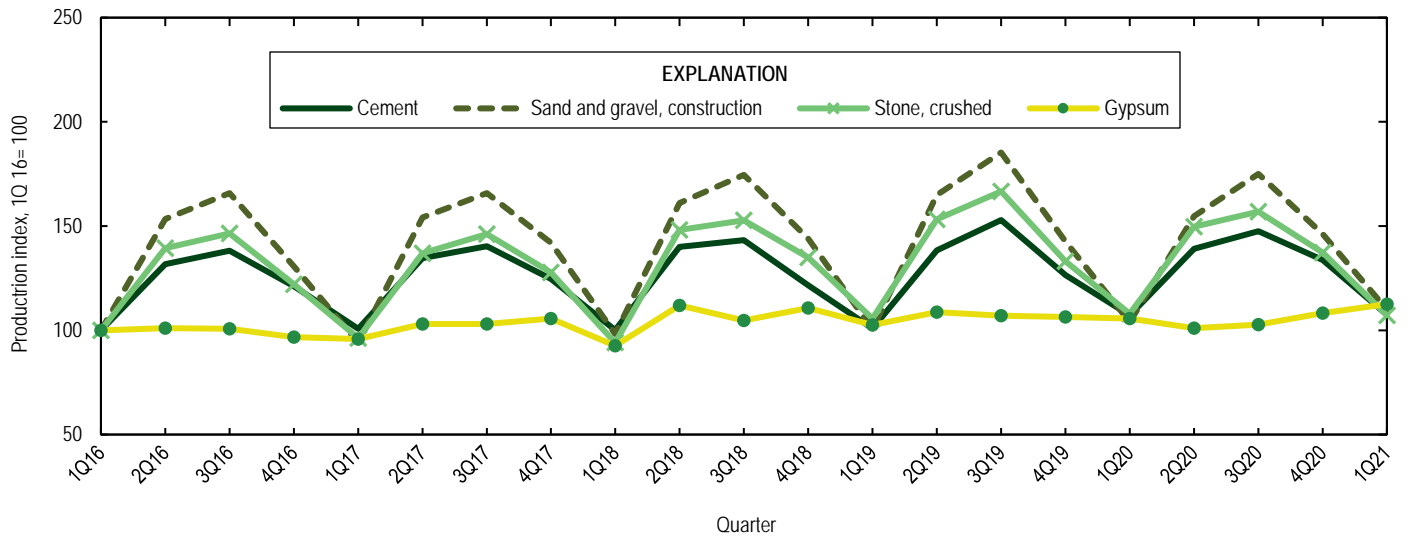


Figure 1. U.S. production of selected construction-related mineral commodities from the first quarter of 2016 through the first quarter of 2021, indexed to the first quarter of 2016.

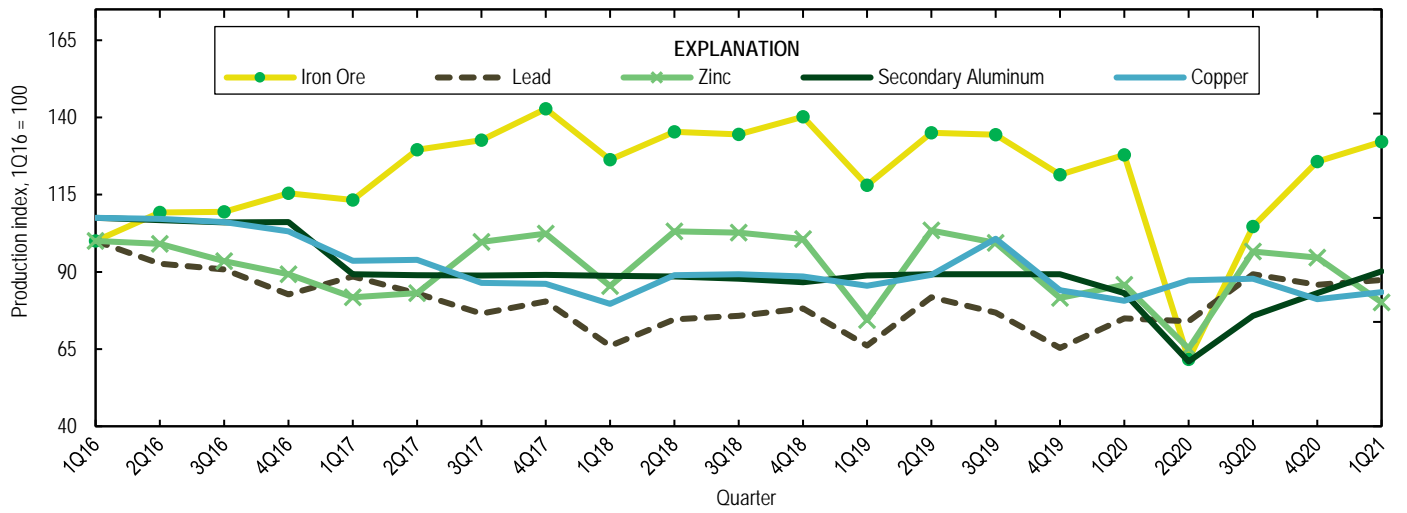


Figure 2. U.S. production of selected base metals from the first quarter of 2016 through the first quarter of 2021, indexed to the first quarter of 2016.

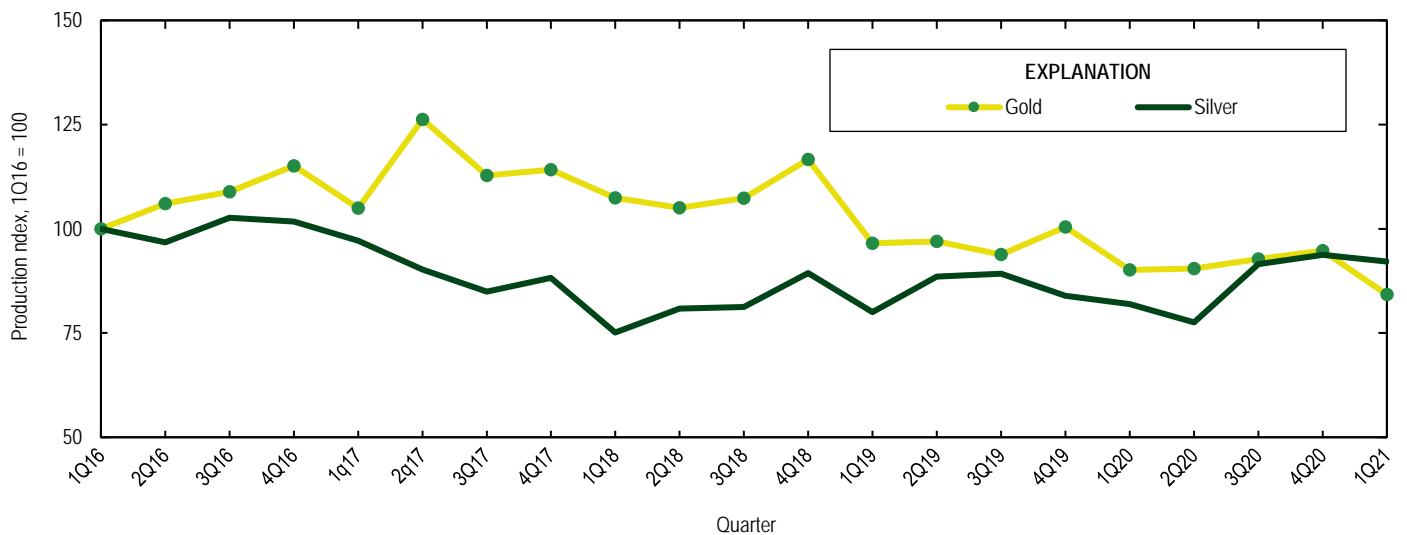


Figure 3. U.S. mine production of gold and silver from the first quarter of 2016 through the first quarter of 2021, indexed to the first quarter of 2016.

TABLE 1  
PRODUCTION TRENDS FOR SELECTED MINERAL COMMODITIES<sup>1</sup>

Mineral commodity	Percent change, 1st quarter 2021 vs. 4th quarter 2020	Percent change, 1st quarter 2021 vs. 1st quarter 2020
Aluminum (secondary)	6	6
Cement	-20	(2)
Copper	2	3
Gold	-11	-7
Gypsum	4	7
Iron ore	5	3
Lead	2	17
Molybdenum	-4	-3
Phosphate rock	-4	-9
Sand and gravel, construction	-25	6
Silver	-2	12
Soda ash	12	4
Stone, crushed	-22	-1
Zinc	-15	-7

<sup>1</sup>Based on data available through June 7, 2021.

<sup>2</sup>Less than 0.5 percent

TABLE 2  
U.S. PRODUCTION OF SELECTED MINERAL COMMODITIES, BY QUARTER<sup>1,2</sup>

Commodity		2020					2021		2020		2021	
		1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	4th quarter	1st quarter– 4th quarter	1st quarter	1st quarter	2020	2020	2021	2021
Aluminum <sup>3,3</sup>	thousand metric tons	199	159	185	199	742	211	199	211	199	211	
Cement <sup>4</sup>	million metric tons	18.0	23.4	24.8	22.5	88.8	18.1	18.0	18.1	18.0	18.1	
Copper <sup>5</sup>	thousand metric tons	290 <sup>r</sup>	307	309 <sup>r</sup>	291 <sup>r</sup>	1,200 <sup>r</sup>	297	290 <sup>r</sup>	297	290 <sup>r</sup>	297	
Gold <sup>3</sup>	metric tons	46.6 <sup>r</sup>	46.8	47.9 <sup>r</sup>	49.0 <sup>r</sup>	190 <sup>r</sup>	43.5	46.6 <sup>r</sup>	43.5	46.6 <sup>r</sup>	43.5	
Gypsum <sup>6</sup>	million metric tons	4.4	4.2	4.2	4.5	17.2	4.6	4.4	4.6	4.4	4.6	
Iron ore <sup>7</sup>	do.	11.8	5.7	9.6	11.6 <sup>r</sup>	38.6 <sup>r</sup>	12.1	11.8	12.1	11.8	12.1	
Lead <sup>5</sup>	thousand metric tons	68.8	67.9	82.0	78.8	297	80.2	68.8	80.2	68.8	80.2	
Molybdenum <sup>5</sup>	do.	13.1	11.5 <sup>r</sup>	12.8	13.3	50.8 <sup>r</sup>	12.7	13.1	12.7	13.1	12.7	
Phosphate rock, marketable	million metric tons	5.7 <sup>r</sup>	6.4 <sup>r</sup>	5.9 <sup>r</sup>	5.5 <sup>r</sup>	23.4 <sup>r</sup>	5.2	5.7 <sup>r</sup>	5.2	5.7 <sup>r</sup>	5.2	
Sand and gravel, construction <sup>8</sup>	do.	169 <sup>r</sup>	251 <sup>r</sup>	284 <sup>r</sup>	237 <sup>r</sup>	941 <sup>r</sup>	178	169 <sup>r</sup>	178	169 <sup>r</sup>	178	
Silver <sup>7</sup>	metric tons	234	222	262	268	986	264	234	264	234	264	
Soda ash <sup>7</sup>	million metric tons	2.9	2.1	2.3	2.7	10.0	3.0	2.9	3.0	2.9	3.0	
Stone, crushed <sup>8</sup>	do.	288 <sup>r</sup>	400 <sup>r</sup>	419 <sup>r</sup>	367 <sup>r</sup>	1,470 <sup>r</sup>	286	288 <sup>r</sup>	286	288 <sup>r</sup>	286	
Zinc <sup>3</sup>	thousand metric tons	175	133	197 <sup>r</sup>	193 <sup>r</sup>	697 <sup>r</sup>	163	175	163	175	163	

<sup>1</sup>Preliminary. <sup>2</sup>Revised. do. Ditto.

<sup>3</sup>Based on data available through June 7, 2021.

<sup>4</sup>Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

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

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

<sup>7</sup>Recoverable mine production.

<sup>8</sup>Calcined production.

<sup>9</sup>Mine production.

<sup>10</sup>Sold or used; quarterly survey based on sample survey. Includes all 50 States.