

Mineral Industry Surveys

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

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 2021 increased by 5% compared with that in the second quarter of 2021 (tables 1, 2). Production of cement, construction sand and gravel, crushed stone, and gypsum were higher in the first 9 months of 2021 than during the same time period in 2020.

Base Metals

Production of base metals was varied in the third quarter of 2021 compared with that in the second quarter of 2021 (fig. 2, table 1); however production for the year through September was higher than that in 2020 for all base metals. Secondary aluminum production was unchanged in the third quarter of 2021 compared with that in the second quarter of 2021, and production during the first 9 months of 2021 was 16% higher than that of the same time period in 2020. Copper production increased by 4% in the third quarter of 2021 compared with that in the second quarter of 2021, but production during the first 9 months of 2021 was slightly more than that of the same time period in 2020. Zinc production was 8% lower in the third quarter of 2021 compared with that of the second quarter of 2021, but production during the first 9 months of 2021 was 5% higher compared with the same time period in 2020. Lead production decreased slightly in the third quarter of 2021 compared with that of the second quarter of 2021, but production during the first 9 months of 2021 was slightly higher

than that of the same time period in 2020. Iron ore production was 4% higher in the third quarter of 2021 compared with that in the second quarter of 2021, and production during the first 9 months of 2021 was 29% higher than that of the same time period in 2020 (fig. 2, table 1).

Precious Metals

During the third quarter of 2021, gold production was 3% higher than production in the second quarter of 2021, but production during the first 9 months of 2021 was 6% less than that of the same time period in 2020. Silver production in the third quarter of 2021 was slightly lower than production in the second quarter of 2021 but was slightly higher during the first 9 months of 2021 compared with that of the same time period in 2020 (fig. 3, table 1).

Other Mineral Materials

Molybdenum production was slightly higher in the third quarter of 2021 than that in the second quarter of 2021, but production during the first 9 months of 2021 was 16% lower than that of the same time period in 2020. Phosphate rock production was slightly higher in the third quarter of 2021 than that in the second quarter of 2021, but production during the first 9 months of 2021 was 7% lower than that in the same time period in 2020. Soda ash production was slightly higher in the third quarter of 2021 compared with that of the second quarter of 2021, and production during the first 9 months of 2021 was 20% higher than that of the same time period in 2020 (table 1).

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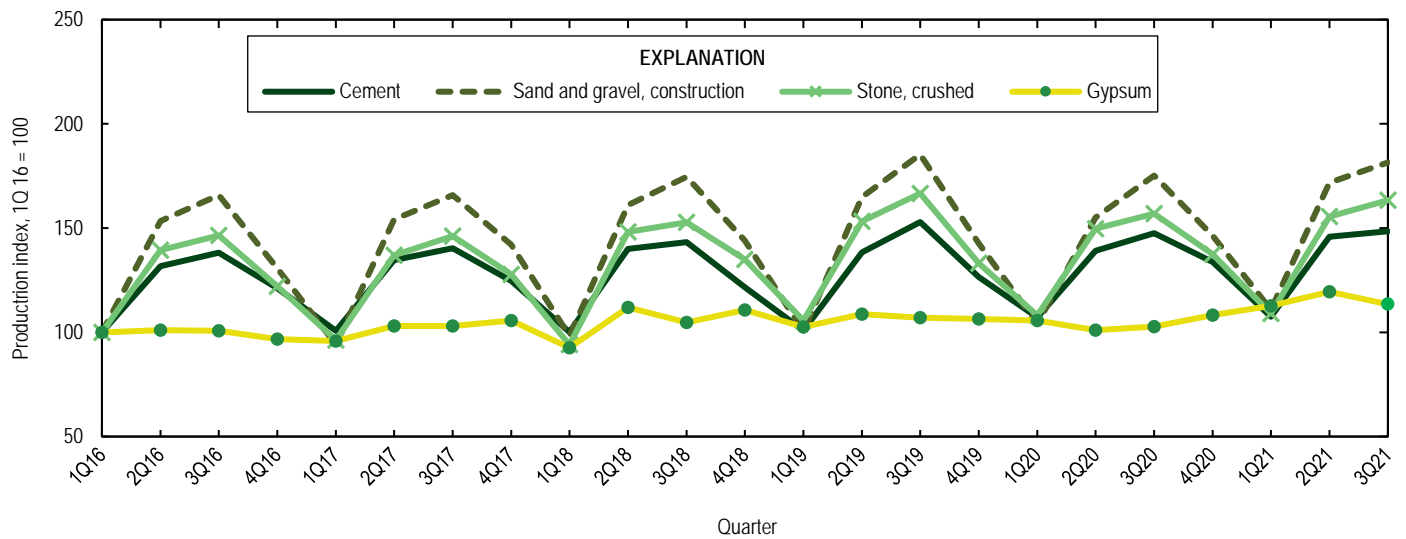


Figure 1. U.S. production of selected construction-related mineral commodities from the first quarter of 2016 through the third quarter of 2021, indexed to the first quarter of 2016.

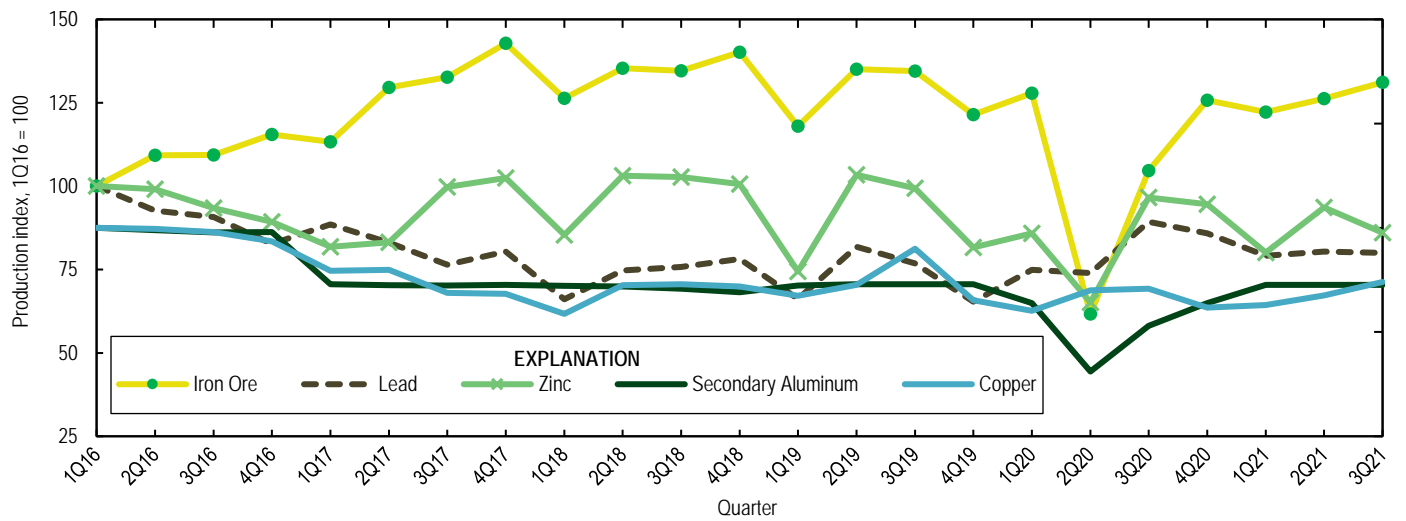


Figure 2. U.S. production of selected base metals from the first quarter of 2016 through the third quarter of 2021, indexed to the first quarter of 2016.

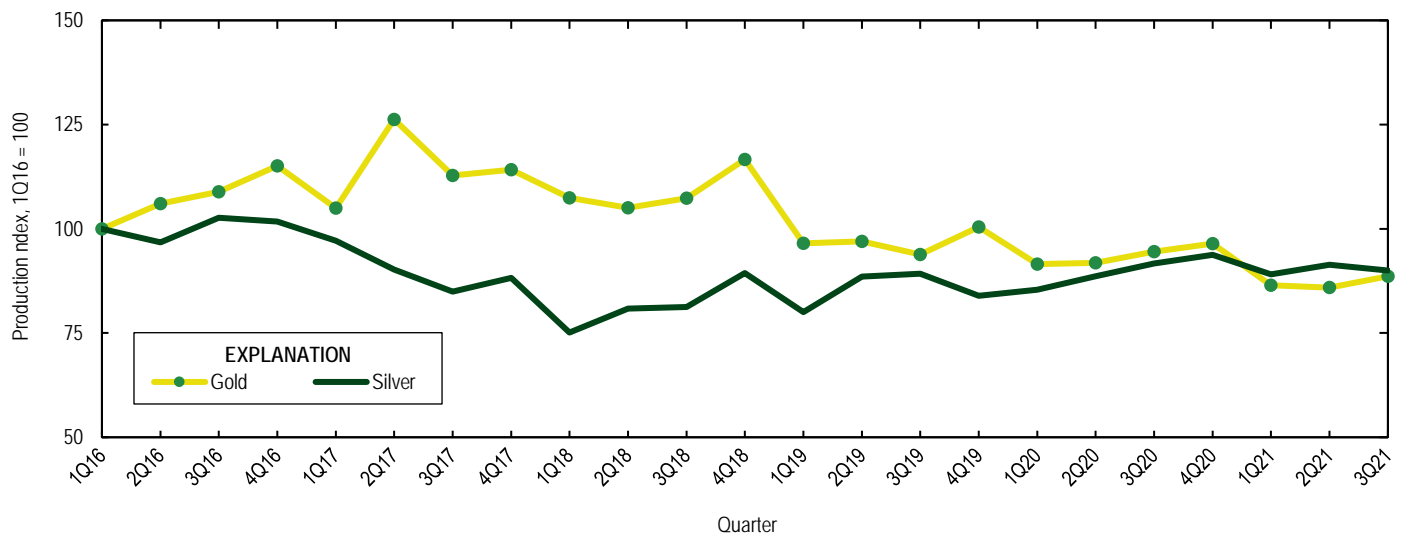


Figure 3. U.S. mine production of gold and silver from the first quarter of 2016 through the third quarter of 2021, indexed to the first quarter of 2016.

TABLE 1
PRODUCTION TRENDS FOR SELECTED MINERAL COMMODITIES¹

Mineral commodity	Percent change, 3d quarter 2021 vs. 2d quarter 2021	Percent change, YTD 2021 vs. YTD 2020
Aluminum (secondary)	--	16
Cement ^c	2	2
Copper	4	1
Gold	3	-6
Gypsum	-5	12
Iron ore ^c	4	29
Lead	-1	1
Molybdenum	1	-16
Phosphate rock	1	-7
Sand and gravel, construction	6	7
Silver	-2	2
Soda ash	2	20
Stone, crushed	5	3
Zinc	-8	5

^cEstimated. -- Zero.

¹Based on data available through December 2, 2021.

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

Commodity		2020					2021			1st quarter- 3d quarter	
		1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	4th quarter	1st quarter- 4th quarter	1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	2020	2021
Aluminum ^{3,3}	thousand metric tons	199	159	185	199	742	209	209	209	543	628
Cement ⁴	million metric tons	18.0	23.4	24.8	22.5	88.8	18.1 ^e	24.5 ^e	25.0 ^e	66.3	67.6 ^e
Copper ⁵	thousand metric tons	290	307	309	292	1,200	295 ^f	303	315	906	912
Gold ⁵	metric tons	47.3	47.4	48.8	49.8	193	44.7 ^f	44.4 ^f	45.8	144	135
Gypsum ⁶	million metric tons	4.4	4.2	4.2	4.5	17.2	4.6	4.9	4.7	12.8	14.2
Iron ore ⁷	do.	11.8	5.7	9.6	11.6	38.1 ⁸	11.2 ^e	11.6 ^e	12.1 ^e	27.0	34.9 ^e
Lead ⁵	thousand metric tons	68.8	67.9	82.0	78.8	297	72.6	73.8 ^f	73.4	219	220
Molybdenum ⁵	do.	13.2	11.6	12.9	13.3	51.1	12.7	9.5 ^f	9.6	37.7	31.8
Phosphate rock, marketable	million metric tons	5.7	6.4	5.9	5.5	23.4	5.3 ^f	5.6 ^f	5.7	18.0	16.6
Sand and gravel, construction ⁹	do.	169	252	284	237	942	180	279	294	705	753
Silver ⁵	metric tons	244 ^f	253 ^f	262	268	1,030 ^f	255 ^f	261 ^f	257	760	773
Soda ash ⁷	million metric tons	2.9	2.1	2.3	2.7	10.0	3.0	2.8	2.9	7.3	8.7
Stone, crushed ⁹	do.	289	400	419	367	1,470	291	415	436	1,110	1,140
Zinc ⁷	thousand metric tons	175	133	197	193	697	163	191	175	505	530

¹Estimated. ²Revised. do. Ditto.

³Based on data available through December 2, 2021.

⁴Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; 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.

⁸Total for 2020 as reported by mines may vary from monthly production totals.

⁹Sold or used; quarterly survey based on sample survey. Includes all 50 States.