

Mineral Industry Surveys

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IRON ORE IN FEBRUARY 2019

U.S. mine production and shipments of iron ore in February 2019 were 3.43 million metric tons (Mt) and 326,000 metric tons (t), respectively (fig. 1, table 1). Average daily production of iron ore was 122,000 t, slightly more than that of January and 12% less than that of February 2018. Average daily shipments of iron ore were 11,600 t, 15% of those in January and 52% more than those in February 2018. Mine stocks were 10.3 Mt at the end of February 2019, 43% more than those held at the end of January and 14% less than those held at the end of February 2018 (fig. 1, table 1).

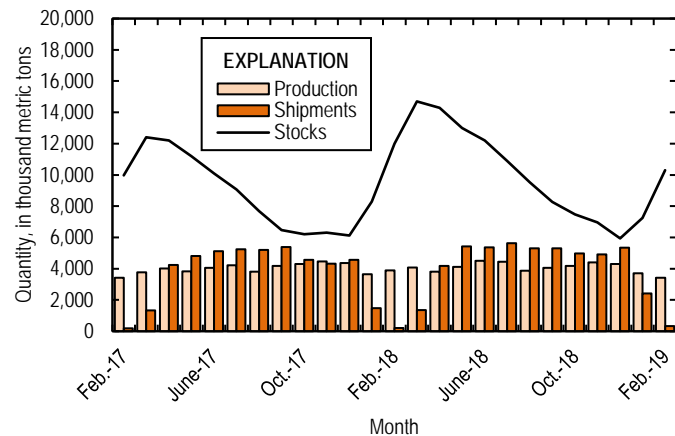


Figure 1. Monthly domestic production, shipments, and stocks of iron ore from February 2017 through February 2019.

Monthly iron ore data are reported as gross weight unless otherwise noted and do not include iron metallics such as pig iron, direct-reduced iron, hot-briquetted iron, or iron nuggets.

U.S. exports of iron ore were 192,000 t in February 2019, 65% less than those in January and 12% less than those in February 2018 (fig. 2, table 3, 6). U.S. imports of iron ore were 288,000 t in February 2019, nearly the same as those in January and more than three times those in February 2018 (fig. 2, table 4, 6). The spot price for imported iron ore fines, 62% iron

content, cost and freight, at Tianjin Port, China was \$88.22 per dry metric ton in February 2019, 16% higher than \$76.16 per dry metric ton in January and 14% higher than that in February 2018 (fig. 2).

Seasonal variations of exports, imports, shipments, and stocks during the winter months are attributed to freezing of waterways and the closing of the Soo Locks, which are used to transport iron ore in the Great Lakes region through the St. Lawrence Seaway.

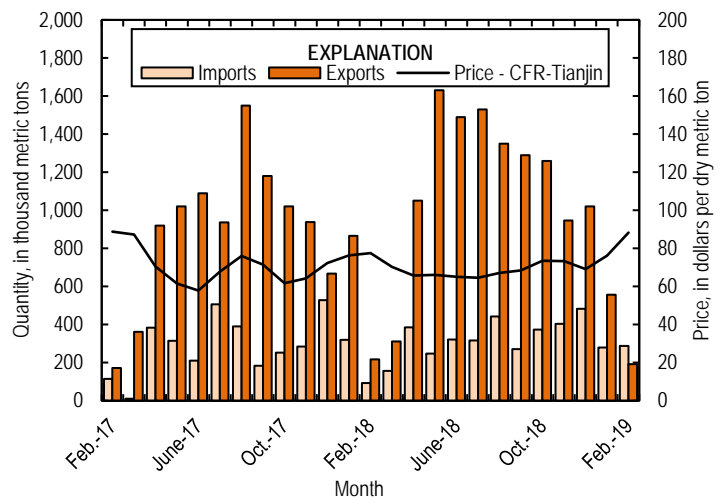


Figure 2. Monthly domestic imports and exports of iron ore and spot prices for imported iron ore fines, 62% iron content, cost and freight (CFR), at Tianjin Port, China, from February 2017 through February 2019. Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Index Mundi, undated.

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TABLE 1
U.S. PRODUCTION, SHIPMENTS, AND STOCKS OF IRON ORE^{1,2}
(Exclusive of ore containing 5% or more of manganese)

(Thousand metric tons, usable ore)

Period	Production		Shipments ³		Stocks
	Monthly	Year to date	Monthly	Year to date	End of Month
2018:					
February	3,900	7,540	214	1,680	12,000
March	4,070	11,600	1,360	3,050	14,700
April	3,810	15,400	4,180	7,230	14,300
May	4,120	19,500	5,420	12,600	13,000
June	4,510	24,000	5,370	18,000	12,200
July	4,440	28,500	5,640	23,700	10,900
August	3,880	32,400	5,310	29,000	9,520
September	4,050	36,400	5,300	34,300	8,270
October	4,180	40,600	4,970	39,200	7,480
November	4,400	45,000	4,910	44,100	6,970
December	4,310	49,300	5,340	49,500	5,940
2019:					
January	3,710	3,710	2,410	2,410	7,240
February	3,430	7,130	326	2,740	10,300

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits.

²Excludes byproduct ores and iron metallics.

³Includes rail and vessel.

TABLE 2
U.S. PRODUCTION OF PIG IRON AND RAW STEEL, BY TYPE OF FURNACE¹

(Thousand metric tons)

Period	Pig iron production		Raw steel production			
	Basic oxygen furnace		Blast furnace		Electric furnace	
	Monthly	Year to date	Monthly	Year to date	Monthly	Year to date
2018:						
February	1,790	3,710	1,980	4,210	4,620	9,270
March	1,970	5,680	2,270	6,490	5,060	14,300
April	1,930	7,600	2,200	8,690	4,720	19,000
May	2,070	9,680	2,400	11,100	4,860	23,900
June	2,060	11,700	2,330	13,400	4,730	28,600
July	2,100	13,800	2,370	15,800	5,010	33,700
August	2,030	15,900	2,340	18,100	5,140	38,800
September	2,010	17,900	2,350	20,500	4,910	43,700
October	2,060	19,900	2,360	22,800	5,190	48,900
November	2,030	22,000	2,380	25,200	5,020	53,900
December	2,100	24,100	2,490	27,700	4,990	58,900
2019:						
January	1,880	1,880	2,330	2,330	5,190	5,190
February	1,840	3,720	2,140	4,470	4,810	10,000

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits.

Source: American Iron and Steel Institute.

TABLE 3
U.S. EXPORTS OF IRON ORE, BY COUNTRY OR LOCALITY AND TYPE ^{1,2}
(Exclusive of ore containing 20% or more manganese)

Country or locality and type of product	2018		2019			
	January-February	February		January-February		
	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value ³ (thousand dollars)	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value ³ (thousand dollars)	Value ³ (dollars per ton)
Canada	921	127	10,100	671	57,300	85.39
Mexico	120	22	2,740	33	4,100	124.33
Other	42	43	1,550	43	1,560	36.33
Total	1,080	192	14,400	747	63,000	84.29
Concentrates	4	11	1,420	11	1,440	130.91
Fine ores	(4)	(4)	9	(4)	22	5.50
Pellets	1,040	137	11,400	693	59,900	86.51
Other	42	43	1,550	43	1,550	36.14
Total	1,080	192	14,400	747	63,000	84.29

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

²All countries with less than 5,000 metric tons of exports per month included in "Other."

³Free alongside ship (FAS) value.

⁴Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 4
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF IRON ORE, BY COUNTRY OR LOCALITY AND TYPE^{1,2}
(Exclusive of ore containing 20% or more manganese)

Country or locality of origin and type of product	2018		2019			
	January-February	February		January-February		
	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value ³ (thousand dollars)	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value ³ (thousand dollars)	Value ³ (dollars per ton)
Brazil	339	74	10,500	236	31,000	131.18
Canada	73	212	28,000	212	28,000	132.16
Other	(4)	1	171	120	13,000	108.58
Total	412	288	38,700	568	72,000	126.77
Concentrates	10	5	523	56	4,530	80.91
Fine Ores	--	(4)	7	(4)	47	11.75
Pellets	401	283	38,100	512	67,400	131.68
Other	(4)	(4)	26	(4)	7	1.75
Total	412	288	38,700	568	72,000	126.77

-- Zero.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

²All countries with less than 5,000 metric tons of imports per month included in "Other."

³Customs value. Excludes international freight and insurance charges.

⁴Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 5
 U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF IRON ORE, BY CUSTOMS DISTRICT^{1,2}
 (Exclusive of ore containing 20% or more manganese)

(Thousand metric tons)

Customs district (code no.)	Pellets			Total, all products		
	January–February		February	January–February		February
	2018	2019	2019	2018	2019	2019
New Orleans, LA (20)	401	512	283	401	563	283
Other	--	--	--	10	5	5
Total	401	512	283	412	568	288

-- Zero.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

²Customs Districts with less than 5,000 metric tons of imports per month included in "Other."

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 6
U.S. IRON ORE TRADE SUMMARY¹

(Thousand metric tons and thousand dollars)

Period	Exports		Imports	
	Quantity	Value ²	Quantity	Value ³
2018:				
January–February	1,080	81,500	411	47,100
February	217	18,900	92	11,000
March	311	25,300	157	18,800
April	1,050	80,600	386	40,700
May	1,630	110,000	247	22,700
June	1,490	105,000	322	33,100
July	1,530	103,000	316	29,600
August	1,350	107,000	442	49,400
September	1,290	103,000	271	23,100
October	1,260	100,000	373	35,200
November	946	77,200	403	38,500
December	1,020	82,900	482	50,400
January–December	12,900	975,000	3,810	388,000
2019:				
January	556	48,600	280	33,300
February	192	14,400	288	38,700
January–February	748	63,000	568	72,000

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

²Free alongside ship (FAS) value.

³Customs value. Excludes international freight and insurance charges.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.