

# Mineral Industry Surveys

**For information, contact:**

Christopher A. Tuck, Iron Ore Commodity Specialist  
 National Minerals Information Center  
 U.S. Geological Survey  
 989 National Center  
 Reston, VA 20192  
 Telephone: (703) 648-4912, Fax: (703) 648-7757  
 Email: ctuck@usgs.gov

Hoa P. Phamdang (Data)  
 Telephone: (703) 648-7965  
 Fax: (703) 648-7975  
 Email: hphamdan@usgs.gov

**Internet:** <https://www.usgs.gov/centers/nmic>

## IRON ORE IN OCTOBER 2019

U.S. mine production and shipments of iron ore in October 2019 were 3.93 million metric tons (Mt) and 4.60 Mt, respectively (fig. 1, table 1). Average daily production of iron ore was 127,000 metric tons (t), a slight decrease from that of September and a 6% decrease from that of October 2018. Average daily shipments of iron ore were 148,000 t, an 11% decrease from those in September and a 7% decrease from those in October 2018. Mine stocks were 6.6 Mt at the end of October 2019, a 9% decrease from those held at the end of September 2019 and an 11% decrease from those held in October 2018 (fig. 1, table 1).

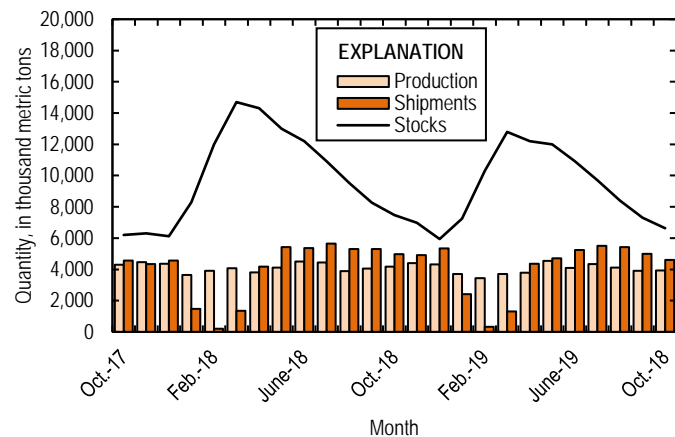


Figure 1. Monthly domestic production, shipments, and stocks of iron ore from October 2017 through October 2019.

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 897,000 t in October 2019, a 23% decrease from those in September 2019 and a 29% decrease from October 2018 (fig. 2, tables 3, 6). U.S. imports of iron ore were 293,000 t in October 2019, nearly double those in September and a 21% decrease from those in October 2018 (fig. 2, tables 4, 6).

The spot price for imported iron ore fines, 62% iron content, cost and freight, at Tianjin Port, China, was \$88.53 per dry metric ton in October 2019, a 5% decrease from \$93.08 per dry metric ton in September (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 in Sault Ste. Marie, MI, which are used to transport iron ore in the Great Lakes region through the St. Lawrence Seaway.

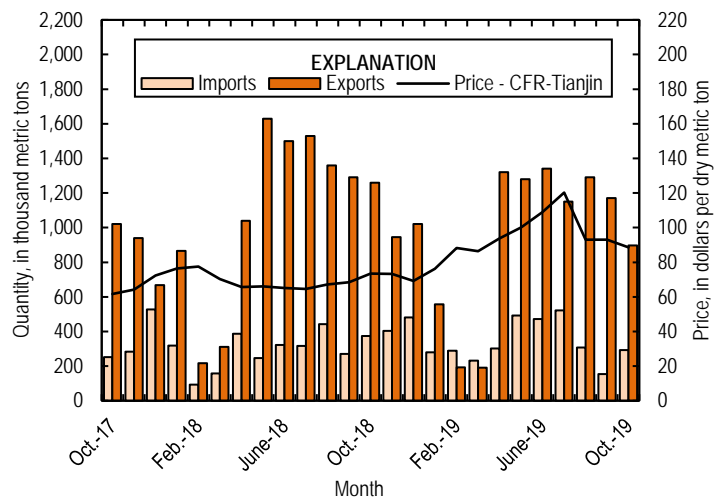


Figure 2. Monthly domestic imports and exports of iron ore and spot prices for imported iron ore fines, 62% iron content, cost and freight (CFR), at Tianjin Port, China, from October 2017 through October 2019. Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Index Mundi, undated.

List services and web feed subscribers are the first to receive notification of USGS minerals information publications and data releases. For information on how to subscribe, go to <https://www.usgs.gov/centers/nmic/minerals-information-publication-list-services>

TABLE 1  
U.S. PRODUCTION, SHIPMENTS, AND STOCKS OF IRON ORE<sup>1, 2</sup>  
(Exclusive of ore containing 5% or more of manganese)

(Thousand metric tons, usable ore)

Period	Production		Shipments <sup>3</sup>		Stocks
	Monthly	Year to date	Monthly	Year to date	End of Month
2018:					
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
March	3,710	10,800	1,300	4,040	12,800
April	3,780	14,600	4,360	8,400	12,200
May	4,540	19,200	4,710	13,100	12,000
June	4,090	23,300	5,230	18,300	10,900
July	4,340	27,600	5,500	23,800	9,700
August	4,120	31,700	5,430	29,300	8,400
September	3,900	35,600	4,990	34,300	7,310
October	3,240	38,900	3,900	38,200	6,640

<sup>1</sup>Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits.

<sup>2</sup>Excludes byproduct ores and iron metallics.

<sup>3</sup>Includes rail and vessel.

TABLE 2  
U.S. PRODUCTION OF PIG IRON AND RAW STEEL, BY TYPE OF FURNACE<sup>1</sup>

(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:						
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
March	2,080	5,800	2,390	6,870	5,290	15,300
April	1,860	7,670	2,170	9,040	5,190	20,500
May	1,930	9,600	2,430	11,500	5,120	25,600
June	1,900	11,500	2,380	13,900	4,870	30,500
July	1,830	13,300	2,190	16,000	5,230	35,700
August	1,840	15,200	2,180	18,200	5,220	40,900
September	1,870	17,000	2,150	20,400	4,850	45,800
October	1,700	18,700	2,120	22,500	5,130	50,900

<sup>1</sup>Data 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 <sup>1,2</sup>  
(Exclusive of ore containing 20% or more manganese)

Country or locality and type of product	2018		2019			
	January–October	October		January–October		
	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value <sup>3</sup> (thousand dollars)	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value <sup>3</sup> (thousand dollars)	Value <sup>3</sup> (dollars per ton)
Canada	8,480 <sup>r</sup>	723	72,400	7,050	647,000	91.77
Japan	1,880	148	9,210	2,240	138,000	61.64
Other	653 <sup>r</sup>	26	2,020	381	50,900	133.56
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,000</b>	<b>897</b>	<b>83,700</b>	<b>9,670</b>	<b>836,000</b>	<b>86.43</b>
Concentrates	62 <sup>r</sup>	26	2,130	198	42,800	216.36
Fine ores	1	(4)	34	38	3,090	9.25
Pellets	10,800 <sup>r</sup>	871	81,500	9,300	785,000	84.41
Other	190 <sup>r</sup>	(4)	12	137	5,070	36.99
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,000</b>	<b>897</b>	<b>83,700</b>	<b>9,670</b>	<b>836,000</b>	<b>86.43</b>

<sup>r</sup>Revised.

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

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

<sup>3</sup>Free alongside ship (FAS) value.

<sup>4</sup>Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

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

Country or locality of origin and type of product	2018		2019			
	January–October	October		January–October		
	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value <sup>3</sup> (thousand dollars)	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value <sup>3</sup> (thousand dollars)	Value <sup>3</sup> (dollars per ton)
Brazil	1,970	186	26,600	1,760	220,000	124.48
Canada	504	79	12,700	829	112,000	134.61
Other	450	28	3,680	746	81,600	109.34
Total	2,920 <sup>r</sup>	293	42,900	3,340	413,000	123.61
Concentrates	804 <sup>r</sup>	61	6,870	844	69,800	82.68
Fine Ores	213	--	--	184	14,700	22.00
Pellets	1,900	232	36,100	2,310	328,000	142.22
Other	1	--	--	6	303	50.50
Total	2,920 <sup>r</sup>	293	42,900	3,340	413,000	123.61

<sup>r</sup>Revised. -- Zero.

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

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

<sup>3</sup>Customs value. Excludes international freight and insurance charges.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

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

(Thousand metric tons)

Customs district (code no.)	Pellets			Total, all products		
	January–October		October	January–October		October
	2018	2019	2019	2018	2019	2019
Chicago, IL (39)	28	45	--	639	526	57
Houston-Galveston, TX (53)	(3)	9	--	131 <sup>r</sup>	210	5
New Orleans, LA (20)	1,880	2,220	232	2,060	2,510	232
Other	--	32	--	92 <sup>r</sup>	91	--
Total	1,900	2,310	232	2,920 <sup>r</sup>	3,340	293

<sup>r</sup>Revised. -- Zero.

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

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

<sup>3</sup>Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 6  
U.S. IRON ORE TRADE SUMMARY<sup>1</sup>

(Thousand metric tons and thousand dollars)

Period	Exports		Imports	
	Quantity	Value <sup>2</sup>	Quantity	Value <sup>3</sup>
2018:				
January–October	11,000	812,000	2,920	300,000
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	13,000 <sup>r</sup>	972,000 <sup>r</sup>	3,810	388,000
2019:				
January	556	48,600	280	33,300
February	192	14,400	288	38,700
March	191	16,200	231	32,100
April	1,320	108,000	301	37,300
May	1,280	128,000	493	61,500
June	1,340	109,000	471	49,200
July	1,450 <sup>r</sup>	121,000	521	60,800
August	1,290	103,000	307	35,900
September	1,170	105,000	154	20,900
October	897	83,700	293	42,900
January–October	9,670	836,000	3,340	413,000

<sup>r</sup>Revised.

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

<sup>2</sup>Free alongside ship (FAS) value.

<sup>3</sup>Customs value. Excludes international freight and insurance charges.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.