

# Mineral Industry Surveys

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## IRON ORE IN JANUARY 2020

U.S. mine production and shipments of iron ore in January 2020 were 3.79 million metric tons (Mt) and 1.72 Mt, respectively (fig. 1, table 1). Average daily production of iron ore was 122,000 metric tons (t), a 3% decrease from that of December 2019 and a slight increase from that of January 2019. Average daily shipments of iron ore were 55,500 t, a 61% decrease from those in December 2019 and a 29% decrease from those in January 2019. Mine stocks were 4.8 Mt at the end of January 2020, a 76% increase from stocks held at the end of December 2019 and a 9% increase to those held in January 2019 (fig. 1, table 1).

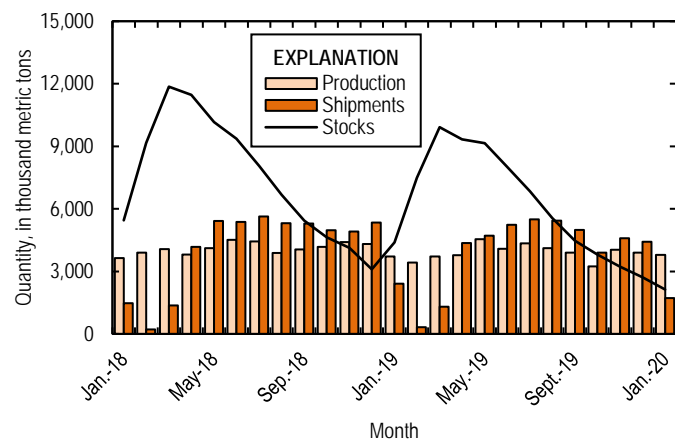


Figure 1. Monthly domestic production, shipments, and stocks of iron ore from January 2018 through January 2020.

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 486,000 t in January 2020, a 29% decrease from those in December 2019 and a 13% decrease from those in January 2019 (fig. 2, tables 3, 6). U.S. imports of iron ore were 162,000 t in January 2020, a 62% decrease from those in December 2019 and a 42% decrease from those in

January 2019 (fig. 2, tables 4, 6). The spot price for imported iron ore fines, 62% iron content, cost and freight, at Tianjin Port, China, was \$95.76 per dry metric ton in January 2020, a 3% increase from \$92.65 per dry metric ton in December (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.

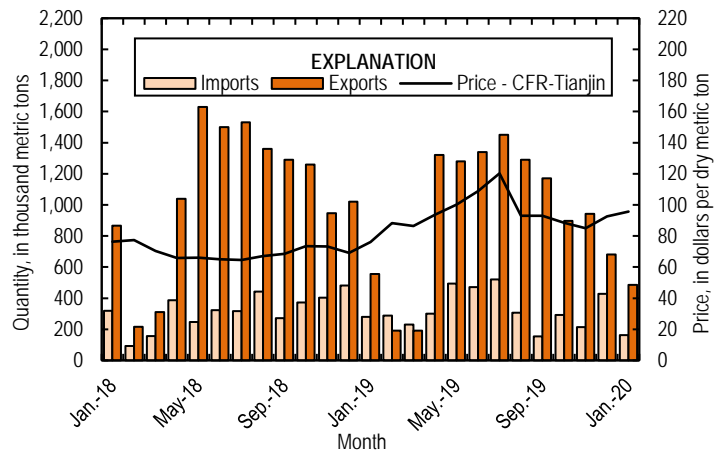


Figure 2. Monthly domestic imports and exports of iron ore and spot prices for imported iron ore fines, 62% iron content, cost and freight (CFR), at Tianjin Port, China, from January 2018 through January 2020. Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Index Mundi, undated.

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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
2019:					
January	3,710	3,710	2,410	2,410	4,390
February	3,430	7,130	326	2,740	7,490
March	3,710	10,800	1,300	4,040	9,910
April	3,780	14,600	4,360	8,400	9,330
May	4,540	19,200	4,710	13,100	9,150
June	4,090	23,300	5,230	18,300	8,020
July	4,340	27,600	5,500	23,800	6,850
August	4,120	31,700	5,430	29,300	5,550
September	3,900	35,600	4,990	34,300	4,460
October	3,240	38,900	3,900	38,200	3,800
November	4,030	42,900	4,590	42,700	3,230
December	3,900	46,800	4,420	47,200	2,720
2020, January	3,790	3,790	1,720	1,720	4,790

<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
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
November	1,720	20,500	1,970	24,500	5,120	56,000
December	1,850	22,300	2,140	26,600	5,160	61,200
2020, January	1,680	1,680	2,270	2,270	5,380	5,380

<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	2019	2020	
	January Quantity (thousand metric tons)	January Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value <sup>3</sup> (thousand dollars)
Canada	545	485	45,800
Mexico	11	(4)	59
Other	(4)	(4)	31
<b>Total</b>	<b>556</b>	<b>486</b>	<b>45,900</b>
Concentrates	(4)	(4)	88
Fine ores	(4)	(4)	55
Pellets	556	485	45,700
<b>Total</b>	<b>556</b>	<b>486</b>	<b>45,900</b>

<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	2019	2020	
	January Quantity (thousand metric tons)	January Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value <sup>3</sup> (thousand dollars)
Brazil	162	76	10,900
Canada	--	9	1,340
Russia	68	77	9,260
Other	51 <sup>r</sup>	(4)	24
Total	280	162	21,500
Concentrates	50	5	787
Fine Ores	(4)	(4)	8
Pellets	230	157	20,700
Total	280	162	21,500

<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.

<sup>4</sup>Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

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

(Thousand metric tons)

Customs district (code no.)	Pellets		Total, all products	
	2019	2020	2019	2020
New Orleans, LA (20)	230	152	280	152
Other	--	5	(3)	10
Total	230	157	280	162

-- 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>
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	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
November	942	79,500	213	27,900
December	682	67,600	428	58,500
January–December	11,300	983,000	3,980	499,000
2020, January	486	45,900	162	21,500

<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.