

Mineral Industry Surveys

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IRON ORE IN FEBRUARY 2020

U.S. mine production and shipments of iron ore in February 2020 were 3.83 million metric tons (Mt) and 520,000 metric tons (t), respectively (fig. 1, table 1). Average daily production of iron ore was 132,000 t, an 8% increase from that of January 2020 and February 2019. Average daily shipments of iron ore were 17,900 t, a 67% decrease from those in January and a 54% increase from those in February 2019. Mine stocks were 8.1 Mt at the end of February 2020, a 69% increase from stocks held at the end of January and an 8% increase to those held in February 2019 (fig. 1, table 1).

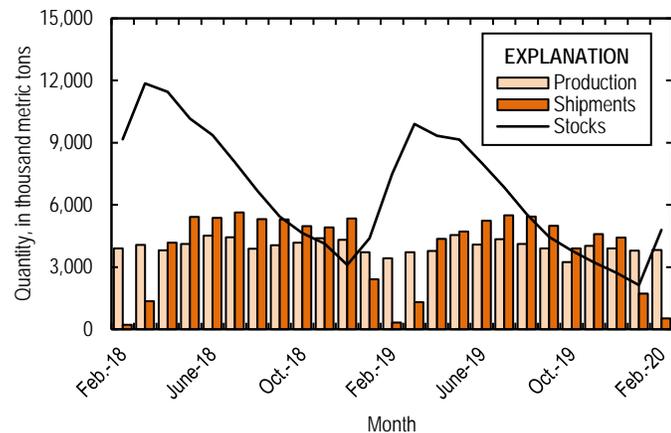


Figure 1. Monthly domestic production, shipments, and stocks of iron ore from February 2018 through February 2020.

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 168,000 t in February 2020, a 65% decrease from those in January and a 13% decrease from those in February 2019 (fig. 2, tables 3, 6). U.S. imports of iron ore were 233,000 t in February 2020, a 44% increase from those in January and a 19% decrease from those in February 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 \$87.68 per dry metric ton in February 2020, an 8% decrease from \$95.76 per dry metric ton in January 2020 (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.

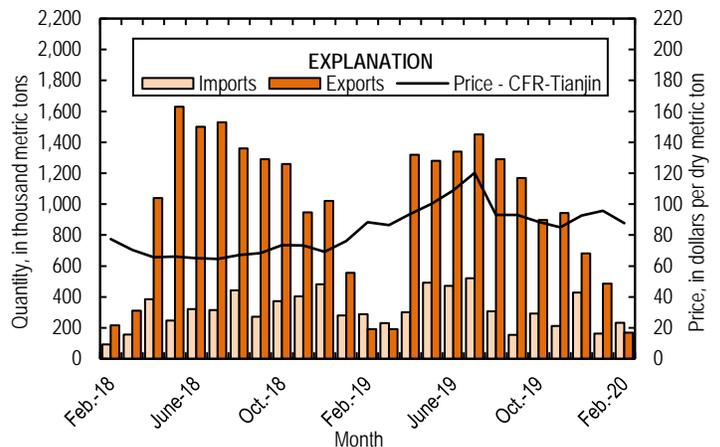


Figure 2. Monthly domestic imports and exports of iron ore and spot prices for imported iron ore fines, 62% iron content, cost and freight (CFR), at Tianjin Port, China, from February 2018 through February 2020. Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Index Mundi, undated.

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TABLE 1
U.S. PRODUCTION, SHIPMENTS, AND STOCKS OF IRON ORE^{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
2019:					
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
February	3,830	7,620	520	2,240	8,100

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
2019:						
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
February	1,920	3,600	2,270	4,540	4,800	10,200

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	2019		2020			
	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	671	119	9,430	604	55,200	91.43
Other	76 ^r	49	1,780	50	1,870	37.32
Total	747	168	11,200	654	57,100	87.30
Concentrates	11	(4)	31	(4)	119	29.75
Fine ores	(4)	(4)	31	(4)	86	21.50
Pellets	693	119	9,430	604	55,200	91.34
Other	43	49	1,720	49	1,720	35.08
Total	747	168	11,200	654	57,100	87.30

^rRevised.

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	2019		2020			
	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	235 ^r	82	10,900	157	21,800	138.92
Canada	212	65	9,150	74	10,500	141.81
Chile	50	8	3,010	8	3,010	375.63
Sweden	1	78	9,580	78	9,600	123.03
Other	68 ^r	(4)	51	77	9,310	120.95
Total	568	233	32,700	395	54,200	137.26
Concentrates	56	--	--	5	787	157.40
Fine Ores	(4)	8	3,060	8	3,060	383.00
Pellets	512	225	29,700	381	50,400	132.19
Total	568	233	32,700	395	54,200	137.26

¹Revised. -- Zero.

²Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

³All countries with less than 5,000 metric tons of imports per month included in "Other."

⁴Customs value. Excludes international freight and insurance charges.

⁵Less 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
	2019	2020	2020	2019	2020	2020
Houston-Galveston, TX (53)	--	35	30	5	40	30
New Orleans, LA (20)	512	346	194	563	354	202
Other	--	--	--	(3)	(3)	(3)
Total	512	381	225	568	395	233

-- 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."

³Less than ½ unit.

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
2019:				
January–February	747	63,000	568	72,000
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
February	168	11,200	233	32,700
January–February	654	57,100	395	54,200

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.