

Mineral Industry Surveys

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IRON ORE IN MAY 2020

U.S. mine production and shipments of iron ore in May 2020 were 1.42 million metric tons (Mt) and 3.94 Mt, respectively (fig. 1, table 1). Average daily production of iron ore was 45,700 metric tons (t), a 53% decrease from that of April 2020 and a 69% decrease from that of May 2019. Average daily shipments of iron ore were 127,000 t, a 10% decrease from those in April and a 16% decrease from those in May 2019. Mine stocks were 6.90 Mt at the end of May 2020, a 27% decrease from stocks held at the end of April and a 25% decrease from those held in May 2019 (fig. 1, table 1).

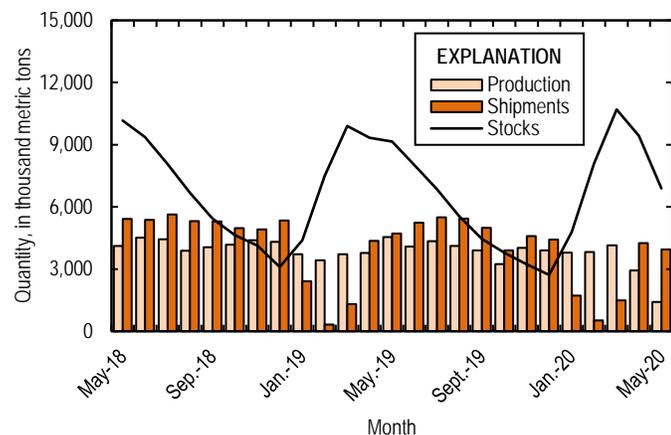


Figure 1. Monthly domestic production, shipments, and stocks of iron ore from May 2018 through May 2020.

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 1.46 Mt in May 2020, a 27% increase from those in April and a 15% increase from those in May 2019 (fig. 2, tables 3, 6). U.S. imports of iron ore were 78,000 t in May 2020, a 73% decrease from those in April 2020

and an 84% decrease from those in May 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 \$93.65 per dry metric ton in May 2020, an 11% increase from \$84.73 per dry metric ton in April 2020 (fig. 2).

Significant decreases in production, shipments, and trade were owing to the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on lower steel consumption globally.

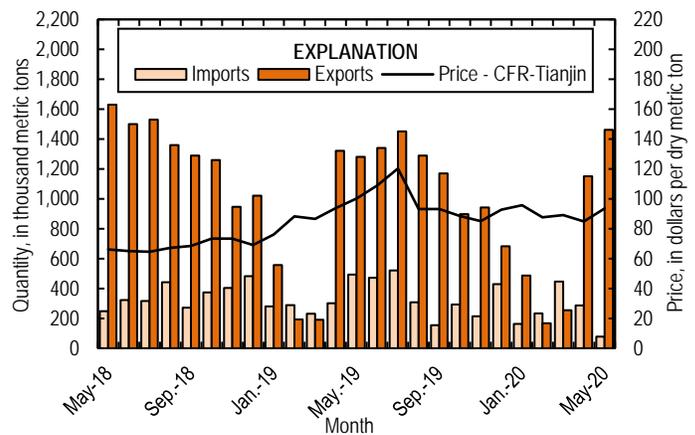


Figure 2. Monthly domestic imports and exports of iron ore and spot prices for imported iron ore fines, 62% iron content, cost and freight (CFR), at Tianjin Port, China, from May 2018 through May 2020. Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Index Mundi, undated.

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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:					
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
March	4,140	11,800	1,490	3,720	10,700
April	2,930	14,700	4,250	7,980	9,430
May	1,420	16,100	3,940	11,900	6,900

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:						
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
March	1,910	5,510	2,230	6,770	4,770	14,900
April	1,110	6,620	1,240	8,010	3,580	18,500
May	949	7,570	1,100	9,110	3,820	22,300

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–May	May		January–May		
	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	2,620 ^r	871	70,000	2,420	202,000	83.55
Japan	707 ^r	421	28,700	792	53,500	67.55
Slovakia	--	168	10,900	168	10,900	64.68
Other	208 ^r	(4)	36	141	7,920	56.13
Total	3,540 ^r	1,460	110,000	3,520	275,000	77.93
Concentrates	101	(4)	6	1	199	199.00
Fine ores	(4)	(4)	13	1	168	168.00
Pellets	3,350 ^r	1,460	110,000	3,420	271,000	79.17
Other	92	--	--	104	3,680	35.34
Total	3,540 ^r	1,460	110,000	3,520	275,000	77.93

^rRevised. -- 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 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–May	May		January–May		
	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	417	7	722	366	42,600	116.41
Chile	102	51	4,750	58	7,750	133.60
Sweden	18	19	1,640	103	11,900	115.78
Other	1,060 ⁴	(4)	44	676	80,800	119.52
Total	1,590	78	7,150	1,200	143,000	118.83
Concentrates	331	(4)	10	32	2,680	83.63
Fine Ores	(4)	69	6,320	122	12,600	103.13
Pellets	1,260	9	826	1,040	127,000	121.98
Other	6 ⁴	--	--	6	463	77.17
Total	1,590	78	7,150	1,200	143,000	118.83

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–May		May	January–May		May
	2019	2020	2020	2019	2020	2020
Charleston, SC (16)	--	--	--	(3)	19	18
Houston–Galveston, TX (53)	--	127	9	93	149	9
New Orleans, LA (20)	1,220	892	--	1,350	973	51
Other	32	26	--	154 [†]	64	(3)
Total	1,260	1,040	9	1,590	1,200	78

[†]Revised. -- 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–May	3,540	315,000	1,590	203,000
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
March	254	18,800	446	52,300
April	1,150	89,000	286	29,400
May	1,460	110,000	78	7,150
January–May	3,520	275,000	1,200	143,000

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.