

Mineral Industry Surveys

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IRON ORE IN SEPTEMBER 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. mine production and shipments of iron ore in September 2020 were 3.60 million metric tons (Mt) and 3.54 Mt, respectively (fig. 1, table 1). Average daily production of iron ore was 120,000 metric tons (t), a slight decrease from that of August 2020 and an 8% decrease from that of September 2019. Average daily shipments of iron ore were 118,000 t, a 17% increase from those in August and a 29% decrease from those in September 2019. Mine stocks were 4.47 Mt at the end of September 2020, a slight increase from stocks held at the end of August and nearly unchanged from those held in September 2019 (fig. 1, table 1).

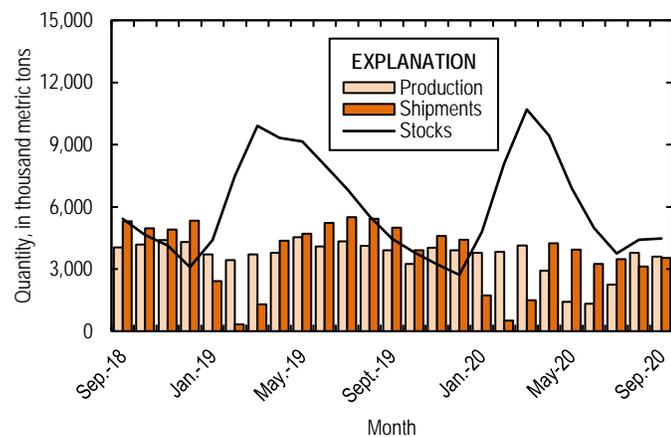


Figure 1. Monthly domestic production, shipments, and stocks of iron ore from September 2018 through September 2020.

U.S. exports of iron ore were 983,000 t in September 2020, a slight increase from those in August and a 16% decrease from those in September 2019 (fig. 2, tables 3, 6). U.S. imports of iron ore were 387,000 t in September 2020, a 37% decrease

from those in August 2020, but more than double those in September 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 \$123.75 per dry metric ton in September 2020, a slight increase from \$121.07 per dry metric ton in August 2020 (fig. 2).

Significant decreases in production, shipments, and trade, compared with those during the same period in 2019, were owing to the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic that resulted in lower steel production and consumption globally.

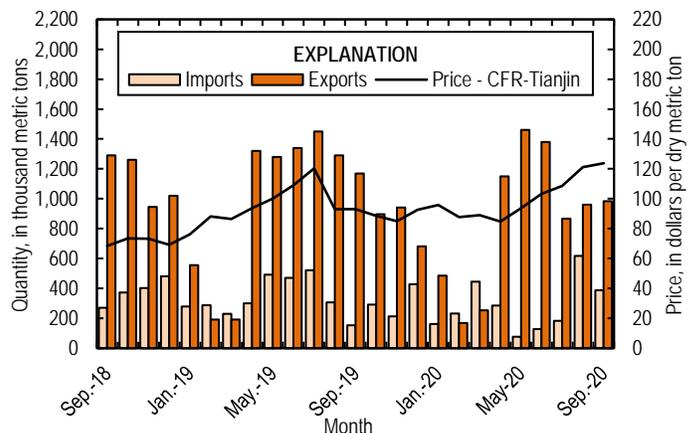


Figure 2. Monthly domestic imports and exports of iron ore and spot prices for imported iron ore fines, 62% iron content, cost and freight (CFR), at Tianjin Port, China, from September 2018 through September 2020. Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Index Mundi, undated.

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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:					
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
June	1,320	17,400	3,240	15,200	4,980
July	2,250	19,700	3,470	18,600	3,760
August	3,780	23,400	3,120	21,700	4,410
September	3,600	27,000	3,540	25,300	4,470

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:						
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
June	1,170	8,740	1,230	10,300	3,690	26,000
July	1,310	10,000	1,500	11,800	3,930	30,000
August	1,520	11,600	1,710	13,500	4,220	34,200
September	1,610	13,200	1,840	15,400	4,140	38,300

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–September	September		January–September		
	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	6,340 ^r	675	57,200	5,070	425,000	83.85
Japan	2,100 ^r	189	13,100	1,570	107,000	67.78
Slovakia	--	118	8,160	783	51,300	65.52
Other	395 ^r	1	315	282	16,000	56.80
Total	8,830 ^r	983	78,900	7,710	599,000	77.71
Concentrates	172	1	236	4	1,260	315.50
Fine ores	31 ^r	(4)	30	1	333	333.00
Pellets	8,440 ^r	982	78,500	7,500	590,000	78.72
Other	183 ^r	(4)	54	209	7,410	35.46
Total	8,830 ^r	983	78,900	7,710	599,000	77.71

^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–September Quantity (thousand metric tons)	September		January–September		
		Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value ³ (thousand dollars)	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value ³ (thousand dollars)	Value ³ (dollars per ton)
Brazil	1,580	380	46,000	1,210	147,000	121.30
Canada	749 ^r	4	459	616	73,300	118.92
Sweden	78	2	199	246	27,100	109.97
Other	641 ^r	(4)	48	449	48,000	106.89
Total	3,050	387	46,800	2,520	295,000	117.09
Concentrates	782 ^r	(4)	18	174	12,800	73.49
Fine Ores	184	(4)	14	207	21,000	101.61
Pellets	2,070	386	46,700	2,130	260,000	122.28
Other	6	(4)	30	12	1,160	96.67
Total	3,050	387	46,800	2,520	295,000	117.09

^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 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–September		September	January–September		September
	2019	2020	2020	2019	2020	2020
Houston-Galveston, TX (53)	9	161	6	204 ^r	183	6
New Orleans, LA (20)	1,990	1,940	380	2,280	2,060	380
Other	77 ^r	26	(3)	560 ^r	277	(3)
Total	2,070	2,130	386	3,050	2,520	387

^rRevised.

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–September	8,830 ^r	752,000	3,050	370,000
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	11,400 ^r	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
June	1,380	101,000	129	15,700
July	867	72,000	183	21,500
August	960	73,200	617	67,900
September	983	78,900	387	46,800
January–September	7,710	599,000	2,520	295,000

^rRevised.

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.