

Mineral Industry Surveys

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IRON ORE IN OCTOBER 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 October 2020 were 3.82 million metric tons (Mt) and 4.03 Mt, respectively (fig. 1, table 1). Average daily production of iron ore was 123,000 metric tons (t), a slight increase from that of September 2020 and an 18% increase from that of October 2019. Average daily shipments of iron ore were 130,000 t, a 10% increase from those in September and a 3% increase from those in October 2019. Mine stocks were 4.26 Mt at the end of October 2020, a 5% decrease from stocks held at the end of September and a 12% increase from those held in October 2019 (fig. 1, table 1).

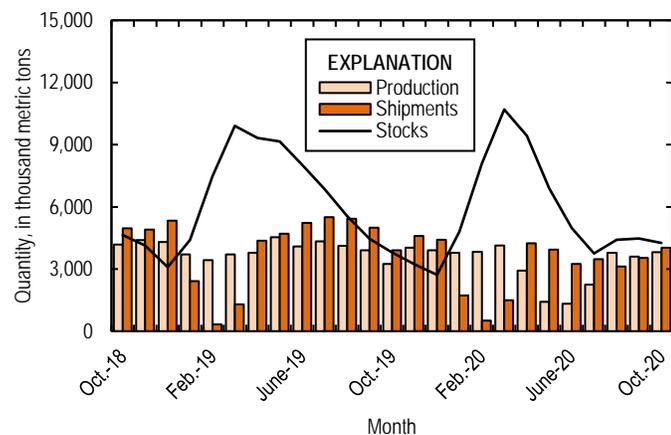


Figure 1. Monthly domestic production, shipments, and stocks of iron ore from October 2018 through October 2020.

U.S. exports of iron ore were 772,000 t in October 2020, a 21% decrease from those in September and a 14% decrease from those in October 2019 (fig. 2, tables 3, 6). U.S. imports of iron ore were 179,000 t in October 2020, less than one-half those in September 2020 and a 39% decrease from those in

October 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 \$119.78 per dry metric ton in October 2020, a 3% decrease from \$123.75 per dry metric ton in September 2020 (fig. 2).

Although iron ore production and shipments increased in October, significant decreases in production, shipments, and trade during earlier months in 2020 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.

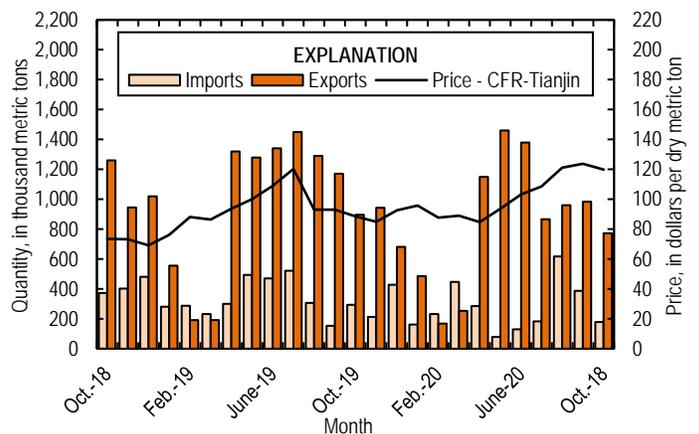


Figure 2. Monthly domestic imports and exports of iron ore and spot prices for imported iron ore fines, 62% iron content, cost and freight (CFR), at Tianjin Port, China, from October 2018 through October 2020. Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Index Mundi, undated.

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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:					
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
October ^e	3,820	30,900	4,030	29,300	4,260

^eEstimated.

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:						
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
October	1,700	14,900	1,960	17,300	4,270	42,600

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–October Quantity (thousand metric tons)	October		January–October		
		Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value ³ (thousand dollars)	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value ³ (thousand dollars)	Value ³ (dollars per ton)
Canada	7,060 ^r	689	62,100	5,760	487,000	84.60
Slovakia	--	83	5,740	866	57,000	65.87
Other	2,670 ^r	(4)	115	1,860	123,000	66.14
Total	9,730 ^r	772	67,900	8,480	667,000	78.65
Concentrates	198	(4)	48	4	1,310	327.25
Fine ores	31 ^r	(4)	58	1	391	391.00
Pellets	9,310 ^r	772	67,800	8,270	658,000	80
Other	183 ^r	--	--	209	7,410	35.46
Total	9,730 ^r	772	67,900	8,480	667,000	78.65

^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–October Quantity (thousand metric tons)	October		January–October		
		Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value ³ (thousand dollars)	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value ³ (thousand dollars)	Value ³ (dollars per ton)
Brazil	1,760	78	9,400	1,290	156,000	121.25
Mexico	--	4	244	49	3,400	69.41
South Africa	56	5	686	39	4,910	125.77
Sweden	78	77	10,800	317	37,200	117.37
Turkey	28	14	497	80	2,750	34.43
Other	1,410 [†]	(4)	56	926	112,000	121.32
Total	3,340	179	21,700	2,700	317,000	117.37
Concentrates	844	22	1,440	196	14,200	72.58
Fine Ores	184	5	299	212	21,300	100.62
Pellets	2,310	152	20,000	2,280	280,000	122.89
Other	6	--	--	12	1,160	96.67
Total	3,340	179	21,700	2,700	317,000	117.37

[†]Revised. -- 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 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–October		October	January–October		October
	2019	2020	2020	2019	2020	2020
Chicago, IL (39)	45	--	--	526	190	22
New Orleans, LA (20)	2,220	2,090	150	2,510	2,210	150
Other	41 ^r	189	2	301 ^r	298	7
Total	2,310	2,280	152	3,340	2,700	179

^rRevised. -- 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."

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–October	9,730 ^r	836,000	3,340	413,000
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	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
October	772	67,900	179	21,700
January–October	8,480	667,000	2,700	317,000

^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.