

# Mineral Industry Surveys

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## U.S. PRODUCTION OF SELECTED MINERAL COMMODITIES IN THE SECOND QUARTER 2020

U.S. mine and plant production data for 14 selected mineral commodities are provided monthly (or quarterly) by the U.S. Geological Survey to the Board of Governors, Federal Reserve System (FRS), for use in preparing its index of industrial production and the related capacity indexes and capacity utilization rates. They are among the key economic indicators monitored by the FRS for guidance in determining national monetary policy.

### Industry Update

Owing to measures imposed to limit the spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19), some mining operations and downstream manufacturing facilities experienced temporary closures and production was curtailed. The base metals sector was hit especially hard in the second quarter of 2020.

### Construction Materials

The combined production of construction-related mineral commodities (cement, construction sand and gravel, crushed stone, and gypsum) in the second quarter of 2020 increased by 42% compared with that in the first quarter of 2020 but the combined production of construction-related materials in the second quarter of 2020 was 3% lower than that in the second quarter of 2019 (tables 1, 2). Production of cement was 3%, higher, and construction sand and gravel, crushed stone, and gypsum were slightly lower in the first 6 months of 2020 as compared with those in the first 6 months of 2019 (fig. 1).

### Base Metals

Secondary aluminum production decreased by 6% in the second quarter of 2020 compared with that in the first quarter of 2020 and was slightly lower in the first 6 months of 2020 compared with that in the first 6 months of 2019. Copper production increased by 4% in the second quarter of 2020 as compared with that in the first quarter of 2020, but production was 4% lower in the first 6 months of 2020 compared with that in the first 6 months of 2019. Iron ore production decreased by 52% in the second quarter of 2020 compared with that in the first quarter of 2020 and was 25% lower in the first 6 months of

2020 compared with that of the first 6 months of 2019. Lead production decreased slightly in the second quarter of 2020 compared with that of the first quarter of 2020 and was essentially unchanged in the first 6 months of 2020 compared with that of the first 6 months of 2019. Zinc production was 24% lower in the second quarter of 2020 compared with that of the first quarter of 2020 and was 15% lower in the first 6 months of 2020 compared with that of the first 6 months of 2019. (fig. 2, table 1).

### Precious Metals

During the second quarter of 2020, gold and silver production increased by 4% each compared with production in the first quarter of 2020. Gold production in the first 6 months of 2020 was 8% lower than production in the first 6 months of 2019. Silver production in the first 6 months of 2020 was slightly higher than production in the first 6 months of 2019 (fig. 3, table 1).

### Other Mineral Materials

Molybdenum production was 22% higher in the second quarter of 2020 than that in the first quarter of 2020 and was 34% higher than that in the first 6 months of 2019. Phosphate rock production was 11% higher in the second quarter of 2020 than that in the first quarter of 2020 and was 5% higher than that in the first 6 months of 2019. Soda ash production was 25% lower in the second quarter of 2020 compared with that of the first quarter of 2020 and 12% lower in the first 6 months of 2020 compared with that of the first 6 months of 2019 (table 1).

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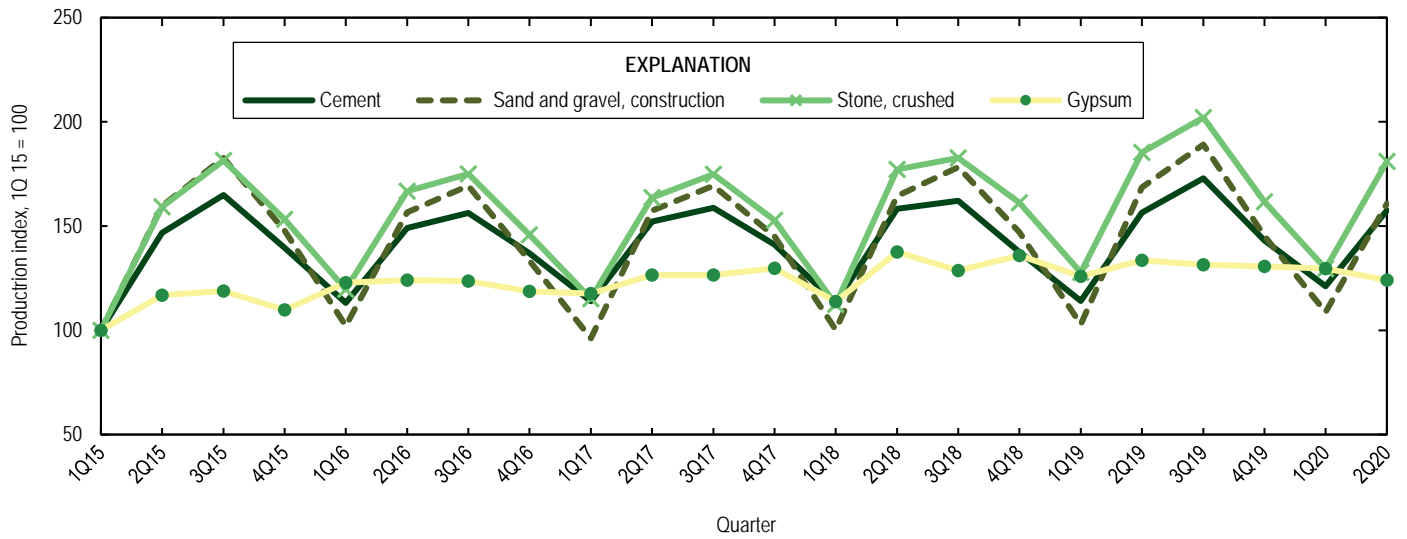


Figure 1. U.S. production of selected construction-related mineral commodities from the first quarter of 2015 through the second quarter of 2020, indexed to the first quarter of 2015.

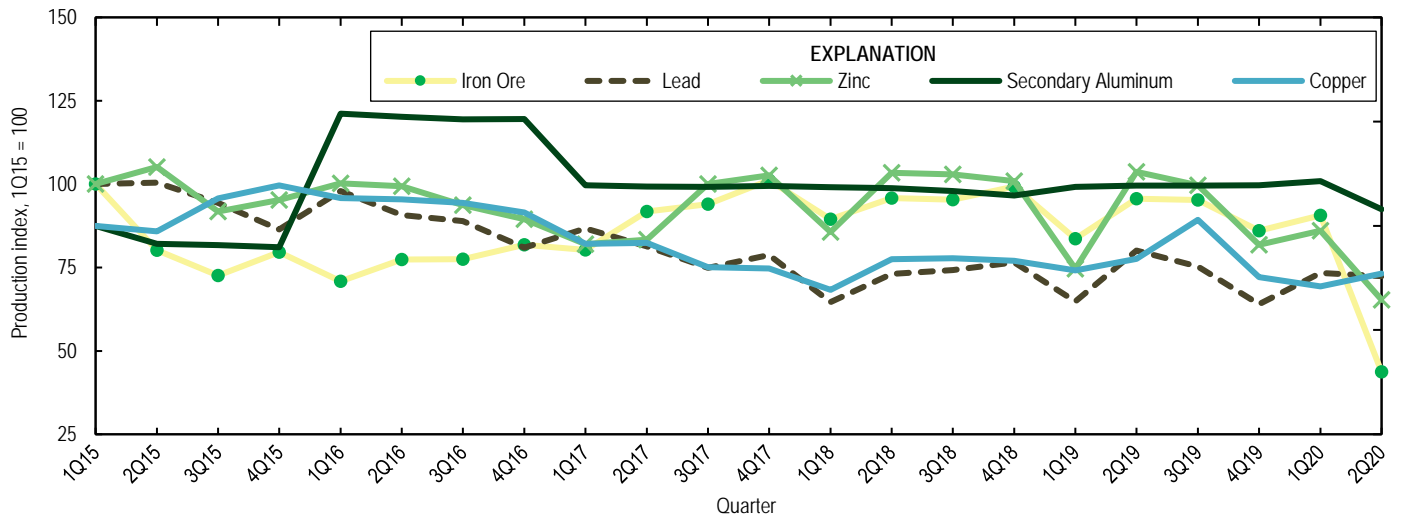


Figure 2. U.S. production of selected base metals from the first quarter of 2015 through the second quarter of 2020, indexed to the first quarter of 2015.

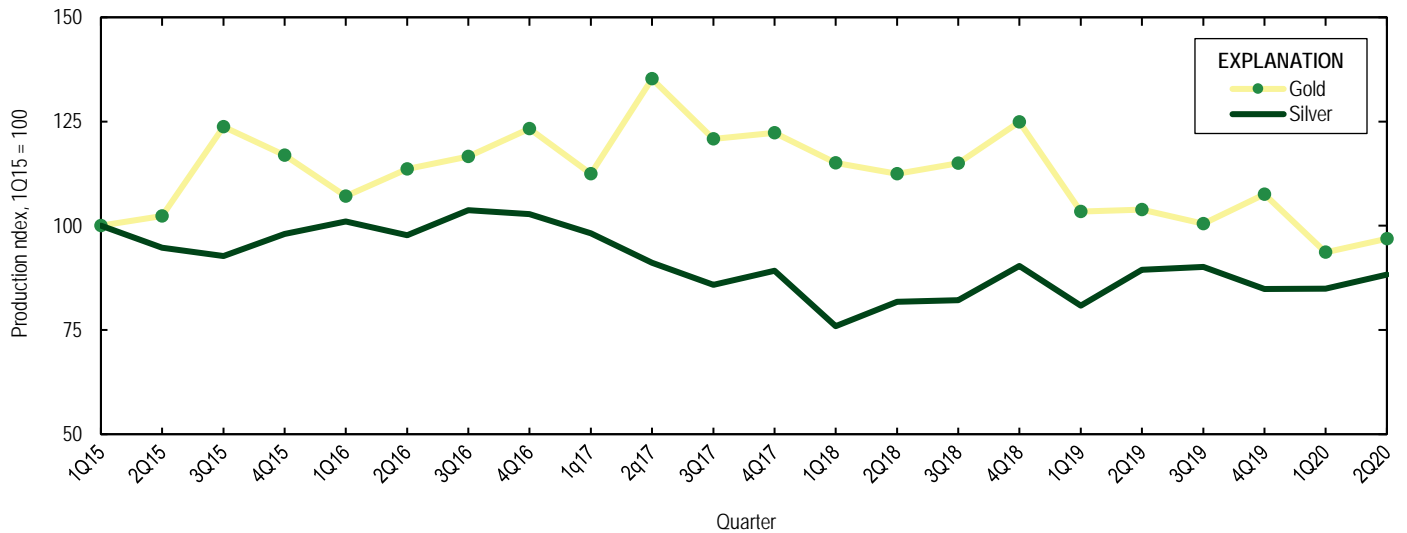


Figure 3. U.S. mine production of gold and silver from the first quarter of 2015 through the second quarter of 2020, indexed to the first quarter of 2015.

TABLE 1  
PRODUCTION TRENDS FOR SELECTED MINERAL COMMODITIES<sup>1</sup>

Mineral commodity	Percent change, 2nd quarter 2020 vs. 1st quarter 2020	Percent change, YTD 2020 vs. YTD 2019
Aluminum (secondary)	-6	-2
Cement	30	3
Copper	4	-4
Gold	4	-8
Gypsum	-4	-2
Iron ore	-52	-25
Lead	-1	1
Molybdenum	22	34
Phosphate rock	11	5
Sand and gravel, construction	48	-1
Silver	4	2
Soda ash	-25	-12
Stone, crushed	40	-1
Zinc	-24	-15

<sup>1</sup>Based on data available through September 2, 2020.

TABLE 2  
U.S. PRODUCTION OF SELECTED MINERAL COMMODITIES, BY QUARTER<sup>1,2</sup>

Commodity		2019						2020		1st quarter– 2nd quarter	
		1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	4th quarter	1st quarter– 4th quarter	1st quarter	2d quarter	2019	2020	
Aluminum <sup>e,3</sup>	thousand metric tons	209	210	210	210	838	212	199	419	410	
Cement <sup>4</sup>	million metric tons	17.0	23.3	25.7	21.3	87.3	18.0	23.4	40.2	41.5	
Copper <sup>5</sup>	thousand metric tons	303	312	344	297	1,260	290 <sup>r</sup>	300	615	590	
Gold <sup>5</sup>	metric tons	49.9 <sup>r</sup>	50.1 <sup>r</sup>	48.5 <sup>r</sup>	51.9 <sup>r</sup>	200 <sup>r</sup>	45.2 <sup>r</sup>	46.8	100	91.9	
Gypsum <sup>6</sup>	million metric tons	4.2	4.5	4.4	4.4	17.5	4.4	4.2	8.7	8.5	
Iron ore <sup>7</sup>	do.	10.8	12.4	12.4	11.2	46.8	11.8	5.7	23.3	17.4	
Lead <sup>8</sup>	thousand metric tons	60.7	75.1 <sup>r</sup>	70.6	60.0	266	68.8	67.9	136	137	
Molybdenum <sup>5</sup>	do.	10.3	11.4	10.2 <sup>r</sup>	11.7	43.6 <sup>r</sup>	13.1 <sup>r</sup>	16.0	21.7	29.2	
Phosphate rock, marketable	million metric tons	5.4	6.0	6.0	6.0 <sup>r</sup>	23.3	5.7	6.3	11.3	11.9	
Sand and gravel, construction <sup>8</sup>	do.	163	268 <sup>r</sup>	300 <sup>r</sup>	231	962	173	255	431	428	
Silver <sup>5</sup>	metric tons	229 <sup>r</sup>	253 <sup>r</sup>	255 <sup>r</sup>	240 <sup>r</sup>	977 <sup>r</sup>	240	250	482	490	
Soda ash <sup>7</sup>	million metric tons	2.9	2.9	2.9	3.0	11.7	2.9 <sup>e</sup>	2.2 <sup>e</sup>	5.8	5.1 <sup>e</sup>	
Stone, crushed <sup>8</sup>	do.	285 <sup>r</sup>	414	451	361 <sup>r</sup>	1,510	289 <sup>r</sup>	404	699	694	
Zinc <sup>5</sup>	thousand metric tons	152	211	203	166	731	175	133	362	308	

<sup>e</sup>Estimated. <sup>r</sup>Revised. do. Ditto.

<sup>1</sup>Based on data available through September 2, 2020.

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

<sup>3</sup>Aluminum alloys produced at secondary smelters in the United States, less primary aluminum consumed, primary silicon consumed, and other alloying ingredients consumed.

<sup>4</sup>Shipments of domestically produced portland and blended cement, including cement made from imported clinker, as a proxy for actual domestic cement production.

<sup>5</sup>Recoverable mine production.

<sup>6</sup>Calcined production.

<sup>7</sup>Mine production.

<sup>8</sup>Sold or used; quarterly survey based on sample survey. Includes all 50 States.