

# Mineral Industry Surveys

**For information, contact:**

Christopher A. Tuck, Iron Ore Commodity Specialist  
 National Minerals Information Center  
 U.S. Geological Survey  
 989 National Center  
 Reston, VA 20192  
 Telephone: (703) 648-4912, Fax: (703) 648-7757  
 Email: ctuck@usgs.gov

Hoa P. Phamdang (Data)  
 Telephone: (703) 648-7965  
 Fax: (703) 648-7975  
 Email: hphamdan@usgs.gov

**Internet:** <https://www.usgs.gov/centers/nmic>

## IRON ORE IN AUGUST 2019

U.S. mine production and shipments of iron ore in August 2019 were 4.12 million metric tons (Mt) and 5.43 Mt, respectively (fig. 1, table 1). Average daily production of iron ore was 133,000 metric tons (t), a 5% decrease from that of July and a 6% increase from that of August 2018. Average daily shipments of iron ore were 175,000 t, a slight decrease from those in July and a slight increase from those in August 2018. Mine stocks were 8.40 Mt at the end of August 2019, a 13% decrease from those held at the end of July 2019 and a 12% decrease from those held in August 2018 (fig. 1, table 1).

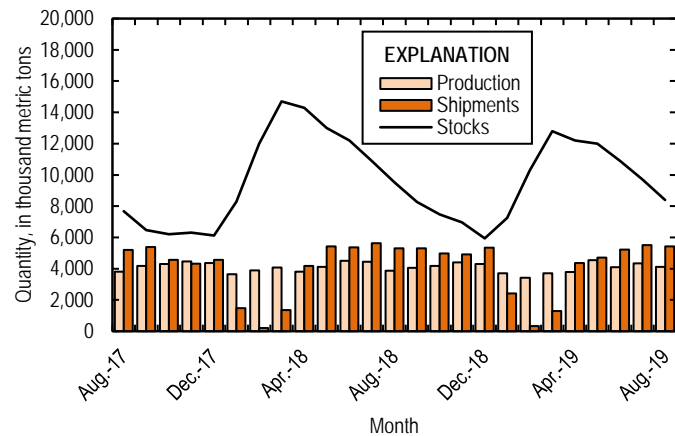


Figure 1. Monthly domestic production, shipments, and stocks of iron ore from August 2017 through August 2019.

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 1.29 Mt in August 2019, a 12% increase from those in July and a 5% decrease from those in August 2018 (fig. 2, table 3, 6). U.S. imports of iron ore were 307,000 t in August 2019, a 41% decrease from those in July and a 31% decrease from those in August 2018 (fig. 2, table 4, 6). The spot price for imported iron ore fines, 62% iron content,

cost and freight, at Tianjin Port, China, was \$93.07 per dry metric ton in August 2019, a 23% decrease from \$120.24 per dry metric ton in July and a 39% increase from \$67.15 per dry metric ton in August 2018 (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.

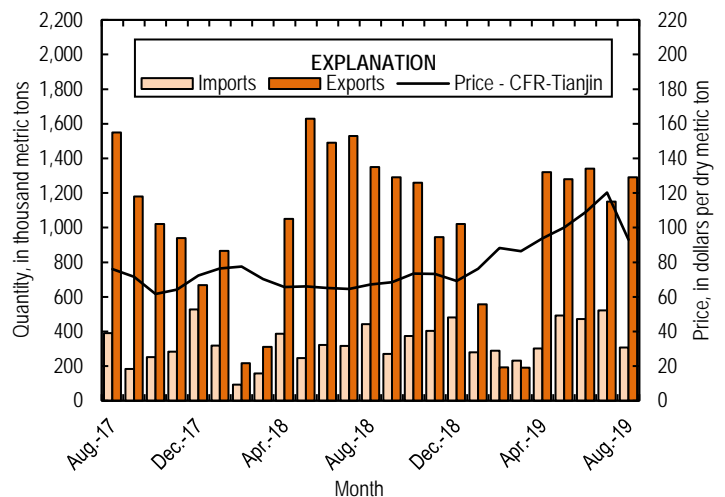


Figure 2. Monthly domestic imports and exports of iron ore and spot prices for imported iron ore fines, 62% iron content, cost and freight (CFR), at Tianjin Port, China, from August 2017 through August 2019. Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Index Mundi, undated.

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TABLE 1  
U.S. PRODUCTION, SHIPMENTS, AND STOCKS OF IRON ORE<sup>1,2</sup>  
(Exclusive of ore containing 5% or more of manganese)

(Thousand metric tons, usable ore)

Period	Production		Shipments <sup>3</sup>		Stocks
	Monthly	Year to date	Monthly	Year to date	End of Month
2018:					
August	3,880	32,400	5,310	29,000	9,520
September	4,050	36,400	5,300	34,300	8,270
October	4,180	40,600	4,970	39,200	7,480
November	4,400	45,000	4,910	44,100	6,970
December	4,310	49,300	5,340	49,500	5,940
2019:					
January	3,710	3,710	2,410	2,410	7,240
February	3,430	7,130	326	2,740	10,300
March	3,710	10,800	1,300	4,040	12,800
April	3,780	14,600	4,360	8,400	12,200
May	4,540	19,200	4,710	13,100	12,000
June	4,090	23,300	5,230	18,300	10,900
July	4,340	27,600	5,500	23,800	9,700
August	4,120	31,700	5,430	29,300	8,400

<sup>1</sup>Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits.

<sup>2</sup>Excludes byproduct ores and iron metallica.

<sup>3</sup>Includes rail and vessel.

TABLE 2  
U.S. PRODUCTION OF PIG IRON AND RAW STEEL, BY TYPE OF FURNACE<sup>1</sup>

(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
2018:						
August	2,030	15,900	2,340	18,100	5,140	38,800
September	2,010	17,900	2,350	20,500	4,910	43,700
October	2,060	19,900	2,360	22,800	5,190	48,900
November	2,030	22,000	2,380	25,200	5,020	53,900
December	2,100	24,100	2,490	27,700	4,990	58,900
2019:						
January	1,880	1,880	2,330	2,330	5,190	5,190
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

<sup>1</sup>Data 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 <sup>1,2</sup>  
 (Exclusive of ore containing 20% or more manganese)

Country or locality and type of product	2018		2019			
	January–August Quantity (thousand metric tons)	August		January–August		
		Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value <sup>3</sup> (thousand dollars)	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value <sup>3</sup> (thousand dollars)	Value <sup>3</sup> (dollars per ton)
Canada	6,470 <sup>r</sup>	762	69,500	5,360	483,000	89.98
Japan	1,450	460	28,300	1,890	116,000	61.57
Other	553 <sup>r</sup>	63	4,690	355	48,800	137.45
Total	8,470 <sup>r</sup>	1,290	103,000	7,610	648,000	85.14
Concentrates	59 <sup>r</sup>	35	3,680	170	40,000	235.48
Fine ores	(4)	30	1,550	38	3,040	9.25
Pellets	8,270 <sup>r</sup>	1,220	97,300	7,260	600,000	82.56
Other	140 <sup>r</sup>	(4)	3	137	5,060	36.91
Total	8,470 <sup>r</sup>	1,290	103,000	7,610	648,000	85.14

<sup>r</sup>Revised.

<sup>1</sup>Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

<sup>2</sup>All countries with less than 5,000 metric tons of exports per month included in "Other."

<sup>3</sup>Free alongside ship (FAS) value.

<sup>4</sup>Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 4  
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF IRON ORE, BY COUNTRY OR LOCALITY AND TYPE<sup>1,2</sup>  
(Exclusive of ore containing 20% or more manganese)

Country or locality of origin and type of product	2018		2019			
	January–August Quantity (thousand metric tons)	August		January–August		
		Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value <sup>3</sup> (thousand dollars)	Quantity (thousand metric tons)	Value <sup>3</sup> (thousand dollars)	Value <sup>3</sup> (dollars per ton)
Brazil	1,500	130	15,500	1,450	177,000	121.78
Canada	391	65	10,500	734	97,600	132.90
Sweden	133	3	273	78	6,960	89.26
Other	256 <sup>r</sup>	109	9,640	630	67,800	107.64
Total	2,280	307	35,900	2,890	349,000	120.65
Concentrates	503 <sup>r</sup>	92	9,060	729	57,500	78.84
Fine Ores	189	81	6,330	173	11,700	22.00
Pellets	1,590	133	20,500	1,980	280,000	140.88
Other	1	--	--	6	273	45.50
Total	2,280	307	35,900	2,890	349,000	120.65

<sup>r</sup>Revised. -- Zero.

<sup>1</sup>Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

<sup>2</sup>All countries with less than 5,000 metric tons of imports per month included in "Other."

<sup>3</sup>Customs value. Excludes international freight and insurance charges.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 5  
 U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF IRON ORE, BY CUSTOMS DISTRICT<sup>1,2</sup>  
 (Exclusive of ore containing 20% or more manganese)

(Thousand metric tons)

Customs district (code no.)	Pellets			Total, all products		
	January–August		August	January–August		August
	2018	2019	2019	2018	2019	2019
Chicago, IL (39)	28	31	--	402	426	81
Houston-Galveston, TX (53)	(3)	4	4	126	175	16
New Orleans, LA (20)	1,560	1,920	129	1,690	2,200	210
Other	--	32 <sup>r</sup>	--	68 <sup>r</sup>	90	(3)
Total	1,590	1,980	133	2,280	2,890	307

<sup>r</sup>Revised. -- Zero.

<sup>1</sup>Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

<sup>2</sup>Customs Districts with less than 5,000 metric tons of imports per month included in "Other."

<sup>3</sup>Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 6  
U.S. IRON ORE TRADE SUMMARY<sup>1</sup>

(Thousand metric tons and thousand dollars)

Period	Exports		Imports	
	Quantity	Value <sup>2</sup>	Quantity	Value <sup>3</sup>
2018:				
January–August	8,440	612,000	2,280	241,000
August	1,350	107,000	442	49,400
September	1,290	103,000	271	23,100
October	1,260	100,000	373	35,200
November	946	77,200	403	38,500
December	1,020	82,900	482	50,400
January–December	12,900	975,000	3,810	388,000
2019:				
January	556	48,600	280	33,300
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	1,150	121,000	521	60,800
August	1,290	103,000	307	35,900
January–August	7,310	648,000	2,890	349,000

<sup>1</sup>Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

<sup>2</sup>Free alongside ship (FAS) value.

<sup>3</sup>Customs value. Excludes international freight and insurance charges.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.