

Mineral Industry Surveys

For information, contact:

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

Michelle B. Blackwell (Data)
Telephone: (703) 648-7943
Fax: (703) 648-7975
E-mail: mblackwell@usgs.gov

Internet: <http://minerals.usgs.gov/minerals>

IRON ORE IN NOVEMBER 2012

U.S. mine production of iron ore in November 2012 was 4.58 million metric tons (Mt), 4% less than that in October. Production was 153,000 metric tons (t) on a daily average basis, nearly equal to that of October 2012 and November 2011. U.S. iron ore shipments were 4.53 Mt in November 2012, slightly higher than those in October 2012.

Shipments were 151,000 t on a daily average basis, 5% more than those of October and 10% less than those of November 2011. Mine stocks at the end of November 2012 were 47,000 t more than those held on October 31, a slight increase. U.S. exports of iron ore were 1.05 Mt and U.S. imports were 452,000 t.

Domestic Production

Cliffs Natural Resources Inc. announced plans to shut down half of the production lines at Northshore Mining's taconite plant in Minnesota on January 5, 2013, and temporarily idle its Empire Mine in Michigan during the summer, which would result in the loss of approximately 625 jobs. Mine expansions at the Bloom Lake Mine in eastern Canada are expected to be delayed owing to low demand (Karnowski, 2012).

Reynolds, IN, was declared to be the site of Magnetation LLC's new pelletizing plant, planned to be operational by the end of 2014, for a projected capital investment of \$300 to \$350 million. It is expected to employ over 100 people, use local railways and highways, and produce 3 Mt of iron ore pellets per year (Magnetation LLC, 2012). Magnetation also planned to build two concentrate reclamation plants alongside their existing infrastructure near Coleraine, MN, for an additional \$120 million investment.

World Production

China's import prices for iron ore fines at 62% iron content spot price (cost and freight Tianjin port) recovered to \$120.35 per dry metric ton in November, a 5.62% increase from that of October 2012 (Index Mundi, 2012). This furthers the recovery

from September's low of \$99.47 per ton of fines, the lowest price since November 2009.

New Millenium Iron Corp. planned to begin producing approximately 2 Mt of iron ore sinter annually in 2013 as it continues ramping up production to 4.2 Mt in 2014 and 6 Mt in 2015. New Millennium also planned to enter into a joint venture with Tata Steel Minerals Canada Ltd. to develop a mine in the Timmins area of Newfoundland and Labrador in Canada, which was expected to cost \$563 million (American Metal Market, 2012).

Vale SA's investment of an estimated \$2 billion on a new class of dry-bulk cargo ships, known as Valemax ships, culminated in a circular by China's Transport Ministry which raised safety concerns that have prevented further Valemax ships from entering Chinese ports. These ships were specifically designed to reduce costs and carry the heavy iron ore loads, approximately 350,000 t, from processing plants in Brazil to consumers in China. The Export-Import Bank of China and the Bank of China Ltd. initially financed \$1.3 billion to build 24 of the ships in Chinese shipyards (Murphy, 2012).

References Cited

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- Karnowski, Steve, 2012, Cliffs cutting iron production, affecting 625 jobs: BusinessWeek, November 19. (Accessed November 20, 2012, at www.businessweek.com/ap/2012-11-19/cliffs-cutting-iron-production-affecting-625-jobs.)
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TABLE 1
U.S. PRODUCTION AND SHIPMENTS OF IRON ORE^{1,2}
(Exclusive of ore containing 5% or more of manganese)

(Thousand metric tons)

Period	Production		Shipments	
	Monthly	Year to date	Monthly	Year to date
2011:				
November	4,600	49,000	5,010	48,100
December	4,630	53,600	6,040	54,200
2012:				
January	4,170	4,170	3,840	3,840
February	4,270	8,450	725	4,560
March	4,290	12,700	2,130	6,690
April	3,980	16,700	5,150	11,800
May	4,430	21,100	5,750	17,600
June	4,200	25,300	5,270	22,900
July	4,250	29,600	5,730	28,600
August	4,350	33,900	5,220	33,800
September	4,340	38,300	4,670	38,500
October	4,750	43,000	4,460	42,900
November	4,580	47,600	4,530	47,500

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits.

²Excludes byproduct ores.

TABLE 2
U.S. PRODUCTION, SHIPMENTS, AND STOCKS OF IRON ORE IN NOVEMBER^{1,2}

(Thousand metric tons)

State	Production		Shipments ³		Stocks ⁴	
	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012
Michigan	1,120	1,140	1,270	1,110	2,000	1,510
Minnesota	3,490	3,440	3,740	3,420	2,250	1,510
Total	4,600	4,580	5,010	4,530	4,250	3,020

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

²Excludes byproduct ore.

³Includes rail and vessel.

⁴Includes usable (marketable) material at mines, concentrators, pelletizing plants, and loading docks. Excludes stocks of crude ore at mine and concentrates at agglomerating complexes.

TABLE 3
CANADA: SHIPMENTS OF IRON ORE^{1,2}

(Thousand dry metric tons)

Period	Newfoundland and Labrador	Quebec	British Columbia	Total
2011:				
November	1,210	2,340	5	3,550
December	1,340	2,200	1	3,540
January–December	15,800	19,800	59	35,700
2012:				
January	1,240	1,420	1	2,650
February	1,400	1,150	1	2,550
March	1,030	1,880	(3)	2,910
April	1,460	1,450	4	2,900
May	1,320	1,780	3	3,100
June	1,320	2,290	3	3,620
July	1,390	1,550	3	2,940
August	1,410	1,620	2	3,030
September	1,280	2,040	4	3,330
October	1,210	1,430	3	2,650
November	NA	NA	NA	NA

NA Not available.

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

²Includes production from steel plant waste oxides.

³Less than ½ unit.

Source: Natural Resources Canada.

TABLE 4
U.S. PRODUCTION OF PIG IRON AND RAW STEEL, BY TYPE OF FURNACE¹

(Thousand metric tons)

Period	Pig iron production, blast furnace		Raw steel production			
	Monthly	Year to date	Basic oxygen furnace		Electric furnace	
			Monthly	Year to date	Monthly	Year to date
2011:						
November	2,990	29,600	2,680	28,900	4,040	47,800
December	3,190	32,800	2,840	31,700	4,290	52,100
2012:						
January	3,080	3,080	2,780	2,780	4,630	4,630
February	3,050	6,130	2,660	5,440	4,490	9,120
March	3,430	9,560	3,060	8,500	4,530	13,700
April	2,920	12,500	3,190	11,700	4,640	18,300
May	3,320	15,800	2,900	14,600	4,590	22,900
June	2,970	18,800	2,570	17,200	4,270	27,200
July	2,930	21,700	2,580	19,700	4,390	31,500
August	2,860	24,600	3,180	22,900	4,450	36,000
September	2,440	27,000	2,720	25,600	4,090	40,100
October	2,260	29,300	2,700	28,300	4,090	44,200
November	2,820	32,100	2,480	30,800	3,960	48,100

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

Source: American Iron and Steel Institute.

TABLE 5
U.S. EXPORTS OF IRON ORE, BY COUNTRY OF DESTINATION AND TYPE^{1,2}

(Thousand metric tons)

Country of destination and type of product	2011	2012				
		1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	October	November
Canada	7,050	1,290	1,850	1,590	421	826
China	3,190	814	1,820	1,020	44	167
Colombia	16	1	--	--	--	--
France	430	--	--	--	--	--
Germany	81	--	--	--	--	--
Japan	--	--	--	--	32	--
Mexico	51	48	98	240	93	55
Spain	187	--	--	(3)	--	--
Switzerland	46	--	--	--	--	--
Other	8	5	1	(3)	6	(3)
Total	11,100	2,160	3,770	2,860	596	1,050
Concentrates	628	148	449	411	93	55
Coarse ores	1,740	554	499	123	--	100
Fine ores	208	114	10	87	37	(3)
Pellets	8,470	1,340	2,810	2,240	443	893
Briquettes	(3)	(3)	(3)	--	--	--
Other agglomerates	1	(3)	1	(3)	23	--
Roasted pyrites	3	1	1	(3)	(3)	(3)
Total	11,100	2,160	3,770	2,860	596	1,050

-- Zero.

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

²Includes agglomerates.

³Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 6
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF IRON ORE, BY COUNTRY AND TYPE^{1,2}
(Exclusive of ore containing 20% or more manganese)

Country of origin and type of product	2011			2012		
	January–November	November		January–November		
	Thousand metric tons	Thousand metric tons	Value ³ (thousand dollars)	Thousand metric tons	Value ³ (thousand dollars)	Value ³ (dollars per ton)
Argentina	74	--	--	81	11,400	140.43
Brazil	353	10	1,040	739	94,700	128.09
Canada	3,680	342	49,800	3,470	538,000	155.15
Chile	165	--	--	104	15,500	148.86
China	(4)	--	--	(4)	115	5,750.00
Finland	4	--	--	4	278	69.50
France	--	--	--	(4)	9	453.45
Germany	(4)	--	--	(4)	11	134.88
India	--	--	--	(4)	2	48.00
Latvia	--	--	--	(4)	3	3,150.00
Mexico	27	--	--	47	5,630	119.74
Norway	(4)	--	--	(4)	72	299.73
Peru	14	26	2,630	44	4,620	104.89
Russia	(4)	--	--	--	--	--
South Africa	147	52	4,980	91	11,300	124.62
Sweden	62	6	1,080	72	9,000	124.97
Trinidad and Tobago	8	--	--	--	--	--
Ukraine	(4)	--	--	(4)	15	54.17
United Kingdom	--	--	--	76	10,100	132.87
Venezuela	278	15	1,410	75	8,340	111.16
Total	4,820	452	61,000	4,800	709,000	147.76
Concentrates	722	78	7,460	861	99,500	115.62
Coarse ores	42	32	1,480	40	2,550	63.78
Fine ores	713	26	2,640	363	49,200	135.53
Pellets	3,290	316	49,400	3,530	557,000	157.85
Briquettes	12	--	--	--	--	--
Other agglomerates	34	--	--	(4)	115	5,750.00
Roasted pyrites	4	--	--	4	303	75.75
Total	4,820	452	61,000	4,800	709,000	147.76

-- Zero.

¹Data, with the exception of the dollars per ton column, are rounded to no more than three significant digits, may not add to totals shown.

²Includes agglomerates.

³Customs value. Excludes international freight and insurance charges.

⁴Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 7
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF IRON ORE IN NOVEMBER 2012^{1,2}
(Exclusive of ore containing 20% or more manganese)

(Thousand metric tons)

Country of origin	Type of product						Total
	Concentrates	Coarse ores	Fine ores	Pellets	Briquettes and other agglomerates	Roasted pyrites	
Brazil	10	--	--	--	--	--	10
Canada	(3)	26	--	316	--	--	342
Peru	--	--	26	--	--	--	26
South Africa	52	--	--	--	--	--	52
Sweden	--	6	(3)	--	--	--	6
Venezuela	15	--	--	--	--	--	15
Total	78	32	26	316	--	--	452

-- Zero.

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

²Includes agglomerates.

³Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 8
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF IRON ORE PELLETS, BY COUNTRY¹

Country of origin	2011		2012			
	January–November Thousand metric tons	November		January–November		
		Thousand metric tons	Value ² (thousand dollars)	Thousand metric tons	Value ² (thousand dollars)	Value ² (dollars per ton)
Brazil	66	--	--	284	40,700	143.27
Canada	3,220	316	49,400	3,170	506,000	159.71
United Kingdom	--	--	--	76	10,100	132.87
Total	3,290	316	49,400	3,530	557,000	157.85

-- Zero.

¹Data, with the exception of the dollars per ton column, are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

²Customs value. Excludes international freight and insurance charges.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 9
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.)	January–November		November
	2011	2012	2012
Baltimore, MD (13)	1,440	1,450	6
Buffalo, NY (09)	(3)	--	--
Charleston, SC (16)	--	(3)	--
Chicago, IL (39)	645	689	77
Cleveland, OH (41)	2,030	1,880	316
Detroit, MI (38)	16	(3)	--
El Paso, TX (24)	18	--	--
Houston-Galveston, TX (53)	20	54	--
Laredo, TX (23)	1	--	--
Los Angeles, CA (27)	(3)	(3)	--
Mobile, AL (19)	13	48	26
New Orleans, LA (20)	616	618	--
New York, NY (10)	(3)	(3)	(3)
Norfolk, VA (14)	1	--	--
Ogdensburg, NY (07)	1	(3)	--
Philadelphia, PA (11)	4	4	--
Port Arthur, TX (21)	--	27	--
San Francisco, CA (28)	5	--	--
Seattle, WA (30)	--	26	26
St. Albans, VT (02)	1	(3)	(3)
Tampa, FL (18)	15	3	--
Total	4,820	4,800	452

-- Zero.

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

²Includes agglomerates.

³Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 10
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF IRON ORE PELLETS,
BY CUSTOMS DISTRICT¹

(Thousand metric tons)

Customs district (code no.)	January–November		November
	2011	2012	2012
Baltimore, MD (13)	1,180	1,260	--
Buffalo, NY (09)	(2)	--	--
Chicago, IL (39)	10	41	--
Cleveland, OH (41)	2,030	1,880	316
New Orleans, LA (20)	70	345	--
Total	3,290	3,530	316

-- Zero.

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

²Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.