

# Mineral Industry Surveys

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## IRON ORE IN DECEMBER 2008

U.S. mine production of iron ore in December 2008, on a daily average basis, was 12% less than that for the prior month, and was 17% less than that of December 2007, according to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). Average daily production, at 115,000 metric tons (t), was 16,100 t less than that of November 2008.

Average daily shipments in December 2008, at 91,100 t, were 39,300 t less than those of the prior month, and 69,000 t less than those of December 2007. Mine stocks at the end of December 2008 were 746,000 t greater than the revised stocks held on November 30, a 13% increase. U.S. net exports of iron ore in November 2008 were 92,000 t, with exports 9% greater than imports.

**Price.**—China's iron ore purchasers opened annual price negotiations asking for major reductions in the iron ore price and a realignment of the contract year with the calendar year. Some analysts consider that steel producers have their strongest bargaining position in annual contract negotiations since at least 2002. Reductions of 40% in contract price have been mentioned as reasonable (Wilson, 2008).

**Domestic Production.**—Cliffs Natural Resources Inc. announced 2008 production for its North American operations. Mine production was as follows (United States, unless otherwise specified): Empire, 4.7 million metric tons (Mt); Hibbing Taconite, 8.3 Mt; Northshore, 5.6 Mt; Tilden, 7.7 Mt; United Taconite, 5.2 Mt; and Wabush (Canada), 4.3 Mt. Cliffs' share of its total production from North American operations, 35.8 Mt, was 23.3 Mt. Total Cliffs' North American production tonnage share for the mines it manages during the year increased 5% compared with that of 2007, and overall iron ore sales revenue increased 36% compared with that of 2007 to \$2,369.6 million (Cliffs Natural Resources Inc., 2008, p. 58, 59.).

**World Production.**—Rio Tinto plc announced full-year production figures for 2008. Rio Tinto's share of saleable quantities of iron ore plus pellets were as follows (Australia, unless otherwise specified)—Channar (60% owned), 6.2 Mt; Corumba (Brazil), 2.0 Mt; Eastern Range, 8.2 Mt; Hamersley, 95.6 Mt; Hope Downs (50% owned), 5.7 Mt; Iron Ore Company of Canada (58.7% owned), 9.3 Mt; and Robe River (53%

owned), 26.6 Mt. Rio Tinto's share of total world mine production was 153.4 Mt, a 6% increase from that of 2007 (Rio Tinto plc, 2009, p. 110).

BHP Billiton Ltd. announced full-year production figures for 2008. BHP Billiton's share of saleable quantities of iron ore (wet) were as follows (Australia, unless otherwise specified)—Area C Joint Venture (JV) (85% owned), 33.7 Mt; Goldsworthy JV (85% owned), 1.2 Mt; Jimblebar (85% owned), 5.2 Mt; Mt. Newman JV (85% owned), 28.5 Mt; Samarco (Brazil) (50% owned), 9.3 Mt; and Yandi JV (85% owned), 39.7 Mt. BHP Billiton's share of total world mine production was 117.5 Mt, a 14% increase from that of 2006 (BHP Billiton Ltd., 2009, p. 4).

In 2008, Brazil's Companhia Vale do Rio Doce (Vale) reported record iron ore production of 301.7 Mt (includes Vale's Samarco joint venture)—a slight decrease compared with that of 2007. Vale pellet production in 2008 was 44.7 Mt—a slight decrease compared with that of 2007 (Companhia Vale do Rio Doce, 2008, p. 2, 3).

**North American Development.**—Iron Ore Company of Canada placed its \$800 million expansion program in Western Labrador (See Iron Ore in March 2008.) on hold until demand for steel improves (Skillings Mining Review, 2009).

## References Cited

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

(Thousand metric tons)

| Period    | Production |              | Shipments |              |
|-----------|------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|
|           | Monthly    | Year to date | Monthly   | Year to date |
| 2007:     |            |              |           |              |
| December  | 4,320      | 52,000       | 4,960     | 51,500       |
| 2008:     |            |              |           |              |
| January   | 4,170      | 4,170        | 3,730     | 3,730        |
| February  | 3,990      | 8,160        | 1,090     | 4,830        |
| March     | 4,780      | 12,900       | 2,190     | 7,020        |
| April     | 4,130      | 17,100       | 5,220     | 12,200       |
| May       | 4,860      | 21,900       | 6,230     | 18,500       |
| June      | 4,870      | 26,800       | 5,450     | 23,900       |
| July      | 4,960      | 31,800       | 6,160     | 30,100       |
| August    | 4,840      | 36,600       | 6,100     | 36,200       |
| September | 4,310      | 40,900       | 5,500     | 41,700       |
| October   | 4,540      | 45,400       | 4,860     | 46,500       |
| November  | 3,940      | 49,400       | 3,910     | 50,400       |
| December  | 3,570      | 53,000       | 2,820     | 53,300       |

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

<sup>2</sup>Excludes byproduct ores.

TABLE 2  
U.S. PRODUCTION, SHIPMENTS, AND STOCKS OF IRON ORE IN DECEMBER<sup>1,2</sup>

(Thousand metric tons)

| State     | Production |       | Shipments <sup>3</sup> |       | Stocks <sup>4</sup> |       |
|-----------|------------|-------|------------------------|-------|---------------------|-------|
|           | 2008       | 2007  | 2008                   | 2007  | 2008                | 2007  |
| Michigan  | 951        | 846   | 864                    | 1,390 | 2,410               | 2,540 |
| Minnesota | 2,620      | 3,480 | 1,960                  | 3,570 | 4,220               | 3,950 |
| Total     | 3,570      | 4,320 | 2,820                  | 4,960 | 6,630               | 6,490 |

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

<sup>2</sup>Excludes byproduct ore.

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

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

Note: Stocks at end of November 2008 for Minnesota have been revised to 3,560 thousand metric tons.

TABLE 3  
CANADA: SHIPMENTS OF IRON ORE<sup>1,2</sup>

(Thousand dry metric tons)

| Period       | Newfoundland<br>and Labrador | Quebec | British<br>Columbia | Total  |
|--------------|------------------------------|--------|---------------------|--------|
| <b>2007:</b> |                              |        |                     |        |
| November     | 2,110                        | 1,470  | 7                   | 3,590  |
| December     | 1,180                        | 1,450  | 5                   | 2,640  |
| Year total   | 17,900                       | 14,900 | 75                  | 32,800 |
| <b>2008:</b> |                              |        |                     |        |
| January      | 1,210                        | 816    | 6                   | 2,030  |
| February     | 1,120                        | 833    | 4                   | 1,950  |
| March        | 1,140                        | 855    | 4                   | 2,000  |
| April        | 1,680                        | 984    | 4                   | 2,670  |
| May          | 2,670                        | 1,330  | 7                   | 4,010  |
| June         | 1,580                        | 1,380  | 9                   | 2,970  |
| July         | 1,820                        | 1,370  | 8                   | 3,200  |
| August       | 2,270                        | 1,200  | 9                   | 3,470  |
| September    | 1,310                        | 1,050  | 9                   | 2,370  |
| October      | 1,760                        | 984    | 8                   | 2,750  |
| November     | 1,370                        | 687    | 6                   | 2,060  |

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

<sup>2</sup>Includes production from steel plant waste oxides.

Source: Natural Resources Canada.

TABLE 4  
PRODUCTION OF PIG IRON AND RAW STEEL IN THE UNITED STATES, BY TYPE OF  
FURNACE<sup>1</sup>

(Thousand metric tons)

| Period       | Pig iron production,<br>blast furnace |              | Raw steel production              |              |                  |              |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|
|              | Monthly                               | Year to date | Basic oxygen furnace <sup>2</sup> |              | Electric furnace |              |
|              |                                       |              | Monthly                           | Year to date | Monthly          | Year to date |
| <b>2007:</b> |                                       |              |                                   |              |                  |              |
| November     | 2,940                                 | 33,000       | 3,280                             | 36,800       | 4,920            | 52,900       |
| December     | 3,160                                 | 36,200       | 3,550                             | 40,400       | 4,900            | 57,800       |
| <b>2008:</b> |                                       |              |                                   |              |                  |              |
| January      | 2,900                                 | 2,900        | 3,550                             | 3,550        | 5,100            | 5,100        |
| February     | 3,110                                 | 6,010        | 3,470                             | 7,020        | 4,750            | 9,850        |
| March        | 3,280                                 | 9,290        | 3,700                             | 10,700       | 4,900            | 14,800       |
| April        | 3,240                                 | 12,500       | 3,560                             | 14,300       | 4,820            | 19,600       |
| May          | 3,210                                 | 15,700       | 3,650                             | 17,900       | 5,080            | 24,700       |
| June         | 3,020                                 | 18,800       | 3,450                             | 21,400       | 4,930            | 29,600       |
| July         | 3,090                                 | 21,800       | 3,460                             | 24,800       | 5,060            | 34,600       |
| August       | 3,290                                 | 25,100       | 3,680                             | 28,500       | 4,990            | 39,600       |
| September    | 2,900                                 | 28,000       | 3,290                             | 31,800       | 4,560            | 44,200       |
| October      | 2,770                                 | 30,800       | 2,330                             | 34,100       | 3,990            | 48,200       |
| November     | 2,040                                 | 32,800       | 1,980                             | 36,100       | 2,660            | 50,800       |

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

<sup>2</sup>Raw steel production figures for the basic oxygen process are usually greater than the corresponding pig iron production figures because scrap is routinely melted in the basic oxygen furnace together with the molten pig iron.

Source: American Iron and Steel Institute.

TABLE 5  
U.S. EXPORTS OF IRON ORE, BY COUNTRY OF DESTINATION AND TYPE<sup>1,2</sup>

(Thousand metric tons)

| Country of destination<br>and type of product | 2007         | 2008         |              |              |              |              |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
|   |              | 1st quarter  | 2nd quarter  | 3rd quarter  | October      | November     |
| Algeria                                       | 570          | --           | 28           | 52           | --           | --           |
| Belgium                                       | --           | 57           | 161          | (3)          | (3)          | --           |
| Canada  | 7,340        | 1,460        | 2,290        | 3,160        | 979          | 578          |
| China   | 1,130        | 24           | 8            | 5            | --           | 54           |
| Colombia                                      | 7            | 1            | 3            | 2            | 1            | 2            |
| Czech Republic                                | --           | --           | 83           | --           | --           | --           |
| France  | --           | --           | --           | 54           | --           | 50           |
| Germany                                       | --           | 1            | 79           | (3)          | --           | 76           |
| Japan   | 7            | --           | --           | --           | --           | --           |
| Malaysia                                      | --           | 24           | 1            | --           | --           | --           |
| Mexico  | 148          | 67           | 100          | 93           | 37           | 31           |
| Peru  | 5            | --           | --           | --           | --           | --           |
| Poland  | --           | --           | --           | 103          | --           | --           |
| Romania                                       | 87           | --           | 76           | 52           | --           | --           |
| Serbia  | --           | --           | --           | 51           | --           | --           |
| Slovakia                                      | --           | --           | 50           | --           | 27           | 292          |
| Spain   | --           | (3)          | 77           | 25           | --           | --           |
| Sweden  | 2            | 1            | --           | 2            | 1            | --           |
| Other   | 8            | 2            | 6            | 4            | 1            | 2            |
| <b>Total</b>                                  | <b>9,310</b> | <b>1,630</b> | <b>2,960</b> | <b>3,610</b> | <b>1,050</b> | <b>1,090</b> |
| Pellets                                       | 9,170        | 1,570        | 2,910        | 3,490        | 1,000        | 1,030        |
| Concentrates                                  | 51           | 21           | 39           | 23           | 2            | 56           |
| Briquettes                                    | 1            | --           | --           | --           | (3)          | --           |
| Sinter  | 22           | 16           | 3            | 1            | --           | --           |
| Direct shipping ores - coarse                 | 6            | 2            | 5            | 14           | 25           | --           |
| Direct shipping ores - fines                  | 51           | 28           | 9            | 78           | 18           | 3            |
| Roasted pyrites                               | 11           | --           | (3)          | (3)          | (3)          | (3)          |
| <b>Total</b>                                  | <b>9,310</b> | <b>1,630</b> | <b>2,960</b> | <b>3,610</b> | <b>1,050</b> | <b>1,090</b> |

-- Zero.

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

<sup>2</sup>Includes agglomerates.

<sup>3</sup>Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

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

| Country of origin<br>and type of product | 2008                       |   |                            |   |  | 2007   |
|--|----------------------------|---|----------------------------|---|--|--|
|  | November                   |   | Year to date               |   |  | January-November<br>Thousand<br>metric<br>tons |
|  | Thousand<br>metric<br>tons | Value <sup>3</sup><br>(thousand<br>dollars) | Thousand<br>metric<br>tons | Value <sup>3</sup><br>(thousand<br>dollars) | Value <sup>3</sup><br>(dollars<br>per ton) |  |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina                   | --                         | --  | 23                         | 1,570                                       | 68.43                                      | --   |
| Brazil                                   | 209                        | 18,500                                      | 2,590                      | 213,000                                     | 82.45                                      | 2,950  |
| Canada                                   | 631                        | 71,600                                      | 5,660                      | 617,000                                     | 109.01                                     | 5,050  |
| Chile                                    | 42                         | 4,450                                       | 215                        | 16,800                                      | 78.25                                      | 279  |
| China                                    | --                         | --  | 14                         | 266   | 19.00                                      | --   |
| Finland                                  | --                         | --  | 6                          | 233   | 38.83                                      | 8  |
| Greenland                                | --                         | --  | --                         | --  | --   | (4)  |
| India                                    | --                         | --  | --                         | --  | --   | (4)  |
| Italy                                    | --                         | --  | 1                          | 43  | 43.00                                      | --   |
| Japan                                    | --                         | --  | (4)                        | 7   | 793.89                                     | --   |
| Mexico                                   | 27                         | 2,640                                       | 52                         | 4,290                                       | 82.56                                      | 35   |
| Netherlands                              | --                         | --  | 1                          | 22  | 22.00                                      | --   |
| Norway                                   | --                         | --  | --                         | --  | --   | 8  |
| Peru                                     | 20                         | 980   | 59                         | 3,100                                       | 52.59                                      | 108  |
| Russia                                   | 61                         | 8,000                                       | 127                        | 16,000                                      | 126.06                                     | --   |
| Spain                                    | (4)                        | 30  | 2                          | 112   | 56.00                                      | --   |
| Sweden                                   | 2                          | 38  | 52                         | 2,050                                       | 39.44                                      | 141  |
| Switzerland                              | --                         | --  | 70                         | 5,410                                       | 77.29                                      | --   |
| United Kingdom                           | --                         | --  | --                         | --  | --   | (4)  |
| Venezuela                                | --                         | --  | 68                         | 4,210                                       | 61.85                                      | 34   |
| Total                                    | 993                        | 106,000                                     | 8,940                      | 885,000                                     | 98.97                                      | 8,620  |
| Concentrates                             | 160                        | 16,700                                      | 1,230                      | 90,900                                      | 73.70                                      | 1,280  |
| Coarse ores                              | --                         | --  | 37                         | 1,800                                       | 48.62                                      | 166  |
| Fine ores                                | 265                        | 22,100                                      | 1,880                      | 141,000                                     | 74.84                                      | 1,590  |
| Pellets                                  | 569                        | 67,500                                      | 5,770                      | 650,000                                     | 112.65                                     | 5,480  |
| Briquettes                               | (4)                        | 30  | 1                          | 97  | 97.00                                      | --   |
| Other agglomerates                       | --                         | --  | --                         | --  | --   | 87   |
| Roasted pyrites                          | --                         | --  | 12                         | 537   | 44.75                                      | 11   |
| Total                                    | 993                        | 106,000                                     | 8,940                      | 885,000                                     | 98.97                                      | 8,620  |

-- Zero.

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

<sup>2</sup>Includes agglomerates.

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

<sup>4</sup>Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 7  
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF IRON ORE IN NOVEMBER 2008<sup>1,2</sup>  
(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            | --              | --          | 189       | 20      | --                                | --              | 209   |
| Canada            | 29              | --          | 54        | 549     | --                                | --              | 631   |
| Chile             | 42              | --          | --        | --      | --                                | --              | 42    |
| Mexico            | 27              | --          | --        | --      | --                                | --              | 27    |
| Peru              | --              | --          | 20        | --      | --                                | --              | 20    |
| Russia            | 61              | --          | --        | --      | --                                | --              | 61    |
| Spain             | --              | --          | --        | --      | (3)                               | --              | (3)   |
| Sweden            | --              | --          | 2         | --      | --                                | --              | 2     |
| Total             | 160             | --          | 265       | 569     | (3)                               | --              | 993   |

-- Zero.

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

<sup>2</sup>Includes agglomerates.

<sup>3</sup>Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 8  
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF PELLETS, BY COUNTRY<sup>1</sup>

| Country of origin      | 2008                 |                                       |                      |                                       |                                      | 2007                 |
|------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
|                        | November             |                                       | Year to date         |                                       |                                      | January-November     |
|                        | Thousand metric tons | Value <sup>2</sup> (thousand dollars) | Thousand metric tons | Value <sup>2</sup> (thousand dollars) | Value <sup>2</sup> (dollars per ton) | Thousand metric tons |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | --                   | --                                    | 23                   | 1,570                                 | 68.43                                | --                   |
| Brazil                 | 20                   | 2,360                                 | 616                  | 65,600                                | 106.50                               | 1,170                |
| Canada                 | 549                  | 65,100                                | 5,050                | 578,000                               | 114.55                               | 4,230                |
| Mexico                 | --                   | --                                    | --                   | --                                    | --                                   | 19                   |
| Peru                   | --                   | --                                    | 18                   | 736                                   | 40.89                                | 9                    |
| Sweden                 | --                   | --                                    | --                   | --                                    | --                                   | 24                   |
| Venezuela              | --                   | --                                    | 68                   | 4,210                                 | 61.85                                | 34                   |
| Total                  | 569                  | 67,500                                | 5,770                | 650,000                               | 112.65                               | 5,480                |

-- Zero.

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

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

(Thousand metric tons)

| Customs district (code no.) | November | January-November |       |
|-----------------------------|----------|------------------|-------|
|                             | 2008     | 2008             | 2007  |
| Baltimore, MD (13)          | 345      | 3,590            | 2,830 |
| Buffalo, NY (09)            | --       | 1                | --    |
| Charleston, SC (16)         | 2        | 26               | 3     |
| Chicago, IL (39)            | 122      | 1,130            | 1,280 |
| Cleveland, OH (41)          | 361      | 2,970            | 2,820 |
| Detroit, MI (38)            | --       | (3)              | (3)   |
| Houston-Galveston, TX (53)  | 20       | 51               | 65    |
| Minneapolis, MN (35)        | 53       | 53               | --    |
| Mobile, AL (19)             | --       | 50               | 33    |
| New Orleans, LA (20)        | 76       | 1,020            | 1,470 |
| New York, NY (10)           | --       | 1                | --    |
| Nogales, AZ (26)            | --       | --               | 16    |
| Norfolk, VA (14)            | (3)      | 10               | --    |
| Ogdensburg, NY (07)         | 1        | 11               | 1     |
| Philadelphia, PA (11)       | --       | 6                | 8     |
| Port Arthur, TX (21)        | --       | --               | 71    |
| Providence, RI (05)         | --       | --               | 8     |
| Savannah, GA (17)           | --       | --               | (3)   |
| St. Albans, VT (02)         | --       | --               | (3)   |
| Tampa, FL (18)              | 13       | 13               | 13    |
| Total                       | 993      | 8,940            | 8,620 |

-- Zero.

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

<sup>2</sup>Includes agglomerates.

<sup>3</sup>Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 10  
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF PELLETS,  
BY CUSTOMS DISTRICT<sup>1</sup>

(Thousand metric tons)

| Customs district (code no.)  | November | January-November |       |
|------------------------------|----------|------------------|-------|
|                              | 2008     | 2008             | 2007  |
| Baltimore, MD (13)           | 147      | 1,860            | 1,170 |
| Chicago, IL (39)             | 41       | 240              | 392   |
| Cleveland, OH (41)           | 361      | 2,950            | 2,760 |
| Detroit, MI (38)             | --       | --               | (2)   |
| Houston - Galveston, TX (53) | 20       | 50               | 65    |
| Mobile, AL (19)              | --       | 18               | --    |
| New Orleans, LA (20)         | --       | 658              | 1,070 |
| Port Arthur, TX (21)         | --       | --               | 24    |
| Total                        | 569      | 5,770            | 5,480 |

-- Zero.

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

<sup>2</sup>Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.