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 MARCH 2013

U.S. mine production of iron ore in March 2013 was 4.4 million metric tons (Mt), 13% greater than that in February. Production was 142,000 metric tons (t) on a daily average basis, 13% greater than that of February 2013 and 3% greater than that of March 2012. U.S. iron ore shipments were 2.02 Mt in March 2013, 231% greater than those in February 2013. Shipments were 65,200 t on a daily average basis, 195% greater than those of February and 6% less than those of March 2012.

Mine stocks at the end of March 2013 were 2.38 Mt more than those held in February 2013 and nearly the same as those in March 2012. U.S. imports of iron ore were 411,000 t in March 2013, 389% greater than those in February 2013 and 13% greater than those of March 2012. U.S. exports of iron ore were 807,000 t in March 2013, 67% greater than those in February 2013 and 45% greater than those of March 2012.

China's average import prices for iron ore fines at 62% iron content spot price (cost and freight Tianjin port) fell to $139.87 per dry metric ton in March 2013, a 9.55% decrease from that of February 2013 and 3.31% lower than that of March 2012 (Index Mundi, undated).

SA Recycling began shipping iron ore from the Port of Long Beach in Los Angeles, CA, in March. Iron ore transported by CML Metals Corp. from areas in the southwestern United States to the port will be used for exporting to markets in Asia. Port of Long Beach, formerly used to transport steel scrap, could export in excess of 1 Mt in 2013. Global iron ore consumption is expected to rise in 2013 to 1,260 Mt according to Morgan Stanley (Bennett, 2013).

Wabush Pointe Niore pellet plant in Sept-Iles, Quebec, was expected to be idled by the end of June 2013 by Cliffs Natural Resources Inc. owing to high production costs and decreasing pellet prices. Cliffs will transition to the Wabush Scully Mine in Newfoundland and Labrador to produce concentrates, maintaining annual production estimates of 9 to 10 Mt from the Eastern Canada business segment (Cliffs Natural Resources Inc., 2013).

In the Pilbara region of Western Australia, Rio Tinto plc and BHP Billiton Ltd. are attempting to reduce costs by increasing the use of autonomous trucks. Rio Tinto expects to be operating 19 vehicles, including those in service at Nammuldi Mine and Yandi Pit. BHP has indicated that in addition to the 12 robotic trucks in development for the Jimblebar Mine, it is researching robot technologies which will impact hauling, drilling, and remote operating centers (Howe, 2013).

NSL Consolidated received $12.2 million from the Vijay Group under a joint-venture agreement to develop iron ore projects in Andhra Pradesh in India. These operations were expected to produce 1.5 Mt within the first 2 years while pursuing development and expansion of existing mines. A Vijay Group subsidiary will maintain 40% interest in NSL Mining Resources (Australian, The, 2013).

Mineração Usiminas S.A., a joint venture of Brazil's Usiminas Siderugicas de Minas Gerais S.A. (70%) and Japan's Sumitomo Corp. (30%), announced an investment plan valued at $396 million to increase production capacity at mines in Minas Gerais, Brazil. Funding will allow the completion of Friáveis Mine enabling a 12-Mt production capacity by the end of 2013, as well as constructing new sinter and pellet feed processing plants (Barbosa, 2013).

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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
2012:				
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
December	4,650	52,200	5,500	53,000
2013:				
January	4,200	4,200	3,110	3,110
February	3,900	8,100	611	3,720
March	4,400	12,500	2,020	5,740

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

[2]Excludes byproduct ores.

TABLE 2

U.S. PRODUCTION, SHIPMENTS, AND STOCKS OF IRON ORE IN MARCH[1, 2]

(Thousand metric tons)

State	Production		Shipments[3]		Stocks[4]	
	2012	2013	2012	2013	2012	2013
Michigan	869	1,140	363	534	1,980	2,780
Minnesota	3,420	3,260	1,770	1,490	6,930	6,180
Total	4,290	4,400	2,130	2,020	8,910	8,960

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

[2]Excludes byproduct ore.

[3]Includes rail and vessel.

[4]Includes 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
2012:				
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	1,460	1,800	5	3,260
December	1,410	1,970	3	3,380
January–December	15,900	20,400	34	36,300
2013:				
January	1,310	1,350	--	2,660
February	1,240	1,360	--	2,590
March	NA	NA	NA	NA

NA Not available. -- Zero.

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

[2]Includes production from steel plant waste oxides.

[3]Less than ½ unit.

Source: Natural Resources Canada.

TABLE 4
U.S. PRODUCTION OF PIG IRON AND RAW STEEL, BY TYPE OF FURNACE[1]

(Thousand metric tons)

Period	Pig iron production, blast furnace		Raw steel production			
			Basic oxygen furnace		Electric furnace	
	Monthly	Year to date	Monthly	Year to date	Monthly	Year to date
2012:						
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
December	2,900	35,000	2,550	33,400	4,270	52,400
2013:						
January	3,060	3,060	2,740	2,740	4,300	4,300
February	2,760	5,820	2,530	5,280	4,050	8,350
March	3,040	8,860	2,660	7,940	4,300	12,600

[1]Data 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	2012		2013			
	4th quarter	1st quarter–4th quarter	January	February	March	1st quarter
Canada	1,640	6,370	832	331	126	1,290
China	458	4,110	47	50	314	412
Colombia	--	1	(3)	--	--	(3)
Germany	3	3	--	--	5	5
Japan	37	37	--	--	--	--
Mexico	255	641	121	103	115	338
Slovak Republic	--	--	--	--	47	47
Spain	--	(3)	--	--	(3)	(3)
United Kingdom	--	--	23	--	198	222
Other	6	12	1	(3)	(3)	1
Total	2,400	11,200	1,020	483	807	2,320
Concentrates	320	1,330	120	102	262	485
Coarse ores	148	1,330	71	49	9	130
Fine ores	38	249	(3)	1	212	213
Pellets	1,870	8,260	833	331	324	1,490
Briquettes	--	(3)	--	--	--	--
Other agglomerates	23	23	--	--	--	--
Roasted pyrites	(3)	3	--	(3)	(3)	(3)
Total	2,400	11,200	1,020	483	807	2,320

-- Zero.

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

[2]Includes agglomerates.

[3]Less 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	2012 January–March Thousand metric tons	2013 March Thousand metric tons	2013 March Value[3] (thousand dollars)	2013 January–March Thousand metric tons	2013 January–March Value[3] (thousand dollars)	2013 January–March Value[3] (dollars per ton)
Argentina	40	41	7,830	41	7,830	191.02
Brazil	213	--	--	--	--	--
Canada	1,150	320	43,600	485	65,100	134.32
Chile	--	50	5,720	50	5,720	114.32
China	(4)	--	--	--	--	--
Germany	(4)	--	--	--	--	--
Mexico	47	--	--	--	--	--
Norway	(4)	--	--	(4)	14	300.00
Peru	8	--	--	(4)	7	1,640.00
South Africa	39	--	--	--	--	--
Sweden	(4)	--	--	(4)	7	330.90
Ukraine	(4)	--	--	--	--	--
Venezuela	33	--	--	--	--	--
Total	1,530	411	57,100	577	78,700	136.43
Concentrates	118	50	5,720	50	5,720	114.32
Coarse ores	(4)	--	--	3	50	16.67
Fine ores	166	258	36,600	342	47,800	139.77
Pellets	1,250	103	14,800	181	25,100	138.92
Briquettes	--	--	--	--	--	--
Other agglomerates	(4)	--	--	--	--	--
Roasted pyrites	--	--	--	(4)	7	1,640.00
Total	1,530	411	57,100	577	78,700	136.43

-- Zero.

[1]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.

[2]Includes agglomerates.

[3]Customs value. Excludes international freight and insurance charges.

[4]Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 7

U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF IRON ORE IN MARCH 2013[1, 2]

(Exclusive of ore containing 20% or more manganese)

(Thousand metric tons)

Country of origin	Type of product: Concentrates	Coarse ores	Fine ores	Pellets	Briquettes and other agglomerates	Roasted pyrites	Total
Argentina	--	--	41	--	--	--	41
Canada	--	--	217	103	--	--	320
Chile	50	--	--	--	--	--	50
Total	50	--	258	103	--	--	411

-- Zero.

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

[2]Includes agglomerates.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 8

U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF IRON ORE PELLETS, BY COUNTRY[1]

Country of origin	2012 January–March Thousand metric tons	2013 March Thousand metric tons	2013 March Value[2] (thousand dollars)	2013 January–March Thousand metric tons	2013 January–March Value[2] (thousand dollars)	2013 January–March Value[2] (dollars per ton)
Brazil	145	--	--	--	--	--
Canada	1,100	103	14,800	181	25,100	138.92
Total	1,250	103	14,800	181	25,100	138.92

-- Zero.

[1]Data, with the exception of the dollars per ton column, are rounded to no more than three significant digits.

[2]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[1, 2]
(Exclusive of ore containing 20% or more manganese)

(Thousand metric tons)

Customs district (code no.)	January–March 2012	January–March 2013	March 2013
Baltimore, MD (13)	1,020	--	--
Charleston, SC (16)	(3)	--	--
Chicago, IL (39)	(3)	--	--
Cleveland, OH (41)	52	103	103
Detroit, MI (38)	(3)	(3)	(3)
Los Angeles, CA (27)	--	(3)	--
New Orleans, LA (20)	464	470	308
New York, NY (10)	(3)	(3)	--
Nogales, AZ (26)	--	(3)	--
Philadelphia, PA (11)	(3)	--	--
St. Albans, VT (02)	--	3	--
Total	1,530	577	411

-- Zero.

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

[2]Includes agglomerates.

[3]Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 10
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF IRON ORE PELLETS,
BY CUSTOMS DISTRICT[1]

(Thousand metric tons)

Customs district (code no.)	January–March 2012	January–March 2013	March 2013
Baltimore, MD (13)	853	--	--
Cleveland, OH (41)	52	103	103
Detroit, MI (38)	--	(2)	(2)
New Orleans, LA (20)	345	78	--
Total	1,250	181	103

-- Zero.

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

[2]Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.