

# Mineral Industry Surveys

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## IRON ORE IN OCTOBER 2013

U.S. mine production of iron ore in October 2013 was 144,000 metric tons (t) on a daily average basis (Table 1), 10% less than that of September 2013 and 6% less than that of October 2012. U.S. iron ore shipments in October 2013 were 165,000 t on a daily average basis, 8% less than those of September and 15% more than those of October 2012.

Mine stocks at the end of October 2013 were 24% less than those held in September and 29% less than those in October 2012 (Table 1). U.S. imports of iron ore in October 2013 were 26% less than those in September 2013 and 18% greater than those of October 2012. U.S. exports of iron ore in October were 11% less than those in September 2013 and 46% greater than those of October 2012 (Table 4).

Nucor Corp. (Charlotte, NC) and the United Steelworkers Union have filed a petition, along with other manufacturers and the Municipal Castings Association, requesting repeal of a waiver the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) made for certain iron and steel products under the Buy America Act. The act required government-funded transportation projects to use steel and other materials produced by U.S. manufacturers. The FHWA issued a memorandum in December 2012 which exempted iron and steel components used to encase, assemble, and construct primary construction products. The petition was transferred to a Washington court in early October (Frizell, 2013).

Cliffs Natural Resources Inc. (Cleveland, OH) requested a review by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) of Cliffs' plans for a 100-acre expansion at the Northshore Mine in Silver Bay, MN. The expansion plans raised environmental concerns regarding possible acid runoff from sulfide-bearing rocks, which are similar to deposits at nearby PolyMet Mining Corp.'s (Toronto, Canada) proposed copper-nickel mine and Dunka Pit, an abandoned taconite mine which contains sulfide-bearing rock. High sulfide content in waste rock may pose water pollution risks, such as acidic mine drainage (Associated Press, The, 2013).

Cliffs announced that the two taconite production lines at its Northshore Mining plant, which had been shut down in early 2013 due to a drop in customer demand, will reopen. Citing a new supply contract, slated to start in 2014, Cliffs announced

plans to increase its U.S. annual iron ore production to an estimated 22 to 23 million metric tons (Mt), up from 20 Mt in 2013 (DePass, 2013).

Palladon Ventures Ltd. (Pleasant View, UT) announced that access to the Port of Long Beach, CA, had allowed for the use of larger vessels, which resulted in lower unit costs and increased export capacity for CML Metals Corp.'s Iron Mountain project, west of Cedar City, UT. CML transitioned to using Panamax vessels, shipping three loads from August through September with an average 70,000 t at 65% iron content per load as well as a fourth, unspecified, load in early October. For the rest of the calendar year CML had 90,000 t hedged at approximately \$126 per ton. CML reported the plant operated at 75% capacity, which fills one Panamax vessel in 2.5 weeks, and planned to produce 2 Mt per year, 100% of design capacity, when new hyperbaric disk filters are operational in January 2014 (Palladon Ventures Ltd., 2013).

Operations at the Minntac Taconite plant in Mountain Iron, MN, were suspended for an undefined period of time, following an electrical incident on October 16 (Olsen, 2013).

## References Cited

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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)

Period	Production		Shipments <sup>3</sup>		Stocks <sup>4</sup>
	Monthly	Year to date	Monthly	Year to date	End of Month
2012:					
October	4,750	43,000	4,460	42,900	2,970
November	4,580	47,600	4,530	47,500	3,020
December	4,650	52,200	5,500	53,000	2,200
2013:					
January	4,200	4,200	3,110	3,110	3,290
February	3,900	8,100	611	3,720	6,580
March	4,400	12,500	2,020	5,740	8,960
April	3,460	16,000	4,670	10,400	7,830
May	4,280	20,200	5,680	16,100	6,350
June	3,990	24,200	5,170	21,300	5,390
July	4,400	28,600	5,650	26,900	4,130
August	4,610	33,200	5,430	32,300	3,320
September	4,780	38,000	5,400	37,700	2,770
October	4,460	42,500	5,120	42,900	2,110

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

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

<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.

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

(Thousand dry metric tons)

Period	Newfoundland and Labrador	Quebec	British Columbia	Total
2012:				
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	1,080	1,600	--	2,680
February	1,000	1,430	--	2,430
March	845	1,620	--	2,470
April	1,730	1,730	--	3,460
May	1,950	1,650	--	3,600
June	1,840	2,060	--	3,900
July	1,620 <sup>r</sup>	2,140	--	3,760 <sup>r</sup>
August	1,530 <sup>r</sup>	2,260 <sup>r</sup>	--	3,790 <sup>r</sup>
September	1,450	2,000	--	3,440
October	NA	NA	NA	NA

<sup>r</sup>Revised. NA Not available. -- Zero.

<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 3  
U.S. PRODUCTION OF PIG IRON AND RAW STEEL, BY TYPE OF FURNACE<sup>1</sup>

(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
2012:						
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
April	2,800	11,700	2,510	10,500	4,340	17,000
May	2,880	14,500	2,660	13,100	4,480	21,500
June	2,760	17,300	2,440	15,500	4,340	25,800
July	2,760	20,100	2,430	18,000	4,680	30,500
August	2,890	22,900	2,550	20,500	4,580	35,100
September	2,880	25,800	2,460	23,000	4,400	39,500
October	2,870	28,700	2,510	25,500	4,490	44,000

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

Source: American Iron and Steel Institute.

TABLE 4  
U.S. EXPORTS OF IRON ORE, BY COUNTRY OF DESTINATION AND TYPE<sup>1,2</sup>

(Thousand metric tons)

Country of destination and type of product	2012	2013				
		1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	September	October
Canada	6,370	1,290	1,630	1,370	582	609
China	4,110	412	458	703	197	143
Colombia	1	(3)	(3)	(3)	--	(3)
France	--	--	--	82	82	--
Germany	3	5	7	(3)	--	--
Hong Kong	3	--	164	--	--	--
Japan	37	--	--	58	31	--
Mexico	641	338	272	244	85	120
Slovakia	--	47	68	--	--	--
Spain	(3)	(3)	--	189	--	--
United Kingdom	--	222	140	61	--	--
Other	12	1	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)
Total	11,200	2,320	2,740	2,710	977	873
Concentrates	1,330	485	631	655	160	189
Coarse ores	1,330	130	83	--	--	--
Fine ores	249	213	91	29	1	11
Pellets	8,260	1,490	1,860	1,830	755	672
Briquettes	(3)	--	--	--	--	--
Other agglomerates	23	--	70	196	60	--
Roasted pyrites	3	(3)	(3)	(3)	--	--
Total	11,200	2,320	2,740	2,710	977	873

-- 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 5  
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 and type of product	2012			2013		
	January–October	October		January–October	January–October	
	Thousand metric tons	Thousand metric tons	Value <sup>3</sup> (thousand dollars)	Thousand metric tons	Value <sup>3</sup> (thousand dollars)	Value <sup>3,4</sup> (dollars per ton)
Argentina	81	50	7,190	137	23,100	168.88
Brazil	728	107	11,400	471	56,600	120.23
Canada	3,130	194	26,200	1,820	245,000	134.75
Chile	104	--	--	50	5,720	114.32
China	(5)	--	--	1	97	97.00
Finland	4	--	--	--	--	--
France	(5)	--	--	(5)	4	175.65
Germany	(5)	--	--	(5)	5	217
India	(5)	--	--	(5)	3	2,681.00
Latvia	(5)	--	--	--	--	--
Mexico	47	--	--	(5)	5	100.00
Norway	(5)	(5)	14	78	11,900	152.77
Peru	18	--	--	(5)	7	1,642.50
South Africa	39	30	4,480	74	10,600	143.62
Sweden	66	--	--	18	1,930	107.33
Trinidad and Tobago	--	--	--	(5)	59	164.57
Ukraine	(5)	--	--	--	--	--
United Kingdom	76	--	--	(5)	5	4,590.00
Venezuela	60	--	--	--	--	--
Total	4,350	381	49,300	2,650	355,000	134.11
Concentrates	783	115	13,300	328	35,200	107.38
Coarse ores	8	1	11	20	1,760	88.00
Fine ores	337	72	9,830	554	76,500	138.01
Pellets	3,210	193	26,100	1,740	241,000	138.52
Briquettes	--	--	--	--	--	--
Other agglomerates	(5)	--	--	1	97	97.00
Roasted pyrites	4	--	--	(5)	14	2,306.83
Total	4,350	381	49,300	2,650	355,000	134.11

-- 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>Values are calculated and may not reflect actual amounts per ton.

<sup>5</sup>Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 6  
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF IRON ORE IN OCTOBER 2013<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	
Argentina	--	--	50	--	--	--	50
Brazil	84	--	23	--	--	--	107
Canada	--	1	(3)	193	--	--	194
Norway	--	--	(3)	--	--	--	(3)
South Africa	30	--	--	--	--	--	30
Total	115	1	72	193	--	--	381

-- 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 7  
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF IRON ORE PELLETS, BY COUNTRY<sup>1</sup>

Country of origin	2012		2013			
	January–October Thousand metric tons	October		January–October		
		Thousand metric tons	Value <sup>2</sup> (thousand dollars)	Thousand metric tons	Value <sup>2</sup> (thousand dollars)	Value <sup>2,3</sup> (dollars per ton)
Brazil	284	--	--	155	24,900	161
Canada	2,860	193	26,100	1,510	204,000	135.45
Germany	--	--	--	(4)	5	217.22
Norway	--	--	--	78	11,900	152.23
United Kingdom	76	--	--	--	--	--
Total	3,210	193	26,100	1,740	241,000	138.52

-- 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.

<sup>3</sup>Values are calculated and may not reflect actual amounts per ton.

<sup>4</sup>Less than ½ unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 8  
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.)	January–October		October
	2012	2013	2013
Baltimore, MD (13)	1,440	--	--
Buffalo, NY (09)	--	(3)	--
Charleston, SC (16)	(3)	--	--
Chicago, IL (39)	612	391	138
Cleveland, OH (41)	1,570	1,280	194
Detroit, MI (38)	(3)	1	1
Houston-Galveston, TX (53)	54	(3)	--
Los Angeles, CA (27)	(3)	(3)	--
Mobile, AL (19)	22	18	--
New Orleans, LA (20)	618	952	50
New York, NY (10)	(3)	(3)	--
Nogales, AZ (26)	--	(3)	--
Ogdensburg, NY (07)	(3)	(3)	--
Pembina, ND (34)	--	(3)	(3)
Philadelphia, PA (11)	4	--	--
Port Arthur, TX (21)	27	--	--
San Diego, CA (25)	--	(3)	--
Seattle, WA (30)	(3)	--	--
St. Albans, VT (02)	--	3	--
Tampa, FL (18)	3	--	--
Total	4,350	2,650	381

-- 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 9  
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF IRON ORE PELLETS,  
BY CUSTOMS DISTRICT<sup>1</sup>

(Thousand metric tons)

Customs district (code no.)	January–October		October
	2012	2013	2013
Baltimore, MD (13)	1,260	--	--
Chicago, IL (39)	41	--	--
Cleveland, OH (41)	1,570	1,280	193
Detroit, MI (38)	--	(2)	--
New Orleans, LA (20)	345	463	--
Total	3,210	1,740	193

-- 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.