

Mineral Industry Surveys

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U.S. PRODUCTION OF SELECTED MINERAL COMMODITIES IN THE FIRST QUARTER 2016

U.S. mine and plant production data for 14 selected mineral commodities are provided monthly (or quarterly) by the U.S. Geological Survey to the Board of Governors, Federal Reserve System (FRS), for use in preparing its index of industrial production and the related capacity indexes and capacity utilization rates. These measures cover manufacturing, mining, and electric and gas utilities, and they are among the key economic indicators monitored by the FRS for guidance in determining national monetary policy.

Construction Materials

Consistent with seasonal trends, the combined production of most construction materials (cement, construction sand and gravel, and crushed stone) in the first quarter of 2016 decreased by approximately 23% compared with that in the fourth quarter of 2015, while production of gypsum increased by 12% (fig. 1, table 1). Production of all construction materials continued an overall upward 4-year trend, and first quarter 2016 production was 22% higher than first quarter 2012 production.

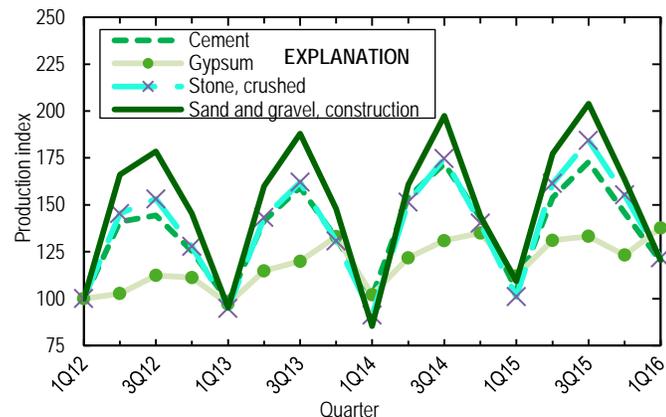


Figure 1. U.S. production of selected construction-related mineral commodities from the first quarter of 2012 through the first quarter of 2016, indexed to the first quarter of 2012. Source: U.S. Geological Survey.

Base Metals

Domestic production of iron ore and zinc continued to decline in the first quarter of 2016, decreasing by 13% and 6%, respectively, compared with that in the fourth quarter of 2015 (fig. 2, table 1). Lead production was slightly higher and secondary aluminum production increased for the first time since the third quarter of 2014.

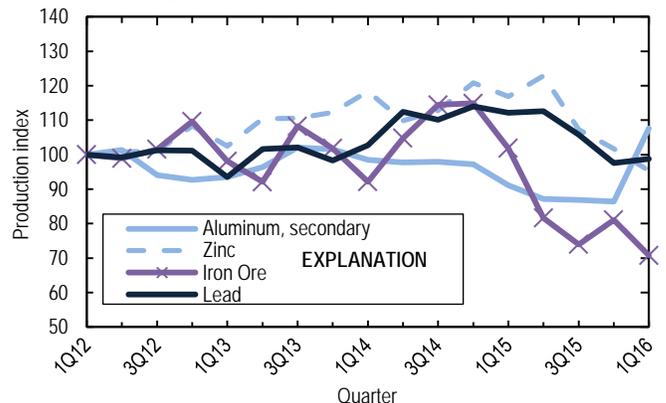


Figure 2. U.S. production of selected base metals from the first quarter of 2012 through the first quarter of 2016, indexed to the first quarter of 2012. Source: U.S. Geological Survey.

Precious Metals

During the first quarter of 2016, copper and gold production decreased but silver production remained unchanged compared with production in the fourth quarter of 2015 (table 1). Copper production has generally increased since 2012. Gold production has fluctuated but generally has trended downward since 2012. Silver production has fluctuated significantly but has generally trended upward during this time period (fig. 3).

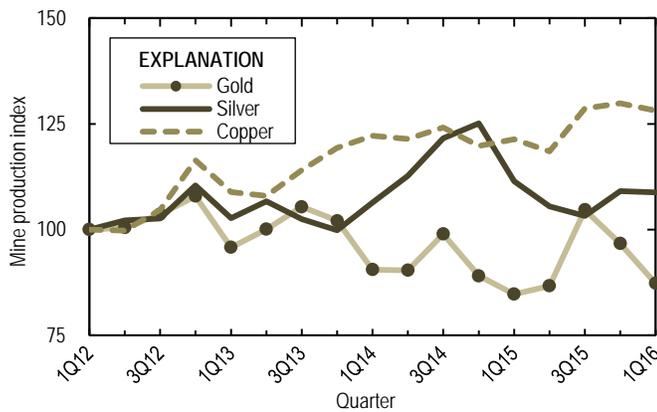


Figure 3. U.S. mine production of selected metals from the first quarter of 2012 through the first quarter of 2016, indexed to the first quarter of 2012. Source: U.S. Geological Survey.

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TABLE 1
PRODUCTION TRENDS FOR SELECTED MINERAL COMMODITIES

Mineral commodity	Percent change, 1st quarter 2016 vs. 4th quarter 2015 ¹	Percent change, 1st quarter 2016 vs. 1st quarter 2015 ¹
Aluminum (secondary)	25	18
Cement	-18	15
Copper	-1	6
Gold	-10	3
Gypsum	12	23
Iron ore	-13	-31
Lead	1	-12
Molybdenum	-39	-53
Phosphate rock	-12	-1
Sand and gravel, construction	-26	10
Silver	(2)	-2
Soda ash	1	-2
Stone, crushed	-22	20
Zinc	-6	-18

¹Based on data available as of May 24, 2016.

²Less than 0.5 percent.

TABLE 2
U.S. PRODUCTION OF SELECTED MINERAL COMMODITIES, BY QUARTER^{1,2}

Mineral commodity		2015					1st quarter– 4th quarter	2016 1st quarter	1st quarter	
		1st quarter	2d quarter	3d quarter	4th quarter	2015			2016	
		Aluminum ³	thousand metric tons	191 ^r	183 ^r	182 ^r	181 ^r	737 ^r	226	191 ^r
Cement ⁴	million metric tons	14.9	21.8	24.5	20.7	81.8 ^r	17.0 ^e	14.9	17.0 ^e	
Copper ⁵	thousand metric tons	336	329	357	360 ^r	1,380	355	336	355	
Gold ⁵	metric tons	48.2 ^r	49.4	59.6 ^r	55.1 ^r	212 ^r	49.7	48.2 ^r	49.7	
Gypsum ⁶	million metric tons	3.4	3.9	4.0	3.7	15.0	4.1	3.4	4.1	
Iron ore ⁷	do.	13.0	10.4	9.4	10.3	43.1	9.0	13.0	9.0	
Lead ⁵	thousand metric tons	93.8 ^r	94.2	88.5 ^r	81.6 ^r	358	82.6	93.8 ^r	82.6	
Molybdenum ⁵	do.	13.8	13.5	12.6	10.5 ^r	50.4 ^r	6.4	13.8	6.4	
Phosphate rock ⁸	million metric tons	6.2	7.6	7.0	7.0	27.8	6.1	6.2	6.1	
Sand and gravel, construction ⁹	do.	157 ^r	254 ^r	292 ^r	234 ^r	937 ^r	173	157 ^r	173	
Silver ⁵	metric tons	283 ^r	268 ^r	262 ^r	277 ^r	1,090 ^r	277	283 ^r	277	
Soda ash ⁷	million metric tons	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	11.6	2.9	2.9	2.9	
Stone, crushed ⁹	do.	224 ^r	358 ^r	409	344 ^r	1,340 ^r	270	224 ^r	270	
Zinc ⁵	thousand metric tons	203	214	187	177 ^r	781 ^r	166	203	166	

^eEstimated. ^rRevised. do. Ditto.

¹Based on data available as of May 24, 2016.

²Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

³Aluminum alloys produced at secondary smelters in the United States, less primary aluminum consumed, primary silicon consumed, and other alloying ingredients consumed.

⁴Data are shipments of domestically produced portland and blended cement, including cement made from imported clinker, as a proxy for actual domestic cement production.

⁵Recoverable mine production.

⁶Calcined production.

⁷Mine production.

⁸Marketable mine production.

⁹Sold or used; quarterly survey based on sample survey. Quarterly data may not add to totals shown because of independent rounding and differences between projected totals by States and by division.