

ZIMBABWE

By Philip M. Mobbs

Gold again was the country's most economically significant mineral. In 1999, gold production increased to 27.7 metric tons despite the closing of several mines. Zimbabwe was a major contributor to the world supply of chrysotile asbestos, ferrochromium, and lithium minerals. Most of the country's mineral operations were export oriented and, thus, subject to world market fluctuations. International investor interest in the Zimbabwean mineral industry was muted in 1999 owing to the country's economic difficulties. The highly diversified mineral industry continued to be adversely affected by low international prices for precious metals; increased local labor, power, and transportation costs; high commercial interest rates; high positive human immunodeficiency virus and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome rates; and spiraling inflation (Jeter, 1999; Mallet, 1999). Zimbabwe's mining companies

continued to cut costs in an attempt to remain economically viable.

In June 1999, the Hartley platinum mine was closed. Also during June, Zimbabwe Iron and Steel Co.'s number 4 blast furnace was restarted. The furnace originally had been idled in 1993 for an 18-month rehabilitation.

For more extensive coverage of the mineral industry of Zimbabwe, see the 1998 Minerals Yearbook, volume III, Mineral Industries of Africa and the Middle East.

References Cited

- Jeter, Jon, 1999, Grief and grievances mount in Zimbabwe: Washington Post, November 21, p. A35-A36.
Mallet, Victor, 1999, Mugabe outbursts fuel doubts about Zimbabwe's veteran leader and his grip on power: Financial Times [London], March 31, p. 9.

TABLE 1
ZIMBABWE: PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES 1/ 2/

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Commodity		1995	1996	1997	1998	1999 e/
METALS						
Antimony, mine output, concentrate, Sb content		37	5	--	--	--
Chromite, gross weight	thousand tons	707	697	670 e/	605	641 3/
Cobalt, metal 4/		109	106 3/	126	137	129 3/
Columbium and tantalum, tantalite concentrate, gross weight e/		1	--	--	--	--
Copper:						
Mine output, concentrate, Cu content e/	thousand tons	9	10	9	4	5
Metal:						
Smelter output, blister/anode, primary e/		8,000	7,600	4,000	3,000	3,000
Refinery output, refined/cathode, primary		6,875	10,900	4,993	2,941	2,900
Gold	kilograms	23,959	24,699	24,156	25,175	27,666 3/
Iron and steel:						
Mine output, iron ore:						
Gross weight	thousand tons	311	324	479	372	599 3/
Fe content e/	do.	160	160	240	190	300
Metal:						
Pig iron e/	do.	209 3/	210	216	230	230
Steel, crude	do.	210	212	214	220	228 3/
Ferroalloys:						
Ferrochromium	do.	254	243	233	247	240
Ferrosilicon chromium	do.	47	33	17	21	20
Nickel:						
Mine output, concentrate, Ni content		11,721	11,561	12,963	12,872	11,164 3/
Refinery output, refined metal		10,864	9,694	10,300 5/	8,732	10,500
Platinum-group metals:						
Palladium	kilograms	17 e/	120 e/	245	1,855	342 3/
Platinum	do.	7 e/	100 e/	345	2,730	479 3/
Rhodium	do.	-- e/	-- e/	27	177	20
Selenium e/	do.	2,000 e/	2,000 e/	1,000	500	500
Silver	do.	15,640	9,982	5,923	6,681	4,983 3/
Tin, mine output, Sn content e/		10	10	10	1	1
INDUSTRIAL MINERALS						
Asbestos	thousand tons	169	165	145	123	115 3/
Barite		--	-- e/	1,217	1,844	1,000
Cement, hydraulic e/	thousand tons	968	1,000	1,100	1,100	1,000
Clays:						
Bentonite (montmorillonite)		169,823	185,953	186,000 e/	135,785	140,000
Kaolin e/		57 3/	--	--	--	--
Other clays 6/		12,743	14,479	14,000 e/	2,818	3,000
Diamond	carats	204,416	437,266	421,307	28,732	45,324 3/
Emerald	kilograms	2,209	1,080	1,000 e/	19	20
Feldspar		3,920	3,248	2,254	2,241	2,250
Graphite		11,381	7,691	12,779	13,806	12,321 3/
Kyanite		875	141	1,113	3,780	4,000
Lithium minerals, gross weight		33,498	30,929	49,833	28,055	36,671 3/
Magnesite		5,597	10,659	13,050	4,321	4,000
Mica		1,040	1,500	30	1,309	1,300
Nitrogen, N content of ammonia e/		42,600	61,400	63,700	56,500	60,800 3/
Phosphate rock, marketable concentrate	thousand tons	154	123	94	91	90
Pigments, iron oxide		400	400 e/	-- e/	--	--
Stone, sand and gravel:						
Granite		121,685	109,268	109,903	125,576	130,000
Limestone	thousand tons	1,499	1,425	1,027	1,473	1,500
Quartz 7/	do.	172	96	52	10	10
Sulfur						
Pyrite:						
Gross weight		70,706	59,831	48,101	52,908	55,472 3/
S content e/		31,000	26,000	26,000	28,000	24,000
Byproduct acid, metallurgical and coal process gas e/		4,500	5,000	5,000	2,500	2,500
Talc		2,080	1,076	1,023	1,039	1,000
Vermiculite		13,742	10,249	14,841	14,804	14,000
Coal, bituminous	thousand tons	5,538	5,175	4,750	5,047 r/ 3/	4,977 3/
Coke, metallurgical e/	do.	300	600	600	600	600

See footnotes at end of table.

TABLE 1--Continued
ZIMBABWE: PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES 1/ 2/

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

e/ Estimated. r/ Revised. -- Zero.

1/ Table includes data available through December 31, 2000.

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

3/ Reported figure.

4/ "Metal" includes metal content of compounds/salts and may include cobalt recovered from nickel-copper matte imported for toll refining.

5/ Excludes toll-refined nickel.

6/ Includes fire clay.

7/ Includes rough and ground quartz, as well as silica sand.