

# FEDERAL RESERVE statistical release



G.3 (402)

For Immediate release

## CAPACITY UTILIZATION

### Manufacturing, Mining, Utilities, and Industrial Materials

June 16, 1988

Capacity utilization in manufacturing, mining, and utilities rose 0.2 percentage point in May to 82.9 percent, three percentage points above its level a year earlier. The increase in May reflected a broadly-based rise in operating rates at manufacturers of durable goods as well as an increase at utilities. Average utilization in both advanced and primary processing industries showed small increases in May.

The operating rate for durable manufacturing rose 0.6 percentage point in May, with the largest gains coming in motor vehicles and parts and primary metals. Utilization also continued to rise in the fabricated metal products industry where the 6 percentage point increase during the past year has lifted utilization to the highest rate since 1979. The operating rate for nonelectrical machinery also moved up again last month, but despite steady gains during the past year is still substantially below its levels during 1979. Utilization at nondurable goods manufacturers slackened further in May; it has fallen more than a percentage point since December 1987, but is still 2 percentage points above its 1967-87 average. In general, the increases in utilization since the end of 1987 have occurred in advanced processing industries that produce durable goods. Operating rates in primary processing industries, which ran up strongly last year, fell back in January and February and have edged up slowly since then.

Capacity utilization at producers of industrial materials rose 0.3 percentage point in May to 83.4 percent, but has yet to return to its level of last December. The increase in May reflected gains at producers of durable goods materials, while operating rates for energy and nondurable goods materials producers were little changed.

### Capacity Utilization: Summary

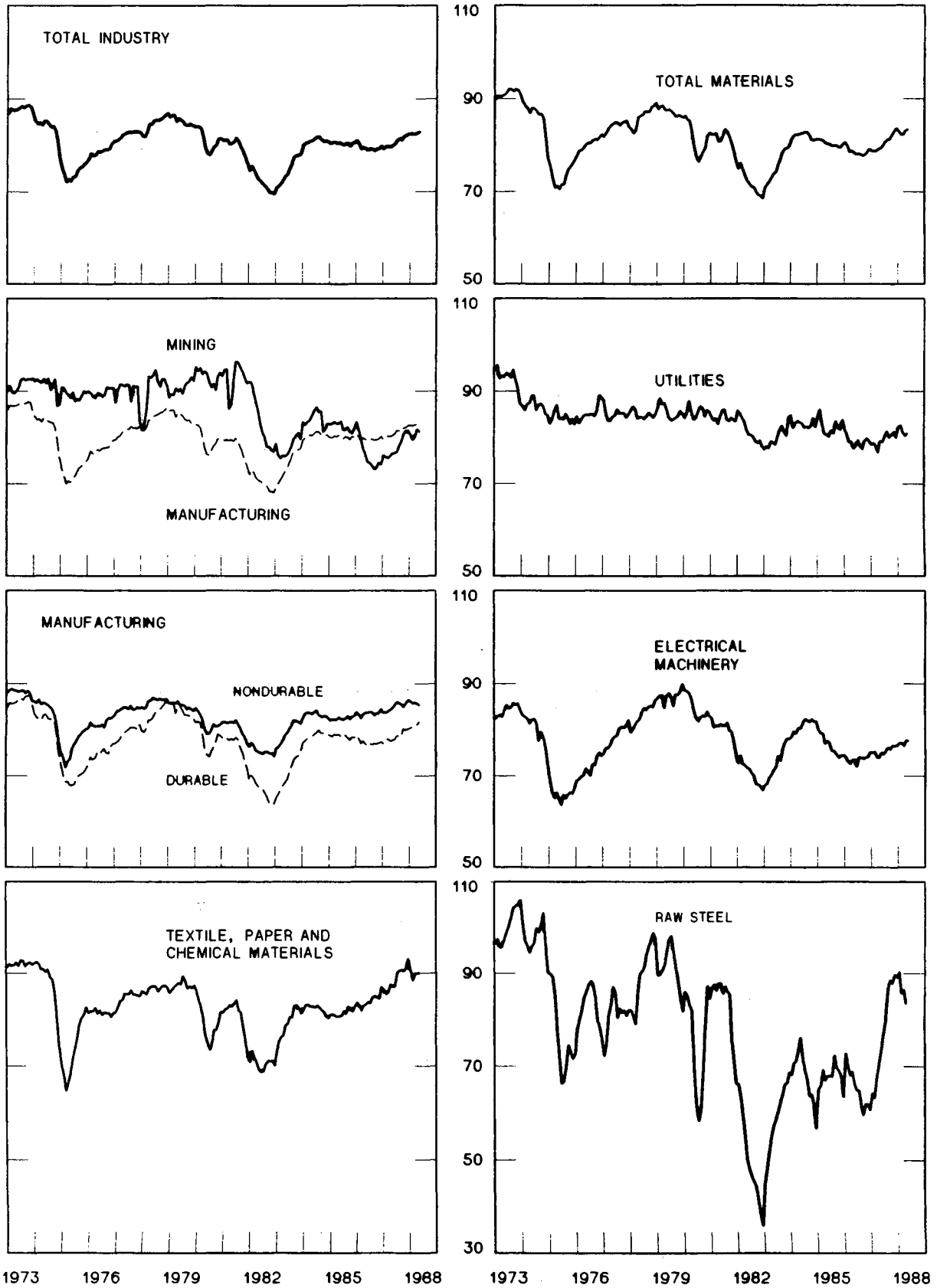
Percent of capacity, seasonally adjusted

Series	1973 High	1975 Low	1978 -80 High	1982 Low	1967 -87 Avg.	1988			
						FEB	MAR	APR	MAY
<b>Total Industry</b>	<b>88.6</b>	<b>72.1</b>	<b>86.9</b>	<b>69.5</b>	<b>81.5</b>	<b>82.4</b>	<b>82.4</b>	<b>82.7</b>	<b>82.9</b>
<b>Manufacturing</b>	<b>87.7</b>	<b>69.9</b>	<b>86.5</b>	<b>68.0</b>	<b>80.6</b>	<b>82.6</b>	<b>82.7</b>	<b>82.9</b>	<b>83.1</b>
Durable	<b>87.4</b>	<b>67.9</b>	<b>86.3</b>	<b>63.7</b>	<b>78.7</b>	<b>80.5</b>	<b>80.5</b>	<b>81.0</b>	<b>81.6</b>
Nondurable	<b>88.8</b>	<b>71.8</b>	<b>87.0</b>	<b>74.2</b>	<b>83.5</b>	<b>85.7</b>	<b>85.8</b>	<b>85.7</b>	<b>85.3</b>
<b>Mining</b>	<b>92.8</b>	<b>87.8</b>	<b>95.2</b>	<b>76.9</b>	<b>86.7</b>	<b>79.5</b>	<b>80.1</b>	<b>81.8</b>	<b>81.3</b>
<b>Utilities</b>	<b>95.6</b>	<b>82.9</b>	<b>88.5</b>	<b>78.0</b>	<b>86.9</b>	<b>82.6</b>	<b>81.1</b>	<b>80.4</b>	<b>80.9</b>
<b>Industrial Materials</b>	<b>92.0</b>	<b>70.5</b>	<b>89.1</b>	<b>68.5</b>	<b>82.2</b>	<b>82.3</b>	<b>82.3</b>	<b>83.1</b>	<b>83.4</b>

# CAPACITY UTILIZATION

MAY DATA

SEASONALLY ADJUSTED, PERCENT



**MANUFACTURING, MINING AND UTILITIES**

Table 1

**Capacity Utilization**

Monthly, seasonally adjusted, percent of capacity

Series	1973	1975	1978	1982	1987	1987	1987					1988				
	High	Low	High	Low	Avg.	MAY	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	
<b>Total Industry</b>	88.6	72.1	86.9	69.5	81.5	79.9	81.1	81.9	82.1	82.4	82.5	82.4	82.4	82.7	82.9	
<b>Manufacturing</b>	87.7	69.9	86.5	68.0	80.6	80.4	81.3	82.0	82.2	82.6	82.7	82.6	82.7	82.9	83.1	
Primary processing	91.9	68.3	89.1	65.0	81.7	83.2	85.1	86.2	87.0	87.6	87.1	86.6	86.8	87.0	87.1	
Advanced processing	86.0	71.1	85.1	69.5	80.1	79.2	79.5	80.1	80.0	80.3	80.7	80.7	80.8	81.1	81.3	
<b>Durable manufacturing</b>	87.4	67.9	86.3	63.7	78.7	77.6	78.4	80.1	79.9	80.1	80.3	80.5	80.5	81.0	81.6	
Stone, clay and glass products	89.3	67.1	86.6	62.9	78.3	80.8	81.0	81.0	81.4	81.5	82.2	82.5	82.1			
Primary metals	101.9	67.0	97.1	45.8	79.6	74.5	82.6	88.8	88.6	89.1	85.2	85.1	83.6	83.8	86.2	
Iron and steel, subtotal	105.8	66.6	100.3	37.6	78.6	71.0	82.3	90.9	88.8	91.6	87.3	86.8	83.2	84.1		
Nonferrous metals, subtotal	95.6	62.1	91.1	60.8	81.2	79.5	83.1	85.9	88.3	85.8	82.4	82.7	84.2	83.3		
Fabricated metal products	85.0	64.7	87.4	61.3	77.8	76.7	78.0	79.5	79.4	80.8	81.6	81.8	82.4	82.8	83.3	
Nonelectrical machinery	89.0	68.2	86.0	62.9	78.1	73.3	76.1	76.6	76.1	77.8	78.5	78.7	79.1	79.8	80.3	
Electrical machinery	85.7	63.7	89.9	66.9	78.1	75.0	75.7	76.5	76.5	77.1	77.1	77.1	76.5	77.7	77.6	
Motor vehicles and parts	97.1	52.7	93.3	47.0	78.1	79.6	74.7	82.0	80.4	77.7	77.2	76.8	79.3	80.6	83.9	
Automobiles			93.3	36.6		71.6	60.7	72.5	70.2	63.9	59.0	60.6	65.8	69.3	75.3	
Aerospace and misc. trans. eqp.	77.0	69.6	87.1	70.7	77.7	89.5	88.4	88.9	88.2	87.9	88.7	88.7	87.6	86.5	86.3	
Instruments	89.2	74.9	88.9	77.8	83.0	78.2	79.2	79.6	79.9	78.5	79.7	80.0	80.0	80.4	80.3	
Other durables	87.7	69.0	81.0	69.1	81.6	81.7	80.3	81.2	82.0	81.8	82.0	82.5	82.3	82.5	82.3	
<b>Nondurable manufacturing</b>	88.8	71.8	87.0	74.2	83.5	84.6	85.5	84.9	85.6	86.4	86.2	85.7	85.8	85.7	85.3	
Food and kindred products	85.8	77.6	85.1	76.5	82.2	80.1	80.5	79.5	79.8	80.3	80.7	80.9	80.4	79.4		
Textile mill products	92.1	58.9	88.3	70.6	85.0	92.1	93.6	92.4	92.7	93.3	91.5	90.4	91.8	91.6		
Paper and products	95.6	67.7	92.7	80.2	88.5	92.7	95.7	94.5	95.8	97.0	96.3	94.7	95.4	95.0		
Chemicals and products	88.6	69.2	82.9	67.6	78.9	81.9	83.8	83.1	84.7	86.5	86.3	84.7	85.0	85.2		
Petroleum products	99.6	83.7	91.7	68.8	86.9	84.1	84.5	85.5	84.2	86.6	86.7	86.3	88.3	89.5	86.3	
Rubber and plastics products	97.5	59.5	89.4	71.2	84.8	87.0	87.1	87.5	88.8	88.8	88.3	88.8	88.4	88.6		
Other nondurables	86.4	72.3	92.4	78.9	86.0	86.9	86.3	86.2	86.4	86.2	86.0	86.0	86.1	86.2	85.5	
<b>Mining</b>	92.8	87.8	95.2	76.9	86.7	76.5	79.1	80.6	81.5	81.5	80.7	79.5	80.1	81.8	81.3	
<b>Utilities</b>	95.6	82.9	88.5	78.0	86.9	79.2	80.0	80.5	81.2	80.0	82.4	82.6	81.1	80.4	80.9	
Electric utilities	98.7	83.0	87.6	78.2	88.0	84.8	83.2	82.5	82.8	81.4	84.3	84.4	83.2	82.6	83.2	

Table 2

**Output, Capacity, and Capacity Utilization**

Quarterly, seasonally adjusted

Series	OUTPUT				CAPACITY				UTILIZATION						
	1987 Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	1988 Q1	1987 Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	1988 Q1	1987 Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	1988 Q1
<b>Total Industry</b>	126.9	128.2	131.0	133.2	134.5	159.5	160.4	161.3	162.2	163.1	79.5	79.9	81.2	82.1	82.4
<b>Manufacturing</b>	131.6	133.2	135.7	138.1	139.6	164.5	165.6	166.7	167.7	168.9	80.0	80.5	81.4	82.3	82.7
Primary processing	114.3	116.1	119.2	122.2	123.0	138.2	139.0	139.8	140.6	141.6	82.7	83.5	85.3	86.9	86.9
Advanced processing	142.0	143.5	145.8	147.6	149.7	180.3	181.6	182.9	184.1	185.4	78.7	79.0	79.7	80.1	80.7
<b>Durable manufacturing</b>	130.5	131.4	133.7	136.9	138.4	168.4	169.3	170.2	171.1	172.0	77.5	77.6	78.5	80.0	80.4
Stone, clay and glass products	120.2	118.6	118.0	119.8	121.4	144.0	145.1	146.1	147.2	147.9	83.4	81.7	80.7	81.4	82.1
Primary metals	75.0	77.3	83.7	90.5	86.0	104.0	103.3	102.6	101.8	101.6	72.1	74.8	81.6	88.8	84.6
Iron and steel, subtotal	62.4	66.3	73.8	81.2	76.5	93.8	92.5	91.1	89.8	89.2	66.5	71.7	81.0	90.4	85.8
Nonferrous metals, subtotal	98.7	98.0	102.2	108.0	104.0	123.2	123.7	124.1	124.6	125.1	80.1	79.2	82.4	86.7	83.1
Fabricated metal products	109.1	109.9	110.8	114.3	117.8	140.8	141.5	142.3	143.0	143.8	77.5	77.6	77.8	79.9	81.9
Nonelectrical machinery	145.8	150.6	155.4	158.7	163.8	202.8	204.1	205.4	206.7	208.0	71.9	73.8	75.7	76.8	78.7
Electrical machinery	169.9	170.0	173.4	175.7	177.2	227.4	228.1	228.9	229.6	230.5	74.7	74.5	75.7	76.5	76.9
Motor vehicles and parts	115.4	109.7	108.0	113.4	110.7	140.2	140.7	141.2	141.7	142.3	82.3	78.0	76.5	80.0	77.8
Automobiles	113.7	103.1	92.2	102.8	92.6	147.1	147.8	148.6	149.3	149.8	77.3	69.7	62.0	68.9	61.8
Aerospace and misc. trans. eqp.	152.8	152.6	152.9	152.9	153.9	170.0	171.1	172.1	173.2	174.2	89.9	89.2	88.8	88.3	88.3
Instruments	140.6	143.1	145.2	146.7	149.0	180.0	181.6	183.3	184.9	186.6	78.1	78.8	79.2	79.3	79.9
Other durables	130.7	132.2	133.1	135.4	137.7	160.3	162.2	164.0	165.8	167.3	81.5	81.5	81.2	81.7	82.3
<b>Nondurable manufacturing</b>	133.1	135.7	138.6	139.7	141.4	158.9	160.3	161.7	163.1	164.6	83.7	84.7	85.7	85.6	85.9
Food and kindred products	136.1	137.0	138.9	139.0	141.5	170.3	171.6	172.8	174.1	175.4	79.9	79.9	80.4	79.8	80.7
Textile mill products	110.9	116.5	118.8	117.4	116.3	125.2	125.7	126.1	126.6	127.5	88.5	92.7	94.2	92.8	91.2
Paper and products	139.9	141.5	148.4	148.3	149.1	151.1	152.4	153.6	154.9	156.2	92.5	92.8	96.6	95.7	95.4
Chemicals and products	135.8	138.2	141.8	144.6	146.5	167.8	168.7	169.6	170.5	171.7	80.9	81.9	83.6	84.8	85.3
Petroleum products	93.1	93.0	93.5	94.7	96.8	109.8	110.1	110.5	110.8	111.1	84.8	84.4	84.6	85.4	87.1
Rubber and plastics products	156.7	162.7	165.7	169.1	171.7	183.8	186.3	188.8	191.3	193.9	85.2	87.3	87.8	88.4	89.5
Other nondurables	134.6	138.4	140.7	141.8	143.0	157.5	159.6	161.8	163.9	166.2	85.5	86.7	87.0	86.3	86.0
<b>Mining</b>	98.8	99.0	100.7	104.3	102.3	130.4	129.7	129.0	128.4	127.7	75.8	76.3	78.0	81.2	80.1
<b>Utilities</b>	108.1	108.3	111.8	112.3	114.7	137.7	138.3	138.8	139.4	139.8	78.5	78.3	80.5	80.6	82.1
Electric utilities	122.5	126.6	130.2	126.6	130.0	150.8	151.9	152.9	154.0	154.8	81.2	83.4	85.1	82.2	84.0

Note. Data for output are percentages of 1977 output as shown in the Federal Reserve's seasonally adjusted indexes of industrial production. Capacity is also expressed as a percentage of

1977 actual output. Capacity utilization percentages are calculated as ratios of production to capacity.

## INDUSTRIAL MATERIALS

Table 3

### Capacity Utilization Monthly, seasonally adjusted, percent of capacity

Series	1973	1975	1978	1982	1987	1987	1987				1988				
	High	Low	-80	Low	-87	MAY	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY
Industrial Materials	92.0	70.5	89.1	68.5	82.2	79.3	81.2	82.1	82.9	83.4	83.0	82.3	82.3	83.1	83.4
Durable goods materials	91.8	64.4	89.8	60.9	79.0	75.1	77.0	78.3	79.0	80.0	79.7	79.3	79.1	79.9	80.6
Metal materials	99.2	67.1	93.6	45.7	77.7	69.7	78.3	82.4	83.3	86.3	80.1	79.3	78.2	79.2	81.1
Raw steel	106.0	66.4	98.9	36.1	80.2	73.4	88.5	87.8	89.7	89.2	90.3	85.7	86.5	83.4	
Aluminum	95.7	73.0	97.4	58.8	87.3	80.3	90.3	91.8	94.8	95.8	97.1	97.9	99.2	99.5	
Nondurable goods materials	91.1	66.7	88.1	70.7	83.4	86.2	88.7	88.2	89.0	90.8	88.8	87.3	88.3	88.6	88.7
Textile, paper, and chemical materials	92.8	64.8	89.4	68.8	83.8	87.1	90.7	90.4	91.0	93.1	90.8	88.5	89.9	90.0	90.0
Pulp and paper materials	98.4	70.6	97.3	79.9	91.7	95.7	98.5	97.4	98.7	101.6	100.6	97.8	98.0	98.1	
Chemical materials	92.5	64.4	87.9	63.5	81.0	83.9	87.4	88.0	88.6	90.9	87.8	85.7	87.4	87.4	
Energy materials	94.6	86.9	94.0	82.3	89.0	82.1	83.5	84.9	85.7	84.8	84.7	84.1	83.8	84.8	84.6

Table 4

### Output, Capacity, and Capacity Utilization

Quarterly, seasonally adjusted

Series	OUTPUT					CAPACITY					UTILIZATION				
	1987 Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	1988 Q1	1987 Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	1988 Q1	1987 Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	1988 Q1
Industrial Materials	115.0	116.5	119.2	122.5	122.5	146.1	146.7	147.2	147.8	148.5	78.7	79.4	81.0	82.9	82.5
Durable goods materials	121.4	122.9	125.7	130.3	131.5	162.3	163.1	163.9	164.7	165.7	74.8	75.4	76.7	79.1	79.4
Metal materials	74.7	77.0	83.8	91.4	86.1	110.6	110.0	109.4	108.9	108.8	67.5	70.0	76.5	84.0	79.2
Raw steel	60.9	67.8	77.0	79.5	77.7	93.6	92.2	90.8	89.4	88.7	65.1	73.6	84.8	88.9	87.5
Aluminum	74.9	77.8	83.6	88.4	92.5	95.4	94.9	94.4	93.9	94.3	78.5	81.9	88.6	94.1	98.1
Nondurable goods materials	121.2	124.0	128.2	130.1	129.9	142.9	143.8	144.7	145.6	146.8	84.8	86.2	88.6	89.3	88.1
Textile, paper and chemical materials	122.3	125.1	130.5	133.0	131.7	142.4	143.8	144.4	145.4	146.7	85.9	87.2	90.4	91.5	89.7
Pulp and paper materials	136.4	137.7	144.6	145.1	145.9	142.8	143.9	145.1	146.2	147.6	95.5	95.7	99.6	99.2	98.8
Chemical materials	122.9	125.3	130.2	135.5	133.5	148.8	149.8	150.9	152.0	153.5	82.6	83.6	86.3	89.1	87.0
Energy materials	98.3	98.7	100.0	102.1	100.8	120.3	120.2	120.1	119.9	119.7	81.7	82.1	83.3	85.2	84.2

#### Explanatory Notes

**Definition.** This release contains estimates of output, capacity, and capacity utilization for the nation's factories, mines, and electric and gas utilities. Output data are the Federal Reserve's seasonally adjusted indexes of industrial production, which express output as percentages of 1977 output. The capacity estimates are expressed as percentages of 1977 output as well. Capacity utilization percentages are calculated as ratios of production to capacity. The capacity indexes are based on a variety of data, including capacity data in physical units compiled by trade associations, private and government surveys of capacity growth and utilization rates, and estimates of capital stock growth. The concept of practical capacity is applied, which is defined as the greatest level of output that a plant can maintain within the framework of a realistic work pattern, taking account of normal downtime, and assuming sufficient availability of inputs to operate machinery and equipment in place. When the capacity indexes for individual industries are aggregated—for example to total manufacturing—no explicit account is taken of possible general equilibrium constraints such as emerging industry bottlenecks. Because of the large and heterogeneous database, changes in utilization rates may be more meaningful in the analysis of business conditions than any particular level of these rates.

**Groupings.** Estimates of capacity and industrial production for manufacturing industries are aggregated to primary processing and advanced processing industries, to durable and nondurable manufacturing industries, and to total manufacturing. The mining, manufacturing, and utilities estimates aggregate to the total index. Primary processing includes textile mill products, paper and products, industrial chemicals, petroleum products, rubber and plastics products, lumber and products, primary metals, fabricated metal products, and stone, clay, and glass products. Advanced processing includes foods, tobacco products, apparel products, printing and publishing, chemical products such as drugs and toiletries, leather and products, furniture and fixtures, machinery, transportation equipment, instruments, miscellaneous manufactures, and government-owned-and-operated ordnance facilities. Industrial materials are items produced and used as inputs by manufacturing plants, mines, and utilities. Industrial materials include many of the items included in the primary processing grouping of manufacturing, as well as some of the output of the advanced processing industries, mines, and utilities—such as iron ore, crude oil, semiconductors, and electricity sold to industry.

**Perspective.** The historical highs and lows in capacity utilization shown in the tables above are specific to each series and did not all occur in the same month. Industrial plants usually operate at capacity utilization rates that are well below 100 percent; none of the broad aggregates has ever reached 100 percent. For mining, manufacturing, and utilities as a whole, and for total manufacturing, utilization rates as high as 90 percent have been exceeded only in wartime.

**Revisions.** The first estimates for a month are published about the 17th of the following month. These estimates may revise in each of the next three months as new data become available. After the fourth month no further revisions are undertaken until an annual or benchmark revision. The median of the revisions in the total manufacturing utilization rate between the first and fourth estimate is 0.3 of a percentage point; that is, in about half of the cases, the absolute value of the revision from the first to the fourth estimate is less than 0.3 of a percentage point.

**Sources.** The basic methodology used to estimate the series is discussed in Richard D. Rad-dock, "Revised Federal Reserve Rates of Capacity Utilization," *Federal Reserve Bulletin*, Vol. 71 (October 1985), pp. 754-66. Revised data for 1984-85 as well as historical utilization rates since 1987 (1948 in the case of manufacturing) are included in the statistical supplement to the September 1986 capacity utilization release. Copies may be obtained from Publications Services, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, Washington, D.C. 20551

**Rounding.** Utilization rates are calculated from unrounded capacity and production indexes. Aggregates are derived from unrounded detailed components.

**Release schedule for 1988.** Approximately 11 a.m. on January 19, February 18, March 17, April 17, May 18, June 16, July 18, August 16, September 16, October 17, November 16, and December 16.