FIS

WEEKLY DRY FFA AND FERROUS MARKET PREVIEW

17 Aug 2026

info@freightinvestor.com | freightinvestorservices.com | fis-live.com
London (+44) 20 7090 1120 | Dubai (+971) 4 4493900 | Singapore (+65) 6535 5189 | Shanghai (+86) 21 6335 4002

Dry FFA Market Signals

Bull

- Brazilian iron ore shipments are entering their seasonal peak. Atlantic cargo volumes are drawing some bulk tonnage away from the Pacific basin. (Iron Ore)

- Rising coal export volumes out of Indonesia and Australia are lifting Panamax TC rates. (PMX)

- China's July coal imports reached 43.73 million tonnes, up 23% year-on-year. Strict safety inspections persist across Shanxi coal mines. Peak coal-fired power demand runs through July and August, followed by the steel raw material restocking season in September and October. Coal demand is likely to remain robust before October. (Coal)

- NOAA puts the probability of a very strong Northern Hemisphere El Niño during autumn and winter 2026 at above 90%. The event may curtail hydropower output across parts of Asia, boosting coal-fired power consumption and seaborne coal demand. (Weather)

- Sinograin will auction 360 kt of imported soybeans on 19 August, marking the fourth auction since late July. Market participants view the move as an effort to free up storage space for incoming US soybean arrivals. Under China's purchase commitment of 25 million tonnes of US soybeans per annum by 2028, market reports indicate that around 7 million tonnes have been secured so far this year. (Grain)

- Nickel ore cargo availability edged higher in the Supramax segment this week. While not enough to drive a sustained rally, it provides marginal support to freight rates. (SMX)

Dry FFA Market Signals

Bear

- Industrial action at Port Hedland materialised, yet ample Pacific tonnage supply quickly diluted the bullish impact. (Cape)

- Between late July and early August, 547 laden vessels and 534 ballasting vessels were deployed across the Pacific. Nearly 49% of the fleet was in ballast, well above early-year levels. (Shipment)

- Global iron ore shipments totalled 32.01 million tonnes for 3–9 August, down 1.38 million tonnes week-on-week. Combined Australian and Brazilian shipments fell by 1.69 million tonnes week-on-week to 25.69 million tonnes. (Iron Ore)

- Typhoon landfalls in China disrupted port operations and vessel movements in the short run. Tonnage availability should normalise next week. (Weather)

- Iran and Oman have made progress on proposed Strait of Hormuz transit arrangements. Higher crude oil throughput going forward could lower oil-related shipping costs. (Geo-Tension)

- Indonesia has approved higher coal output to safeguard domestic energy security and export volumes. (Coal)

- Weak steel-related cargo volumes are failing to underpin Supramax freight rates. Persistently low profit margins within China's steel sector are capping steel exports and associated shipping demand. (SMX)

- The ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict is diverting grain flows from sea to land routes, while some grain cargoes remain stranded. Grain exports from major Russian and Ukrainian terminals have collapsed since July. August grain shipments may print the lowest monthly reading in a decade. (Geo-Tension)

Ferrous Market Signals

Bull

- Middle East geopolitical conflict remains protracted, keeping crude oil prices fluctuating around an elevated central level.

- BHP's third round of negotiations with labour unions is scheduled for 18 August alongside its FY2026 earnings release. A prolonged strike would trigger a reassessment of Q4 iron ore price expectations.

- Widespread losses are pushing Chinese coking plants towards deeper output curtailments, tightening coke supply. Market rumours suggest a potential first round of coke price hikes following three consecutive cuts, with producers proposing voluntary production discipline.

- Rigorous safety inspections persist across Shanxi. While domestic coking coal capacity is gradually resuming, import windows for seaborne coking coal remain open.

- Cerrejon, Glencore's largest coal mine in Colombia, suspended rail operations following an explosive attack on its main export railway. The mine posted output of 16.8 million tonnes in 2025.

- Market reports on 11 August indicated that key Tangshan steel mills had received production restriction notices. Flexible shutdowns tied to meteorological conditions apply from 16–25 August, while mandatory full production shutdowns run from 25 August to 3 September. The news drove broad gains in steel product prices.

Bear

- More than two-thirds of Chinese steel mills are operating at a loss, heavily dampening restocking appetite.

- A surplus of ballasting tonnage persists across the Pacific basin, with nearly 50% of the fleet in ballast. C5 route freight rates remain soft.

- Following heavy rainfall and typhoon-related disruptions to Asian port logistics, iron ore and coal shipments are normalising. Large volumes of cargoes currently at sea are expected to arrive at Chinese ports in concentrated batches in the near term.

Market Data Snapshot (14th Aug)

Open Interest /lots	Aug-26	Sep-26	Oct-26	Nov-26	Dec-26	Jan-27
Cape5TC (180)	23,321	24,420	17,722	14,205	15,071	5,641
Pmx5TC	23,234	25,047	17,971	15,677	14,962	6,523
Smx10TC	13,875	13,162	9,513	8,727	7,532	3,605
Iron Ore (IODEX)	322,473	482,273	217,167	99,243	78,193	24,655
Coking Coal	3,360	2,685	1,690	1,345	1,540	1,005
US HRC	5,603	9,054	7,207	5,745	4,772	2,579
FOB China HRC	763	685	216	155	155	44

Price	Aug-26	Sep-26	Oct-26	Nov-26	Dec-26	Jan-27
Cape5TC (180) $/day	39,343	39,882	40,304	38,832	37,436	27,257
Pmx5TC $/day	20,186	20,943	21,818	21,146	19,921	16,654
Smx10TC $/day	18,707	20,186	20,868	20,132	18,796	14,629
Iron Ore (IODEX) $/mt	95.50	95.96	95.90	95.80	95.64	95.51
Coking Coal $/mt	225.00	233.00	234.00	235.00	236.00	237.00
US HRC $/st	1,196	1,215	1,220	1,195	1,173	1,144
FOB China HRC $/t	486.0	486.0	490.0	492.5	494.0	497.0

OI WoW %	Aug-26	Sep-26	Oct-26	Nov-26	Dec-26	Jan-27
Cape5TC (180)	3.5%	4.0%	5.8%	7.2%	13.1%	-1.1%
Pmx5TC	-3.3%	8.4%	4.1%	5.7%	2.8%	8.8%
Smx10TC	0.1%	4.5%	12.7%	9.7%	8.3%	3.3%
Iron Ore (IODEX)	-1.4%	0.7%	17.4%	9.2%	8.4%	5.7%
Coking Coal	0.0%	0.6%	24.3%	8.0%	0.7%	0.0%
US HRC	-1.4%	-5.9%	11.0%	5.6%	8.9%	22.1%
FOB China HRC	0.0%	8.6%	0.0%	6.9%	0.0%	0.0%

Price WoW %	Aug-26	Sep-26	Oct-26	Nov-26	Dec-26	Jan-27
Cape5TC (180) $/day	0.6%	6.4%	6.0%	5.2%	4.8%	4.2%
Pmx5TC $/day	-2.6%	-0.4%	1.3%	2.0%	1.2%	1.3%
Smx10TC $/day	0.4%	0.7%	2.9%	4.2%	3.5%	2.2%
Iron Ore (IODEX) $/mt	0.8%	1.0%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%
Coking Coal $/mt	4.4%	6.4%	5.9%	5.7%	5.6%	5.1%
US HRC $/st	0.1%	0.3%	1.7%	1.9%	1.6%	1.7%
FOB China HRC $/t	1.4%	0.6%	0.5%	0.7%	0.9%	1.1%

Sources: EEX, SGX, CME

Edited by: Hao Pei, Senior Research Analyst

CONTACT

Paul Geddes
PaulG@freightinvestor.com
m: (+44) 7745644966

Federico Picciolini
FedericoP@freightinvestor.com
m: (+44) 7543223444