PUMICE AND PUMICITE

(Data in thousand metric tons, unless otherwise noted)

Domestic Production and Use: The estimated value of pumice and pumicite sold or used in 1998 was $15.1 million. Domestic output came from 14 producers in 6 States. The principal producing States were Idaho, New Mexico, and Oregon, with combined production accounting for about 77% of the national total. The remaining production was from Arizona, California, and Kansas. About 59% of the pumice was consumed for building blocks, and the remaining 41% was used in abrasives, concrete, laundries, and many other applications.

Salient Statistics—United States:	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998[e]
Production, mine[1]	490	529	612	577	616
Imports for consumption	143	238	215	265	306
Exports[e]	18	16	13	12	21
Consumption, apparent	615	728	814	830	901
Price, average value, dollars per ton, f.o.b. mine or mill	24.10	25.00	24.20	27.90	24.60
Stocks, yearend	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Employment, mine and mill, number	50	60	70	70	75
Net import reliance[2] as a percent of apparent consumption	20	30	25	30	32

Recycling: Not available.

Import Sources (1994-97): Greece, 87%; Ecuador, 6%; Turkey, 6%; and other, 1%.

Tariff: Item	Number	Normal Trade Relations (NTR) 12/31/98	Non-NTR[3] 12/31/98
Crude or in irregular pieces, including crushed pumice	2513.11.0000	Free	Free.
Other	2513.19.0000	0.1¢/kg	1.7¢/kg.

Depletion Allowance: 5% (Domestic), 5% (Foreign).

Government Stockpile: None.

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PUMICE AND PUMICITE

Events, Trends, and Issues: The amount of pumice and pumicite sold or used in 1998 increased nearly 7% compared with that of 1997. Imports increased over 15% compared with that of 1997 as more Greek pumice was brought into the eastern half of the United States. Total consumption reached a 10-year high, at 901,000 tons. Consumption increased because of increased demand from lightweight-block producers. Laundry use of pumice continued to decline in 1998.

It is estimated that in 1999 domestic mine production of pumice and pumicite will be about 650,000 tons, with U.S. apparent consumption at approximately 950,000 tons. Imports, mainly from Greece, continue to maintain markets on the East Coast and Gulf Coast States of the United States.

Although pumice and pumicite were plentiful in the Western United States, changes in laws and public land designations could make many deposits decreasingly accessible to mining. Pumice and pumicite were sensitive to mining costs and should domestic production cost increase, it was expected that imports and competing materials might replace domestic pumice in many markets.

All domestic mining of pumice in 1998 was by open pit methods and generally occurred in relatively remote areas where land use conflicts were not severe. Although the generation and disposal of reject fines in mining and milling resulted in a dust problem at some operations, the environmental impact was restricted to a small geographical area.

World Mine Production, Reserves, and Reserve Base:

	Mine production		Reserves[4]	Reserve base[4]
	1997	1998[e]		
United States[1]	577	616	Large	Large
Chile	450	475	NA	NA
France	450	450	NA	NA
Germany	600	600	NA	NA
Greece	1,200	1,200	NA	NA
Italy	5,100	5,100	NA	NA
Spain	600	600	NA	NA
Turkey	1,130	1,140	NA	NA
Other countries	1,090	1,100	NA	NA
World total (rounded)	11,200	11,300	NA	NA

World Resources: The identified U.S. domestic resources of pumice and pumicite in the West are estimated to be at least 25 million tons. The estimated resources in the Western and Great Plains States are 250 million to 450 million tons.

Substitutes: Transportation cost determines the maximum distance that pumice and pumicite can be shipped and remain competitive with alternate materials. Competitive materials that can be substituted for pumice and pumicite for several end uses include expanded shale and clay, diatomite, and crushed aggregates.

[e]Estimated. NA Not available.

[1]Quantity sold and used by producers.

[2]Defined as imports - exports + adjustments for Government and industry stock changes.

[3]See Appendix B.

[4]See Appendix D for definitions.