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 2007 was about $43 million. Domestic output came from 17 producers at 19 mines in 7 States. Pumice and pumicite were mined in California, Arizona, New Mexico, Oregon, Idaho, Nevada, and Kansas, in descending order of production. About 49% of production came from Arizona and California. About 85% of the pumice was consumed for building blocks. Horticulture consumed 5%; concrete admixture and aggregate, 5%; abrasives, 3%; and the remaining 2% was used in landscaping, stone-washing laundries, and other applications.

Salient Statistics—United States:	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007[e]
Production, mine[1]	870	1,490	1,270	1,540	1,410
Imports for consumption	367	402	240	365	369
Exports[e]	26	27	21	22	22
Consumption, apparent	1,210	1,870	1,490	1,880	1,760
Price, average value, dollars per ton, f.o.b. mine or mill	25.20	16.80	31.00	28.85	30.33
Employment, mine and mill, number	100	100	110	110	115
Net import reliance[2] as a percentage of apparent consumption	28	20	15	18	20

Recycling: Not available.

Import Sources (2003-06): Greece, 75%; Italy, 21%; Turkey, 3%; and other, 1%.

Tariff: Item	Number	Normal Trade Relations 12-31-07
Crude or in irregular pieces, including crushed pumice	2513.10.0010	Free.
Other	2513.10.0080	Free.

Depletion Allowance: 5% (Domestic and foreign).

Government Stockpile: None.

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PUMICE AND PUMICITE

Events, Trends, and Issues: The amount of domestically produced pumice and pumicite sold or used in 2007 decreased by 8% to 1.41 million tons compared with 1.54 million tons in 2006. Imports remained about the same as those of 2006. More than 96% of pumice imports were from Greece and Italy to supply markets in the Eastern United States and Gulf Coast. Apparent consumption in 2007 fell by about 6.5% compared with that of 2006.

In 2008, domestic mine production of pumice and pumicite and U.S. apparent consumption are expected to decrease owing to continued softness in the housing construction industry. Although pumice and pumicite are plentiful in the Western United States, changes in laws and public land designations could limit access to many deposits. Pumice and pumicite production is sensitive to mining and transportation costs, and if domestic production costs increase, imports and competing materials might replace pumice in many domestic markets.

All domestic mining of pumice in 2007 was by open pit methods and was generally in 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 geographic area.

World Mine Production, Reserves, and Reserve Base:

	Mine production		Reserves[3]	Reserve base[3]
	2006	2007[e]		
United States[1]	1,540	1,410	Large	Large
Algeria	500	430		
Cameroon	600	600		
Chile	1,620	1,600		
Ecuador	640	830	Quantitative estimates of reserves	
France	450	450	and reserve base for most countries	
Greece	2,250	2,300	are not available.	
Iran	1,600	1,500		
Italy	4,600	4,600		
Spain	900	600		
Syria	650	650		
Turkey	900	700		
Other countries	2,600	2,600		
World total (rounded)	18,800	18,300	NA	NA

World Resources: The identified U.S. resources of pumice and pumicite in the West are estimated to be more than 25 million tons. The estimated total resources (identified and undiscovered) in the Western and Great Plains States are at least 250 million tons and may total more than 1 billion tons. Italy, Greece, and Chile are the leading producers of pumice and pumicite, followed by Iran, the United States, and Turkey. Recent analysis shows that the production estimates of past years for pumice and pumicite from some countries, notably Greece, Ecuador, and Cameroon, may have been erroneous. More reliable sources were used for the current production figures. There are large resources of pumice and pumicite on all continents.

Substitutes: The costs of transportation determine the maximum distance that pumice and pumicite can be shipped and still remain competitive with alternate materials. Competitive materials that can be substituted for pumice and pumicite for several end uses include crushed aggregates, diatomite, expanded shale and clay, and vermiculite.

[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 C for definitions.