

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 2006 was about \$50 million. Domestic output came from 16 producers at 17 mines in 7 States. Pumice and pumicite was mined in Arizona, Oregon, Idaho, California, New Mexico, Nevada, and Kansas, in descending order of production. About 66% of production came from Arizona, Oregon, and Idaho. About 82% of the pumice was consumed for building blocks. Horticulture consumed 11%; abrasives, 3%; concrete admixture and aggregate, 2%; and the remaining 2% was used in concrete, landscaping, stone-washing laundries, and other applications.

<u>Salient Statistics—United States:</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006^e</u>
Production, mine ¹	956	870	1,490	1,270	1,580
Imports for consumption	360	366	402	240	240
Exports ^e	30	25	27	21	22
Consumption, apparent	1,320	1,210	1,870	1,490	1,800
Price, average value, dollars per ton, f.o.b. mine or mill	20.69	25.19	16.80	31.00	32.00
Stocks, yearend	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Employment, mine and mill, number	100	100	100	110	110
Net import reliance ² as a percentage of apparent consumption	25	28	20	15	12

Recycling: Not available.

Import Sources (2002-05): Greece, 72%; Italy, 25%; Turkey, 3%; and other, <1%.

<u>Tariff: Item</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Normal Trade Relations</u> <u>12-31-06</u>
Crude or in irregular pieces, including crushed pumice	2513.11.0000	Free.
Other	2513.19.0000	0.2¢/kg.

Depletion Allowance: 5% (Domestic and foreign).

Government Stockpile: None.

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Events, Trends, and Issues: The amount of domestically produced pumice and pumicite sold or used in 2006 increased by 24% to 1.6 million tons compared with 1.3 million tons in 2005. Imports remained about the same as those of 2005. Over 95% of pumice imports were from Greece and Italy to supply markets in the Eastern United States and Gulf Coast. Apparent consumption in 2006 rose by about 21% compared with that of 2005.

In 2007, domestic mine production of pumice and pumicite and U.S. apparent consumption are expected to increase slightly. Although pumice and pumicite are plentiful in the Western United States, changes in laws and public land designations could decrease access to many deposits. Production of pumice and pumicite 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 2006 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
	2005	2006 ^e		
United States ¹	1,270	1,580	Large	Large
Algeria	500	500		
Cameroon	600	300		
Chile	1,620	1,600		
Ecuador	830	830	Quantitative estimates of reserves and reserve base for most countries are not available.	
France	450	450		
Greece	2,250	2,200		
Iran	1,200	1,200		
Italy	4,600	4,600		
Spain	600	600		
Syria	650	650		
Turkey	1,000	1,200		
Other countries	1,000	1,100		
World total (rounded)	16,600	16,800		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 the United States, Iran, 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.

^eEstimated. NA Not available.

¹Quantity sold and used by producers.

²Defined as imports – exports + adjustments for Government and industry stock changes.

³[See Appendix C for definitions.](#)