PUMICE AND PUMICITE

(Data in thousand metric tons, unless noted)

Domestic Production and Use: The estimated value of pumice and pumicite sold or used in 1995 was $12.6 million. Domestic output came from 13 producers in 6 States. The principal producing States were New Mexico and Oregon, with combined production accounting for about 65% of the national total. The remaining production was from Arizona, California, Idaho, and Kansas. About 64% of the pumice was consumed for building blocks and the remainder was used in abrasives, concrete, laundries, and many other uses.

Salient Statistics—United States:	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995[e]
Production, mine[1]	401	481	469	490	544
Imports for consumption	118	257	143	143	237
Exports[e]	13	11	18	18	18
Consumption, apparent	506	727	594	615	763
Price, average value, dollars per ton, f.o.b. mine or mill	22.90	30.99	25.68	24.08	23.15
Stocks, yearend	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Employment, mine and mill	50	50	50	50	55
Net import reliance[2] as a percent of apparent consumption	21	34	21	20	29

Recycling: Not available.

Import Sources (1991-94): Greece, 67%; Zaire, 8%; Turkey, 7%; Ecuador, 6%; and other, 12%.

Tariff: Item	Number	Most favored nation (MFN) 12/31/95	Non-MFN[3] 12/31/95
Crude or in irregular pieces, including crushed pumice	2513.11.0000	Free	Free.
Other	2513.19.0000	0.3¢/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 apparent consumption of 763,000 tons in 1995 was the highest since 1986 when 851,000 tons was consumed. Increased demand for pumice in lightweight concrete and building block was the major factor influencing increased consumption.

It is estimated that in 1996 domestic mine production of pumice and pumicite will remain around 540,000 tons, with U.S. apparent consumption at approximately 750,000 tons. Imports, mainly from Greece, continue to maintain markets on the East Coast and Gulf Coast States of the United States. Imports increased in 1995, returning to well over 200,000 tons after several lean years.

Although pumice and pumicite were plentiful in the Western United States, changes that occur in laws and public land designations could make many deposits decreasingly accessible to mining. Pumice and pumicite was sensitive to mining cost 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 1995 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]
	1994	1995[e]		
United States[1]	490	544	Large	Large
Chile	450	450	NA	NA
France	500	525	NA	NA
Germany	650	680	NA	NA
Greece	900	1,000	NA	NA
Italy	5,200	5,200	NA	NA
Spain	700	700	NA	NA
Turkey	1,000	1,100	NA	NA
Other countries	1,500	1,500	NA	NA
World total (rounded)	11,400	11,700	NA	NA

World Resources: The identified 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 C for definitions.