

FELDSPAR

(Data in thousand metric tons, unless otherwise noted)

Domestic Production and Use: U.S. feldspar production in 2001 had an estimated value of about \$42 million. The three largest producers accounted for about two-thirds of the output, with six other companies supplying the remainder. Operations in North Carolina provided about 40% of the output, and facilities in six other States contributed smaller quantities. Feldspar processors reported coproduct recovery of mica and silica sand.

Feldspar is ground for industry use to about 20 mesh for glassmaking and to 200 mesh or finer for most ceramic and filler applications. It was estimated that feldspar shipments went to at least 30 States and to foreign destinations, including Canada and Mexico. In pottery and glass, feldspar functions as a flux. Estimated 2001 end-use distribution of domestic feldspar was glass, 66%, and pottery and other, 34%.

Salient Statistics—United States:	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001^e
Production, marketable ^e	900	820	875	790	780
Imports for consumption	9	7	7	7	7
Exports	7	13	10	11	5
Consumption, apparent ^e	902	814	872	786	782
Price, average value, marketable production, dollars per ton ^e	47.00	50.00	49.00	56.00	54.00
Stocks, producer, yearend ¹	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Employment, mine and preparation plant, number	400	400	400	400	400
Net import reliance ² as a percentage of apparent consumption	(³)	E	E	E	(³)

Recycling: Insignificant.

Import Sources (1997-2000): Mexico, 95%; and other, 5%.

Tariff: Item	Number	Normal Trade Relations 12/31/01
Feldspar	2529.10.0000	Free.

Depletion Allowance: 14% (Domestic and foreign).

Government Stockpile: None.

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Events, Trends, and Issues: U.S. shipments of glass containers, a major end use of feldspar, were about 1% less in the first 8 months of 2001 than in the comparable period of 2000, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Plastic containers continued to be strong competitors with glass in the packaging market, especially in the food and beverage segments. A U.S. manufacturer of glass baby food jars announced in June 2001 that it would replace most of its jars with plastic containers.⁴ A U.S. brewing company previously began making three of its popular beers available in plastic bottles. However, glass remains the most widely used material for beer containers.⁵

Much feldspar was used in ceramic tile and vitreous plumbing fixtures in new housing and commercial buildings. U.S. housing starts for the first 8 months of 2001 were about 2% more than in the comparable period of 2000, according to U.S. Census Bureau data. There were indications of decreased housing activity in the fourth quarter of 2001, according to the National Association of Home Builders. Imports continued to account for a large share of the U.S. market, about 70% of all tile consumed in 2000. The largest suppliers, in descending order of quantity, were Italy, Spain, Mexico, and Brazil.⁶

World Mine Production, Reserves, and Reserve Base:

	Mine production		Reserves and reserve base ⁷
	2000	2001 ^e	
United States ^e	790	780	Detailed reserve information is not available.
Argentina	61	60	
Brazil	240	60	
Colombia	55	60	
France	600	600	
Germany	460	460	
Greece	60	60	
India	110	110	
Italy	2,600	2,600	
Japan	52	50	
Korea, Republic of	330	330	
Mexico	334	400	
Norway	75	80	
Portugal	120	120	
Spain	425	430	
Thailand	543	540	
Turkey	1,200	1,200	
Uzbekistan	70	70	
Venezuela	160	150	
Other countries	995	1,100	
World total	9,280	9,260	

World Resources: Identified and hypothetical resources of feldspar are more than adequate to meet anticipated world demand. Quantitative data on resources of feldspar existing in granites, pegmatites, and feldspathic sands generally have not been compiled. There is ample geologic evidence that resources are large, although not always conveniently accessible to the principal centers of consumption.

Substitutes: Feldspar can be replaced in some of its end uses by feldspar-silica mixtures, clays, talc, pyrophyllite, spodumene, or electric-furnace slag. Imported nepheline syenite, however, was the major alternative material.

^eEstimated. E Net exporter. NA Not available.

¹Change in stocks assumed to be zero for apparent consumption and net import reliance calculations.

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

³Negligible.

⁴The Freedonia Group, 2000, Plastic containers to 2004: Cleveland, OH, The Freedonia Group, 213 p.

⁵———2001, World beer containers: Cleveland, OH, The Freedonia Group, 327 p.

⁶Glueck, M.J., 2001, Information presented at Coverings 2001: Washington, DC, Law, Economics, and Consulting Group, LLC.

⁷See Appendix C for definitions.