FELDSPAR

(Data in thousand metric tons, unless otherwise noted)

Domestic Production and Use: U.S. feldspar production (including aplite) in 1996 had an estimated value of $38 million. The three largest producers accounted for over one-half of the output, with eight other companies supplying the remainder. Operations in North Carolina provided about 55% of the output and facilities in six other States contributed smaller quantities.

Production of lithium ores and mica yielded moderate quantities of byproduct or coproduct feldspar and feldspar-silica mixtures, and 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 31 States and to foreign destinations, including Canada and Mexico. In ceramics and glass, feldspar functions as a flux. Estimated 1996 end-use distribution of domestic feldspar was glass, 69%, and pottery and other, 31%.

Salient Statistics—United States:	**1992**	**1993**	**1994**	**1995**	**1996[e]**
Production, marketable	725	770	765	880	900
Imports for consumption	13	7	7	9	10
Exports	18	18	17	15	15
Consumption, apparent	720	759	755	874	895
Price, average value, marketable production, dollars per ton	39.31	40.78	40.78	42.50	42.44
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 percent of apparent consumption	2	E	E	E	E

Recycling: Insignificant.

Import Sources (1992-95): Mexico, 98%; and other, 2%.

Tariff: Item	**Number**	**Most favored nation (MFN) 12/31/96**	**Non-MFN[3] 12/31/96**
Feldspar	2529.10.0000	Free	49¢/t.

Depletion Allowance: 14% (Domestic), 14% (Foreign).

Government Stockpile: None.

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Events, Trends, and Issues: Shipments of glass containers, the largest end use of feldspar, have been somewhat flat in the United States. Plastic containers have provided strong competition, especially in the soft drink market. According to one industry source, one niche, beer bottles, could see positive growth in 1996. Growth in glass containers could take place in other areas, such as South America, Eastern Europe, and India. The switch from glass to plastic containers in these countries appears less likely, because the cost of raw materials for plastics outside the United States is more expensive.

Feldspar's other large end use continued to be in ceramics, such as tile, plumbing fixtures, electrical insulators, and dinnerware. Usage of plumbing fixtures (sanitaryware) often follows housing starts, which were projected by a non-Government source to reach 1.4 million units in 1996. This was an increase of 3% compared with activity in 1995.

World Mine Production, Reserves, and Reserve Base:

	Mine production		Reserves and reserve base[4]
	1995	1996[e]	
United States	880	900	Significant in the United States and assumed to be similar in other countries.
Brazil	145	145	
France	300	310	
Germany	350	350	
India	65	65	
Italy	1,600	1,600	
Japan	57	60	
Korea, Republic of	320	330	
Mexico	140	150	
Norway	100	100	
Russia	55	55	
Spain	225	230	
Thailand	590	600	
Turkey	400	420	
Uzbekistan	70	70	
Venezuela	170	170	
Other countries	643	645	
World total (may be rounded)	6,110	6,200	

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 immense, 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 alternate material.

[e]Estimated. E Net exporter. NA Not available.
[1]Change in stocks assumed to be zero for apparent consumption and net import reliance calculations.
[2]Defined as imports - exports + adjustments for Government and industry stock changes.
[3]See Appendix B.
[4]See Appendix C for definitions.