

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 2004 was about \$26 million. Domestic output came from 16 producers at 17 mines in 6 States. Pumice and pumicite was mined in Arizona, Oregon, New Mexico, California, Idaho, Nevada, and Kansas, in descending order of significance. About 76% of production came from Arizona, Oregon, and New Mexico. About 76% of the pumice was consumed for building blocks, and the remaining 24% was used in abrasives, concrete, horticulture, landscaping, stone-washing laundries, and other applications.

Salient Statistics—United States:	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004^e</u>
Production, mine ¹	1,050	920	956	870	1,070
Imports for consumption	385	379	360	366	405
Exports ^e	27	27	30	25	25
Consumption, apparent	1,410	1,270	1,320	1,210	1,450
Price, average value, dollars per ton, f.o.b. mine or mill	24.27	21.42	20.69	25.19	24.12
Stocks, yearend	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Employment, mine and mill, number	105	100	100	100	100
Net import reliance ² as a percentage of apparent consumption	25	28	25	28	26

Recycling: Not available.

Import Sources (2000-03): Greece, 80%; Italy, 14%; Turkey, 5%; and other, 1%.

Tariff: Item	Number	Normal Trade Relations <u>12-31-04</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 2004 increased 23% compared with that of 2003. Imports increased about 11% compared with those of 2003 as more Greek and Italian pumice was brought into eastern U.S. ports to supply markets primarily in the Eastern United States and Gulf Coast.

Total apparent consumption in 2004 rose about 20% compared with that of 2003. This increase in apparent consumption was due to a greater demand for lightweight building materials associated with the overall increase in building in the Western United States.

In 2005, domestic mine production of pumice and pumicite is expected to increase slightly to about 1.1 million tons, with U.S. apparent consumption rising to 1.5 million tons. Although pumice and pumicite is plentiful in the Western United States, changes in laws and public land designations could decrease access to many deposits. Pumice and pumicite is sensitive to mining and transportation costs, and, if domestic production costs were to increase, imports and competing materials might replace pumice in many domestic markets.

All domestic mining of pumice in 2004 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
	2003	2004 ^e		
United States ¹	870	1,070	Large	Large
Algeria	400	500	NA	NA
Chile	830	850	NA	NA
Ecuador	90	90	NA	NA
France	450	450	NA	NA
Germany	500	500	NA	NA
Greece	1,600	1,700	NA	NA
Guadeloupe	210	210	NA	NA
Guatemala	270	260	NA	NA
Iran	1,200	1,100	NA	NA
Italy	4,600	4,500	NA	NA
Spain	600	600	NA	NA
Turkey	800	800	NA	NA
Other countries	1,900	1,800	NA	NA
World total (rounded)	14,300	14,400	NA	NA

World Resources: The identified U.S. domestic 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.

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.

³See [Appendix C](#) for definitions.