MICA (NATURAL), SCRAP AND FLAKE[1]

(Data in thousand metric tons, unless otherwise noted)

Domestic Production and Use: Scrap and flake mica production, excluding low-quality sericite, was estimated to be 81,000 metric tons in 1998. North Carolina accounted for about 52% of U.S. production. The remaining output came from Georgia, New Mexico, South Carolina, and South Dakota. Scrap mica was recovered principally from mica and sericite schist and from feldspar, kaolin, and industrial sand beneficiation. The majority of domestic production was processed into small particle-size mica by either wet or dry grinding. Primary uses were joint compound, paint, roofing, oil well drilling additives, and rubber products. The value of 1998 scrap mica production was estimated at $9 million. Ground mica sales in 1997 were valued at $37 million. There were 10 domestic producers of scrap and flake mica.

Salient Statistics—United States:	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998[e]
Production:[2 3] Mine	109	108	97	114	81
Ground	95	98	103	110	78
Imports, mica powder and mica waste	18	22	18	23	22
Exports, mica powder and mica waste	6	7	8	8	8
Consumption, apparent[4]	97	112	107	122	90
Price, average, dollars per ton, reported:					
Scrap and flake	66	52	81	83	112
Ground:					
Wet	1,007	974	1,032	1,080	1,000
Dry	151	174	182	176	180
Stocks, producer, yearend[e]	14	13	7	NA	NA
Employment, mine, number[e 5]	364	360	NA	NA	NA
Net import reliance[6] as a percent of apparent consumption	1	5	4	9	13

Recycling: None.

Import Sources (1994-97): Canada, 63%; India, 29%; Finland, 4%; Japan, 2%; and other, 2%.

Tariff: Item	Number	Normal Trade Relations (NTR) 12/31/98	Non-NTR[7] 12/31/98
Mica powder	2525.20.0000	0.5% ad val.	20% ad val.
Mica waste	2525.30.0000	Free	8.8¢/ kg.

Depletion Allowance: 22% (Domestic), 14% (Foreign).

Government Stockpile: None.

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MICA (NATURAL), SCRAP AND FLAKE

Events, Trends, and Issues: Domestic production of ground mica decreased in 1998. The decline was primarily the result of the closure of a lithium and mica mine in Bessemer City, NC. Part of the production shortfall from the North Carolina mine was offset by increased production from recently opened operations in Deep Step, GA, and Newell, SD. A dry and wet ground mica producer in Micaville, NC, was sold to a larger mining company with existing operations in Spruce Pine, NC. The United States remained a major world producer of scrap and flake mica. Imported mica scrap and flake is primarily used for making mica paper and as a filler and reinforcer in plastics.

World Mine Production, Reserves, and Reserve Base:

	Mine production		Reserves[8]	Reserve base[8]
	1997	1998[e]		
United States[2]	114	81	Large	Large
Brazil	7	7	Large	Large
Canada	18	18	Large	Large
India	1	1	Large	Large
Korea, Republic of	34	34	Large	Large
Russia	100	100	Large	Large
Other countries	41	40	Large	Large
World total	315	281	Large	Large

World Resources: Resources of scrap and flake mica are available in granite, pegmatite, schist, and clay deposits and are considered more than adequate to meet anticipated world demand in the foreseeable future.

Substitutes: Some of the lightweight aggregates, such as diatomite, vermiculite, and perlite, may be substituted for ground mica when used as a filler. Ground synthetic fluorophlogopite, a fluorine-rich mica, may replace natural ground mica for uses that require the thermal and electrical properties of mica.

[e]Estimated. NA Not available.

[1]See also Mica (Natural), Sheet.

[2]Sold or used by producing companies.

[3]Excludes low-quality sericite used primarily for brick manufacturing.

[4]Based on ground mica.

[5]Total employment at mines and mills where mica was produced and processed, including byproduct production. Employees were not assigned to specific commodities in calculating employment.

[6]Defined as imports - exports + adjustments for Government and industry stock changes.

[7]See Appendix B.

[8]See Appendix D for definitions.