DIATOMITE

(Data in thousand metric tons, unless otherwise noted)

Domestic Production and Use: The estimated value of processed diatomite, f.o.b. plant, was $182 million in 1999. Production was from 7 companies with 12 processing facilities in 4 States. Three companies produced more than 75% of the total. California and Nevada were the principal producing States. Estimated end uses of diatomite were filter aids, 64%; absorbents, 14%; fillers, 12%; and other (mostly cement manufacture), 10%.

Salient Statistics—United States:	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999[e]
Production[1]	722	729	773	725	720
Imports for consumption	([2])	2	2	2	2
Exports	144	143	140	138	140
Consumption, apparent	578	588	635	589	582
Price, average value, dollars per ton, f.o.b. plant	238	242	244	248	250
Stocks, producer, yearend	36	36	36	36	36
Employment, mine and plant, number[e]	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Net import reliance[3] as a percent of apparent consumption	E	E	E	E	E

Recycling: None.

Import Sources (1995-98): France, 85%; Mexico, 5%; and other, 10%.

Tariff: Item	Number	Normal Trade Relations 12/31/99
Siliceous fossil meals, including diatomite	2512.00.0000	Free.

Depletion Allowance: 15% (Domestic and foreign).

Government Stockpile: None.

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Events, Trends, and Issues: Filtration (including for beer, wine, liquors, oils, and greases) continued to be the largest end use for diatomite, also known as diatomaceous earth (D.E.). Another application is for microbial contaminants such as bacteria, viruses, and protozoa in public water systems. A U.S. company in conjunction with an international association commissioned a test project using D.E. filtration and achieved very significant results in reduction of cryptosporidium. D.E. filter aids have been successfully deployed in over 200 locations throughout the United States for the treatment of potable water.

World Mine Production, Reserves, and Reserve Base:

	Mine production		Reserves[4]	Reserve base[4]
	1998	1999[e]		
United States[1]	725	720	250,000	500,000
China	350	350		NA
Denmark[5]	375	375		NA
France	80	80	Other	2,000
Japan	190	190	countries:	NA
Korea, Republic of	50	50	550,000	NA
Mexico	60	60		2,000
Spain	40	40		NA
Former Soviet Union[6]	80	80		NA
Other countries	200	205		NA
World total (may be rounded)	2,150	2,150	800,000	Large

World Resources: World resources of crude diatomite are adequate for the foreseeable future, but the need for diatomite to be near markets encourages development of new sources for the material.

Substitutes: Many materials can be substituted for diatomite. However, the unique properties of diatomite assure its continuing use for many applications. Expanded perlite and silica sand compete for filtration purposes. Other filtration technologies use ceramic, polymeric, or carbon membrane. Alternate filler materials include talc, ground silica sand, ground mica, clay, perlite, vermiculite, and ground limestone. For thermal insulation, materials such as various clays and special brick, mineral wool, expanded perlite, and exfoliated vermiculite can be used.

[e]Estimated. E Net exporter. NA Not available.

[1]Processed ore sold and used by producers.

[2]Less than ½ unit.

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

[4]See Appendix C for definitions.

[5]Includes sales of moler production.

[6]As constituted before December 1991.