

PERLITE

(Data in thousand metric tons, unless otherwise noted)

Domestic Production and Use: The estimated value (f.o.b. mine) of processed perlite produced in 1996 was \$20.4 million. Crude ore production came from eight mines operated by six companies in four Western States. New Mexico continued to be the major producing State. Processed ore was expanded at 62 plants in 31 States. The principal end uses were building construction products, 69%; filter aid, 10%; horticultural aggregate, 10%; fillers, 9%; and other, 2%.

<u>Salient Statistics—United States:</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1993</u>	<u>1994</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>1996^e</u>
Production ¹	541	569	644	700	701
Imports for consumption ^e	65	70	70	84	85
Exports ^e	29	26	30	40	40
Consumption, apparent	577	613	684	744	746
Price, average value, dollars per ton, f.o.b. mine	30.32	30.63	30.03	27.93	29.16
Stocks, producer, yearend	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Employment, mine and mill	115	115	125	125	125
Net import reliance ² as a percent of apparent consumption	6	7	6	6	6

Recycling: Not available.

Import Sources (1992-95): Greece, 100%.

<u>Tariff: Item</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Most favored nation (MFN)</u> <u>12/31/96</u>	<u>Non-MFN³</u> <u>12/31/96</u>
Mineral substances, not specifically provided for	2530.10.0000	Free	Free.

Depletion Allowance: 10% (Domestic), 10% (Foreign).

Government Stockpile: None.

PERLITE

Events, Trends, and Issues: Processed ore production and apparent consumption increased for the fifth straight year. Supplies of domestic processed ore were tight in 1996 due to strong demand from expanders who were trying to fill a void left when a producer in California was temporarily shutdown. The shutdown occurred because of a landslide at the mining operation. The supply-demand situation is expected to stabilize when the site reopens in 1997.

Perlite mining generally occurred in remote areas, and environmental problems were not severe. The overburden, reject ore, and mineral fines produced during ore mining and processing are used to reclaim the mined out areas, and, therefore, little waste is produced. Airborne dust is captured by baghouses, and there is practically no runoff that contributes to water pollution.

Domestic perlite continued to encounter transportation cost disadvantages in some areas of the Eastern United States compared with Greek imports. However, Western U.S. perlite exports to Canada partially offset imports into the Eastern United States.

New uses of perlite were being researched, which may increase domestic consumption.

World Processed Perlite Production, Crude Ore Reserves, and Reserve Base:

	Production		Reserves ⁴	Reserve base ⁴
	1995	1996 ^e		
United States	700	701	50,000	200,000
Greece	200	200	50,000	300,000
Japan	200	200	(⁵)	(⁵)
Turkey	165	175	(⁵)	(⁵)
Other countries	<u>215</u>	<u>225</u>	<u>600,000</u>	<u>1,500,000</u>
World total (may be rounded)	1,480	1,500	700,000	2,000,000

World Resources: Too little information is available in perlite-producing countries to estimate resources with any reliability.

Substitutes: Alternate materials can be substituted for all uses of perlite, if necessary. Long-established competitive commodities include diatomite, expanded clay and shale, pumice, slag, and vermiculite.

^eEstimated. NA Not available.

¹Processed perlite sold and used by producers.

²Defined as imports - exports + adjustments for Government and industry stock changes; changes in stocks not available and assumed to be zero for apparent consumption and net import reliance calculations.

³See Appendix B.

⁴See Appendix C for definitions.

⁵Included with "Other countries."