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 1998 was $24.8 million. Crude ore production came from 10 mines operated by 8 companies in 6 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, 71%; horticultural aggregate, 10%; filter aid, 9%; fillers, 7%; and other, 3%.

Salient Statistics—United States:	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998[e]
Production[1]	644	700	684	706	688
Imports for consumption[e]	70	84	125	135	140
Exports[e]	30	40	38	38	38
Consumption, apparent	684	744	771	803	790
Price, average value, dollars per ton, f.o.b. mine	30.03	27.93	28.25	33.04	35.99
Stocks, producer, yearend	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Employment, mine and mill	125	125	125	135	135
Net import reliance[2] as a percent of apparent consumption	6	6	11	12	13

Recycling: Not available.

Import Sources (1994-97): Greece, 100%.

Tariff: Item	Number	Normal Trade Relations (NTR) 12/31/98	Non-NTR[3] 12/31/98
Mineral substances, not specifically provided for	2530.10.0000	Free	Free.

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

Government Stockpile: None.

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PERLITE

Events, Trends, and Issues: A new perlite mine in Oregon continued operating but at less than planned capacity. The Idaho Department of Environmental Quality halted operations at a refurbished mine in Idaho, but an affiliated expanding plant remained operational. A company in Utah continued work towards bringing up to capacity a new mine near Kaysville. Closure and reclamation of a mine near Florence, CO, continued.

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]
	1997	1998[e]		
United States	706	688	50,000	200,000
Greece	425	450	50,000	300,000
Japan	200	200	([5])	([5])
Turkey	175	175	([5])	([5])
Other countries	334	360	600,000	1,500,000
World total (may be rounded)	1,840	1,870	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.

[e]Estimated. NA Not available.

[1]Processed perlite sold and used by producers.

[2]Defined 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.

[3]See Appendix B.

[4]See Appendix D for definitions.

[5]Included with "Other countries."