FELDSPAR

(Data in thousand metric tons unless otherwise noted)

Domestic Production and Use: U.S. feldspar production in 2006 had an estimated value of about $43 million. The three leading producers accounted for about two-thirds of the production, with six other companies supplying the remainder. Operations in North Carolina provided more than 45% of the output; facilities in Virginia, California, Oklahoma, Georgia, Idaho, and South Dakota, in descending order of estimated production, produced the remainder. Feldspar processors reported coproduct recovery of mica and silica sand.

Feldspar is ground to about 20 mesh for glassmaking and to 200 mesh or finer for most ceramic and filler applications. It was estimated that feldspar shipments went to at least 30 States and to foreign destinations, including Canada and Mexico. In pottery and glass, feldspar functions as a flux. The estimated 2006 end-use distribution of domestic feldspar was glass, 64%, and pottery and other, 36%.

Salient Statistics—United States:	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006[e]**
Production, marketable[e]	790	800	770	750	760
Imports for consumption	5	8	21	26	5
Exports	10	9	10	15	10
Consumption, apparent[e]	785	799	781	761	755
Price, average value, marketable production, dollars per ton[e]	54	54	57	57	57
Stocks, producer, yearend[1]	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Employment, mine, preparation plant, and office, number[e]	400	400	400	400	400
Net import reliance[2] as a percentage of apparent consumption	E	E	1	1	E

Recycling: There is no recycling of feldspar by producers; however, glass container producers use cullet (recycled glass), thereby reducing feldspar consumption.

Import Sources (2002-05): Turkey, 61%; Mexico, 38%; and other, 1%.

Tariff: **Item**	**Number**	**Normal Trade Relations 12-31-06**
Feldspar	2529.10.0000	Free.

Depletion Allowance: 14% (Domestic and foreign).

Government Stockpile: None.

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FELDSPAR

Events, Trends, and Issues: Glass, including beverage containers and insulation for housing and building construction, continued to be the leading end use of feldspar in the United States. U.S. shipments of glass containers in the first 8 months were about the same as in the comparable period of 2005, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Feldspar use in tile and vitreous sanitaryware was reflected in housing construction. U.S. housing starts for the first 9 months were about 9% lower than in the same period of 2005, according to the U.S Census Bureau. Much of the U.S. demand for ceramic tile and plumbing fixtures in recent years has been supplied by imports.

Worldwide sales of ceramic tiles were over 6.9 billion square meters (most recent data), according to a nongovernment source. Eight countries, in descending order of output, produced about 65% of global sales—China, Spain, Italy, Brazil, Indonesia, Turkey, India, and Mexico. China reportedly had sales volumes of more than 2.1 billion square meters (most recent data). Much of the Chinese output was being sold to its large domestic market and about 20% was being exported.[3]

World Mine Production, Reserves, and Reserve Base:

	Mine production		Reserves[4]	Reserve base[4]
	2005	2006[e]		
United States[e]	750	760	NA	NA
Colombia	100	100	NA	NA
Czech Republic	400	450	25,000	68,000
Egypt	350	350	NA	NA
France	650	650	NA	NA
Germany	500	500	NA	NA
India	150	180	NA	NA
Iran	250	260	NA	21,000
Italy	2,500	2,500	NA	NA
Japan	1,000	1,000	NA	NA
Korea, Republic of	540	500	NA	NA
Mexico	350	450	NA	NA
Poland	300	300	11,300	87,000
Portugal	120	125	NA	NA
Spain	450	450	NA	NA
Thailand	1,000	1,000	NA	NA
Turkey	2,200	2,500	NA	NA
Venezuela	180	180	NA	NA
Other countries	1,110	1,000	NA	NA
World total (rounded)	12,900	13,300	Large	Large

World Resources: Identified and hypothetical resources of feldspar are more than adequate to meet anticipated world demand. Quantitative data on resources of feldspar existing in feldspathic sands, granites, and pegmatites generally have not been compiled. There is ample geologic evidence that resources are large, although not always conveniently accessible to the principal centers of consumption.

Substitutes: Feldspar can be replaced in some of its end uses by clays, electric furnace slag, feldspar-silica mixtures, pyrophyllite, spodumene, or talc. Imported nepheline syenite, however, was the major alternative material.

[e]Estimated. E Net exporter. NA Not available.
[1]Change in stocks assumed to be zero for apparent consumption and net import reliance calculations.
[2]Defined as imports – exports + adjustments for Government and industry stock changes.
[3]Stentiford, Martin, 2006, A versatile market for minerals: Industrial Minerals, no. 461, February, p. 44-48.
[4]See Appendix C for definitions.