

## 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 2002 was \$18.5 million. Crude ore production came from 10 mines operated by 8 companies in 7 Western States. New Mexico continued to be the major producing State. Processed ore was expanded at 61 plants in 31 States. The principal end uses were building construction products, 67%; horticultural aggregate, 12%; filter aid, 8%; fillers, 8%; and other, 5%.

<b>Salient Statistics—United States:</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002<sup>e</sup></b>
Production <sup>1</sup>	685	711	672	588	548
Imports for consumption <sup>e</sup>	150	144	180	175	210
Exports <sup>e</sup>	42	47	43	43	45
Consumption, apparent	793	808	809	720	713
Price, average value, dollars per ton, f.o.b. mine	31.91	33.40	33.78	36.31	33.74
Stocks, producer, yearend	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Employment, mine and mill	140	150	150	145	145
Net import reliance <sup>2</sup> as a percentage of apparent consumption	14	12	17	18	23

**Recycling:** Not available.

**Import Sources (1998-2001):** Greece, 100%.

<b>Tariff: Item</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Normal Trade Relations 12/31/02</b>
Mineral substances, not specifically provided for	2530.10.0000	Free.

**Depletion Allowance:** 10% (Domestic and foreign).

**Government Stockpile:** None.

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**Events, Trends, and Issues:** Production<sup>1</sup> of domestic perlite decreased about 7% and imports of perlite increased 20% compared with that of 2001. Domestic production decreased for the third year in a row while imports reached an all time high.

The cost of rail transportation from the mines in the Western United States to some areas of the Eastern United States continued to burden domestic perlite with strong cost disadvantages compared with Greek imports. However, U.S. perlite exports to Canada partially offset losses from competition with imports in Eastern U.S. markets.

Perlite mining generally takes place in remote areas, and its environmental impact is 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 remains. Airborne dust is captured by baghouses, and there is practically no runoff that contributes to water pollution.

Research for new uses of perlite may increase domestic consumption.

**World Processed Perlite Production, Crude Ore Reserves, and Reserve Base:** The world total reserve base has been increased significantly based on new information from official government sources in Turkey.

	Production		Reserves <sup>3</sup>	Reserve base <sup>3</sup>
	2001	2002 <sup>e</sup>		
United States	588	548	50,000	200,000
Greece	360	500	50,000	300,000
Hungary	150	150	3,000	( <sup>4</sup> )
Japan	250	250	( <sup>4</sup> )	( <sup>4</sup> )
Turkey	150	150	( <sup>4</sup> )	5,700,000
Other countries	210	200	600,000	1,500,000
World total (may be rounded)	1,710	1,800	700,000	7,700,000

**World Resources:** Insufficient information is available to provide a reliable estimate of resources in perlite-producing countries.

**Substitutes:** Alternative 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.

<sup>e</sup>Estimated. NA Not available.

<sup>1</sup>Processed perlite sold and used by producers.

<sup>2</sup>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.

<sup>3</sup>See Appendix C for definitions.

<sup>4</sup>Included with "Other countries."