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 2007 was $20.7 million. Crude ore production came from eight mines operated by seven companies in six 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, 60%; horticultural aggregate, 14%; fillers, 11%; filter aid, 7.5%; and other, 7.5%.

Salient Statistics—United States:	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007[e]
Production[1]	493	508	508	454	444
Imports for consumption[e]	245	238	196	245	220
Exports[e]	37	37	32	30	30
Consumption, apparent	701	709	672	669	634
Price, average value, dollars per ton, f.o.b. mine	38.20	41.81	40.68	42.90	51.61
Employment, mine and mill	194	133	128	114	101
Net import reliance[2] as a percentage of apparent consumption	30	28	24	32	30

Recycling: Not available.

Import Sources (2003-06): Greece, 100%.

Tariff: Item	Number	Normal Trade Relations 12-31-07
Vermiculite, perlite and chlorites, unexpanded	2530.10.0000	Free.

Depletion Allowance: 10% (Domestic and foreign).

Government Stockpile: None.

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PERLITE

Events, Trends, and Issues: The amount of processed perlite sold or used from U.S. mines dropped to its lowest level since 1983 when about 430,000 tons of processed perlite were sold or used. Domestic miners continued to lose market share to imports. Imports also decreased to about 220,000 tons, as consumption dropped to its lowest levels since 1993.

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 producers with strong cost disadvantages compared with Greek perlite exporters. 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 mineral fines, overburden, and reject ore 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.

World Processed Perlite Production, Reserves, and Reserve Base: Greece surpassed the United States in processed perlite production starting in 2003. Information for China and several other countries is unavailable, making it unclear whether or not Greece and the United States are the world's leading producers.

	Production		Reserves[3]	Reserve base[3]
	2006	2007[e]		
United States	454	444	50,000	200,000
Greece	525	500	50,000	300,000
Hungary	140	140	3,000	([4])
Japan	240	240	([4])	([4])
Mexico	100	100	([4])	([4])
Turkey	145	140	([4])	5,700,000
Other countries	205	200	600,000	1,500,000
World total (rounded)	1,810	1,760	700,000	7,700,000

World Resources: Insufficient information is available to make reliable estimates 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.

[e]Estimated.
[1]Processed perlite sold and used by producers.
[2]Defined as imports - exports + adjustments for Government and industry stock changes; changes in stocks were not available and assumed to be zero for apparent consumption and net import reliance calculations.
[3]See Appendix C for definitions. Reserves and reserve base data are for crude ore.
[4]Included with "Other countries."