

FELDSPAR

(Data in thousand metric tons unless otherwise noted)

Domestic Production and Use: U.S. feldspar production in 2009 was valued at about \$36 million. The three leading producers accounted for about 57% of the production, with five other companies supplying the remainder. Producing states were North Carolina, Virginia, California, Oklahoma, Idaho, Georgia, and South Dakota, in descending order of estimated tonnage. 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 2009 end-use distribution of domestic feldspar was glass, 70%, and pottery and other uses, 30%.

<u>Salient Statistics—United States:</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009^e</u>
Production, marketable ^e	750	760	730	680	530
Imports for consumption	26	5	4	2	2
Exports	15	10	10	15	4
Consumption, apparent ^e	761	755	724	667	528
Price, average value, marketable production, dollars per ton	57	59	59	60	65
Stocks, producer, yearend ¹	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Employment, mine, preparation plant, and office, number ^e	400	400	400	700	570
Net import reliance ² as a percentage of apparent consumption	1	E	E	E	E

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

Import Sources (2005-08): Turkey, 54%; Mexico, 42%; and other, 4%.

<u>Tariff: Item</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Normal Trade Relations</u>
Feldspar	2529.10.0000	<u>12-31-09</u> Free.

Depletion Allowance: 14% (Domestic and foreign).

Government Stockpile: None.

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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. Most feldspar consumed by the glass industry is for the manufacture of container glass. Residential and automotive flat glass have seen heavy recent declines as a result of declines in housing starts, a decrease in demand from commercial construction, and a slowdown in automobile sales. Fiberglass demand is forecast to expand steadily at 3.3% per year in the United States through 2013. Domestic feldspar consumption is moving away from ceramics toward glass markets, as indicated by a 5% increase of feldspars sold into the glass markets at the expense of ceramic feldspars sold.

Feldspar use in tile and porcelain pottery bodies used in sanitaryware declined concurrent with declines in the housing construction market. In September 2009, the adjusted annual rate for privately owned housing starts was 2.8% below the September 2008 rate, and U.S. Census Bureau data also showed that housing completions were 39.6% below the September 2008 seasonally adjusted annual rate. Although this continued decrease in housing starts is significant, the large decrease in the percentage of finished houses may be an indication of shortages in capital for building materials and/or an explanation for the decreased demand of building supplies.

World Mine Production and Reserves: Estimates of reserves were revised for Czech Republic based on October 2008 Mineral Commodity Summaries of the Czech Republic; revisions for India were based on the Indian Minerals Yearbook.

	Mine production		Reserves ³
	2008	2009 ^e	
United States ^e	680	530	NA
Argentina	292	250	NA
Brazil	170	150	NA
China	2,000	2,000	NA
Czech Republic	510	420	30,000
Egypt	360	140	NA
France	650	550	NA
Germany	170	140	NA
India	400	340	38,000
Iran	300	250	NA
Italy	4,700	4,700	NA
Japan	700	600	NA
Korea, Republic of	400	340	NA
Malaysia	300	260	NA
Mexico	433	370	NA
Poland	440	370	NA
Portugal	372	320	11,000
Spain	675	580	NA
Thailand	678	580	NA
Turkey	6,500	5,000	NA
Venezuela	200	170	NA
Other countries	927	790	NA
World total (rounded)	21,900	18,900	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.

^eEstimated. E Net exporter. NA Not available.

¹Change in stocks assumed to be zero for apparent consumption and net import reliance calculations.

²Defined as imports – exports + adjustments for Government and industry stock changes.

³See Appendix C for definitions. Reserve base estimates were discontinued in 2009; see [Introduction](#).