

**PERLITE**

(Data in thousand metric tons unless otherwise noted)

**Domestic Production and Use:** The estimated value (f.o.b. mine) of processed crude perlite produced in 2009 was \$18.6 million. Crude ore production came from nine mines operated by seven companies in six Western States. New Mexico continued to be the major producing State. Processed crude perlite was expanded at 55 plants in 28 States. The principal end uses were building construction products, 59%; fillers, 13%; horticultural aggregate, 13%; filter aid, 8%; and other, 7%.

<b><u>Salient Statistics—United States:</u></b>	<b><u>2005</u></b>	<b><u>2006</u></b>	<b><u>2007</u></b>	<b><u>2008</u></b>	<b><u>2009<sup>e</sup></u></b>
Production <sup>1</sup>	508	454	409	434	380
Imports for consumption <sup>e</sup>	196	245	229	187	135
Exports <sup>e</sup>	32	30	28	37	35
Consumption, apparent	672	669	610	584	480
Price, average value, dollars per ton, f.o.b. mine	41	43	45	45	49
Employment, mine and mill	128	113	110	103	97
Net import reliance <sup>2</sup> as a percentage of apparent consumption	24	32	33	26	21

**Recycling:** Not available.

**Import Sources (2005-08):** Greece, 100%.

<b><u>Tariff:</u></b> Item	<b>Number</b>	<b>Normal Trade Relations <u>12-31-09</u></b>
Vermiculite, perlite and chlorites, unexpanded	2530.10.0000	Free.

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

**Government Stockpile:** None.

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**Events, Trends, and Issues:** The amount of processed crude perlite sold or used from U.S. mines decreased about 12% compared with that reported for 2008. Imports also decreased as demand for perlite-based construction products fell with the weak U.S. economy and lower construction activity.

The amount of processed crude perlite sold or used was at its lowest amount since 1968. Concurrently, imports of processed crude perlite were at the lowest levels since 1997.

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 and Reserves:** 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 <sup>3</sup>
	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009<sup>e</sup></u>	
United States	434	380	50,000
Greece	525	500	50,000
Hungary	70	70	3,000
Japan	230	230	(4)
Mexico	54	50	(4)
Turkey	270	250	(4)
Other countries	<u>205</u>	<u>210</u>	<u>600,000</u>
World total (rounded)	1,790	1,690	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.

<sup>e</sup>Estimated.

<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 were not available and assumed to be zero for apparent consumption and net import reliance calculations.

<sup>3</sup>See [Appendix C for definitions](#). Reserves data are for crude ore. Reserve base estimates were discontinued in 2009; see [Introduction](#).

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