

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 2010 was \$19.6 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, 53%; fillers, 14%; horticultural aggregate, 14%; and filter aid, 8%. The remaining 11% includes miscellaneous uses and estimated expanded perlite consumption whose use is unknown.

<u>Salient Statistics—United States:</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010^e</u>
Production ¹	454	409	434	348	375
Imports for consumption ^e	245	229	187	153	160
Exports ^e	30	28	37	33	34
Consumption, apparent	669	610	584	468	500
Price, average value, dollars per ton, f.o.b. mine	43	45	48	49	52
Employment, mine and mill	113	110	103	97	102
Net import reliance ² as a percentage of apparent consumption	32	33	26	26	25

Recycling: Not available.

Import Sources (2006–09): Greece, 100%.

<u>Tariff:</u> Item	Number	Normal Trade Relations <u>12-31-10</u>
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 increased by about 7% compared with that reported for 2009. Imports also increased as demand for perlite-based construction products began to recover from the low experienced in 2009.

The amounts of processed crude perlite sold or used in 2009 and 2010 were lower than they had been since the mid-1960s. Imports recovered slightly in 2010 but were still at levels not seen since the late 1990s. Correspondingly, apparent consumption of processed crude perlite, while increasing from that of 2009, was still only equivalent to that of 1988.

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 ³
	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010^e</u>	
United States	348	375	50,000
Greece	525	500	50,000
Hungary	65	65	3,000
Japan	220	220	(4)
Mexico	54	50	(4)
Turkey	230	220	(4)
Other countries	<u>209</u>	<u>230</u>	<u>600,000</u>
World total (rounded)	1,650	1,700	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.

^eEstimated.

¹Processed perlite sold and used by producers.

²Defined 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.

³See [Appendix C for resource/reserve definitions and information concerning data sources](#).

⁴Included with "Other countries."