

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 2011 was \$20.4 million. Crude ore production came from eight mines operated by six companies in five Western States. New Mexico continued to be the major producing State. Processed crude perlite was expanded at 50 plants in 26 States. The principal end uses were building construction products, 55%; fillers, 14%; horticultural aggregate, 14%; and filter aid, 9%. The remaining 8% includes miscellaneous uses and estimated expanded perlite consumption whose use is unknown.

<u>Salient Statistics—United States:</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011^e</u>
Production ¹	409	434	348	414	400
Imports for consumption ^e	229	187	153	174	185
Exports ^e	28	37	33	42	40
Consumption, apparent	610	584	468	546	540
Price, average value, dollars per ton, f.o.b. mine	45	48	49	52	51
Employment, mine and mill	110	103	97	102	92
Net import reliance ² as a percentage of apparent consumption	33	26	26	24	27

Recycling: Not available.

Import Sources (2007–10): Greece, 100%.

<u>Tariff:</u> Item	Number	Normal Trade Relations <u>12-31-11</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 decreased by about 3% compared with that reported for 2010. Imports increased as demand for perlite-based construction products staged a weak recovery in 2010 after the low experienced in 2009.

The quantities of processed crude perlite sold or used each year from 2009 through 2011 were lower than they had been since the mid-1960s. Imports continued to recover in 2011 but seemingly at the expense of domestic sales. A perlite mine in California, which had been in operation for many decades, apparently had ceased production.

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>2010</u>	<u>2011^e</u>	
United States	414	400	50,000
Greece	500	500	50,000
Hungary	65	80	NA
Italy	60	60	(4)
Japan	210	200	(4)
Mexico	50	50	(4)
Turkey	230	500	(4)
Other countries	<u>140</u>	<u>150</u>	<u>600,000</u>
World total (rounded)	1,670	1,900	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. NA Not available.

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.

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

⁴Included with "Other countries."