

**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 2012 was \$24.5 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 27 States. The principal end uses were building construction products, 54%; fillers, 15%; horticultural aggregate, 14%; and filter aid, 10%. The remaining 7% includes miscellaneous uses and estimated expanded perlite consumption whose use is unknown.

<b><u>Salient Statistics—United States:</u></b>	<b><u>2008</u></b>	<b><u>2009</u></b>	<b><u>2010</u></b>	<b><u>2011</u></b>	<b><u>2012<sup>e</sup></u></b>
Production <sup>1</sup>	434	348	414	420	424
Imports for consumption <sup>e</sup>	187	153	174	193	168
Exports <sup>e</sup>	37	33	42	36	35
Consumption, apparent	584	468	546	577	557
Price, average value, dollars per ton, f.o.b. mine	48	49	52	56	58
Employment, mine and mill	103	97	102	95	95
Net import reliance <sup>2</sup> as a percentage of apparent consumption	26	26	24	27	24

**Recycling:** Not available.

**Import Sources (2008–11):** Greece, 100%.

<b><u>Tariff:</u></b> Item	<b>Number</b>	<b>Normal Trade Relations <u>12–31–12</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 increased slightly in 2012 compared with that reported for 2011. Imports decreased about 13% as demand for perlite-based construction products, fillers, and filter aid failed to sustain a modest recovery started in 2010.

The quantities of processed crude perlite sold or used each year from 2009 through 2012 had not recovered to levels seen prior to 2006, and in 2012 were still lower than they had been since the early 1980s. Imports declined for the first time since 2009 as decreased demand affected imports, even as domestic miners maintained production and sales levels near those attained in 2011.

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. Estimates for 2012, however, indicate the United States may have once again overtaken Greece. 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. Reserve data previously reported for some countries have been removed because they were based on information that was judged to be no longer reliable. Updated reserve data for these countries were not available.

	Production		Reserves <sup>3</sup>
	2011	2012 <sup>e</sup>	
United States	420	424	50,000
Greece	500	400	50,000
Hungary	65	70	NA
Italy	60	60	NA
Japan	300	200	NA
Mexico	30	30	NA
Turkey	250	400	NA
Other countries	150	150	NA
World total (rounded)	1,770	1,700	NA

**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. NA Not available.

<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 resource/reserve definitions and information concerning data sources.