

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 2013 was \$21.1 million. Crude ore production came from eight mines operated by six companies in five Western States. New Mexico continued to be the leading producing State. Processed crude perlite was expanded at 48 plants in 27 States. The principal end uses were building construction products, 53%; fillers, 15%; horticultural aggregate, 14%; and filter aid, 10%. The remaining 8% includes miscellaneous uses and estimated expanded perlite consumption, for which end use data is unavailable.

<u>Salient Statistics—United States:</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013^e</u>
Production ¹	348	414	420	396	376
Imports for consumption ^e	153	174	193	150	134
Exports ^e	33	42	36	38	38
Consumption, apparent	468	546	577	508	472
Price, average value, dollars per ton, f.o.b. mine	49	52	56	52	56
Employment, mine and mill	97	102	95	95	92
Net import reliance ² as a percentage of apparent consumption	26	24	27	22	20

Recycling: Not available.

Import Sources (2009–12): Greece, 100%.

<u>Tariff:</u> Item	Number	Normal Trade Relations <u>12–31–13</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 5% in 2013 compared with that reported for 2012. Imports decreased by about 11% as demand for perlite-based construction products, fillers, and filter aid failed to sustain a modest recovery that took place in 2010 and 2011.

The quantities of processed crude perlite sold or used each year from 2009 through 2013 had not recovered to levels seen prior to 2006 and in 2013 were about equal to the quantity sold or used in the late 1960s. Imports declined for the second consecutive year, falling to the lowest levels since 1997. The average unit value for crude processed perlite in 2012 fell to the lowest value since 2006, but was thought to have rebounded in 2013. The steep price decline in 2012 was mainly the result of one producer reporting a substantial drop in selling prices. Most producers did not report a substantial decrease in pricing.

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 to contribute to water pollution.

World Processed Perlite Production and Reserves: Newly available data indicate that Greece, Iran, and Turkey have been producing substantially more perlite than the United States since at least 2008. Although production data for China and several other countries are unavailable, the world's leading producers are believed to be Greece and Turkey. 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 ³
	2012	2013 ^e	
United States	396	376	50,000
Greece	800	800	50,000
Hungary	70	70	NA
Iran	500	500	NA
Italy	60	60	NA
Japan	200	200	NA
Turkey	800	800	NA
Other countries	150	150	NA
World total (rounded)	2,980	3,000	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.

^eEstimated. NA Not available.

¹Processed perlite sold and used by producers.

²Defined as imports - exports.

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