

PERLITE

(Data in thousand metric tons unless otherwise noted)

Domestic Production and Use: The estimated value (f.o.b. mine) of processed perlite produced in 2004 was \$18 million. Crude ore production came from 10 mines operated by 8 companies in 7 Western States. New Mexico continued to be the major producing State. Processed ore was expanded at 62 plants in 30 States. The principal end uses were building construction products, 62%; horticultural aggregate, 13%; fillers, 10%; filter aid, 9%; and other, 6%.

Salient Statistics—United States:	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004^e
Production ¹	672	588	521	493	510
Imports for consumption ^e	180	175	224	245	190
Exports ^e	43	43	42	37	40
Consumption, apparent	809	720	703	701	660
Price, average value, dollars per ton, f.o.b. mine	33.78	36.31	36.45	38.20	35.22
Stocks, producer, yearend	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Employment, mine and mill	150	145	145	135	135
Net import reliance ² as a percentage of apparent consumption	17	18	26	30	23

Recycling: Not available.

Import Sources (2000-03): Greece, 100%.

Tariff: Item	Number	Normal Trade Relations 12-31-04
Mineral substances, not specifically provided for	2530.10.0000	Free.

Depletion Allowance: 10% (Domestic and foreign).

Government Stockpile: None.

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Events, Trends, and Issues: Production of domestic perlite increased about 3% compared with that of 2003. This increase was the first since 1999 after having dropped nearly 27% between 2000 and 2003. Imports decreased about 22% compared with the record-high levels reached in 2003. Domestic apparent consumption dropped about 6% compared to 2003, continuing a trend that began in 2001. Since 2000, domestic apparent consumption has dropped about 18%. Consumption has declined mainly because of a continued decrease in the demand for perlite used in construction-related materials.

The cost of rail transportation from the mines in the Western United States to some areas of the Eastern United States continued to burden domestic perlite with strong cost disadvantages compared with Greek imports. However, U.S. perlite exports to Canada partially offset losses from competition with imports in Eastern U.S. markets.

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, Crude Ore Reserves, and Reserve Base:

	Production		Reserves ³	Reserve base ³
	2003	2004 ^e		
United States	493	510	50,000	200,000
Greece	360	500	50,000	300,000
Hungary	145	150	3,000	(⁴)
Japan	250	255	(⁴)	(⁴)
Turkey	150	150	(⁴)	5,700,000
Other countries	<u>240</u>	<u>240</u>	<u>600,000</u>	<u>1,500,000</u>
World total (rounded)	1,600	1,800	700,000	7,700,000

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

³See [Appendix C](#) for definitions.

⁴Included with "Other countries."