

PERLITE

(Data in thousand metric tons, unless noted)

Domestic Production and Use: The estimated value (f.o.b. mine) of processed perlite produced in 1995 was \$21.1 million. Crude ore production came from eight mines operated by six companies in four Western States. New Mexico continued to be the major producing State. Processed ore was expanded at 64 plants in 32 States. The principal end uses were building construction products, 71%; filter aid, 11%; horticultural aggregate, 9%; fillers, 7%; and other, 2%.

Salient Statistics—United States:	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995^e
Production ¹	514	541	569	644	719
Imports for consumption ^e	54	65	70	70	85
Exports ^e	29	29	26	30	25
Consumption, apparent	540	577	613	684	779
Price, average value, dollars per ton, f.o.b. mine	29.33	30.32	30.63	30.03	29.40
Stocks, producer, yearend	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Employment, mine and mill	120	115	115	125	125
Net import reliance ² as a percent of apparent consumption	5	6	7	6	8

Recycling: Not available.

Import Sources (1991-94): Greece, 100%.

Tariff:	Item	Number	Most favored nation (MFN) 12/31/95	Non-MFN³ 12/31/95
	Mineral substances, not specifically provided for	2530.10.0000	Free	Free.

Depletion Allowance: 10% (Domestic), 10% (Foreign).

Government Stockpile: None.

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Events, Trends, and Issues: Processed ore production and apparent consumption increased for the fourth straight year. Increased sales of domestic perlite coupled with booming imports helped make 1995 a remarkable year for the perlite industry. Most of the increased sales went to the construction materials markets, particularly for formed products.

Imports of perlite from Greece increased to 85,000 tons in 1995. It is estimated that in 1996, domestic production of processed perlite will total 740,000 tons and apparent consumption, 800,000 tons.

Perlite mining had the normal problems of disposal of overburden and the conditions of the abandoned pit sites, but overall, the mining of perlite disturbed a relatively small surface area. Mining generally occurred in remote areas, and environmental problems were not severe.

Domestic perlite continued to encounter transportation cost disadvantages in some areas of the Eastern United States compared with Greek imports. However, Western U.S. perlite exports to Canada partially offset imports into the Eastern United States. Foreign interests were actively investigating the possibility of exporting their perlite into the United States.

New uses of perlite were being researched, which may increase domestic consumption.

World Processed Perlite Production, Crude Ore Reserves, and Reserve Base:

	Production		Reserves ⁴	Reserve base ⁴
	1994	1995 ^e		
United States	644	719	50,000	200,000
Greece	200	230	50,000	300,000
Japan	200	200	(⁵)	(⁵)
Turkey	250	260	(⁵)	(⁵)
Other countries	286	291	600,000	1,500,000
World total	1,580	1,700	700,000	2,000,000

World Resources: Too little information is available in perlite-producing countries to estimate resources with any reliability.

Substitutes: Alternate 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 B.

⁴See Appendix C for definitions.

⁵Included with "Other countries."