

FELDSPAR

(Data in thousand metric tons, unless otherwise noted)

Domestic Production and Use: U.S. feldspar production (including aplite) in 1997 had an estimated value of \$42 million. The three largest producers accounted for over one-half of the output, with eight other companies supplying the remainder. Operations in North Carolina provided about 54% of the output and facilities in six other States contributed smaller quantities.

Production of lithium ores and mica yielded moderate quantities of byproduct or coproduct feldspar and feldspar-silica mixtures, and feldspar processors reported coproduct recovery of mica and silica sand.

Feldspar is ground for industry use to about 20 mesh for glassmaking and to 200 mesh or finer for most ceramic and filler applications. It was estimated that feldspar shipments went to at least 31 States and to foreign destinations, including Canada and Mexico. In ceramics and glass, feldspar functions as a flux. Estimated 1997 end-use distribution of domestic feldspar was glass, 70%, and pottery and other, 30%.

<u>Salient Statistics—United States:</u>	<u>1993</u>	<u>1994</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>1997^e</u>
Production, marketable	770	765	880	890	930
Imports for consumption	7	7	9	7	9
Exports	18	17	15	10	8
Consumption, apparent	759	755	874	887	931
Price, average value, marketable production, dollars per ton	40.78	40.78	42.50	44.27	45.09
Stocks, producer, yearend ¹	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Employment, mine and preparation plant, number	400	400	400	400	400
Net import reliance ² as a percent of apparent consumption	E	E	E	E	—

Recycling: Insignificant.

Import Sources (1993-96): Mexico, 97%; and other, 3%.

<u>Tariff: Item</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Most favored nation (MFN)</u> <u>12/31/97</u>	<u>Non-MFN³</u> <u>12/31/97</u>
Feldspar	2529.10.0000	Free	49¢/t.

Depletion Allowance: 14% (Domestic), 14% (Foreign).

Government Stockpile: None.

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Events, Trends, and Issues: A large U.S. feldspar producer announced a price increase in mid-1997, according to North American Minerals News, June 1997. The increase of around 4% covered products across the board from Spruce Pine, NC. Prices for 200 mesh, bulk, ceramic-grade material were increased in early 1997 from \$70 per metric ton to about \$73 per metric ton. Increases in fuel oil prices were reported to be a factor.

Feldspar usage in housing construction is reflected in tile, plumbing fixtures, and glass fiber insulation. Although housing starts in 1997 may decrease slightly compared with those of the previous year, growth in the remodeling industry should help to offset any decline in new construction, according to one source. Based on an informal survey taken by a national remodeling association, kitchens are the most likely area of the home to be remodeled, with bathrooms a close second.

World Mine Production, Reserves, and Reserve Base:

	Mine production		Reserves and reserve base ⁴
	1996	1997 ^e	
United States	890	930	Significant in the United States and assumed to be similar in other countries.
Brazil	205	200	
Columbia	60	60	
France	600	600	
Germany	375	375	
India	90	90	
Italy	1,800	1,800	
Japan	59	60	
Korea, Republic of	320	320	
Mexico	130	130	
Norway	65	65	
Russia	75	75	
Spain	225	230	
Thailand	650	650	
Turkey	500	500	
Uzbekistan	70	70	
Venezuela	170	170	
Other countries	466	475	
World total (may be rounded)	6,750	6,800	

World Resources: Identified and hypothetical resources of feldspar are more than adequate to meet anticipated world demand. Quantitative data on resources of feldspar existing in granites, pegmatites, and feldspathic sands generally have not been compiled. There is ample geologic evidence that resources are immense, although not always conveniently accessible to the principal centers of consumption.

Substitutes: Feldspar can be replaced in some of its end uses by feldspar-silica mixtures, clays, talc, pyrophyllite, spodumene, or electric-furnace slag. Imported nepheline syenite, however, was the major alternate material.

^eEstimated. E Net exporter. NA Not available.

¹Change in stocks assumed to be zero for apparent consumption and net import reliance calculations.

²Defined as imports - exports + adjustments for Government and industry stock changes.

³See Appendix B.

⁴See Appendix D for definitions.