

## FELDSPAR

(Data in thousand metric tons unless otherwise noted)

**Domestic Production and Use:** U.S. feldspar production in 2008 had an estimated value of about \$36 million. The three leading producers accounted for about 75% of the production, with five other companies supplying the remainder. Producing states were North Carolina, Virginia, California, Oklahoma, Georgia, Idaho, and South Dakota, in descending order of estimated tonnage. Feldspar processors reported coproduct recovery of mica and silica sand.

Feldspar is ground 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 30 States and to foreign destinations, including Canada and Mexico. In pottery and glass, feldspar functions as a flux. The estimated 2008 end-use distribution of domestic feldspar was glass, 65%, and pottery and other uses, 35%.

<b><u>Salient Statistics—United States:</u></b>	<b><u>2004</u></b>	<b><u>2005</u></b>	<b><u>2006</u></b>	<b><u>2007</u></b>	<b><u>2008<sup>e</sup></u></b>
Production, marketable <sup>e</sup>	770	750	760	730	600
Imports for consumption	21	26	5	4	2
Exports	10	15	10	10	11
Consumption, apparent <sup>e</sup>	781	761	755	724	591
Price, average value, marketable production, dollars per ton <sup>e</sup>	57	57	59	59	60
Stocks, producer, yearend <sup>1</sup>	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Employment, mine, preparation plant, and office, number <sup>e</sup>	400	400	400	400	400
Net import reliance <sup>2</sup> as a percentage of apparent consumption	1	1	E	E	E

**Recycling:** There is no recycling of feldspar by producers; however, glass container producers use cullet (recycled glass), thereby reducing feldspar consumption.

**Import Sources (2004-07):** Turkey, 62%; Mexico, 35%; and other, 3%.

<b><u>Tariff: Item</u></b>	<b><u>Number</u></b>	<b><u>Normal Trade Relations</u></b>
Feldspar	2529.10.0000	<b><u>12-31-08</u></b> Free.

**Depletion Allowance:** 14% (Domestic and foreign).

**Government Stockpile:** None.

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**Events, Trends, and Issues:** Glass, including beverage containers and insulation for housing and building construction, continued to be the leading end use of feldspar in the United States. U.S. shipments of glass containers in the first 9 months of 2008 were slightly lower than in the comparable period of 2007, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Feldspar use in tile and vitreous sanitaryware reflected trends in housing construction. U.S. housing starts for the first 9 months were about 31% lower than in the same period of 2007, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Reduced construction activity resulted in reduced feldspar usage in ceramic tiles, glass fiber insulation, and plumbing fixtures. In 2007 (latest data), U.S. tile consumption decreased by about 19% from that of 2006, according to the Tile Council of North America, Inc. U.S. imports decreased by 20%. This reflected the trend of the declining housing market. In 2007, about 82% of tiles consumed in the United States was imported. The leading sources of imports, in descending order of volume, were Italy, Mexico, China, Brazil, and Spain.

Brazil is the world's third largest ceramic tiles manufacturer and has the second largest tile consumer market. The country's ceramic tile sector consists of 94 companies with 117 processing facilities located in 18 States.<sup>3</sup>

### **World Mine Production, Reserves, and Reserve Base:**

	Mine production		Reserves <sup>4</sup>	Reserve base <sup>4</sup>
	2007	2008 <sup>e</sup>		
United States <sup>e</sup>	730	600	NA	NA
Argentina	170	290	NA	NA
Brazil	125	130	NA	NA
China	2,000	2,000	NA	NA
Colombia	100	100	NA	NA
Czech Republic	490	490	25,000	68,000
Egypt	350	350	NA	NA
France	650	650	NA	NA
Germany	171	170	NA	NA
India	160	160	NA	NA
Iran	260	260	NA	21,000
Italy	4,200	4,200	NA	NA
Japan	750	700	NA	NA
Korea, Republic of	399	400	NA	NA
Malaysia	150	250	NA	NA
Mexico	460	440	NA	NA
Poland	350	350	11,000	87,000
Portugal	130	130	NA	NA
Spain	600	600	NA	NA
Thailand	1,000	800	NA	NA
Turkey	3,800	3,800	NA	NA
Venezuela	200	200	NA	NA
Other countries	850	1,200	NA	NA
World total (rounded)	18,100	18,300	Large	Large

**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 feldspathic sands, granites, and pegmatites generally have not been compiled. There is ample geologic evidence that resources are large, although not always conveniently accessible to the principal centers of consumption.

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

<sup>e</sup>Estimated. E Net exporter. NA Not available.

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

<sup>2</sup>Defined as imports – exports + adjustments for Government and industry stock changes.

<sup>3</sup>Chuecco, Fátima, 2008, Brazil's tile industry begins domestic shift: Industrial Minerals, no. 493, October, p. 30.

<sup>4</sup>See Appendix C for definitions.