

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 2005 was \$21 million. Crude ore production came from 10 mines operated by 7 companies in 7 Western States. New Mexico continued to be the major producing State. Processed ore was expanded at 61 plants in 30 States. The principal end uses were building construction products, 62%; horticultural aggregate, 14%; fillers, 11%; filter aid, 7%; and other, 6%.

Salient Statistics—United States:	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005^e
Production ¹	588	521	493	508	506
Imports for consumption ^e	175	224	245	238	196
Exports ^e	43	42	37	37	37
Consumption, apparent	720	703	701	709	665
Price, average value, dollars per ton, f.o.b. mine	36.31	36.45	38.20	40.57	42.08
Stocks, producer, yearend	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Employment, mine and mill	188	189	194	133	131
Net import reliance ² as a percentage of apparent consumption	18	26	30	28	24

Recycling: Not available.

Import Sources (2001-04): Greece, 100%.

Tariff: Item	Number	Normal Trade Relations 12-31-05
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 decreased slightly compared with that of 2004. Imports decreased about 18% compared with the near-record-high levels reached in 2004. Domestic apparent consumption dropped about 6% compared with that of 2004, continuing a general trend that began in 2001. Since 2000, domestic apparent consumption has dropped about 18%. Consumption has declined mainly because of weak demand from 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 producers with strong cost disadvantages compared with Greek perlite exporters. 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
	2004	2005 ^e		
United States	508	506	50,000	200,000
Greece	525	525	50,000	300,000
Hungary	145	60	3,000	(⁴)
Japan	240	200	(⁴)	(⁴)
Turkey	140	130	(⁴)	5,700,000
Other countries	392	500	600,000	1,500,000
World total (rounded)	1,950	1,920	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.

³[See Appendix C for definitions.](#)

⁴Included with "Other countries."