

TALC AND PYROPHYLLITE

(Data in thousand metric tons unless otherwise noted)

Domestic Production and Use: Domestic talc production in 2012 was estimated to be 623,000 tons valued at \$22 million. Three companies operated six talc-producing mines in three States in 2011. These three companies accounted for more than 99% of the U.S. talc production. Two other companies, one in California and one in Virginia, worked from stocks. Montana was the leading producer State, followed by Texas and Vermont. Sales of talc were estimated to be 571,000 tons valued at \$90 million. Talc produced and sold in the United States was used for ceramics, 26%; paint and paper, 20% each; plastics and roofing, 9% each; cosmetics, 4%; rubber, 3%; and other, 9%. About 260,000 tons of talc was imported; more than 75% of the imported talc was used for plastics, cosmetics, and paint applications, in decreasing order by tonnage. The total estimated use of talc in the United States, with imported talc included, was plastics, 26%; ceramics, 17%; paint, 16%; paper, 15%; cosmetics and roofing, 6% each; rubber, 3%; and other, 11%. One company in North Carolina mined pyrophyllite. Production of pyrophyllite decreased slightly from that of 2011. Consumption was, in decreasing order by tonnage, in refractory products, ceramics, and paint.

Salient Statistics—United States: ¹	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012^e
Production, mine	706	511	604	616	623
Sold by producers	667	512	567	567	571
Imports for consumption	193	134	242	270	260
Exports	244	188	240	233	250
Shipments from Government stockpile excesses	(²)	—	—	—	—
Consumption, apparent	655	457	606	653	633
Price, average, processed, dollars per metric ton	125	111	150	155	157
Employment, mine and mill	350	285	280	290	300
Net import reliance ³ as a percentage of apparent consumption	E	E	1	6	2

Recycling: Insignificant.

Import Sources (2008–11): China, 46%; Canada, 35%; Japan, 4%; and other, 15%.

Tariff: Item	Number	Normal Trade Relations 12–31–12
Not crushed, not powdered	2526.10.0000	Free.
Crushed or powdered	2526.20.0000	Free.
Cut or sawed	6815.99.2000	Free.

Depletion Allowance: Block steatite talc: 22% (Domestic), 14% (Foreign). Other: 14% (Domestic and foreign).

Government Stockpile: Although a disposal plan was established for fiscal year 2012, sales of talc from the stockpile have been suspended by the Defense Logistics Agency since September 2010.

Stockpile Status—9–30–12⁴ (Metric tons)

Material	Uncommitted inventory	Authorized for disposal	Disposal plan FY 2012	Disposals FY 2012
Talc, block and lump	865	865	⁵ 580	—
Talc, ground	621	621	—	—

TALC AND PYROPHYLLITE

Events, Trends, and Issues: Talc production and sales increased slightly in 2012. U.S. exports increased 7% from those of 2011. Canada, Japan, and France accounted for most of the increase in talc exports and Mexico and Canada accounted for 31% and 28%, respectively, of U.S. talc exports, based on trade data through August. U.S. imports decreased 4% from those of 2011. Canada and China supplied more than 80% of the talc imported into the United States.

The Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System reported a 4% increase in general manufacturing and the U.S. Census Bureau reported that housing starts increased by 29.1% between August 2011 and August 2012. These trends could lead to increased consumption of talc, if they can be sustained, because talc is used in manufacturing catalytic converter bodies (ceramics), automotive and truck body and underhood components (plastics), paint and coatings (fillers and extenders), and plastics and rubber (fillers and extenders in plastic products, tires, and other rubber components). In construction, talc is used to manufacture such product applications as adhesives, caulks, ceramics, joint compounds, paint, and roofing.

Sales of pyrophyllite declined slightly in 2012. Sales to industries that use pyrophyllite to manufacture ceramics and paints had limited growth in 2012 owing to the slow recovery of that sector of the economy.

World Mine Production and Reserves:

	Mine production		Reserves ⁶
	2011	2012 ^e	
United States ¹	616	623	140,000
Brazil	656	660	230,000
China	2,200	2,200	Large
Finland	500	500	Large
France	420	420	Large
India	650	660	75,000
Japan	374	375	100,000
Korea, Republic of	706	530	14,000
Other countries	1,570	1,600	Large
World total (rounded)	7,690	7,600	Large

World Resources: The United States is self-sufficient in most grades of talc and related minerals. Domestic and world resources are estimated to be approximately five times the quantity of reserves.

Substitutes: Substitutes for talc include bentonite, chlorite, kaolin, and pyrophyllite in ceramics; chlorite, kaolin, and mica in paint; calcium carbonate and kaolin in paper; bentonite, kaolin, mica, and wollastonite in plastics; and kaolin and mica in rubber.

^eEstimated. E Net exporter. — Zero.

¹Excludes pyrophyllite.

²Less than ½ unit.

³Defined as imports – exports + adjustments for Government and industry stock changes.

⁴See Appendix B for definitions.

⁵Included talc, block and lump, and talc, ground.

⁶See Appendix C for resource/reserve definitions and information concerning data sources.