

TALC AND PYROPHYLLITE

(Data in thousand metric tons unless noted)

Domestic Production and Use: Domestic talc production in 2008 was estimated to be 645,000 tons valued at \$21 million. There were nine talc-producing mines in five States in 2008. Montana was the leading producer, followed by Texas, Vermont, New York, and California. Sales of talc were estimated to be 619,000 tons valued at \$75 million. About 36% of the talc produced domestically was exported in 2008. Talc produced in the United States was used for ceramics, 31%; paper, 21%; paint, 19%; roofing, 8%; plastics, 5%; rubber, 4%; cosmetics, 2%; and other, 10%. About 190,000 tons of talc was imported with more than 75% of the imported talc being used for plastics, cosmetics, and paint applications, in decreasing order by tonnage. Other uses for imported talc included ceramics, paper, and refractory applications. Two companies in North Carolina mined pyrophyllite. Production of pyrophyllite decreased from that of 2007. Consumption was, in decreasing order by tonnage, in refractory products, ceramics, and paint.

Salient Statistics—United States: ¹	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008^e
Production, mine	833	856	895	769	645
Sold by producers	854	826	900	720	619
Imports for consumption	226	237	314	221	190
Exports	202	198	163	183	220
Shipments from Government stockpile excesses	(²)	—	—	—	(²)
Consumption, apparent	857	895	1,050	807	615
Price, average, processed, dollars per ton	88	86	90	114	121
Employment, mine and mill	404	440	435	430	440
Net import reliance ³ as a percentage of apparent consumption	3	4	14	5	E

Recycling: Insignificant.

Import Sources (2004-07): China, 47%; Canada, 34%; Japan, 7%; France, 5%; and other, 7%.

Tariff: Item	Number	Normal Trade Relations 12-31-08
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:

Material	Stockpile Status—9-30-08⁴ (Metric tons)			
	Uncommitted inventory	Authorized for disposal	Disposal plan FY 2008	Disposals FY 2008
Talc, block and lump	867	867	⁵ 907	—
Talc, ground	622	622	(⁶)	430

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Events, Trends, and Issues: Production of talc declined 16% and sales decreased 14% from those of 2007. U.S. exports of talc increased 20% from those of 2007. Canada remained the major destination for U.S. talc exports, accounting for 48% of the tonnage. Mexico was another significant importer of U.S. talc, accounting for 12% of the export tonnage. The lower value of the U.S. dollar with respect to other currencies has helped to boost export sales in 2007 and 2008. U.S. imports decreased 14% from those of 2007. In 2008, Canada and China supplied approximately 83% of the imported talc. Apparent consumption decreased by 24% in 2008. The declines in the housing market resulted in lower sales to construction-related applications such as adhesives, caulks, ceramic tile, joint compounds, paint, roofing, rubber, and sealants. These are markets on which talc producers are strongly dependent for domestic sales. The continued slowdown of the U.S. and world economies and tightening of the credit market may exacerbate the situation. U.S. talc production, sales, and apparent consumption may experience slight additional declines until the housing market improves. In 2008, U.S. apparent consumption declined below 700,000 tons for the first time since 1976.

A major talc producer in New York announced that it would stop production by the end of 2008. The company cited declines in sales as the reason for its departure from the talc market after about 60 years of mining in the State.

World Mine Production, Reserves, and Reserve Base:

	Mine production		Reserves ⁷	Reserve base ⁷
	2007	2008 ^e		
United States ¹	769	645	140,000	540,000
Brazil	400	405	180,000	250,000
China	2,400	2,400	Large	Large
Finland	550	550	Large	Large
India	642	660	4,000	9,000
Japan	275	375	100,000	160,000
Korea, Republic of	744	740	14,000	18,000
Other countries	<u>1,840</u>	<u>1,800</u>	<u>Large</u>	<u>Large</u>
World total (rounded)	7,620	7,580	Large	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.

⁴[See Appendix B for definitions.](#)

⁵Includes block and lump talc and ground talc.

⁶Included in block and lump talc.

⁷[See Appendix C for definitions.](#)