ASBESTOS

(Data in thousand metric tons, unless otherwise noted)

Domestic Production and Use: One firm in California accounted for 100% of domestic production. Asbestos was consumed in roofing products, 48%; friction products, 32%; packings 12%; and other, 8%.

Salient Statistics—United States:	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996[e]
Production (sales), mine	16	14	10	9	9
Imports for consumption	32	31	26	22	23
Exports[1]	25	28	18	15	16
Shipments from Government stockpile excesses	—	—	—	—	—
Consumption, apparent	33	32	27	22	23
Price, average value, dollars per ton, f.o.b.	394	435	506	W	W
Stocks, producer, yearend	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Employment, mine and mill, number	70	70	30	30	30
Net import reliance[2] as a percent of apparent consumption	21	9	30	32	30

Recycling: Insignificant.

Import Sources (1992-95): Canada, 99%; and other, 1%.

Tariff: Item	Number	Most favored nation (MFN) 12/31/96	Non-MFN[3] 12/31/96
Asbestos	2524.00.0000	Free	Free.

Depletion Allowance: 22% (Domestic), 10% (Foreign).

Government Stockpile:

Stockpile Status—9-30-96
(Metric tons)

Material	Uncommitted inventory	Committed inventory	Authorized for disposal	Disposals Jan.-Sept. 96
Amosite	30,849	—	30,849	—
Chrysotile	9,767	—	9,767	—
Crocidolite	33	—	33	—

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Events, Trends, and Issues: Domestic sales of asbestos were unchanged from those of 1995. Imports and exports increased 5% and 7% respectively, according to the Bureau of the Census. It is likely that a large percentage of the exports were either reexports, asbestos-containing products, or nonasbestos products. Exports of asbestos fiber were estimated to be approximately 9,000 tons. Apparent consumption increased 5%. Almost all of the asbestos consumed in the United States was chrysotile. Canada remained the largest supplier of asbestos for domestic consumption.

World Mine Production, Reserves, and Reserve Base:

	Mine production		Reserves[4]	Reserve base[4]
	1995	1996[e]		
United States	9	9	Moderate	Large
Brazil	190	190	Moderate	Moderate
Canada	511	510	Large	Large
China	240	240	Large	Large
Kazakstan	250	250	Large	Large
Russia	800	800	Large	Large
South Africa	95	95	Moderate	Moderate
Zimbabwe	150	150	Moderate	Moderate
Other countries	155	156	Large	Large
World total (rounded)	2,400	2,400	Large	Large

World Resources: The world has 200 million tons of identified resources and an additional 45 million tons classified as hypothetical resources. The U.S. resources are large, but are composed mostly of short fibers.

Substitutes: Numerous materials substitute for asbestos in products. The substitutes include calcium silicate; carbon fiber; cellulose fiber; ceramic fiber; glass fiber; steel fiber; wollastonite; and several organic fibers, such as aramid, polyethylene, polypropylene, and polytetrafluoroethylene. Several nonfibrous minerals were considered as possible asbestos substitutes for products in which the reinforcement properties of fibers were not required. No single substitute was as versatile and as costeffective as asbestos.

[e]Estimated. NA Not available. W Withheld to avoid disclosing company proprietary data.

[1]May include nonasbestos materials.

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

[3]See Appendix B.

[4]See Appendix C for definitions.

U.S. Geological Survey, Mineral Commodity Summaries, February 1997