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, 61%; gaskets, 19%; friction products, 13%; and other, 7%.

Salient Statistics—United States:	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000[e]
Production (sales), mine	10	7	6	7	5
Imports for consumption	22	21	16	16	15
Exports[1]	15	20	18	22	20
Shipments from Government stockpile excesses	—	—	3	5	—
Consumption, estimated	22	21	16	16	15
Price, average value, dollars per ton[2]	210	210	210	210	210
Stocks, producer, yearend	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Employment, mine and mill, number	25	25	25	25	25
Net import reliance[3] as a percent of estimated consumption	100	100	100	100	100

Recycling: Insignificant.

Import Sources (1996-99): Canada, 97%; and other, 3%.

Tariff: Item	Number	Normal Trade Relations 12/31/00
Asbestos	2524.00.0000	Free.

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

Government Stockpile:

Stockpile Status—9-30-00[4] (Metric tons)

Material	Uncommitted inventory	Committed inventory	Authorized for disposal	Disposal plan FY 2000	Disposals FY 2000
Amosite	11,500	—	11,500	—	—
Chrysotile	1	—	1	—	—

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Events, Trends, and Issues: Domestic sales of asbestos decreased from those of 1999. Imports and exports decreased by 6% and 9%, respectively, from those of 1999, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Estimated consumption decreased by 6%. Some reported exports were likely to have been reexports, asbestos-containing products, or nonasbestos products. Exports of asbestos fiber were estimated to be approximately 5,000 tons. Essentially all the asbestos used 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[5]	Reserve base[5]
	1999	2000[e]		
United States	7	5	Moderate	Large
Brazil	170	170	Moderate	Moderate
Canada	337	335	Large	Large
China	300	300	Large	Large
Kazakhstan	125	125	Large	Large
Russia	700	700	Large	Large
South Africa	20	20	Moderate	Moderate
Zimbabwe	135	130	Moderate	Moderate
Other countries	136	114	Large	Large
World total	1,930	1,900	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 to be possible asbestos substitutes for products in which the reinforcement properties of fibers were not required. No single substitute was as versatile and as cost effective as asbestos.

[e]Estimated. NA Not available.

[1]Probably includes nonasbestos materials and reexports.

[2]Average price for Group 7 Canadian chrysotile, ex-mine.

[3]Defined as imports - exports + adjustments for Government and industry stock changes. Most domestic production is exported; imports account for almost all domestic consumption.

[4]See Appendix B for definitions.

[5]See Appendix C for definitions.

U.S. Geological Survey, Mineral Commodity Summaries, January 2001