USGS
science for a changing world

Mineral Industry Surveys

For information contact:
Robert L. Virta, Asbestos Commodity Specialist
U.S. Geological Survey
989 National Center
Reston, VA 20192
Telephone: 703-648-7726, Fax: (703) 648-7757
E-mail: rvirta@usgs.gov

Richard H. Kraft (Data)
Telephone: (703) 648-7736
Fax: (703) 648-7975
E-mail: rkraft@usgs.gov

Internet: http://minerals.usgs.gov/minerals

WORLD ASBESTOS CONSUMPTION FROM 2003 THROUGH 2007

In 2006, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) published Circular 1298 titled "World Asbestos Supply and Consumption Trends from 1900 to 2003" (Virta, 2006). This Mineral Industry Surveys updates Circular 1298 with apparent consumption estimates, by country, for 2004 through 2007. For comparative purposes, it also includes data for 2003 from Circular 1298.

Apparent consumption was estimated using world asbestos production data published in the 2007 USGS Minerals Yearbook and asbestos trade data available from the United Nations (United Nations, 2009; Virta, 2008). Consumption was calculated as production minus exports plus imports. Changes in government and industry stocks were not considered because they are not available for most countries. An unknown margin of error is present in these calculations because of the different manner in which countries report their trade of asbestos. Some of this inaccuracy was corrected by adjusting data to follow industry trends. As with Circular 1298, these data are best used to identify trends in asbestos consumption rather than absolute changes in consumption for a single country.

World consumption was relatively steady between 2003 and 2007, averaging 2.11 million metric tons (Mt). The leading consuming countries in 2007 were, in decreasing order tonnage, China (30%), India (15%), Russia (13%), Kazakhstan and Brazil (5% each) and Thailand, Uzbekistan, and Ukraine (4% each). These eight countries accounted for about 80% of world asbestos consumption in 2007.

From 2003 through 2007, apparent consumption declined in most countries (table 1). However, there were significant increases in apparent consumption in China, India, and Uzbekistan between 2003 and 2007. Apparent consumption in China increased to 626,000 metric tons (t) in 2007 from 492,000 t in 2003, although uncertainty in reported asbestos production in China may have affected the apparent consumption estimate. During the same period, consumption in India increased to 302,000 t from 192,000 t, and consumption in Uzbekistan increased to 86,500 t from 42,400 t.

In general, world asbestos consumption is likely to decline as more countries institute bans on its use. By May 2009, 50 countries had banned the use of asbestos, with some exemptions (International Ban Asbestos Secretariat, 2009).

References Cited

International Ban Asbestos Secretariat, 2009, Current asbestos bans and restrictions: London, International Ban Asbestos Secretariat, May 1. (Accessed May 11, 2009, at http://ibasecretariat.org/lka_alpha_asb_ban_280704.php.)

United Nations, 2009, United Nations commodity trade statistics database: United Nations Web site. (Accessed April 6, 2009, at http://comtrade.un.org/db.)

Virta, R.L., 2006, World asbestos supply and consumption trends from 1900 to 2003: U.S. Geological Survey Circular 1298, 80 p. (Accessed May 12, 2009, at http://pubs.usgs.gov/circ/2006/1298/.)

Virta, R.L., 2008, Asbestos [Advance release]: U.S. Geological Survey Minerals Yearbook 2007, p. 8.1-8.6. (Accessed April 23, 2009, at http://minerals.usgs.gov/minerals/pubs/commodity/asbestos/myb1-2007-asbes.pdf.)

U.S. Department of the Interior
U.S. Geological Survey

July 2009

TABLE 1
WORLD ASBESTOS CONSUMPTION 2003–2007[1, 2]
(Metric tons)

Region and country	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Africa:					
Algeria	10,800	1,740	13,100	12,000	(3)
Angola	1,360	754	2,610	463	1,380
Benin	99	82	82	--	--
Cameroon	--	--	-7	-8	--
Cote d'Ivoire	--	--	--	--	1
Congo (Brazzaville)	--	--	--	--	(3)
Congo (Kinshasha)	--	--	--	--	4
Djibouti	--	--	--	--	9
Egypt	2,380	3,030	--	64	25
Ethopia	--	--	--	--	(3)
Ghana	65	55	1,750	1,840	11
Guinea	4	--	--	--	--
Kenya	84	18	33	19	(3)
Libya	--	--	--	(3)	--
Malawi	2	1	1	1	(3)
Mauritius	--	--	(3)	1	(3)
Mayotte	--	--	1	--	(3)
Morocco	1,480	862	1,510	1,300	1,150
Mozambique	320	11,900	452	1,090	556
Namibia	(3)	--	5	97	1
Niger	--	--	--	--	(3)
Nigeria	561	2,470	1,710	2,710	740
Senegal	1,250	852	930	772	587
South Africa	3,500	7,360	-11,100	-18,400	-2,970
Sudan	91	50	--	(3)	(3)
Tanzania	2	(3)	1	31	31
Togo	259	622	1	791	804
Tunisia	1,020	1,330	1,620	1,290	1,320
Uganda	--	--	1	14	5
Zambia	408	3,530	925	1,070	700
Zimbabwe	5,000	-52,500	49,800 [4]	39,300 [4]	57,300 [4]
Total[5]	28,600	-17,900	63,400	44,400	61,700
Asia and the Middle East:					
Afghanistan	--	--	-72	52	--
Bangladesh	2,800	2,000	2,610	2,610	2,740
Bhutan	--	--	--	475	600
Burma	2	8	712	594	436
China	492,000	537,000	515,000	541,000	626,000
Hong Kong	2	5,310	--	29	1
India	192,000	190,000	255,000	240,000	302,000
Indonesia	32,300	51,000	23,300	36,300	46,200
Iran	75,800	64,300	53,000	6,000	41,900
Iraq	12	80	71	23	32
Japan	23,400	8,180	-31	-875	58
Jordon	--	--	--	-108	-32
Korea, Republic of	23,800	14,600	6,480	4,700	1,100
Kuwait	--	--	--	4	23
Lebanon	--	--	--	77	-389
Malaysia	13,400	8,350	-11,800	10,300	9,390
Maldives	--	--	2	--	(3)
Mongolia	310	246	510	386	406
Nepal	25	9	116	42	89
North Korea	1,230	1,880	1,710	2,240	2,060
Oman	--	--	2,610	2,600	2,130
Pakistan	3,130	9,170	8,390	6,990	3,680
Philippines	2,450	3,580	1,490	2,570	2,180
Qatar	--	--	1,390	--	23

See footnotes at end of table.

TABLE 1—Continued
WORLD ASBESTOS CONSUMPTION 2003–2007[1, 2]
(Metric tons)

Region and country	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Asia and the Middle East:—continued					
Saudi Arabia	7	484	42	34	-20
Singapore	268	3	-3,180	1,400	40
Sri Lanka	6,110	33,800	32,900	7,680	12,000
Syria	1,210	304	356	1,750	594
Thailand	133,000	166,000	176,000	141,000	86,500
Turkey	13,500	13,500	10,600	5,350	-738
UAE	9,110	14,900	-4,770	20,800	17,000
Viet Nam	39,400	58,300	103,000	61,200	64,400
Yemen	--	--	--	(3)	8
Total[5]	1,070,000	1,180,000	1,180,000	1,100,000	1,220,000
Central and North America:					
Anguilla	--	--	--	--	273
Antigua and Barbuda	--	--	--	2	20
Aruba	--	--	--	--	(3)
Bahamas	--	--	--	4	15
Barbados	--	--	4	1	4
Belize	--	--	--	--	(3)
Bermuda	--	--	--	--	50
Canada	19,800	6,680	65,100 [6]	24,500 [6]	39,800 [6]
Costa Rica	--	--	--	(3)	--
Cuba	9,900	7,920	7,830	9,320	8,190
Dominican Republic	75	50	25	25	75
El Salvador	2,600	965	946	1,610	1,670
Guatemala	--	-2	--	(3)	--
Guyana	--	--	--	1	11
Haiti	--	--	--	--	1
Jamaica	--	--	--	--	1
Mexico	20,100	13,600	14,300	16,300	16,700
Panama	1,080	1,140	-90	--	--
St. Vincents	--	--	-1,410	--	--
Turks and Caicos Islands	--	--	--	53	3
United States	4,630	1,870	576	-1,610	916
Total[5]	58,200	32,200	87,300	50,200	67,700
Europe:					
Albania	--	--	--	(3)	(3)
Armenia	--	--	501	546	275
Austria	(3)	-10	(3)	-1	-1
Azerbaijan	10,200	10,600	3,820	2,710	60
Belarus	-61	21,000	21,900	24,800	33,300
Belgium	111	61	(3)	-163	-17
Bosnia-Herzegovina	-1	(3)	(3)	(3)	-4
Bulgaria	108	113	250	17	20
Croatia	2,710	3,250	2,430	--	4
Czech Republic	1,610	2,480	(3)	--	1
Denmark	-3	--	--	--	(3)
Estonia	--	--	--	-280	(3)
Finland	--	--	-532	--	(3)
France	-5	-23	-374	40	169
Georgia	--	191	--	1	1
Germany	102	62	94	-138	54
Gibraltar	--	--	-68	-665	-935
Greece	-13	-4,260	-2,670	--	--
Hungary	329	-21	120	180	180
Ireland	3	--	2,790	2,700	-163
Italy	--	--	-20	-5	-29
Kazakhstan	174,000	289,000	150,000	96,200	109,000

See footnotes at end of table.

TABLE 1—Continued
WORLD ASBESTOS CONSUMPTION 2003–2007[1, 2]
(Metric tons)

Region and country	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Europe:—continued					
Kyrgyzstan	23,700	26,500	23,400	24,100	20,900
Latvia	--	--	4	27	1
Lithuania	--	--	--	--	--
Luxembourg	--	--	--	189	120
Macedonia	50	25	--	--	--
Malta	--	--	-65	-16	--
Moldova	949	135	116	156	60
Netherlands	2	341	-70	-329	--
Poland	--	--	-14,300	-2,930	-1,090
Portugal	1,650	474	356	--	--
Romania	11,300	13,000	9,080	3,270	(3)
Russia	429,000	321,000	315,000	293,000	280,000
Serbia	--	--	219	120	400
Slovakia	240	10	(3)	--	--
Spain	2	192	23	16	28
Sweden	--	--	-2	--	--
Switzerland	--	--	--	378	-287
Tajikistan	490	110	430	1,080	3,100
Turkmenistan	1,850	60	2,220	2,460	3,260
Ukraine	156,000	122,000	185,000	124,000	85,600
United Kingdom	22	2,150	-1	(3)	187
Uzbekistan	42,400	-1,870	59,900	63,200	86,500
Total[5]	857,000	806,000	759,000	634,000	621,000
Oceania:					
Australia	19	1	--	-337	(3)
Fiji	1	1	(3)	-1,130	--
New Zealand	--	--	(3)	--	--
Samoa	--	--	--	1,130	--
Vanuatu	--	--	--	--	(3)
Total[5]	20	2	1	-337	(3)
South America:					
Argentina	166	170	294	303	300
Bolivia	1,160	1,220	1,820	1,320	2,420
Brazil	78,400	66,900	139,000	134,000	93,800
Chile	--	--	--	(3)	--
Colombia	13,100	17,600	23,900	22,900	4,840
Ecuador	1,460	4,650	3,640	5,940	4,000
Guyana	--	--	951	--	--
Paraguay	--	--	(3)	--	(3)
Peru	492	492	823	907	999
Venezuela	1,460	--	--	1,030	862
Total[5]	96,300	91,000	170,000	167,000	107,000
Other areas (nonspecified)	3,610	4,500	2,610	2,410	1,720
Grand total[5]	2,110,000	2,100,000	2,260,000	1,990,000	2,080,000

-- Zero.

[1]Apparent consumption calculated as production plus imports minus exports, not adjusted to account for changes in Government and industry stocks. Trade data is frequently revised so these apparent consumption calculations are a snapshot of trade as of April 4, 2009, and may change in the future as new data is obtained.

[2]A negative number indicates net exports during the year.

[3]Less than ½ unit.

[4]Apparent consumption for Zimbabwe probably should be between 5,000 to 10,000 metric tons per year to account for the amount of production going into stocks rather than being sold for consumption.

[5]May not add to total owing to independent rounding.

[6]Apparent consumption for Canada probably should be less than 7,500 metric tons per year to account for the amount of production going into stocks rather than being sold for consumption.

WORLD ASBESTOS CONSUMPTION 2003–2007[1, 2]

Source: Production data was from the 2007 U.S. Geological Survey Minerals Yearbook chapter on asbestos. Import and export data were extracted from the United Nations Comtrade database (United Nations Statistical Division), at http://unstats.un.org/unsd/default.htm. Although not shown on this table, there were instances where imports reported by one country did not equal the exports reported by partner countries and vice-versa, owing to differences in data reporting among countries or recording errors on shipment manifests. In these cases, import or export data used to calculate apparent consumption was estimated based on industry trends.