

LIME¹

(Data in thousand metric tons unless otherwise noted)

Domestic Production and Use: In 2018, an estimated 19 million tons of quicklime and hydrate was produced (excluding independent commercial hydrators²), valued at about \$2.4 billion. At yearend, 29 companies were producing lime, which included 18 companies with commercial sales and 10 companies that produced lime strictly for internal use (for example, sugar companies). These companies had 74 primary lime plants (plants operating quicklime kilns) in 28 States and Puerto Rico. Six of these 29 companies operated only hydrating plants in 11 States. In 2018, the five leading U.S. lime companies produced quicklime or hydrate in 20 States and accounted for 79% of U.S. lime production. Principal producing States were, in alphabetical order, Alabama, Kentucky, Missouri, Ohio, and Texas. Major markets for lime were, in descending order of consumption, steelmaking, chemical and industrial applications (such as the manufacture of fertilizer, glass, paper and pulp, and precipitated calcium carbonate, and in sugar refining), flue gas treatment, construction, water treatment, and nonferrous mining.

Salient Statistics—United States:	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018^e
Production ³	19,500	18,300	17,700	17,800	19,000
Imports for consumption	414	391	376	367	330
Exports	320	346	329	391	350
Consumption, apparent ⁴	19,600	18,300	17,700	17,800	19,000
Quicklime average value, dollars per ton at plant	119.10	121.50	121.00	121.80	120.00
Hydrate average value, dollars per ton at plant	142.20	146.40	145.50	146.70	150.00
Employment, mine and plant, number	5,100	NA	NA	NA	NA
Net import reliance ⁵ as a percentage of apparent consumption	1	<1	<1	<1	<1

Recycling: Large quantities of lime are regenerated by paper mills. Some municipal water-treatment plants regenerate lime from softening sludge. Quicklime is regenerated from waste hydrated lime in the carbide industry. Data for these sources were not included as production in order to avoid duplication.

Import Sources (2014–17): Canada, 94%; Mexico, 5%; and other, 1%.

Tariff: Item	Number	Normal Trade Relations 12–31–18
Calcined dolomite	2518.20.0000	3% ad val.
Quicklime	2522.10.0000	Free.
Slaked lime	2522.20.0000	Free.
Hydraulic lime	2522.30.0000	Free.

Depletion Allowance: Limestone produced and used for lime production, 14% (Domestic and foreign).

Government Stockpile: None.

Events, Trends, and Issues: In 2018, domestic lime production was estimated to increase by 7% from that of 2017, owing primarily to an increase in hydrated lime output. This also led to the slight increase in estimated value of production year over year.

In 2017, one sugar cooperative reversed an earlier decision made in 2016 to close its sugar beet facility in Torrington, WY, thereby keeping one quicklime kiln in production. Another company shut down quicklime production at one plant in Green Bay, WI; since then, only hydrated lime has been produced at this location. As a result, the total number of operating quicklime plants stayed at 74 in 2018. Hydrated lime is a dry calcium hydroxide powder made from reacting quicklime with a controlled amount of water in a hydrator. It is used in chemical and industrial, construction, and environmental applications. In 2018, the leading uses of hydrated lime were chemical and industrial, and construction applications; flue gas desulfurization; and water treatment.

LIME

World Lime Production and Limestone Reserves:

	Production ^{e, 6}		Reserves ⁷
	2017	2018	
United States	17,800	19,000	Adequate for all countries listed.
Australia	2,000	2,100	
Belgium ⁸	1,500	1,500	
Brazil	8,300	8,400	
Bulgaria	1,400	1,400	
Canada (shipments)	1,830	1,800	
China	290,000	300,000	
Czechia	1,100	1,100	
France	2,600	2,600	
Germany	7,000	7,200	
India	16,000	16,000	
Iran	3,100	3,300	
Italy ⁸	3,600	3,600	
Japan (quicklime only)	7,300	7,300	
Kazakhstan	1,040	1,000	
Korea, Republic of	5,200	5,200	
Malaysia	1,600	1,600	
Poland (hydrated and quicklime)	1,840	1,900	
Romania	2,130	2,100	
Russia (industrial and construction)	11,000	11,000	
Slovenia	1,060	1,100	
South Africa	1,130	1,100	
Spain	1,830	1,800	
Turkey	4,700	4,700	
Ukraine	2,500	2,500	
United Kingdom	1,500	1,500	
Other countries	13,500	14,000	
World total (rounded)	413,000	420,000	

World Resources: Domestic and world resources of limestone and dolomite suitable for lime manufacture are very large.

Substitutes: Limestone is a substitute for lime in many applications, such as agriculture, fluxing, and sulfur removal. Limestone, which contains less reactive material, is slower to react and may have other disadvantages compared with lime, depending on the application; however, limestone is considerably less expensive than lime. Calcined gypsum is an alternative material in industrial plasters and mortars. Cement, cement kiln dust, fly ash, and lime kiln dust are potential substitutes for some construction uses of lime. Magnesium hydroxide is a substitute for lime in pH control, and magnesium oxide is a substitute for dolomitic lime as a flux in steelmaking.

^eEstimated. NA Not available.

¹Data are for quicklime, hydrated lime, and refractory dead-burned dolomite. Includes Puerto Rico.

²To avoid double counting quicklime production, excludes independent commercial hydrators that purchase quicklime for hydration.

³Sold or used by producers.

⁴Defined as production + imports – exports. Includes some double counting based on nominal, undifferentiated reporting of company export sales as U.S. production.

⁵Defined as imports – exports.

⁶Only countries that produced 1 million tons of lime or more are listed separately.

⁷See Appendix C for resource and reserve definitions and information concerning data sources.

⁸Includes hydraulic lime.