



The term "bentonite," as defined here, is any material composed dominantly of the clay mineral, smectite, and whose properties are controlled by this clay mineral. Fuller's earth, as used here, refers to any naturally occurring material which has a high absorptive capacity for liquids or gases and consists largely of hydrated alumina silicates. Fuller's earths are generally composed of attapulgite and/or smectite, but may also contain large quantities of opal or other forms of amorphous silica. Other materials having absorptive capacity and produced as Fuller's earth are ground silica, diatomaceous earth, talc, pyrophyllite, and kaolinite.

Both bentonite and fuller's earth have a wide variety of uses. They are used to make suitable materials for many commercial uses and applications. Both are used as an ingredient in drilling muds, bentonite where fresh water is present and attapulgite-type fuller's earth where salt water is present in rocks being penetrated by drilling equipment. A large amount of bentonite is also used for bonding and pelletizing. The "sodium" or "Wyoming" bentonite is a swelling type of bentonite. The bentonite used for bonding and pelletizing is called "calcium" or "southern" bentonite is a nonswelling variety which is used in bonding foundry sand where a high-strength green bond is required. Other uses are in adhesives (latex and asphalt), animal feed, petroleum industry (as a catalyst), fertilizers, claying oils, medicinal uses, pesticides, waterproofing, and many others. Fuller's earth is used in many ways. It is produced as granules which are used principally as an absorbent for oils, grease, and chemicals from floors.

as an absorbent for oils, grease, and chemicals from floors, as an animal litter, and as a soil conditioner. Other uses of fuller's earth are for fertilizers, clarifying oils, pesticides, and waste disposal.

Almost all of the present deposits of commercial fuller's earth and bentonite are from geologic units that are either Cretaceous or Tertiary in age. The host grade of fuller's

REFERENCES CITED

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TABLE 1—Listing of bentonite and fuller's earth processing plants operating in 1981, and pits active in the past few years.

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INTERPOL POLICE SURVEY RESULTS: 1995-1997