

Almost 60 companies are active in the pharma-chemical sector which manufactures raw materials for medicines from basic chemicals and other inputs. Another 350 companies produce medicines for human and veterinary use as well as surgical products. Little research and development is done in the country.

PLASTICS

The Mexican plastics industry is made up of about 2,800 plastics processing companies, plus about 350 firms engaged in activities related to plastics. The number of firms has fallen slightly in recent years as a result of the rationalization imposed on the industry by trade liberalization.

Mexico has a large production capability in the traditional commodity resins, but is dependent on imports for the newer and more sophisticated inputs. Most leading companies are part of large multinationals or are integrated into a network of alliances with Mexican and foreign firms. The most important companies include Duroplast, *Internacional Profesional*, *Industrias Plásticas Máximo*, *Reich*, *Celmex*, and *Empaques Plásticos Industriales (EPISA)*.

PULP AND PAPER INDUSTRY

There are eight pulp and paper producing firms and another 58 paper producers in Mexico. Paper production capacity peaked at 3.8 million metric tonnes in 1991, and it has contracted somewhat since then. There was a small upturn in 1995, as the devaluated peso allowed some idle capacity to be put back into production.

The largest manufacturers of industrial and business paper are Kimberley-Clark, *Compañía Industrial de San Cristóbal* (Scott Paper) and Jefferson Smurfit Group of Ireland. They have pulp mills throughout the south, east and central regions of the country. Some of these mills are integrated with papermaking facilities. All of Mexico's newsprint is produced by *Productores e Importadores de Papel (PIPSA)*, which is a group of three government-owned or government-backed plants.

SOAP AND DETERGENTS

Mexico's soap and detergent producers are, for the most part, technologically advanced and include two of the largest plants in the world. The principal products are laundry soap, personal soap products and detergents. Mexico does not import significant quantities of these products, but it does import raw materials. The US is the principal supplier, claiming close to 90 percent of the import market.