**PROPANE AT A GLANCE**

**WHAT IS PROPANE?**

Propene is a gas found mixed in natural gas and petroleum deposits. To obtain propane, it must be separated from natural gas and crude oil when they are processed for their final uses. Propene is called a fossil fuel because it was formed hundreds of millions of years ago from the remains of tiny sea animals and plants. When the plants and animals died, they sank to the bottom of the oceans and were buried by layers of sediment and sand that turned into rock. Over time, the layers became thousands of feet thick. The layers were subjected to enormous heat and pressure, changing the energy-rich remains into petroleum and natural gas deposits. Eventually, pockets of these fossil fuels became trapped in rocks, similar to the way a wet sponge holds water.

**PRODUCING PROPANE**

Propene comes from natural gas and petroleum wells. About 73 percent of the propene used in the United States is extracted from raw natural gas. Raw natural gas contains about 90 percent methane, five percent propene, and five percent other gases. The propene is separated from the raw natural gas and the other gases at a natural gas processing facility. Petroleum accounts for 13 percent of propene. Petroleum is separated into its various products at a processing plant called a refinery. A little more than 10 percent of the propene we use in the U.S. is imported from other countries, mostly from Canada by rail car.

**SOURCES OF U.S. PROPANE**

- **PETROLEUM REFINING**: 13.34%
- **IMPORTED**: 13.55%
- **NATURAL GAS PROCESSING**: 73.12%

* Total does not equal 100% due to independent rounding.

Data: Energy Information Administration

**PROPANE USES**

Propene is a clean-burning, versatile fuel. It is used by nearly everyone in the United States—in homes, on farms, by business, and in industry—mostly for producing heat and operating equipment.

**HOMES**

Homes and businesses are the largest consumer of propene in the U.S. Propene is used mostly in homes in rural areas that do not have natural gas service, as well as in manufactured (mobile) homes. Millions of homes use propene to meet some of their energy needs. Many mobile homes use propene for heating. Propene is also used in homes for air conditioning, heating water, cooking and refrigerating foods, drying clothes, lighting, and fueling fireplaces.

**HOMES**

Homes that use propene as a main energy source usually have a large propene tank outside of the house that stores propene under pressure as a liquid. Propene dealers deliver propene to the residences in trucks, filling the tanks several times a year as needed. The average residential propene tank holds between 500 and 1,000 gallons of liquid fuel. Millions of backyard cooks use propene-powered gas grills for cooking. Recreational vehicles (RVs) usually have propene-fueled appliances, giving them a portable source of energy for cooking, hot water, and refrigeration.

**FARMS**

Many of America’s farms use propene to help meet their energy needs. Farmers use propene to dry crops such as corn, soybeans, grains, tobacco, apples, peanuts, and onions. Propene is also used to ripen fruit, heat water, and refrigerate foods.

Propene flamethrowers are used to control weeds. Propene is also used to heat barns, chicken houses, stock tanks, nurseries, greenhouses, orchards, and incubators. Propene is one fuel farmers use to operate a variety of farm equipment, including tractors, weeder, irrigation pumps, stand-by generators, and seedling planters.

**BUSINESS**

Some businesses and commercial establishments—such as hotels, schools, hospitals, restaurants, and laundromats—use propene for heating and cooling air, cooking and refrigerating food, heating water, and lighting.

**INDUSTRY**

Industry uses almost 40 percent of the propene consumed in the U.S. Some industries find propene well suited to their special needs. Metal workers use propene tanks to fuel their cutting torches and other equipment. Industries also use propene for soldering, vulcanizing, and other processes that need a ready heat source.

Portable propene heaters provide a convenient source of heat for construction and road workers in cold weather. Propene also is used to heat asphalt for highway construction and repairs. Propene heaters at construction sites are used to dry concrete, plaster, and fuel pitch. And because propene is a very low-emission fuel, fuel for trucks powered by propene can operate safely inside factories and warehouses.