Roofing materials and roof systems

by **Mark S. Graham**

A large number and variety of roofing products and roof systems are available to roofing professionals in the United States. However, some contractors are concerned that recent product manufacturer consolidations have decreased the number of manufacturers, and, therefore, some products and systems eventually may be available from only a few of these manufacturers.



Review of the annual editions of NRCA's *Low-Slope Roofing Materials Guide* and *Steep-Slope Roofing Materials Guide* yields data related to this topic. A summary of data from the 1999 guide editions (see Figures 1 and 2) can be considered representative of the manufacturers, products and specifications available in the United States.

Although there currently are 185 low-slope material manufacturers listed, 213 were named in 1993. However, in 1987, there only were 78 manufacturers listed. (The 1987 materials guide did not include roof cement/coating, spray polyurethane foam-based roof system or metal panel manufacturers.)

For steep-slope roof systems, NRCA's steep-slope materials guide lists 73 manufacturers; in 1993, the materials guide included 53.

Following are comparisons of 1999 data to information from past guide editions:

- *Built-up roofing (BUR).* There currently are 18 manufacturers of 145 BUR products and 479 roof system specifications listed; in 1993, there were 20 manufacturers of 116 products and 402 specifications listed. In 1987, there were 15 manufacturers of 77 BUR products and only 225 specifications in the guide.
- *Modified bitumen sheets.* Although there now are 40 manufacturers of 420 sheet products (102 APP, 318 SBS) and 1,512 roof system specifications listed, in 1993, there were 38 manufacturers of 298 sheet products (75 APP, 221 SBS, two other) and 699 specifications listed. In 1987, the guide included 40 manufacturers of only 158 sheet products (59 APP, 89 SBS, 10 other) and 573 specifications.
- *Insulation.* Currently, there are 40 manufacturers of 175 insulation products listed; in 1993, there were 90 manufacturers of 126 products named; and in 1987, the guide included 92 manufacturers of 358 insulation products.
- *Asphalt shingles.* The guide currently lists 15 asphalt shingle product manufacturers of 169 products vs. 14 manufacturers of 136 products listed in 1993.

Steep-Slope Roofing Materials Guide		
Product type	**Manufacturers**	**Products**
Asphalt shingles	15	169
Fiber cement	6	21
Clay tile	13	81
Concrete tile	4	60
Metal	17	67
Wood shakes/shingles	4	29
Slate	6	6
Synthetic	2	3
Underlayment	18	90
Note: Data collected from 73 individual manufacturers.		

Figure 2: *A summary of data from the 1999 edition of NRCA's* Steep-Slope Roofing Materials Guide.

Low-Slope Roofing Materials Guide			
Product type	**Manufacturers**	**Products**	**Specifications**
Built-up	18	145	479
Modified bitumen	40	420	1,542
PVC	11	38	-
EPDM	12	87	-
CSPE	8	12	-
PIB	3	3	-
Other sheets	14	44	-
SPF-based:			
SPF	10	35	-
Coatings	20	131	-
Metal panels	25	120	-
Cements/coatings	38	468	-
Note: Data collected from 185 individual manufacturers.			

Figure 1: *A summary of data from the 1999 edition of NRCA's* Low-Slope Roofing Materials Guide.

Summing it up

Although there are fewer manufacturers named in the guide now than in 1993, the number is notably higher than in 1987. During that same time period, with exception to roof insulation products, the overall number of roofing products and roof system specifications available from these manufacturers has grown—in some instances significantly.

Roofing professionals have expressed concerns about recent manufacturer consolidations. However, it appears these consolidations have done little to effect the overall number of available roofing products, roof systems and specifications. PR

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