

# Appendix A

## Thermal Conversion Factors

### Using Thermal Conversion Factors

The thermal conversion factors presented in the following tables can be used to estimate the heat content in British thermal units (Btu) of a given amount of energy measured in physical units, such as barrels or cubic feet. For example, 10 barrels of asphalt has a heat content of approximately 66.36 million Btu (10 barrels x 6.636 million Btu per barrel = 66.36 million Btu).

The heat content rates (i.e., thermal conversion factors) provided in this section represent the gross (or upper) energy content of the fuels. Gross heat content rates are applied in all Btu calculations for the *Annual Energy Review* and are commonly used in energy calculations in the United States; net (or lower) heat content rates are typically used in European energy calculations. The difference between the two rates is the amount of energy that is consumed to vaporize water that is created during the combustion process. Generally, the difference ranges from 2 percent to 10 percent, depending on the specific fuel and its hydrogen content. Some fuels, such as unseasoned wood, can be more than 40 percent different in their gross and net heat content rates. More information about British thermal units (Btu) can be found in the Glossary.

Thermal conversion factors for hydrocarbon mixes (Table A1) are weighted averages of the thermal conversion factors for each hydrocarbon included in the mix. For example, in calculating the thermal conversion factor for a 60-40 butane-propane mixture, the thermal conversion factor for butane is weighted 1.5 times the thermal conversion factor for propane.

In general, the annual thermal conversion factors presented in Tables A2 through A6 are computed from final annual data or from the best available data and are labeled “preliminary.” Often, the previous year’s factor is used as the preliminary value until data become available to calculate the factor appropriate to the year. The source of each factor is described in the section entitled “Thermal Conversion Factor Source Documentation,” which follows Table A6 in this appendix.

**Table A1. Approximate Heat Content of Petroleum Products**  
(Million Btu per Barrel)

Asphalt	6.636
Aviation Gasoline	5.048
Butane	4.326
Butane-Propane Mixture (60 percent-40 percent)	4.130
Distillate Fuel Oil	5.825
Ethane	3.082
Ethane-Propane Mixture (70 percent-30 percent)	3.308
Isobutane	3.974
Jet Fuel, Kerosene-Type	5.670
Jet Fuel, Naphtha-Type	5.355
Kerosene	5.670
Lubricants	6.065
Motor Gasoline	
Conventional <sup>1</sup>	5.253
Oxygenated <sup>1</sup>	5.150
Reformulated <sup>1</sup>	5.150
Fuel Ethanol <sup>2</sup>	3.539
Natural Gasoline	4.620
Pentanes Plus	4.620
Petrochemical Feedstocks	
Naphtha less than 401° F	5.248
Other Oils equal to or greater than 401° F	5.825
Still Gas	6.000
Petroleum Coke	6.024
Plant Condensate	5.418
Propane	3.836
Residual Fuel Oil	6.287
Road Oil	6.636
Special Naphthas	5.248
Still Gas	6.000
Unfinished Oils	5.825
Unfractionated Stream	5.418
Waxes	5.537
Miscellaneous	5.796

<sup>1</sup>See Table A3 for motor gasoline annual weighted averages beginning in 1994.

<sup>2</sup>Fuel ethanol, which is derived from agricultural feedstocks (primarily corn), is not a petroleum product but is blended into motor gasoline. Its gross heat content (3.539 million Btu per barrel) is used in *Annual Energy Review* calculations; its net heat content (3.192 million Btu per barrel) is used in the Energy Information Administration’s *Renewable Energy Annual* calculations.

Web Page: For related information, see <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/aer/append.html>.

Sources: See “Thermal Conversion Factor Source Documentation,” which follows Table A6.