

2002 VEGETABLE, MELON, AND TARO HIGHLIGHTS

VEGETABLES AND MELONS

The farm value of vegetables and melons was estimated at a record high \$50.4 million in 2002, up 5 percent from 2001. Tomato growers led all individual vegetables and melons in farm value with a record high \$9.6 million in 2002, up 4 percent from 2001. Increases in production and farm prices enabled watermelon farmers to move from last year's fourth spot to second in 2002 on farm revenues of \$2.9 million, a 17 percent increase. Head cabbage growers were third with farm revenues estimated at \$2.7 million in 2002, down 1 percent from 2001 as farm prices declined 5 percent.



The combined category of Other Vegetables and Melons continued to make double-digit percentage gains in farm revenues. Farm value was estimated at \$16.2 million, up 36 percent. This category contains over 60 individual vegetables and includes such high-valued crops as sprouts, taro leaves, ethnic vegetables, baby vegetables, and salad mix greens.

Production of vegetables and melons totaled 96.5 million pounds in 2002, up 2 percent from 2001. Leading all vegetables and melons for the fourth consecutive year were tomatoes (field-grown and greenhouse tomatoes combined) with a record-tying harvest of 17.5 million pounds in 2002. Head cabbage growers were second with production estimated at 13.0 million pounds in 2002, up 4 percent from 2001. Watermelons remained third with a harvest of 11.3 million pounds, up 8 percent from 2001.

The category of Other Vegetables and Melons had a record-high combined production of 17.6 million pounds in 2002, up 43 percent from 2001. Increased production of specialty melons and cantaloupes were mainly responsible for the overall boost.

TARO

Hawaii County taro production is estimated at 6.1 million pounds for 2002, down 5 percent from 2001. The combined farm price for poi and Chinese taro increased 2 percent from 2001 to a new record-high average of 54.0 cents per pound in 2002. Total farm revenues declined 3 percent to \$3.3 million in 2002 as the drop in production more than offset the increase in farm prices.

Poi taro acreage in 2002 decreased 5 percent from the previous year to total 400 acres. Chinese taro acreage, on the other hand, saw an increase of 50 percent to 30 acres.

Taro for processing totaled 5.8 million pounds in 2002, down 6 percent from the previous year. The bulk of all processed taro, and taro in general, is made into poi and yields across the State were hampered by factors such as adverse weather conditions, pests, and disease. Compounding all these problems that were hampering the supply of poi taro, farmers also saw the demand for their product decline following the tragic events of September 11, 2001. Poi sales slowed as fewer tourists visited the State and the local economy began to slowdown.