



USDA, NASS, Hawaii Field Office

Hawaii Taro

In cooperation with:



Agricultural Development Division

January 2006

Taro production hits record low

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Number of farms, acreage, marketings, farm price and value by County, State of Hawaii, 1996 - 2005

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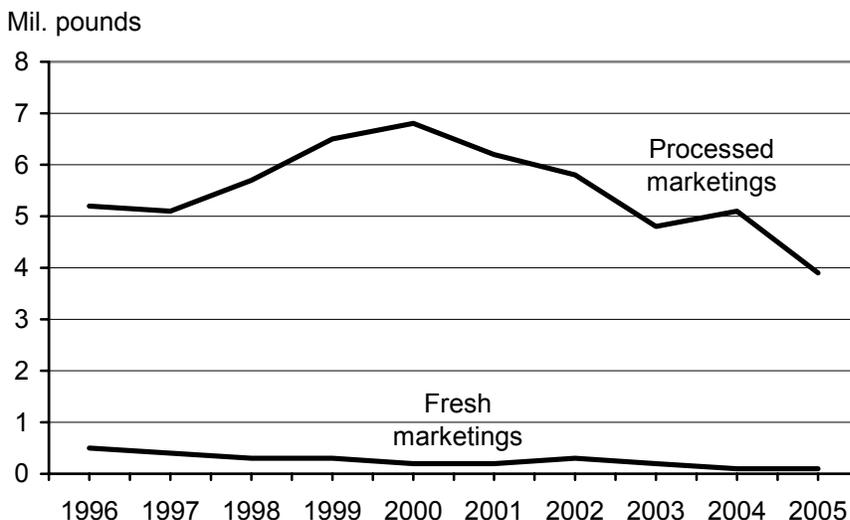
Monthly totals for 2004 and 2005 and 5-year monthly average, State of Hawaii.

Hawaii taro production is estimated at 4.0 million pounds in 2005, down 19 percent from 2004 and the lowest total since the NASS, USDA, Hawaii Field Office began publishing taro estimates in 1946. The previous record low as 5.0 million pounds set in 2003.

Weather and pests hamper growers

Taro production was hindered from the start of 2005 by a second winter of rainy weather. Periodically heavy rains pelted the major taro growing areas throughout the first quarter and resulted in occasional flooding. While plant losses due to weather were light, the wet and cloudy weather did slow crop development. The rest of 2005 was generally a mixture of sunshine and showers which favored taro, but the plant's 11-15 month maturity cycle prevented the industry's recovery for 2005. Pests also continued to pose a problem for taro growers. Reports of apple snail (*Pomacea canaliculata*) infestations and losses varied from light to extremely heavy. Taro Pocket Rot (TPR), a disease that forms pockets of rotting tissue in the corm, also continued to result in some losses. Finally, incidences of leaf blight (*Phytophthora colocasiense*), due to the wet weather, slowed drop development. ■

Hawaii Taro Marketings, by use, State of Hawaii, 1996-2005



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Processed taro totals

3.9 million pounds

Taro for processing totaled 3.9 million pounds in 2005, down 24 percent from 2004. The bulk of all processed taro, and taro in general, is made into poi. Other processed uses for taro include a traditional Hawaiian desert called *Kulolo* (a mixture of taro and coconut cream and/or shredded coconut meat) and chips. Taro sold for fresh use is estimated at 100,000 pounds, unchanged from 2004. Chinese taro is the main source of fresh taro sales.

Kauai County leads State in taro marketings

Kauai County remained the State's largest producer of taro with 2005 production set at 2.9 million pounds, down 26 percent from 2004. Honolulu and Maui counties combined for total taro marketings of 850,000 pounds in 2005, up 6 percent from 2004 and the only area to record an increase in marketings during 2005. Hawaii county recorded the largest decrease as taro marketing fell from 500,000 in 2004 to 250,000 pounds in 2005, a 50 percent decrease. Damage from heavy rains in March 2005 in the Waipio Valley area was mainly responsible for the drop in marketings from the Big Island.

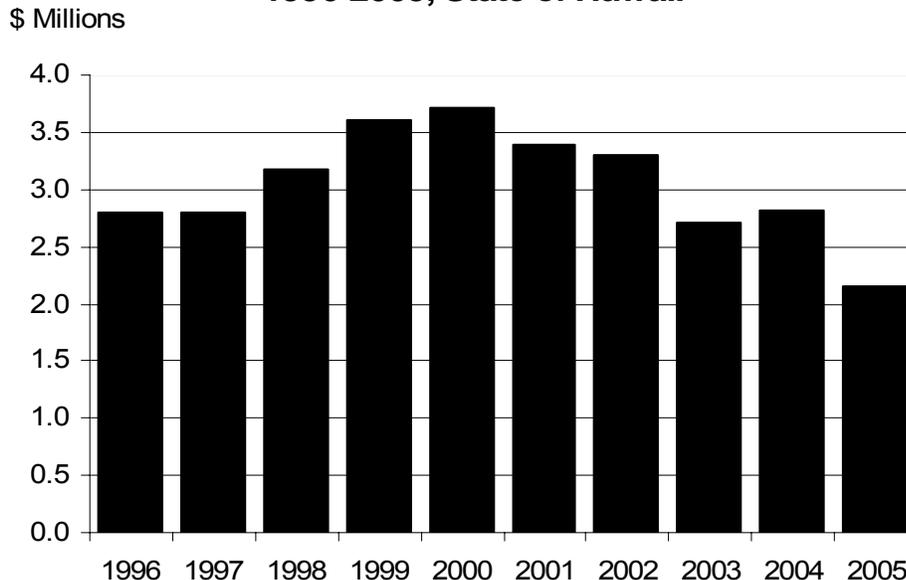
Farm prices remain steady

The overall farm price for poi and Chinese taro remained unchanged for the fourth consecutive year at 54.0 cents per pound in 2005, matching the record high first set in 2002. Poi taro farm prices averaged 54.0 cents per pound, unchanged from 2004. Chinese taro farmers also received an average of 54.0 cents per pound in 2005, up fractionally from 2004.

Farm value hits 16-year low

The farm value of all types of taro marketings totaled \$2.2 million in

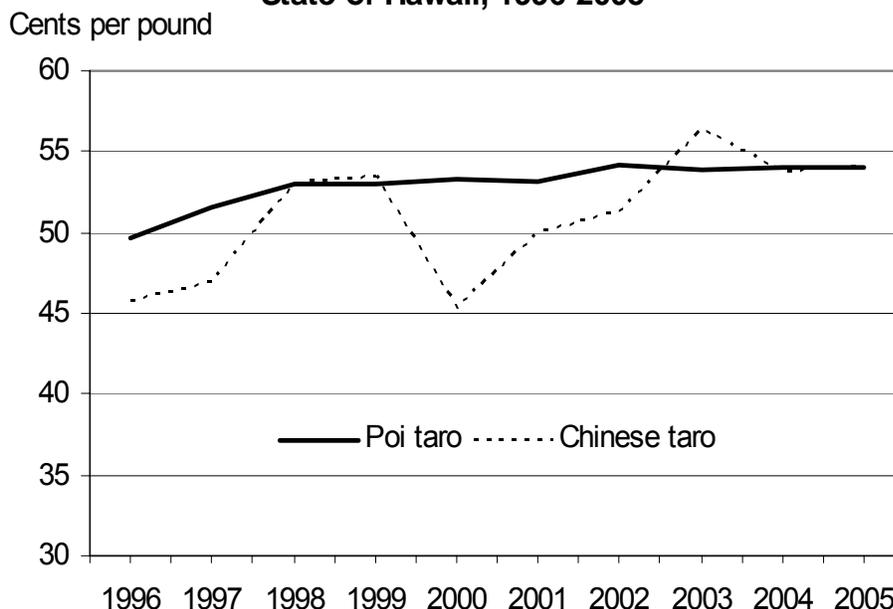
Hawaii Taro: Farm Value of Sales 1996-2005, State of Hawaii



2005, down 23 percent from 2004 and the lowest annual total since 1989's \$2.0 million in revenues. Kauai County generated the most farm revenues in the State with a 2005 total of \$1.5 million, down 26 percent from 2004 and the county's lowest total since 1996. The

combined total of Honolulu and Maui counties was second with \$481,000 in farm revenues, up 9 percent from 2004. Hawaii County saw taro farm revenues decline 51 percent to \$142,000 in 2005, the lowest total in 24 years. ■

Average Taro Farm Prices State of Hawaii, 1996-2005



Hawaii Taro Statistics

TARO: Number of farms, acreage, marketing, price, and value, by counties, 1996-2005

Year	Farms	Acreage in crop ^{1/}			Marketings			Farm price			Value of sales
		Poi taro	Chinese taro	Total	Fresh	Processed	Total	Poi taro	Chinese taro	All	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>----- Acres -----</i>			<i>----- 1,000 pounds -----</i>			<i>----- Cents per pound -----</i>			<i>\$1,000</i>
STATE											
1996	180	350	180	530	500	5,200	5,700	49.6	45.8	49.0	2,793
1997	160	370	80	450	400	5,100	5,500	51.5	46.9	51.0	2,805
1998	180	400	90	490	300	5,700	6,000	53.0	53.0	53.0	3,180
1999	190	420	80	500	300	6,500	6,800	53.0	53.5	53.0	3,604
2000	185	430	40	470	200	6,800	7,000	53.3	45.3	53.0	3,710
2001	170	420	20	440	200	6,200	6,400	53.2	50.0	53.0	3,392
2002	150	400	30	430	300	5,800	6,100	54.2	51.2	54.0	3,294
2003	150	390	30	420	200	4,800	5,000	53.9	56.3	54.0	2,700
2004	130	360	10	370	100	5,100	5,200	54.0	53.8	54.0	2,808
2005	110	350	10	360	100	3,900	4,000	54.0	54.0	54.0	2,160
Counties:											
Hawaii											
1996	100	60	170	230	490	910	1,400	56.0	44.7	49.2	689
1997	85	80	70	150	390	910	1,300	60.0	46.1	53.7	698
1998	100	90	70	160	250	850	1,100	61.0	53.0	57.0	627
1999	100	100	80	180	200	900	1,100	61.0	53.2	57.5	632
2000	85	80	40	120	200	700	900	61.6	45.3	56.2	506
2001	60	70	20	90	150	650	800	60.4	48.9	51.5	443
2002	50	60	20	80	200	550	750	61.4	48.4	55.3	415
2003	40	55	15	70	130	450	580	59.7	54.9	57.8	335
2004	30	50	10	60	100	400	500	60.0	53.1	57.5	288
2005	30	40	10	50	60	190	250	59.0	50.0	56.8	142
Honolulu/Maui ^{2/}											
1996	26	80	5	85	10	1,090	1,100	51.1	61.2	51.6	568
1997	25	80	5	85	10	890	900	49.5	90.0	50.0	450
1998	25	80	15	95	50	1,050	1,100	52.4	53.5	52.5	577
1999	25	90	*	90	100	1,300	1,400	52.4	54.9	52.6	736
2000	30	100	*	100	*	1,300	1,300	52.6	^{3/}	52.6	684
2001	40	100	*	100	50	1,250	1,300	53.0	57.3	53.0	691
2002	35	90	10	100	60	1,190	1,250	54.6	67.2	55.2	690
2003	40	85	15	100	50	1,050	1,100	54.7	61.6	55.0	605
2004	35	75	*	75	*	800	800	55.1	^{3/}	55.1	441
2005	30	75	*	75	40	810	850	56.4	60.0	56.6	481
Kauai											
1996	54	210	5	215	*	3,200	3,200	48.0	^{3/}	48.0	1,536
1997	50	210	5	215	*	3,300	3,300	50.1	^{3/}	50.2	1,657
1998	55	230	5	235	*	3,800	3,800	52.0	^{3/}	52.0	1,976
1999	65	230	*	230	*	4,300	4,300	52.0	^{3/}	52.0	2,236
2000	70	250	*	250	*	4,800	4,800	52.5	^{3/}	52.5	2,520
2001	70	250	*	250	*	4,300	4,300	52.5	^{3/}	52.5	2,258
2002	65	250	*	250	40	4,060	4,100	53.4	^{3/}	53.4	2,189
2003	70	250	*	250	20	3,300	3,320	53.0	^{3/}	53.0	1,760
2004	65	235	*	235	*	3,900	3,900	53.3	^{3/}	53.3	2,079
2005	50	235	*	235	*	2,900	2,900	53.0	^{3/}	53.0	1,537

^{1/} Survey conducted in November of each year. Does not include acreage used primarily for leaf production. ^{2/} County of Honolulu combined with Maui to avoid disclosure of individual operations. ^{3/} Not shown separately, but accounted for in State average. *=Less than 5,000 pounds or 5 acres.

Monthly Taro for Poi Millings

Monthly Taro for Poi Millings, State of Hawaii, 5-year average, 2004, and 2005.

Year	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>												
5-year average ¹	464	453	477	443	455	462	478	485	469	482	458	483	5,609
2004.....	370	360	410	410	390	430	460	440	440	420	420	450	5,000
2005 ²	330	330	340	270	260	280	310	380	350	330	310	410	3,900
<u>Percent changes:</u>	<i>Percent</i>												
2005/5-year.....	71	73	71	61	57	61	65	78	75	68	68	85	
2005/2004.....	89	92	83	66	67	65	67	86	80	79	74	91	

¹ Years: 2000-2004.

² Revised.