

# Hawaii Taro

Preliminary estimates of acreage, farm prices, marketings, and farm value.

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## Output and farm prices make gains

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Hawaii taro production is estimated at 6.0 million pounds for 1998, up 9 percent from 1997 and the highest total in three years. The combined farm price for poi and Chinese taro averaged a record high 53 cents per pound in 1998, up 4 percent from a year ago. Higher production and farm prices enabled taro growers to post farm revenues of \$3.2 million, up 13 percent from 1997 and the second highest total on record.

### Poi taro rebounds

Taro for processing totaled 5.7 million pounds in 1998, up 12 percent from 1997. Most of the gains in processed taro were made by poi taro growers on the island of Kauai. Although pocket rot disease remained a serious problem on Kauai, its impact was lessened in 1998 with the adoption of improved cultural practices. This, and generally favorable weather, helped Kauai increase taro production by 15 percent in 1998. At the other end of the State, poi taro farmers in the Big Island's Waipio Valley were being hampered by weather and disease. Some Waipio Valley farmers reported serious losses due to pocket rot. In addition, generally rainy weather during the second half of 1998 limited yields by fostering the presence of some diseases.

*Continued on next page*



### Hawaii Agricultural Statistics Service

*Fact finding for agriculture*

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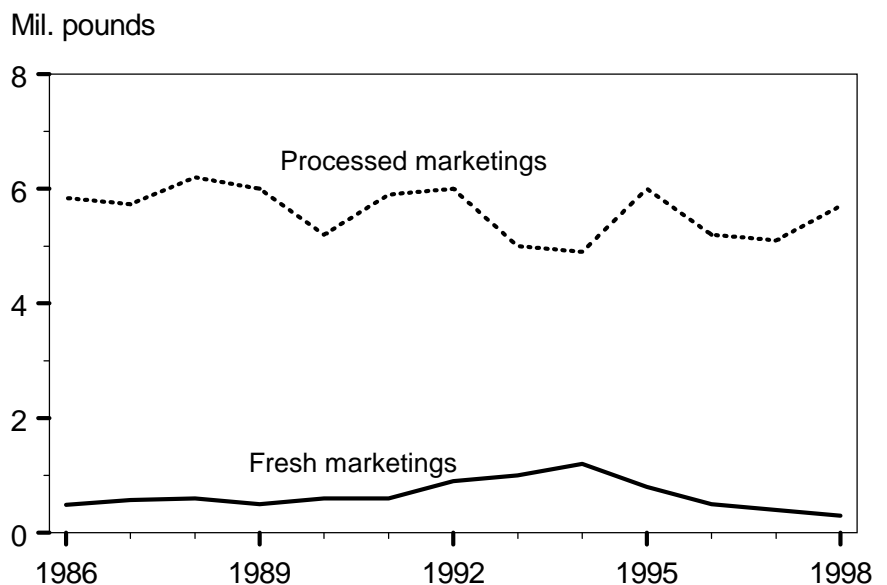
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### Hawaii taro marketings, by use. State of Hawaii, 1994-98



## Chinese taro growers hampered by weather

Most of the State's Chinese taro is grown in the windward areas of the Big Island where extreme weather conditions had an adverse impact on production during 1998. Drought conditions from 1997 continued into the first quarter of 1998 and resulted in slowed plant growth. For farmers dependent solely on rainfall, the dry weather also resulted in the

loss of some plantings. In addition, a few farmers reported an increase in damage caused by feral pigs during the drought period. Then as El Niño began to wane, rainfall started to increase. By late spring, the windward areas of the Big Island were receiving steady doses of trade wind showers. Unfortunately for Chinese taro growers, the showers

were frequent and occasionally heavy. Crop development was once again hampered, but this time by the generally overcast skies and soggy conditions. Some farmers also reported an increase in damage caused by disease and snails due to the showery weather.

## 1998 Hawaii taro statistics

**TARO: Number of farms, acreage, marketings, price, and value, by islands, 1994-98**

Year	Farms	Acreage in crop <sup>1</sup>			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>
<b>STATE</b>											
1994	180	310	180	490	1,200	4,900	6,100	48.3	38.9	46.0	2,806
1995	190	350	200	550	800	6,000	6,800	48.1	47.4	48.0	3,264
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
<b>1998</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>490</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>5,700</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>53.0</b>	<b>53.0</b>	<b>53.0</b>	<b>3,180</b>
<b>HAWAII</b>											
1994	105	45	170	215	1,200	760	1,960	44.8	38.9	40.3	790
1995	109	65	190	255	790	610	1,400	46.2	47.2	46.9	657
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
<b>1998</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>850</b>	<b>1,100</b>	<b>61.0</b>	<b>53.0</b>	<b>57.0</b>	<b>627</b>
<b>KAUAI</b>											
1994	50	200	<sup>2</sup>	200	*	3,160	3,160	47.9	<sup>3</sup>	47.9	1,514
1995	52	210	<sup>2</sup>	210	*	4,160	4,160	48.0	<sup>3</sup>	48.0	1,997
1996	54	210	5	215	*	3,200	3,200	48.0	<sup>3</sup>	48.0	1,536
1997	50	210	5	215	*	3,300	3,300	50.1	<sup>3</sup>	50.2	1,657
<b>1998</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>235</b>	*	<b>3,800</b>	<b>3,800</b>	<b>52.0</b>	<sup>3</sup>	<b>52.0</b>	<b>1,976</b>
<b>MAUI/MOLOKAI/OAHU <sup>4</sup></b>											
1994	25	65	10	75	*	980	980	51.3	40.0	51.2	502
1995	29	75	10	85	10	1,230	1,240	49.1	64.0	49.2	610
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
<b>1998</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>1,050</b>	<b>1,100</b>	<b>52.4</b>	<b>53.5</b>	<b>52.5</b>	<b>577</b>

<sup>1</sup> Survey conducted in November of each year. Does not include acreage used primarily for leaf production.

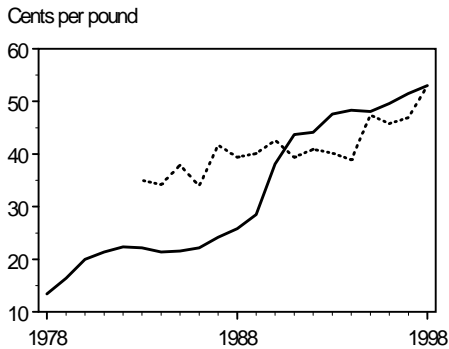
<sup>2</sup> Kauai combined with Maui, Molokai, and Oahu to avoid disclosure of individual operations.

<sup>3</sup> Not shown separately but accounted for in State average.

<sup>4</sup> Oahu combined with Maui and Molokai to avoid disclosure of individual operations.

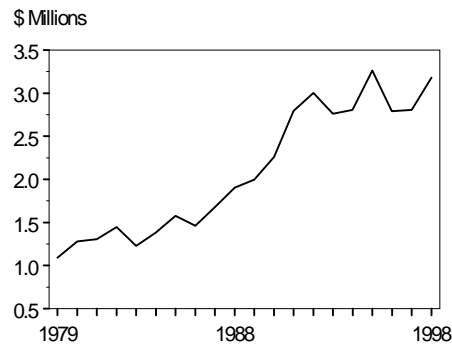
\* = Less than 5,000 pounds.

## Farm prices



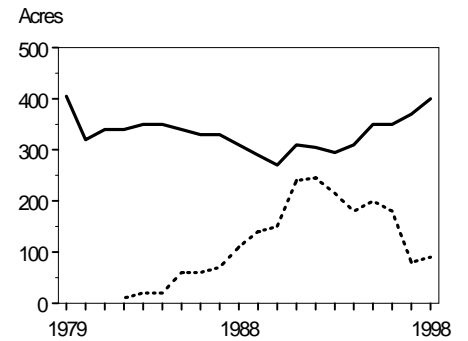
Farm prices for poi and Chinese taro reached record-high levels in 1998. Poi taro farm prices averaged 53 cents per pound in 1998, up 3 percent from 1997. Chinese taro growers also received an average of 53 cents per pound in 1998.

## Farm value



Fueled by higher farm prices and increased production, the combined farm value of Chinese and poi taro increased 13 percent in 1998 to \$3.2 million. It was the third consecutive year of increase, but fell short of 1995's record high of \$3.3 million.

## Total acreage in crop



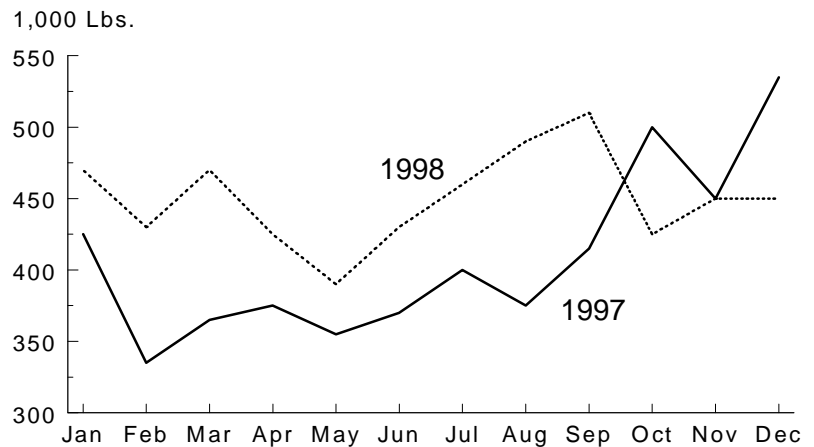
Both Chinese taro and poi taro growers experienced an increase in acreage. Poi taro acreage is estimated at 400 acres, up 8 percent. Chinese taro acreage is estimated at 90 acres, a 12-percent increase from 1997.

# Poi taro millings

## Taro millings rebound

Taro for poi millings totaled 5.4 million pounds in 1998, up 10 percent from 1997. The increase in taro for poi millings started in late 1997 and carried over into the first nine months of 1998. From January through September of 1998, monthly taro for poi millings were, on the average, 20 percent higher than the previous year. The increase in poi supplies was one reason for a sharp decline in millings during October. Taro millings for the final two months of 1998 were a stable 450,000 pounds per month.

## Monthly Taro Millings State of Hawaii, 1997-98



**Monthly Taro For Poi Millings: State of Hawaii, 1993-97 average, 1997, and 1998.**

Year	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
<i>1,000 pounds</i>													
5-year average .....	421	397	405	387	374	371	395	423	426	464	450	487	5,000
1997 .....	425	335	365	375	355	370	400	375	415	500	450	535	4,900
1998 .....	470	430	470	425	390	430	460	490	510	425	450	450	5,400

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