

National Agricultural Statistics Service

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# Hawaii Taro

Annual report of acreage, marketings, farm prices, and farm value.

## Farm revenue at record high

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*Special tabulation based on 1997 Agricultural Census data.*

Hawaii taro production is estimated at 6.8 million pounds for 1999, up 13 percent from 1998 and the highest total since 1995. The combined farm price for poi and Chinese taro averaged 53 cents per pound in 1999, unchanged from the record high achieved in 1998. The boost in production, combined with steady farm prices, enabled taro farmers to post farm revenues of \$3.6 million, up 13 percent from 1998 and a new record high.

### Production helped by weather and cultural practices

Taro for processing totaled 6.5 million pounds in 1999, up 14 percent from 1998. The bulk of all processed taro is made into poi. In 1999, that amount totaled 6.2 million pounds, up 15 percent from 1998. Taro for poi production got off to a relatively slow start in 1999 mainly to due to cloudy and wet weather in December of 1998. Weather conditions improved thereafter and were generally favorable for most farmers. Although flooding did occur in Kauai's Hanalei Valley during the final months of 1998, losses were relatively low. Also contributing to the increased production was the successful adoption of improved cultural practices that helped reduce the incidence of the Taro Pocket Rot

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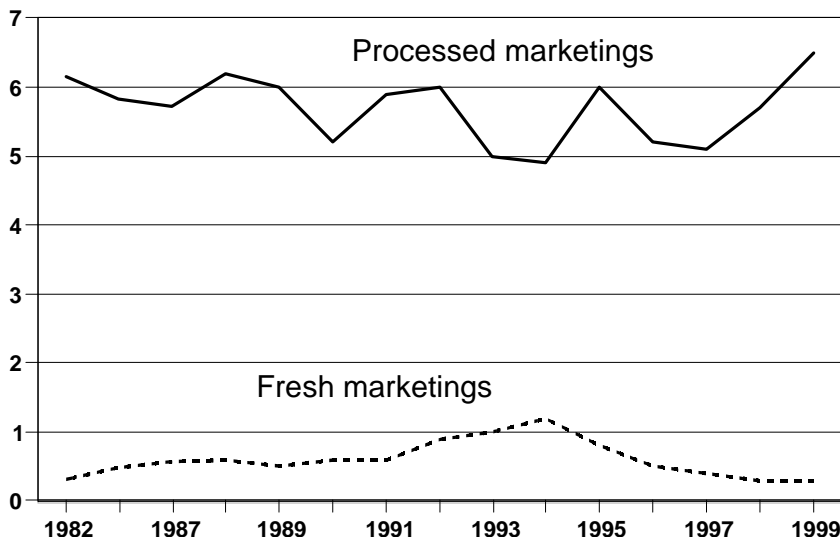
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## Hawaii taro marketings, by use. State of Hawaii, 1994-98



disease. While the disease continues to hamper yields in many fields, its destructive impact was lessened in 1999.

Total taro for poi acreage increased 5 percent in 1999 to 420 acres Statewide. Most of the increase was in upland plantings of taro for poi on the Big Island.

### Chinese taro growers endure less than favorable conditions

Most of the State's Chinese taro is grown in the windward sections of the Big Island where weather conditions improved from a very dry 1998. Growers, however, still experienced periodic dry spells that particularly hampered yields on non-irrigated farms. In addition, the dry conditions may have increased the presence of aphids which lead, in turn, to a greater incidence of disease. The overall effect was that farmers reported harvesting smaller-than-normal

corm sizes during 1999.

Total Chinese taro acreage decreased 11 percent in 1999 to 80 acres as some farmers switched to other crops.

Farm prices for Chinese taro averaged 53.5 cents per pound in 1999, up 1 percent from 1999 and a new record high. A few farmers, however, reported that they faced increased competition from relatively inexpensive imported foreign taro.

## 1999 Hawaii taro statistics

**TARO: Number of farms, acreage, marketings, price, and value, by islands, 1995-99**

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>											
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
1998	180	400	90	490	300	5,700	6,000	53.0	53.0	53.0	3,180
<b>1999</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>6,500</b>	<b>6,800</b>	<b>53.0</b>	<b>53.5</b>	<b>53.0</b>	<b>3,604</b>
<b>HAWAII</b>											
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
1998	100	90	70	160	250	850	1,100	61.0	53.0	57.0	627
<b>1999</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>1,100</b>	<b>61.0</b>	<b>53.2</b>	<b>57.5</b>	<b>632</b>
<b>KAUAI</b>											
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
1998	55	230	5	235	*	3,800	3,800	52.0	<sup>3</sup>	52.0	1,976
<b>1999</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>230</b>	*	<b>230</b>	*	<b>4,300</b>	<b>4,300</b>	<b>52.0</b>	<sup>3</sup>	<b>52.0</b>	<b>2,236</b>
<b>MAUI/MOLOKAI/OAHU <sup>4</sup></b>											
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
1998	25	80	15	95	50	1,050	1,100	52.4	53.5	52.5	577
<b>1999</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>90</b>	*	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,300</b>	<b>1,400</b>	<b>52.4</b>	<b>54.9</b>	<b>52.6</b>	<b>736</b>

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

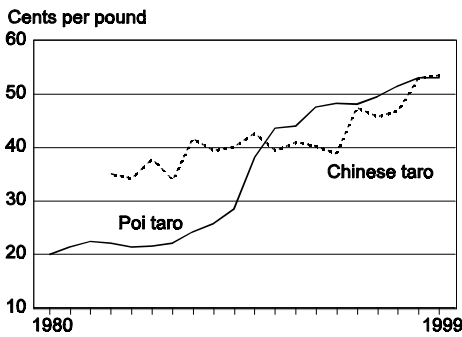
<sup>2</sup> Kauai combined with Maui, Molokai, and Oahu to avoid disclosure of individual operations.

<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.

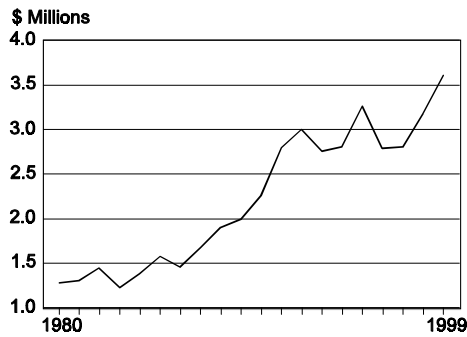
\* = Less than 5,000 pounds or 5 acres.

## Farm prices



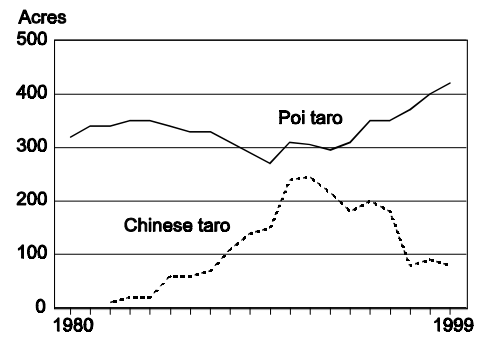
Farm prices for poi taro maintained the record-high prices achieved in 1998 at 53 cents per pound during 1999. Chinese taro growers surpassed the record-high prices received in 1998 by averaging a new high of 53.5 cents per pound in 1999.

## Farm value



Farm revenues climbed to a record high \$3.6 million in 1999, up 13 percent from 1998, surpassing the previous record of \$3.3 million in 1995 by 10 percent. Higher production was the reason for 1999's record farm value.

## Total acreage in crop



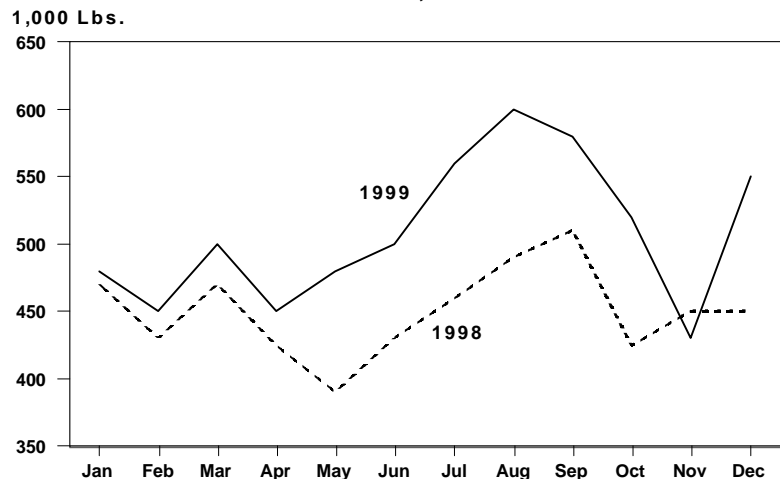
Poi taro acreage increased to 420 acres Statewide in 1999, up 5 percent from 1998. This was the most acreage in poi taro since 1979 when 405 acres were devoted to poi taro. Chinese taro totaled 80 acres, down 11 percent from 1998.

# Poi taro millings

## Taro millings top 6 million pounds

Taro for poi millings totaled 6.2 million pounds in 1999, up 15 percent from 1998. Monthly taro for poi millings in 1999 were consistently higher than the previous year and peaked at 600,000 pounds in August. Weather conditions were generally good for the growing of poi taro in 1999. The only exception were some heavy showers during the final quarter of the year that caused some flooding in the Hanalei area. For the most part, however, the flooding was short-lived and did not cause any significant losses. Improved cultural practices also resulted in fewer losses due to the Taro Pocket Rot disease.

## Monthly Taro Millings State of Hawaii, 1998-99



Monthly Taro For Poi Millings: State of Hawaii, 1994-98 average, 1998, and 1999.

Year	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
<i>1,000 pounds</i>													
5-year average .....	429	401	418	394	379	385	414	440	451	471	458	500	5,140
1998 .....	470	430	470	425	390	430	460	490	510	425	450	450	5,400
1999 .....	480	450	500	450	480	500	560	600	580	520	530	550	6,200

# Distribution of Taro Acreage by Age Groups

**Hawaii Taro:** Distribution of Total Acreage by Age of Operator, 1997  
Average Age: 53 years

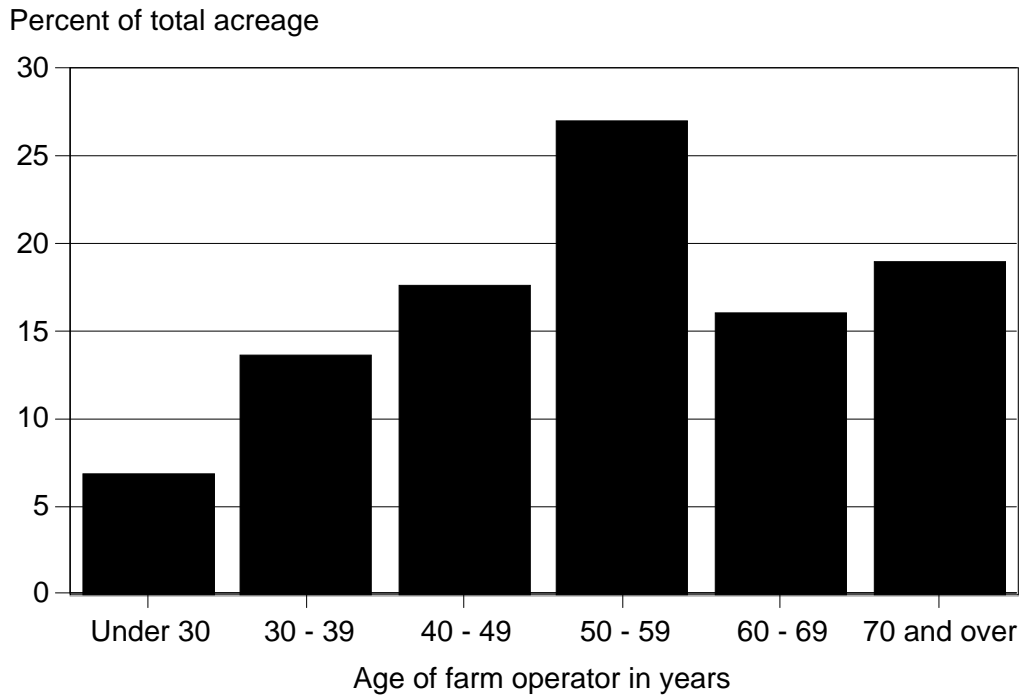


Chart prepared by the Hawaii Agricultural Statistics Service from data collected for the 1997 Census of Agriculture.

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