



National Agricultural Statistics Service

Hawaii Agricultural Statistics Service
Hawaii Department of Agriculture

Hawaii Taro Millings

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Taro for poi millings ends year on strong note

The Hawaii Agricultural Statistics Service estimates poi millers utilized 1.4 million pounds of taro during the fourth quarter of 2003, up 19 percent from the third quarter and 4 percent more than a year ago. The three highest monthly totals for 2003 were all recorded in the fourth quarter and December's total of 501,000 pounds was also the highest since July 2002.

Despite the relatively strong finish, total taro for poi millings are estimated to decline 17 percent to 4.7 million pounds in 2003. Several factors contributed to the decline in production during 2003 including untimely rains (which resulted in periodic flooding), cool temperatures, and disease. However, farmers and millers attributed most of the loss to damage caused by Apple snails.

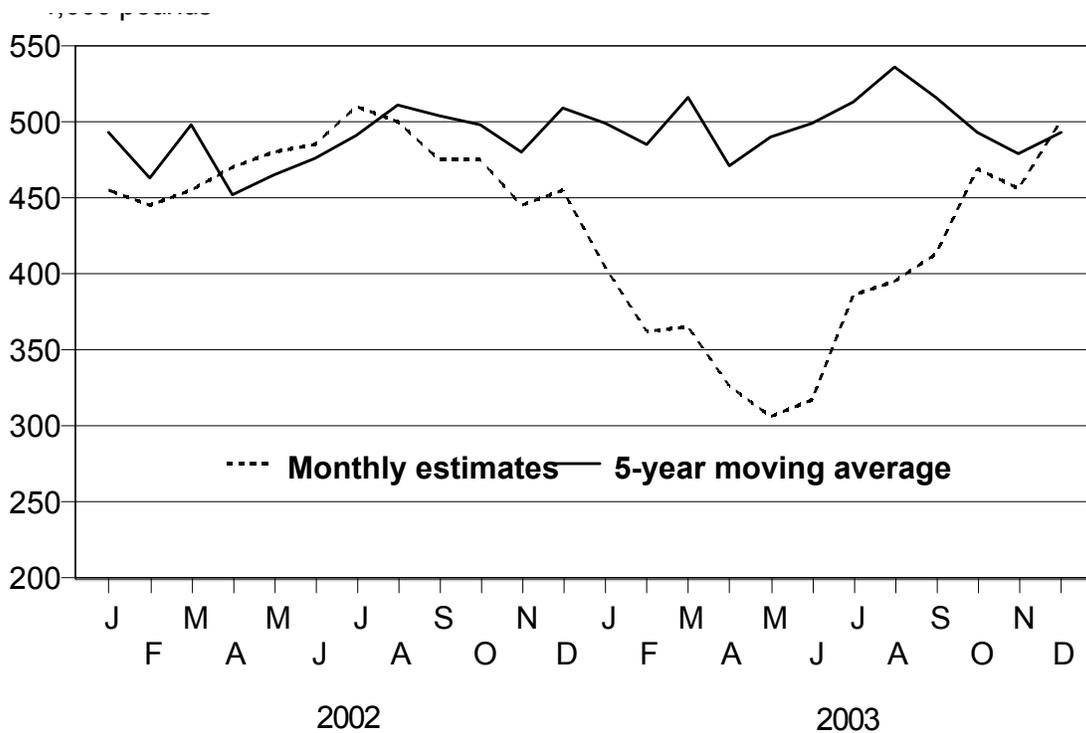
Weather-wise, the fourth quarter signals the start of Hawaii's wet season which runs from October to April. Like clockwork, a cold front brought showers to Kauai on October 1st, but unfortunately dissipated before reaching any of the other islands.

Kauai, in fact, continued to be the wettest spot in the State as it received another round of heavy showers at the end of the month. November is typically the rainiest month of the year and it was no different in 2003. Heavy showers pelted most of the State during the Thanksgiving weekend with some stations recording over 10 inches of rain in a 24-hour period. The wet weather continued into December before stable conditions returned on December 8th and continued through the 26th. This period of favorable weather allowed farmers an opportunity to catch up on field activities delayed by the previous wet weather. Finally, 2003 closed-out with a last round of showers that dampened the Christmas and New Year's season. Rainfall, however, was not as heavy as earlier in the month.■

Monthly Taro for Poi Millings, State of Hawaii, 5-year average, 2002, and 2003.

| Year | Jan. | Feb. | Mar. | Apr. | May | Jun. | Jul. | Aug. | Sep. | Oct. | Nov. | Dec. | Total |
|-----------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| <i>1,000 Pounds</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5-year average ¹ | 499 | 485 | 516 | 471 | 490 | 499 | 513 | 536 | 516 | 493 | 479 | 493 | 5,990 |
| 2002 | 455 | 445 | 455 | 470 | 480 | 485 | 510 | 500 | 475 | 475 | 445 | 455 | 5,650 |
| 2003² | 404 | 362 | 365 | 326 | 306 | 317 | 386 | 395 | 413 | 469 | 456 | 501 | 4,700 |
| <i>Percent</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <u>Percent changes:</u> | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2003/5-year | 81 | 75 | 71 | 69 | 62 | 64 | 75 | 74 | 80 | 95 | 95 | 102 | 78 |
| 2003/2002 | 89 | 81 | 80 | 69 | 64 | 65 | 76 | 79 | 87 | 99 | 102 | 110 | 83 |

¹ Years: 1998-2002. ² Revised.



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