

Hawaii Taro

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Production falls to record low

Hawaii taro production declined to a record low 5.0 million pounds in 2003, down 18 percent from 2002. The previous record low was 5.5 million pounds in 1997. Farm prices, meanwhile, remained at a record high average of 54.0 cents per pound for 2003. The farm value of taro sales is estimated at \$2.7 million in 2003, down 18 percent from 2002.

Apple snails seriously impacted Statewide production

Taro for processing totaled 4.8 million pounds in 2003, down 17 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 adverse weather, disease, and most importantly by apple snails. Originally from South America, apple snails were promoted in the late 1980s as a potential aquacultural product for Hawaii. Kept in confinement, the snails posed no problem. However, in the early 1990s the snails began to appear in taro fields. These snails are voracious feeders and can devour significant taro foliage which results in smaller corms.



Apple Snail
(*Pomacea canaliculata*)

Hawaii. Kept in confinement, the snails posed no problem. However, in the early 1990s the snails began to appear in taro fields. These snails are voracious feeders and can devour significant taro foliage which results in smaller corms.

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Statistics page 2

Number of farms, acreage, marketings, price, and value by islands, 1998-2002.

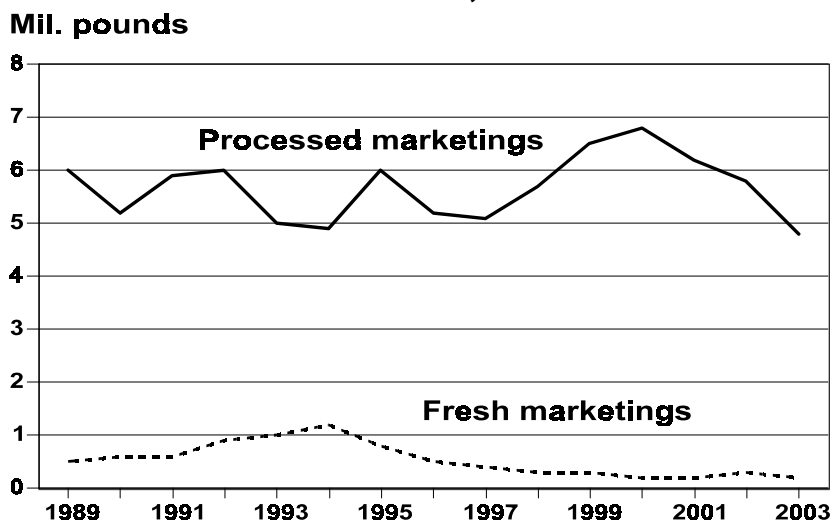
Taro marketings by counties page 3

Taro marketings by county for the past 58 years.

Chronicle of Hawaii's taro marketings .. page 4

Major events that affected taro marketings from 1946 to 2003.

Hawaii taro marketings, by use. State of Hawaii, 1989-2003



In addition to apple snails, Hawaii taro production continued to be hampered by Taro Pocket Rot (TPR), a disease that forms pockets of rotting tissue in the corm, and leaf blight (caused by *Phytophthora colocasiae*). Losses varied widely by location and some farmers reported an improvement in TPR conditions. Finally, while most areas of the State were relatively dry in 2003, Kauai experienced normal or above-normal rainfall. A particularly

intense rainstorm flooded the Hanalei River in July inundating nearby taro fields. While losses were relatively light, a consequence of the flood was the further spreading of apple snails.

Farm value hits 13-year low

Farm value from the sale of taro for fresh and processed use totaled \$2.7 million in 2003, down 18 percent from 2002 and the lowest annual total since 1990. The overall

farm price of taro remained steady at 54.0 cents per pound in 2003. Poi taro farm prices averaged 53.9 cents per pound, down 1 percent from 2002. Chinese taro farm prices increased 10 percent to an average of 56.3 cents per pound. ♦



2003 Hawaii Taro Statistics

TARO: Number of farms, acreage, marketings, price, and value, by county, 1999-2003

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	
		Number	Acres				1,000 pounds				\$1,000
STATE											
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
HAWAII											
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
KAUAI											
1999	65	230	*	230	*	4,300	4,300	52.0	²	52.0	2,236
2000	70	250	*	250	*	4,800	4,800	52.5	²	52.5	2,520
2001	70	250	*	250	*	4,300	4,300	52.5	²	52.5	2,258
2002	65	250	*	250	40	4,060	4,100	53.4	²	53.4	2,189
2003	70	250	*	250	20	3,300	3,320	53.0	²	53.0	1,760
MAUI/HONOLULU ³											
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	²	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

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

² Not shown separately but accounted for in State average.

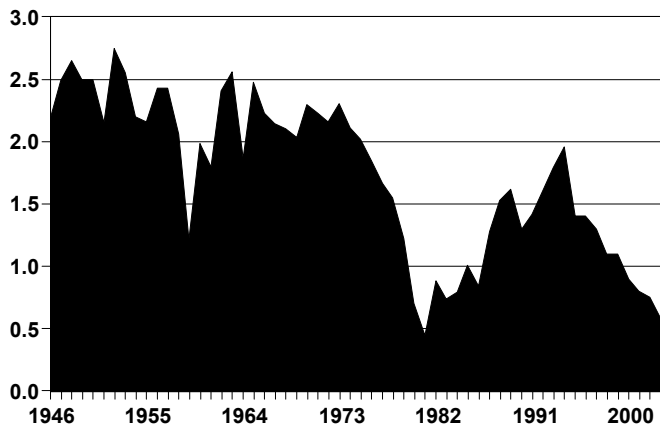
³ County of Honolulu combined with Maui to avoid disclosure of individual operations.

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

Statistical History of Taro Marketings by County

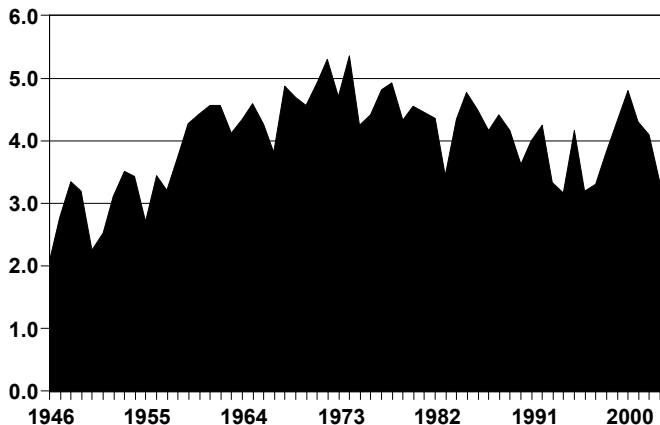
County of Hawaii

Taro Marketings, 1946-2003



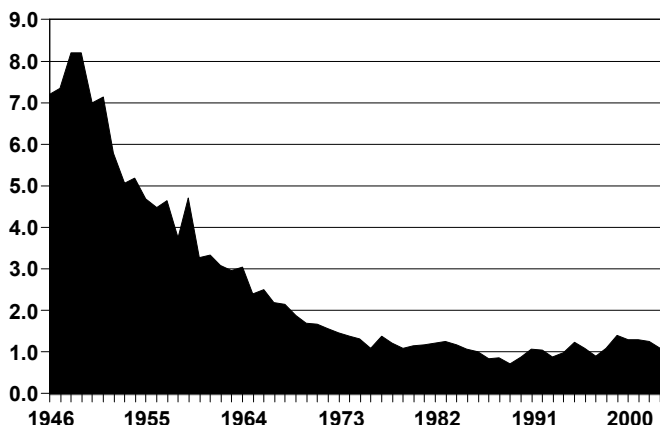
County of Kauai

Taro Marketings, 1946-2003



Counties of Maui and Honolulu

Taro Marketings, 1946-2003

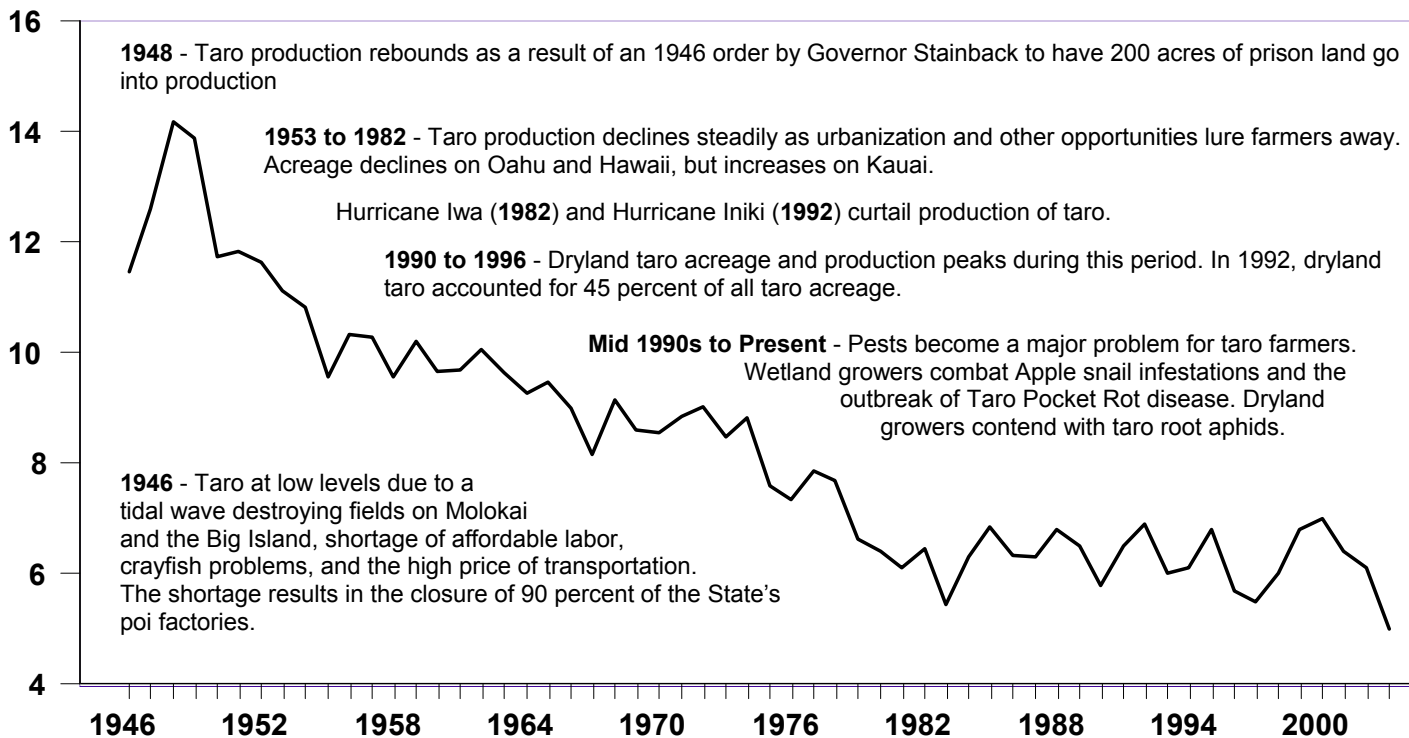


Taro Marketings by County, State of Hawaii, 1946-2003

Year	County			State total
	Hawaii	Kauai	Maui and Honolulu	
----- 1,000 pounds -----				
1946	2,190	2,085	7,205	11,480
1947	2,490	2,775	7,350	12,615
1948	2,650	3,340	8,205	14,195
1949	2,500	3,200	8,200	13,900
1950	2,500	2,250	6,990	11,740
1951	2,150	2,530	7,150	11,830
1952	2,745	3,115	5,780	11,640
1953	2,550	3,510	5,060	11,120
1954	2,200	3,430	5,195	10,825
1955	2,155	2,710	4,695	9,560
1956	2,425	3,445	4,475	10,345
1957	2,430	3,210	4,645	10,285
1958	2,060	3,750	3,755	9,565
1959	1,215	4,275	4,710	10,200
1960	1,985	4,425	3,265	9,675
1961	1,800	4,560	3,330	9,690
1962	2,405	4,560	3,090	10,055
1963	2,560	4,120	2,960	9,640
1964	1,870	4,350	3,055	9,275
1965	2,480	4,600	2,400	9,480
1966	2,230	4,265	2,495	8,990
1967	2,145	3,815	2,195	8,155
1968	2,105	4,875	2,160	9,140
1969	2,035	4,690	1,880	8,605
1970	2,295	4,565	1,695	8,555
1971	2,230	4,930	1,680	8,840
1972	2,160	5,300	1,560	9,020
1973	2,305	4,700	1,473	8,478
1974	2,110	5,350	1,375	8,835
1975	2,023	4,253	1,316	7,592
1976	1,845	4,420	1,085	7,350
1977	1,665	4,820	1,385	7,870
1978	1,550	4,920	1,210	7,680
1979	1,220	4,330	1,090	6,640
1980	700	4,550	1,150	6,400
1981	450	4,450	1,200	6,100
1982	880	4,360	1,220	6,460
1983	740	3,450	1,250	5,440
1984	795	4,350	1,165	6,310
1985	1,010	4,780	1,070	6,860
1986	840	4,490	1,000	6,330
1987	1,280	4,170	850	6,300
1988	1,530	4,410	860	6,800
1989	1,620	4,160	720	6,500
1990	1,300	3,620	880	5,800
1991	1,420	4,000	1,080	6,500
1992	1,610	4,250	1,040	6,900
1993	1,790	3,330	880	6,000
1994	1,960	3,160	980	6,100
1995	1,400	4,160	1,240	6,800
1996	1,400	3,200	1,100	5,700
1997	1,300	3,300	900	5,500
1998	1,100	3,800	1,100	6,000
1999	1,100	4,300	1,400	6,800
2000	900	4,800	1,300	7,000
2001	800	4,300	1,300	6,400
2002	750	4,100	1,250	6,100
2003	580	3,320	1,100	5,000

Chronicle of Hawaii's Taro Industry

Millions of pounds



Hawaii Agricultural Statistics Service, 2/2004

Selected historical notes taken from "A Brief History of Taro in Hawaii", Taro Industry Analysis Number 4, November 1990.

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