National Agricultural Statistics Service

Hawaii Agricultural Statistics
Hawaii Department of Agriculture

Hawaii Taro

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Production rebounds from record low

Hawaii taro production is estimated at 5.2 million pounds for 2004, up 4 percent from 2003's record low of 5.0 million pounds. Farm prices remained unchanged for the third consecutive year at an average of 54.0 cents per pound in 2004. The farm value of taro sales is estimated at $2.8 million in 2004, up 4 percent from 2003.

Wet weather and persistent pests hamper production

Taro for processing totaled 5.1 million pounds in 2004, up 6 percent from the previous year's record low. 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 apple snails. Weather was a major factor as Hawaii's 2003-04 winter season, which runs from October through April, was the wettest since 1996-97. Major taro growing areas on Kauai, Maui, and Hawaii islands were frequently pelted with heavy rains which caused occasional flooding. The wet, cloudy conditions were also responsible for an increase in the incidence of Phytophthora Leaf Blight disease. A fungal disease that can spread rapidly, Phytophthora can severely damage the taro plant's foliage thereby slowing or stunting corm development. In extreme cases the disease may infect the corm causing a firm, brownish rot to develop.

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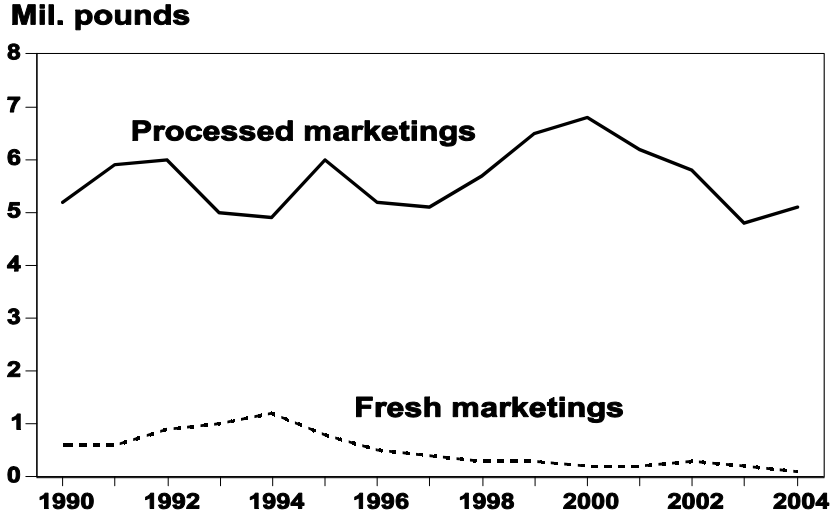
Hawaii taro marketings, by use. State of Hawaii, 1990-2004



Losses from Taro Pocket Rot, another fungal disease caused by a different species of Phytophthora, varied by location and did not appear to be as widespread as in previous years. Apple snails continued to plague farmers in varying degrees. Taro growers in the Big Island's Waipio Valley reported heavy Apple snail infestations, but most farmers elsewhere in the State reported less severe infestations compared to the previous year. An additional problem reported by some farmers was the theft of mature plants and planting materials, or *huli*.

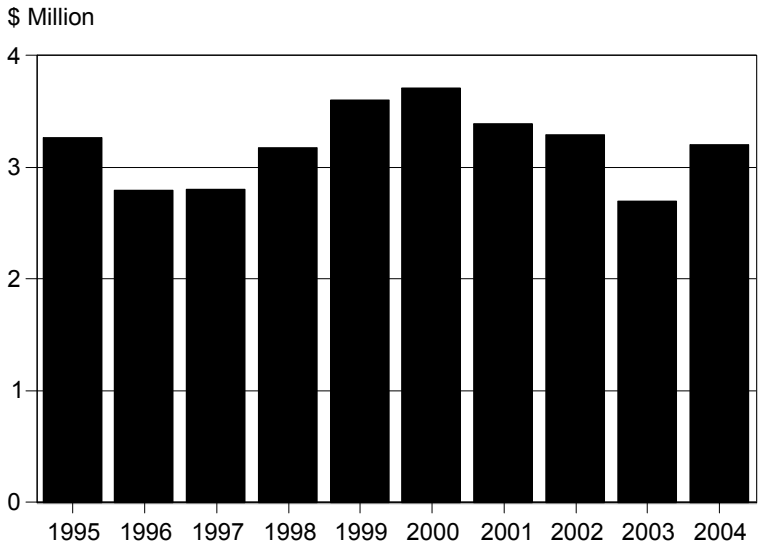
Taro sold for fresh use is estimated at 100,000 pounds in 2004, the lowest total since statistics were established in 1982. Chinese taro is the main source of fresh taro, and farmers in the major growing areas of Hawaii island reported sales were hampered by relatively low prices, dry weather, and pests.

Farm value up 4 percent

Farm value from the sale of taro for fresh and processed use totaled $2.8 million in 2004, up 4 percent from 2004 but the second lowest total in 7 years. Kauai county accounted for 74 percent of the total farm value with $2.1 million in farm sales during 2004, up 18 percent from 2003.

The overall farm price of taro remained unchanged for the third consecutive year at an average of 54.0 cents per pound in 2004. Farm prices for poi taro averaged 54.0 cents per pound, up fractionally from 2003. Chinese taro farm prices decreased 4 percent to an average of 53.8 cents per pound.❖

Hawaii taro farm value
State of Hawaii, 1995-2004

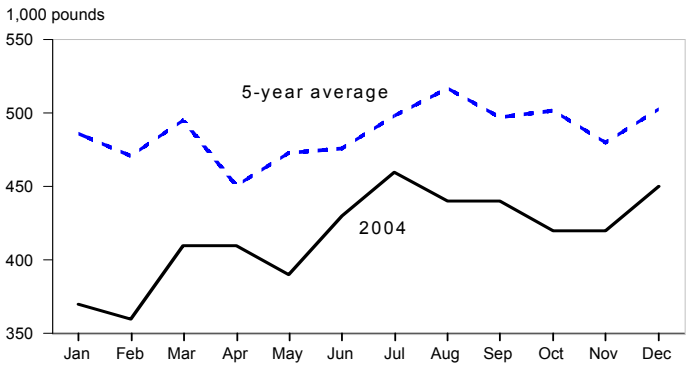


Monthly poi taro millings

Hawaii poi millers utilized 5.0 million pounds of taro in 2004, up 6 percent from 2003's record low of 4.7 million pounds. Compared to the 5-year average of 5.9 million pounds, taro for poi utilization was down 15 percent in 2004.

Monthly taro for poi utilization started off slowly with a January total of 370,000 pounds, down 24 percent from its 5-year average and the lowest January total in 10 years. While monthly production totals remained below comparable 5-year average levels throughout 2004, the gap closed as the months progressed averaged 15 percent for the year.

Monthly taro for poi millings
State of Hawaii, 5-year average and 2004



Monthly taro for poi millings: State of Hawaii, 5-year average, 2003, and 2004.

Year	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
	1,000 pounds												
5-year average [1/]	486	471	495	451	473	476	498	517	497	502	480	503	5,850
2003	404	362	365	326	306	317	386	395	413	469	456	501	4,700
2004	370	360	410	410	390	430	460	440	440	420	420	450	5,000

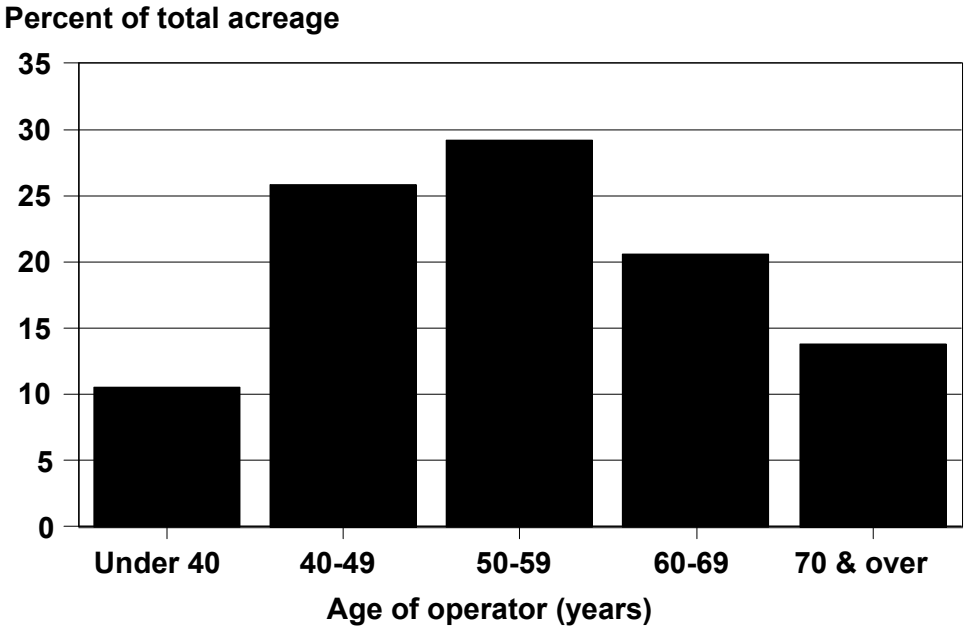
[1/] Years: 1999-2003.

TARO: Number of farms, acreage, marketings, price, and value, by county, 1995-2004

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*			*Cents per pound*			*$1,000*
					STATE						
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
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**
					HAWAII						
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
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**
					KAUAI						
1995	52	210	[2]	210	*	4,160	4,160	48.0	[3]	48.0	1,997
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**
					MAUI/HONOLULU [4]						
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
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**

[1] Survey conducted in November of each year. Does not include acreage used primarily for leaf production. [2] Kauai combined with Maui, Molokai, and Oahu to avoid disclosure of individual operations. [3] Not shown separately but accounted for in State average. [4] County of Honolulu combined with Maui to avoid disclosure of individual operations. * = Less than 5,000 pounds or 5 acres.

Percent distribution of taro for poi acreage by age of operator [1/]
State of Hawaii, 2004



[1/] Based on Hawaii Agricultural Statistics and Agricultural Census data.