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Market Link

for primary producers

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"Linking the market and Primary producers"

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GIANT TARO – TA'AMU



Giant taro or also known as Giant alocasia belongs to the Araceae family. Its scientific name is *Alocasia macrorrhizos*[1]. It is a species of a flowering plant that originates from the tropical rainforests of India, Sri Lanka and Malaysia [2]and has now been cultivated on most Pacific Islands including Samoa.

Giant taro is also known as "Ta'amu" in Samoan, and it is one of the vital staple crops in Samoa's cultural, dietary and economic developments. Ta'amu is grown throughout the year as much as it is locally consumed and sold in markets. Farmers in Samoa have centuries of traditional knowledge on farming practices in giant taro production. However, rapid climate changes have associated with economic and technological conditions which cause alterations to the centuries used indigenous farming practices used by our local farmers.

Giant taro is known to grow best in a partly shady area with moist soil. The plant grows slowly, but it gets very large; therefore, it needs plenty of room to grow, as its roots may take up to two years to be fully mature. Giant taro can grow to a height of 12-15ft with a width of 6-8ft. A fun fact; Giant taro can also be differentiated from Taro by looking at their leaves. Giant taro leaves point upward, whereas the Taro leaves point downward[3].

[1] https://www.pslbg.org/giant-taro/

[2] https://www.mnhn.fr/en/giant-taro

[3] https://www.pslbg.org/giant-taro/

GIANT TARO - PRODUCTION

This gross margin budget represents a 0.4 acre fully commercial Ta'amu (Giant Taro) enterprise, selling 700 plants.

a) Production Information

Recommended Varieties:

- Ta'amu Niu Kini
- Ta'amu Toga.

Seed Rate:

- *Traditional Farming System:* Approximately 1,010 suckers are planted into a 1-acre plot.

Planting Materials:

- Suckers or headsets are planted into a one acre of land.

Plant Spacing:

- *Traditional System:* Suckers are planted at a spacing of 1.5m x 1.5m.

Cropping System:

- Taamu can be intercropped with crops such as banana or coconut, however, in this instance; Ta'amu is grown as a mono crop.

Planting Time:

- The best yields are obtained when Ta'amu palagi is planted in the wet season (December – March).

Growth Period:

- 12-18months growth period**.**

Number of Months to Harvesting:

- Harvesting commences during the 12 months of the growth period and generally continues up to 14months after planting

Mortality Rate of Plants:

- Approximately 5% of plants do not survive.

Planting Material:

- Sucker

Fertilizer:

- Soil analysis should be done before fertilizer application. Inorganic Fertilizer application for Ta'amu production in Samoa is not practiced.

Weed Control/ Management:

- Paraquat @ 100ml/15L Water can be used (sold as Gramoxone etc.).
- Preferably manual weeding is recommended[4].

Over the years, there are a few new varieties of Giant Taro added such as Laufola, Lauoo and Monoi as recorded by our Crops Division at Nu'u[5].

According to the information collected from the Agriculture Census in 2019, it shows that the number of households growing giant taro has decreased to 16% from 2009 to 2019. Approximately 32% of Ta'amu growers in Samoa grew mainly for home

[4] Farm Management Manual - MAF

[5] Crops Division Quarterly Updates

consumption and less than 10% sold some of their produce for income[6].

MARKET ACCESS

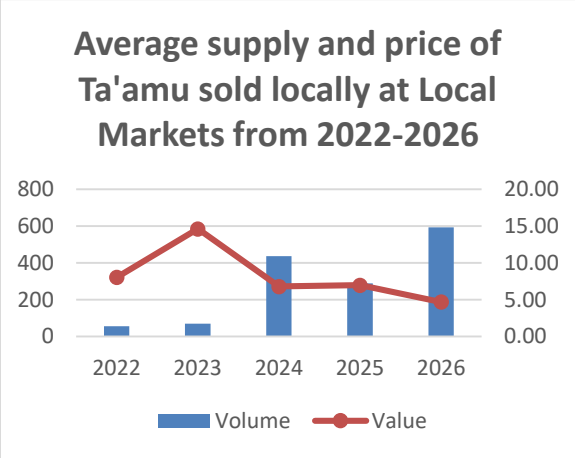


Figure 1

Average supply and price for giant taro varied from time to time as shown in figure 1 above. In 2026, it is recorded that giant taro has the highest average supply to local markets with almost 600kgs, whereas the lowest average supply was recorded in 2022 with less than 100kgs. 2023, has been recorded as the highest average value for giant taro with lower average supply to markets when compared to 2026 which has the highest supply with the average price below $5.00[7].

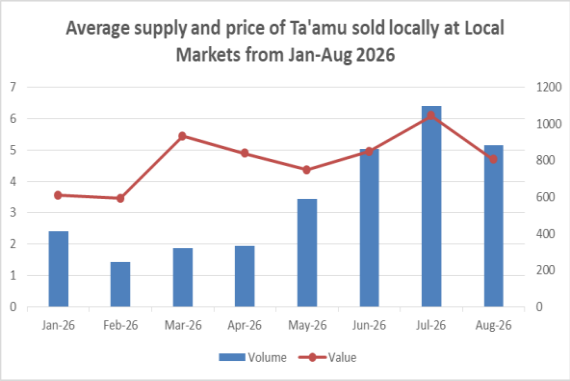


Figure 2

Figure 2 above shows the fluctuations in volume supply and price of giant taro throughout the year at the local markets. July is recorded to have the highest average supply and as well as the average price for giant taro produced and sold locally whereas February is recorded to have[8].

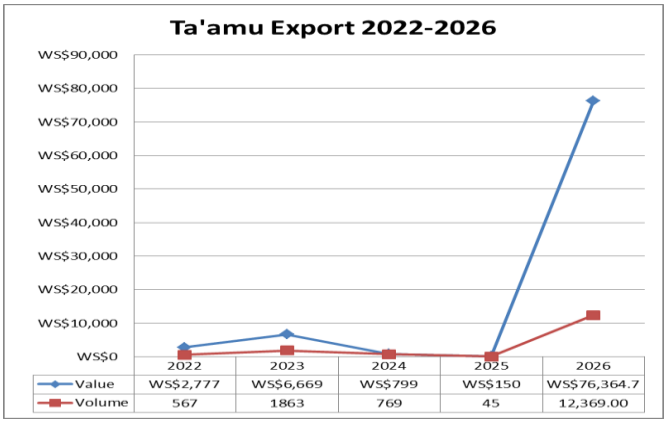


Figure 3

Exportation of giant taro was not a significant concern in the 90s when compared to our major crops such as Taro. However, the initiation of exporting agricultural frozen raw products such as frozen taro and frozen giant taro, has gained popularity in the twentieth century. [9]New Zealand is recorded as the largest export market with some exports going to American Samoa and United States of America.

Figure 3 shows that 2025 is recorded to have the lowest volume of exportation with the highest cost whereas 2022 is recorded to have the lowest volume of export products. A huge decrease in the volume of exported giant taro is recorded in 2024 and 2025, followed by an increase in 2026[10].

[6] Samoa Agriculture Census 2019/2020

[7] Samoa Bureau of Statistics, Local Market 2022-2026

[8] Samoa Bureau of Statistics, Local Market 2022-2026

[9] Samoa Bureau of Statistics, Trade data 2022-2026

[10] Samoa Bureau of Statistics, Local Market 2022-2026

Table1: Average Prices at the Fugalei Market

Commodities (SAT$/kg)	June 2026	July 2026	August 2026	Lowest Price for 2026 to date	Highest Price for 2026 to date
Taro	5.15	6.48	6.79	4.16	6.48
Banana	2.32	3.06	2.68	1.78	3.06
Ta'amu	4.95	6.1	4.7	3.46	6.10
Coconut	1.13	1.15	1.08	1.03	1.17
Breadfruit	1.19	4.19	2.74	1.19	4.19
Yam	7.71	6.9	7.24	5.46	16.37
Head Cabbage	16.78	14.33	12.88	8.81	16.78
Tomato	38.25	28.95	25.32	22.19	38.25
Chinese Cabbage	15.36	10.76	8.93	8.93	15.36
Cucumber	11.97	13.18	14.14	8.59	13.18
Pumpkin	8.14	7.43	7.26	5.62	8.14

Source: Samoa Bureau of Statistics

Table 2: Foreign Currency per Tala (SAT$)

March 2025	USD$	NZD$	AUD$	YEN$	FJD$	EURO
1 Samoan Tala SAT$=	0.35	0.63	0.50	56	0.79	0.31

Source: Bank of the South Pacific

Market Link Newsletter

This newsletter is published quarterly and it seeks to assist stakeholders (farmers, consumers, wholesalers, policymakers) make informed market and marketing decisions based on credible, relevant price and supply information. Help us help you by providing constructive feedback on market information issues that will improve the service which will lead to growing a healthy and wealthy Samoa. For more information, contact the Policy, Planning, Sector Coordination and Communication Division and ask for Fereni Tofilau.

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Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries
P.O Box 1874
Phone: (685) 22 561, (685) 22562
Email: fereni.tofilau@maf.gov.ws