

MARKET LINK

for primary producers

A publication of the Market Information Service (MIS) - Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries
“Linking the market and primary producers”

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Pacific Islands are: Taro, Cocoyam, Giant swamp taro and Giant taro².

Taro is considered the most important staple crop in Samoa during special cultural events, dietary and everyday meals, and also economic developments. It is grown throughout the year and it's mainly used for two purposes: for consumption and for selling it. Farmers have centuries of indigenous farming practices in taro production. However, rapid changes in the economic, technological, and demographic conditions have caused alterations to the traditional Samoan way of farming, which associated with the impacts of climate change.

There are 8 different varieties of taro currently available at the MAF's Crop Division main compound at Nu'u as well as its different stations located all around Samoa. Such varieties are being multiplied in different planting materials, and it aims to be distributed to farmers and for the MAF's use in demonstrating plots and research. Its distribution is mainly facilitated by several initiatives undertaken by the Ministry, and hence, it is also available to be sold or purchased by the public.

TARO PRODUCTION IN SAMOA

³The Samoa Agriculture Census 2019 shows that the number of households growing taro increased



TARO (*Colocasia esculentum*)

Background

Taro is an herbaceous plant of the family Araceae and its edible root-like corm. It is probably native to the Southern Asia region, and it is spreading to the Pacific Islands, and it became a staple or subsistence crop with its greatest importance¹. The most important taro species grown in the

¹ <https://www.britannica.com/plant/taro-plant>

² MARKET-ACCESS-STUDY_TARO_MARCH-2011

³ Samoa Agriculture Census 2019-2020

in the region between 2009 and 2019 except for Savaii. In 2019 alone, 41% of households grow taro, covering 13,724.6 acres of land; this indicates a 13% increase from 2009. When compared to 2009, taro growers totaled at 15,106 covering 18,145 acres of land.

⁴In 2019 alone, the number of sales for crops has dropped to 552 from 728 as recorded in 2009 which represents 2.5% of the major crop households. 33% of taro growers sold a proportion of taro produce, of which most reported selling half or more of their produce.

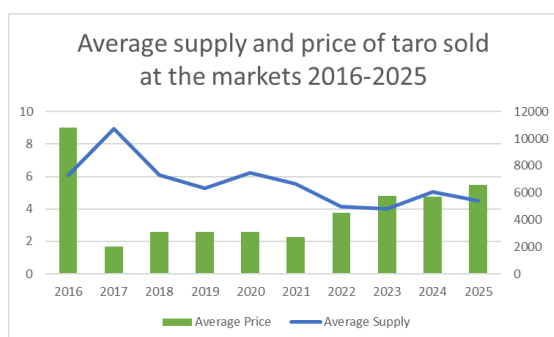


Figure 1

Average supply and price of Taro varied from 2020 to 2025 as shown in Figure 1. The highest supplies for taro within the 6 years with 2025 as the highest average price. Lowest average price for Taro is recorded in 2021 whereas 2023 is recorded to have the lowest supply. Such decline in the supply and price was due to the Covid-19 restrictions that occurred nationwide⁵.

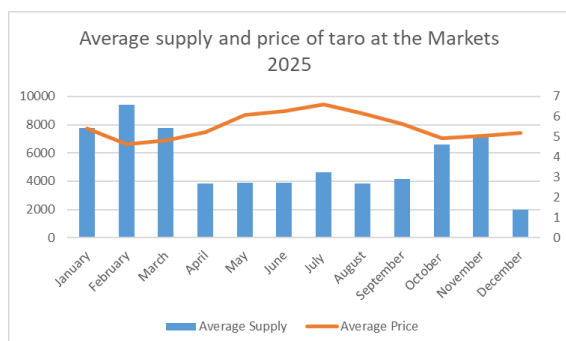


Figure 2

Average supply of Taro to Local markets in 2025 ended with a drop in the average supply with an increase in the average price, as shown in Figure 2. April to September was recorded as the lowest

period for average supplies with higher average prices⁶.

Seed Rate:

- Traditional Farming System: Approximately 4,000 suckers are planted into a 1-acre plot.

Planting Time:

- The best yields are obtained when taro is planted in the wet season (December – March).

Planting Methods:

- Suckers are planted into a one-acre plot, at a plant spacing of 1m x 1m.

Plant Spacing:

- Traditional System: Between rows: 1m Plants within rows: 1m

Cropping System:

- Grown as a mono crop

Growth Period:

- 8-9 months

Number of Months to Harvesting:

- Harvesting @ no less than 8 months for the export market whilst some local varieties are harvest at 9 months or more⁷.

TARO EXPORT

Samoa is among one of the Pacific Islands countries permitted to export both fresh and frozen Taro to other parts of the country such as American Samoa, NZ, China, and other parts of the world.

As shown in Figure 3, the total value and volume of Taro being exported has dropped in 2025. 2021 is recorded with the highest volumes of Taro exported with a lower value, but in 2023 it shows an increased in the total value with a lower volume throughout the year⁸.

⁶Samoa Bureau of Statistics Local Market Survey

⁷MAF-Farm Management manual

⁸Samoa Bureau of Statistics Export Updates

⁴Samoa Agriculture Census 2019-2020

⁵Samoa Bureau of Statistics Local Market Survey



Figure 3

Figure 4 below shows records for the exportation of both fresh taro and also frozen taro to some overseas countries in 2025. Q4 ranges from the months of October to December has recorded to have the highest quantity of taro being exported as both fresh and frozen⁹

Months	Destination	Fresh Taro			Frozen Taro	
		Number of Bags	Number of Taro	Total Weight (kg)	Destination	Total Weight (kg)
Q2		1270	18835	25435		2000
	NZ, USA, HAWAII				AUS/NZ/USA	
Q3		1020	20400	18542		0
	NZ, USA, HAWAII				AUS/NZ/USA	
Q4		2657	35483	51628		2440
	NZ, USA, HAWAII				AUS/NZ/USA	
Total		4,947	74,718	95,605		4,440

Figure 4

¹⁰There is a total of 35,483 fresh taros which is equivalent to 2,657 bags and a total weight of 51,628kg, and it was exported to NZ, USA and Hawaii. Frozen taro on the other hand was exported to NZ, Australia, and the USA with a total weight of 2,440kg.

These export taros are being prepared and packed at the Atele Packhouse located at Nu'u.



Taro sold at the Fugalei market

⁹ MAF-Crops Division Quarterly Updates

¹⁰ MAF-Crops Division Quarterly Updates

Table 1: Average Prices of Agricultural Commodities at Fugalei market

Commodities (SAT\$/kg)	January 2026	February 2026	Lowest price for 2025 to date	Highest price for 2025 to date
Taro	4.68	4.53	4.53	6.60
Banana	1.98	1.85	1.74	2.71
Taamu	3.56	3.46	3.46	11.22
Coconut	1.05	1.03	0.94	1.15
Breadfruit	2.2	1.65	1.07	3.82
Yam	5.46	7.27	4.78	7.89
Head cabbage	12.34	8.81	8.81	17.48
Tomato	22.19	32.4	18.42	36.25
Chinese cabbage	13.48	13.79	8.83	17.18
Cucumber	8.59	10.21	8.06	11.92
Pumpkin	5.82	5.62	5.57	7.27

Source: Samoa Bureau of Statistics

Table 2: Foreign currency per tala (ST\$)

January-February 2021	USD\$	NZD\$	AUD\$	YEN\$	FJD\$	EURO
1 Samoan Tala SAT\$ =	0.36	0.61	0.51	57	0.78	0.30

Source: Bank of the South Pacific

Market Link Newsletter

This newsletter is published bi-monthly 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 and Communication Division and ask for Fereni Tofilau

Disclaimer

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