

# FUGALEI MARKET SURVEY REPORT

## DECEMBER 2008

Monthly Report No. 12/08\*

Prepared by: Research and Statistics Department  
Central Bank of Samoa  
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**CENTRAL BANK OF SAMOA**

**FUGALEI MARKET SURVEY**

**DECEMBER 2008**

This report provides a monthly review of selected agricultural produce available at the Fugalei Market, based on the Central Bank's survey and price data sourced from the Samoa Bureau of Statistic (formerly Statistical Services Division of the Ministry of Finance).

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**OVERVIEW**

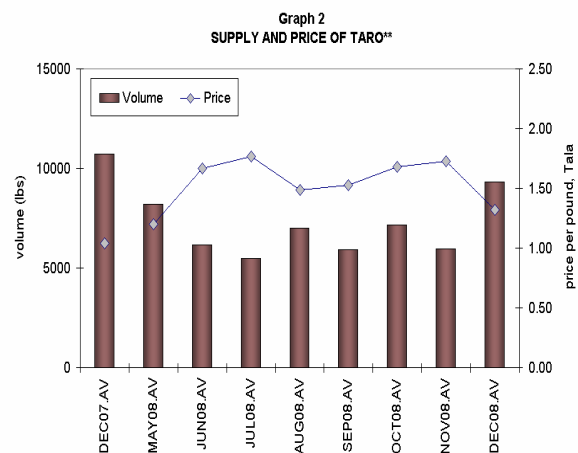
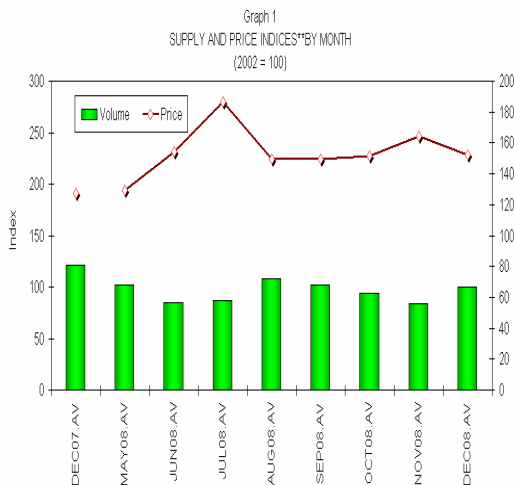
The Central Bank's survey of the Fugalei Market showed an unexpected improvement in December 2008, reversing the seasonal downturn recorded in the three months to end November 2008. Increasing 19 percent in the month under review, the unusual rebound in the overall volume of selected produce supplied to the Market in the month under review reflected increases in the availability of most staple food crops and a few vegetables such as Chinese cabbage and cucumber. This notable increase reflected the need for money by most farmers leading up to the end of year festivities and family reunions. At this current level, however, it was 18 percent lower when compared with the same month last year, reflecting the impact of the longer dry season during 2008.

The increased supply of agricultural produce saw the overall price index at the Fugalei Market drop 8 percent in December 2008, but was 20 percent higher than in December 2007. (See Graph 1 and Tables 4 & 5.)

Despite higher supplies in December 2008, the overall volume of selected agricultural commodities in the first six months of 2008/09 when compared with the same period of 2007/08 was 35 percent lower reflecting the exceptionally high level of supplies last year as part of Samoa's preparations for hosting the South Pacific Games. As a result, the average price level was 28 percent higher in the comparable period.

**TARO**

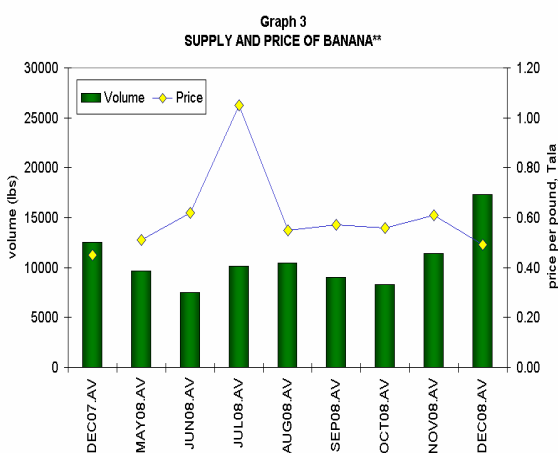
The average supply of taro in December 2008 rebounded 57 percent to 9,337 pounds, reversing the previous month's reduction. As a result, its price fell 24 percent to \$1.32 per pound. However, when compared to December 2007, the supply of taro in the month under review was 13 percent lower and its price was 27 percent higher. (See Graph 2 and Table 1 and 2.)



Despite this month's increased volume, the average availability of taro in the first six months of 2008/09 was 37 percent lower at 6,807 pounds per month compared to 10,725 pounds per month in the same period of 2007/08. As a result, the price of taro was 33 percent higher.

## BANANA

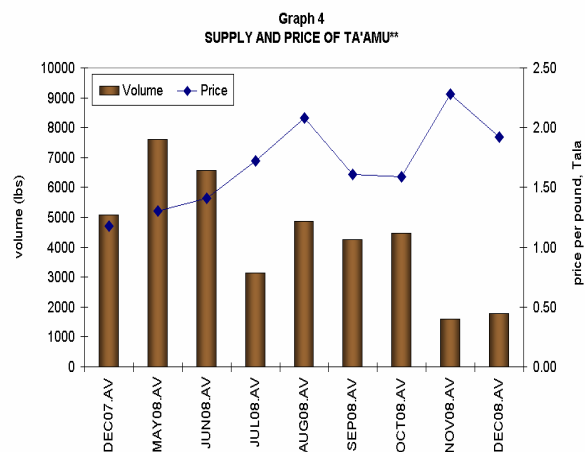
The average supply of banana in December 2008 (at 17,310 pounds) was 52 percent and 38 percent higher than the levels in November 2008 and December 2007 respectively. Consequently, its price fell 20 percent from the previous month but was 9 percent higher than the same month last year reflecting the increased demand for banana as consumers switched from taro and taamu over the year. (See Graph 3 and Tables 1 and 2.)



In the first six months of 2008/09, however, the average monthly supply of banana at the Market (at 11,100 pounds) was 37 percent lower than the same period last year, resulting in a 25 percent increase in its price.

## TA'AMU

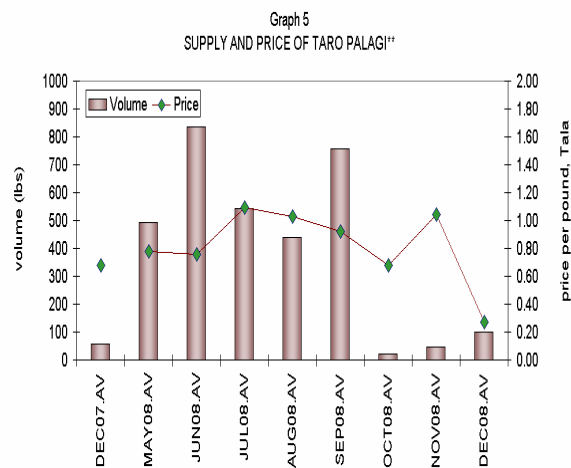
The 1,791 pounds of taamu supplied in the month under review was 11 percent higher than in November 2008 but was 65 percent lower than in December 2007. As a consequence, the price of taamu (of \$1.92 per pound) was 16 percent lower compared to the previous month and 63 percent higher than in December 2007. (See Graph 4 and Table 1 and 2.)



Despite the increase in December 2008, the average availability of taamu (at 3,351 pounds per month) in the first six months of 2008/09 shrank 47 percent when compared with the same period of 2007/08. As a result, its price soared 58 percent.

## TARO PALAGI

The 99 pounds of taro palagi available at the Market in December 2008 was more than doubled (up 120 percent) its November 2008 level and was 76 percent higher than in the previous year. As a consequence, its average price decreased 74 percent to \$0.27 per pound, a level that was 60 percent lower than in December 2007. (See Graph 5 and Tables 1 and 2.)

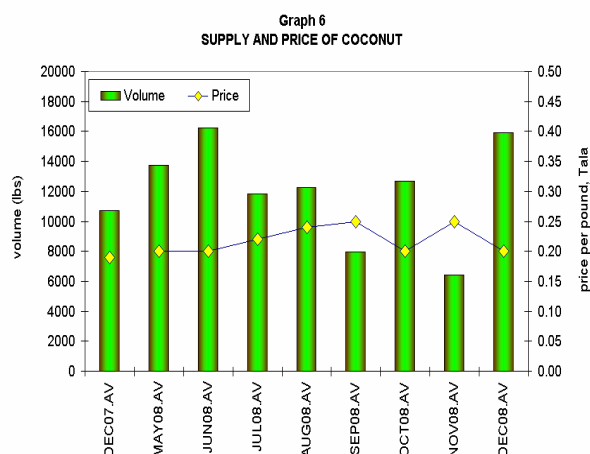


The huge recovery in taro palagi in December 2008 contributed to a 27 percent expansion (to 317 pounds per month) in its average

availability in the first six months of fiscal year 2008/09 compared to the same period of 2007/08. Strong demand, however, pushed its price up by 2 percent in the comparable period.

## COCONUT

Likewise, the volume of coconut at the Market increased more than two-fold to 15,901 pounds in December 2008, reducing its price by 20 percent to \$0.20 per pound as a result. At this current level, the supply of coconut to the Fugalei Market was, compared to December 2007, 48 percent higher and its price 5 percent above that of a year ago due to stronger demand. (See Graph 6 and Tables 1 and 2).

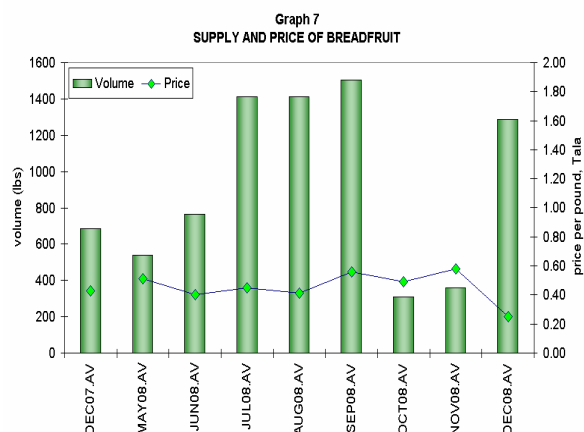


Despite the increase in December 2008, the average availability of coconut (at 11,161 pounds per month) in the first six months of 2008/09 dropped 35 percent from the same period of 2007/08, boosting its price by 15 percent.

## BREADFRUIT

The onset of the breadfruit season was well into its second month with the volume of this crop at the Fugalei Market recording the largest increase of selected agricultural produce in December 2008. At 1,286 pounds, the current volume of breadfruit was more than tripled that available in November 2008 and was 88 percent higher than in December 2007. As a consequence, the price of breadfruit fell to \$0.25 per pound, 57 percent below that of November 2008 and 42 percent

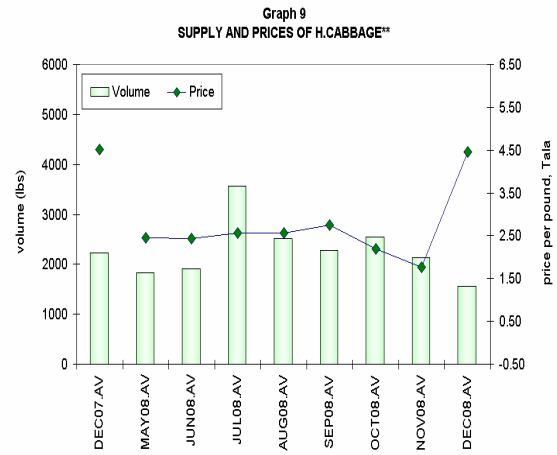
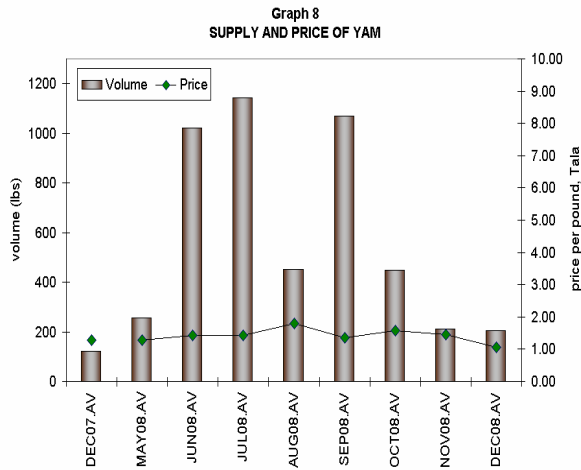
lower than a year ago. (See Graph 7 and Tables 1 and 2.)



And, with its higher supply in December 2008, the average availability of breadfruit (at 1,047 pounds per month) in the first six months of fiscal year 2008/09 was 48 percent higher than the same period of 2007/08, with stronger demand elevating its average price by 21 percent.

## YAM

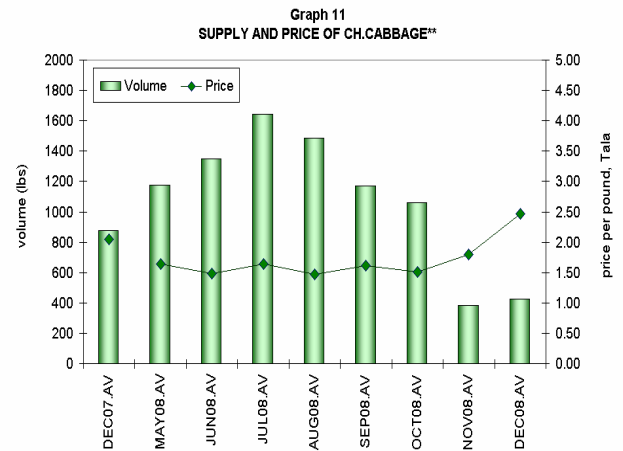
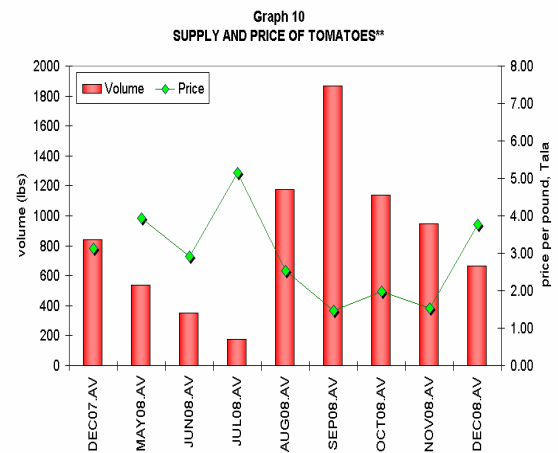
Yam was the only staple food to record decreased supply in December 2008 with a 4 percent drop from the previous month to a level that was however 66 percent above that of a year earlier. And, with demand shifting to its main substitutes (such as taro, banana, taamu, taro palagi and breadfruit), the average price for yam declined 27 percent to \$1.06 per pound, 18 percent down from a year ago. (See Graph 8 and Tables 1 and 2.)

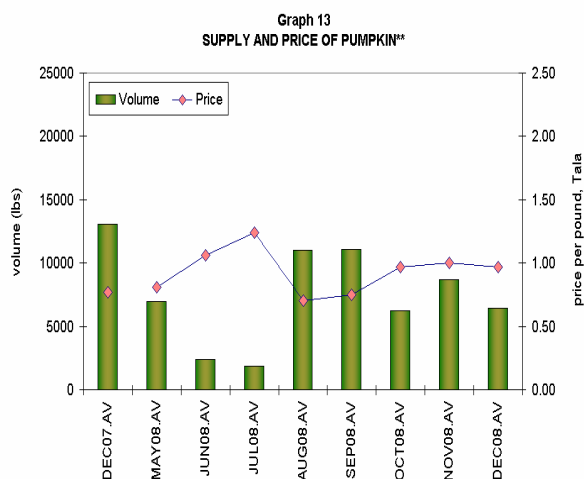
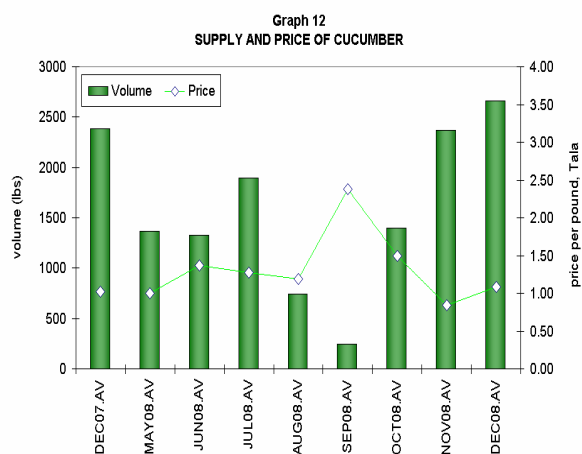


Despite the lower volume of yam in December 2008, the average availability of this food crop at the Market in the first six months of 2008/09 (to 588 pounds per month) more than doubled its level supplied in the first six months of 2007/08 (with 236 pounds per month). Stronger demand, however, pushed its price up 16 percent to \$1.45 per pounds.

### **VEGETABLE PRODUCE**

Encouraged by stronger domestic demand and the usual favourable weather conditions in December, the supply of most vegetable produce was mixed in the month under review. In particular, improved supplies were recorded for Chinese cabbage (up 11 percent) and cucumber (up 12 percent) while the volume of tomatoes, head cabbage and pumpkin contracted by 30 percent, 27 percent and 26 percent respectively. Vegetable prices, as a result, were generally higher in the month under review with market conditions mainly behind the current levels. (See Graphs 9 to 13 and Tables 1 and 2.)



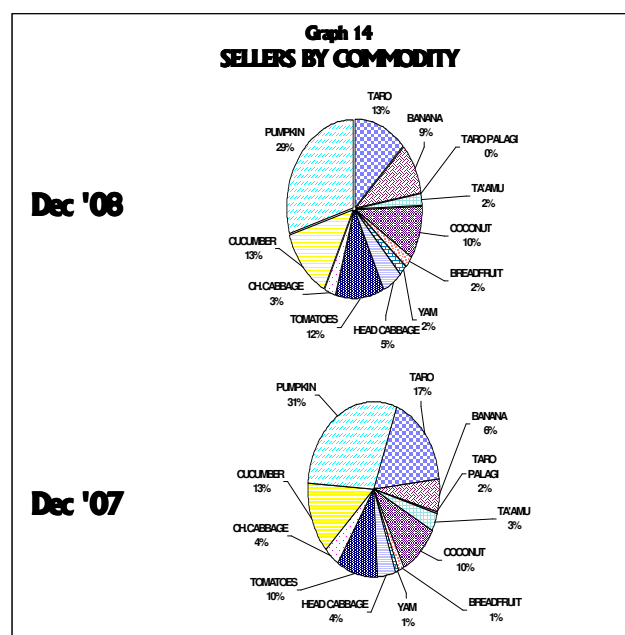


## SELLERS

Reflecting the expansion in supplies, the number of sellers on the days surveyed in December 2008 increased 2 percent to 257, 1 percent higher than that of December 2007. The higher number of sellers in the month under review was mainly for those supplying breadfruit, taro, coconut, banana, breadfruit, head cabbage and pumpkin. (See Graph 14 and Table 6.)

With its increased number in December 2008, those supplying pumpkin maintained their position as the main suppliers of agricultural produce at the Market, with a 30 percent share that was similar to that of the previous month and December 2007. Cucumber and taro sellers followed with shares of 13 percent each compared to 14 percent and 12 percent respectively in November 2008 and 13 percent and 17 percent in that order a year ago. And, recording a 12 percent share in December 2008 were sellers of tomatoes, down from its 13

percent share in the previous month, which corresponded to a drop in the number of those supplying tomatoes from November 2008. Coconut sellers accounted for 10 percent of the total number of sellers in December 2008, up from 9 percent in the previous month and steady from a year ago. Recording similar shares of 9 percent and 5 percent respectively, despite their increased number in December 2008, were those supplying the Fugalei Market with banana and head cabbage, with their current shares higher than that recorded in December 2007. Sellers of taamu, breadfruit and yam represented 2 percent each of the 257 suppliers at the Fugalei Market on the days surveyed in December 2008.



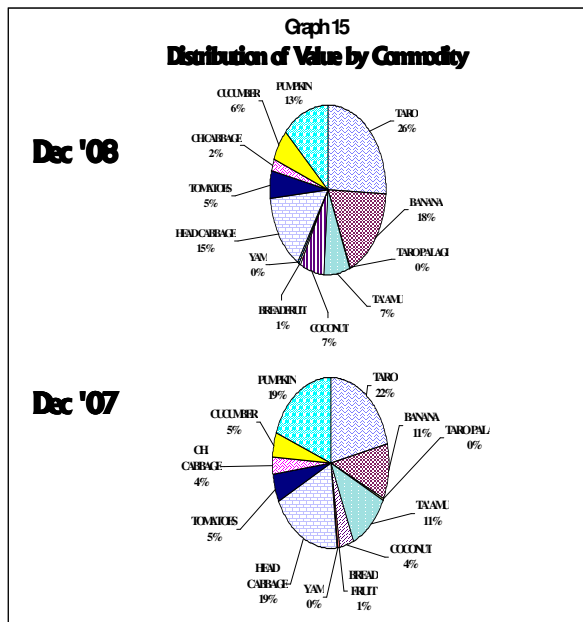
## VALUE OF SUPPLIES

Consequent to the rise in the level of supply, the average value of selected produce supplied to the Market (at \$47,600) in December 2008 jumped 20 percent to a level that was however 9 percent lower than that in the same month of 2007. (See Graph 15 and Table 3.)

Taro and banana contributed the most to the total value of produce surveyed in December 2008, with shares of 26 percent and 18 percent, which were similar to those in the

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previous month and higher than the 21 percent and 11 percent shares in that order in December 2007. Likewise, head cabbage and pumpkin registered shares of 15 percent and 13 percent respectively in the month under review compared to 9 percent and 22 percent in November 2008 and 19 percent each a year earlier. On the other hand, taamu and coconut recorded shares of 7 percent each while cucumber and tomatoes accounted for 6 percent and 5 percent respectively in the month under review. Relatively lower shares were recorded for the rest of the other commodities in December 2008.



@ Weights for the selected produce have been revised using 2002 as the base period and have been incorporated starting from January 2003 report.

\* The selected produces are: taro, banana, ta'amu, taro palagi, coconut, head cabbage, tomatoes, Chinese cabbage, cucumber and pumpkin. Breadfruit and yam were recently included in the composition of the overall Indices.

\*\* Data shown reflects the average availability and prices of the selected produce at the Fugalei Market on each Friday (Thursday where Friday is a public holiday) in the months under reference.