

FUGALEI MARKET SURVEY REPORT

MARCH 2009

Monthly Report No. 03/09*

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Central Bank of Samoa
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FUGALEI MARKET SURVEY MARCH 2009

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).

Issue No. 3/09

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OVERVIEW

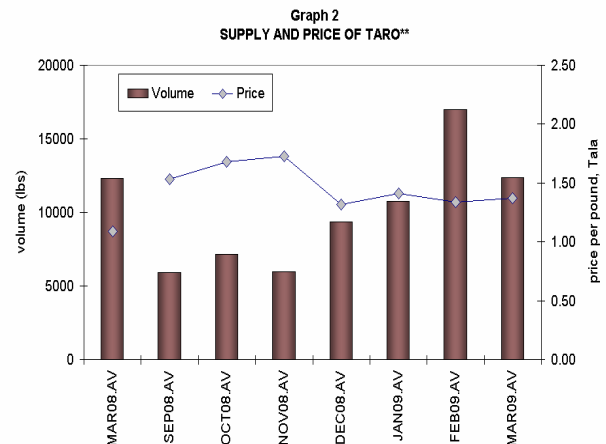
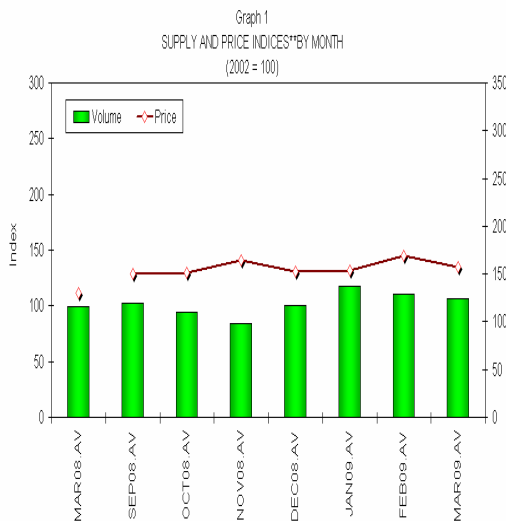
Agricultural food supplies to the Fugalei Market contracted a further 4 percent in March 2009 to a level that was nevertheless 6 percent higher than a year ago. This seasonal decline in the month under review reflected decreased supplies in taro, banana, breadfruit, yam and coconut. According to farmers, this month's reduction in agricultural produce to the Market was influenced not only by seasonal weather conditions, but also controlled provision by individual sellers based on their financial need from time to time.

Despite the fall in the overall volume of agricultural produce in March 2009, the overall price level at the Market fell 7 percent, as weaker demand resulted in lower prices for most commodities (with the exception of taro, banana, coconut, breadfruit and tomatoes). However, when compared to March 2008, the current price level was 21 higher consequent to the increased supply of agricultural produce over the year. (See Graph 1 and Table 4 and 5.)

In the first nine months of 2008/09, the overall average availability of produce to the Market was 25 percent lower than in the corresponding period of 2007/08. As a result, the average price level was 24 percent higher in the nine months ending March 2009.

TARO

The volume of taro supplied to the Market in March 2009 fell 27 percent in response to the increased availability of ta'amu and taro palagi during the month. Its price, as a consequence, rose 2 percent to \$1.37 per pound. When compared with March 2008, however, the current level of taro was 1 percent higher with stronger demand over the year for this stable crop pushing its price up 26 percent. (See graph 2 and Tables 1 and 2.)

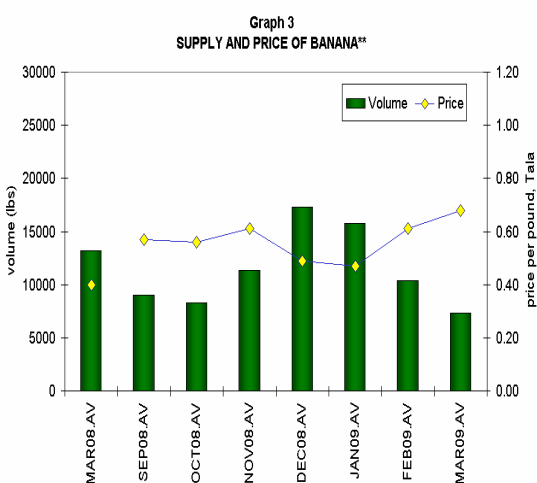


This month's lower volume contributed to a 19 percent drop in the average supply of taro (to 8,996 pounds) in the first nine

months of 2008/09 from the same period of 2007/08. In the event, its average price shot up 27 percent over the comparable period.

BANANA

The average supply of banana dropped 29 percent to 7,322 pounds in the month under review, consequently pushing its price up 11 percent to \$0.68 per pound. And, when compared to March last year, the volume of banana available at the market in March 2009 was 44 percent lower, pushing its price up by 70 percent over the year. (See Graph 3 and Tables 1 and 2.)

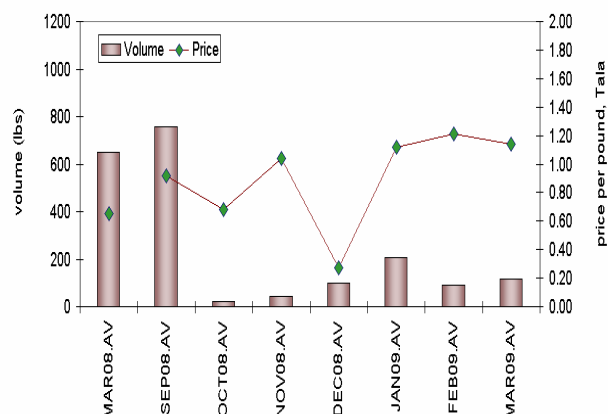


This month's lower supply contributed to a 31 percent decrease in the average volume of banana in the nine months ending March 2009, to 11,114 pounds per month. Its price, consequently, increased 24 percent in the same period.

TARO PALAGI

After a significant reduction in the previous month, the volume of taro palagi available at the Market improved 31 percent to 118 pounds, a level that was still considerably lower (by 82 percent) than in March 2008. Its' average price, as a result, declined 6 percent in March 2009 to a level 75 percent higher than a year ago. (See Graph 4 and Tables 1 and 2.)

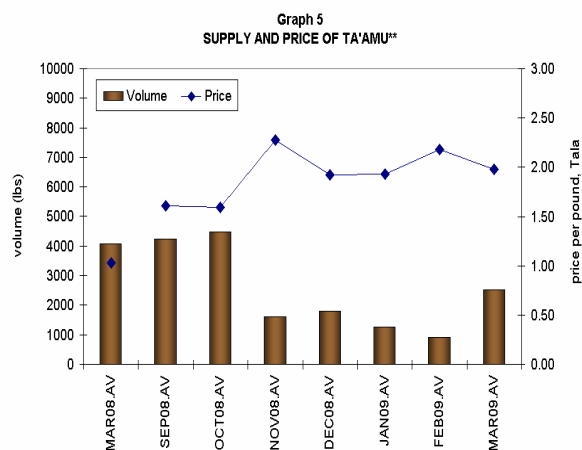
Graph 4
SUPPLY AND PRICE OF TARO PALAGI**



Despite the higher level of taro palagi in March 2009, its average supply in the first nine months of 2008/09 (at 258 pounds per month) was 26 percent lower, exerting upward pressure on its price, which rose 12 percent in the first nine months of 2008/09.

TAAMU

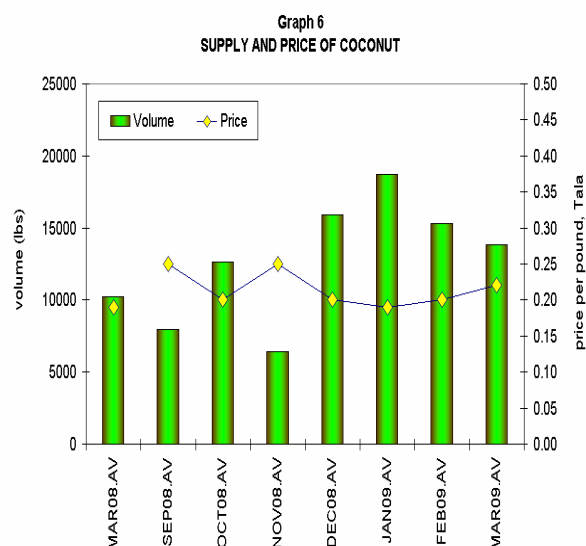
The volume of taamu available at the Fugalei Market rebounded significantly in the month under review, more than doubling (173 percent) to 2,519 pounds. Its' price of \$1.98 per pound, as a result, was 9 percent lower than that of February 2009. However, when compared to March 2008, the quantity of taamu available in March 2009 was 38 percent lower and its price, as a result, was 92 percent higher. (See Graph 5 and Table 1 and 2.)



Despite the higher supply of taamu in March 2009, its average availability in the first nine months of 2008/09 was 52 percent lower at 2,756 pounds per month. As a result, its average price leapt 61 percent to \$1.92 per pound in the same period.

COCONUT

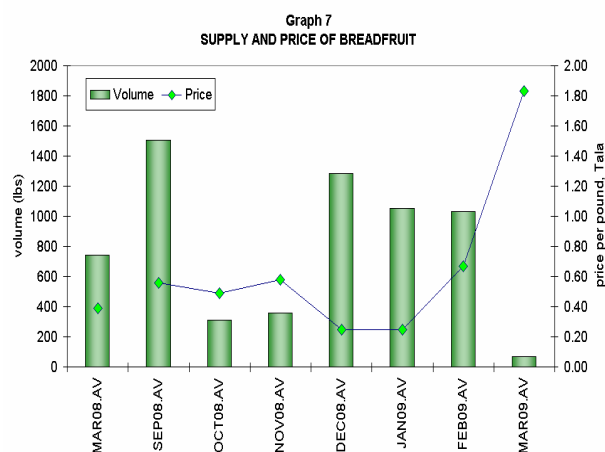
The volume of coconut sold at the Market trended downwards for the second consecutive month in March 2009, with a 10 percent reduction to 13,834 pounds. Its price, as a result, jumped 10 percent to \$0.22 per pound. When compared to the same month last year, however, the current supply of coconut was 35 percent higher, with stronger demand pushing its price up 16 percent. (See Graph 6 and Tables 1 and 2.)



With this month's lower volume, the average availability of coconut at the Market in the first nine months of 2008/09 fell 19 percent to 12,759 pounds per month, pushing its average price up 10 percent to \$0.22 per pound.

BREADFRUIT

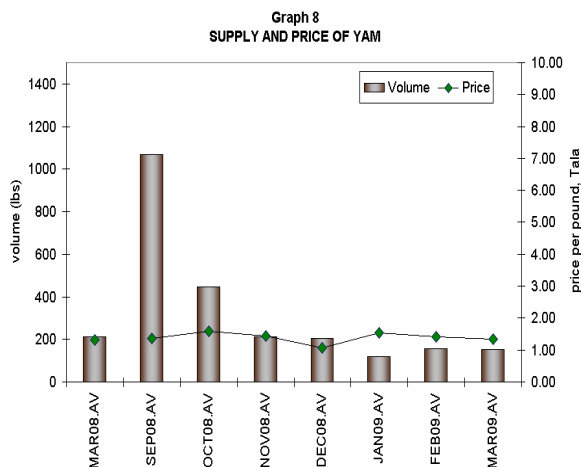
While the availability of breadfruit was seasonally lower in the month under review, its current volume of 69 pounds was significantly lower than the 1,032 pounds available in February 2009. In the event, its' price nearly tripled its February level to \$1.83 per pound. This current volume, which reflected only two weeks of supply in early March 2009, was the lowest monthly level recorded for this staple crop since the impact of cyclone Heta in January 2004. And, when compared to March 2008, the current breadfruit supply was 91 percent lower with its price more than four times higher than the \$0.39 per pound recorded a year ago. (See Graph 7 and Table 1 and 3.)



At 937 pounds per month, the average volume of breadfruit in the first nine months of 2008/09 was 26 percent higher when compared to the same period in 2007/08. Its average price (of \$0.61 per pound), on the other hand, increased 65 percent reflecting stronger demand over the year.

YAM

The volume of yam supplied to the Market in March 2009 fell 3 percent from the previous month and down 28 percent from March last year. Lower demand for this staple food crop, on the other hand, pushed its average price down 5 percent to \$1.35 per pound in March 2009, a level that was 2 percent higher than that of March 2008. (See Graph 8 and Table 1 and 2).



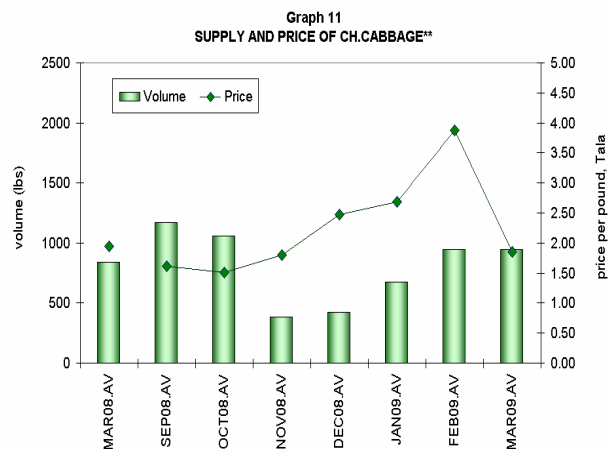
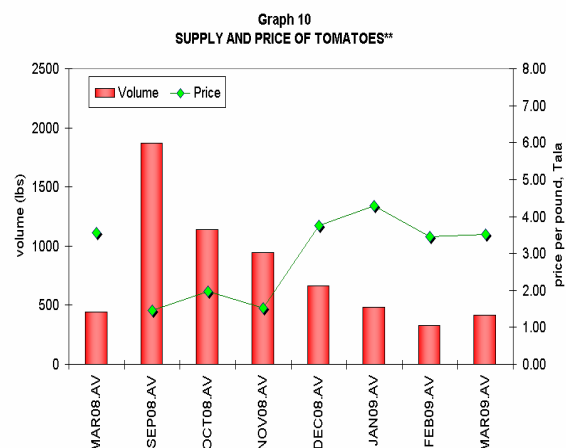
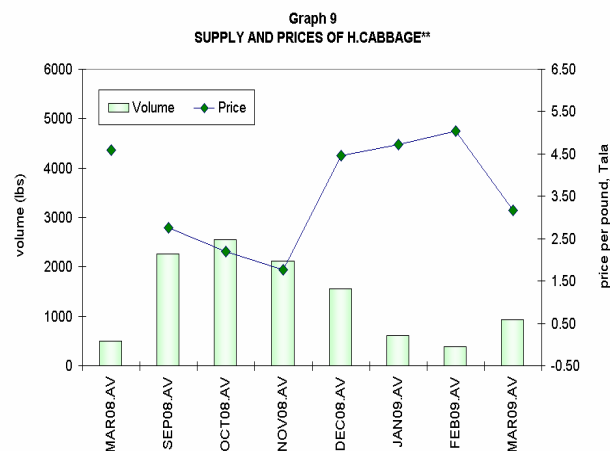
The lower volume of yam supplied in March 2009 did not impact on the overall average availability of this food crop at the Market in the first nine months of 2008/09, which increased 83 percent to 439 pounds per month compared to 240 pounds per month available in the same period of 2007/08. Higher demand, on the other hand, saw its price edge up 5 percent to \$1.44 per pound.

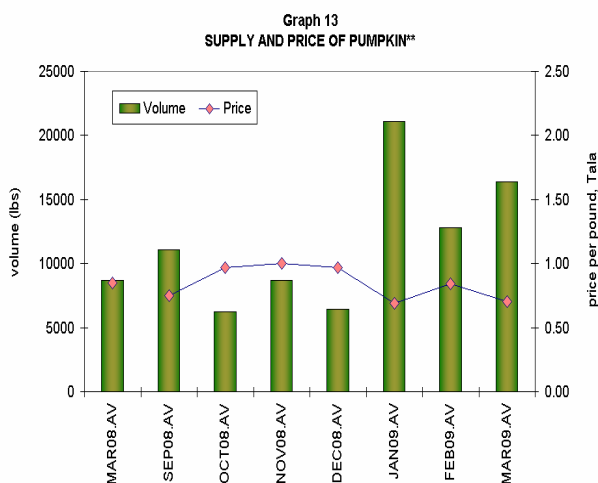
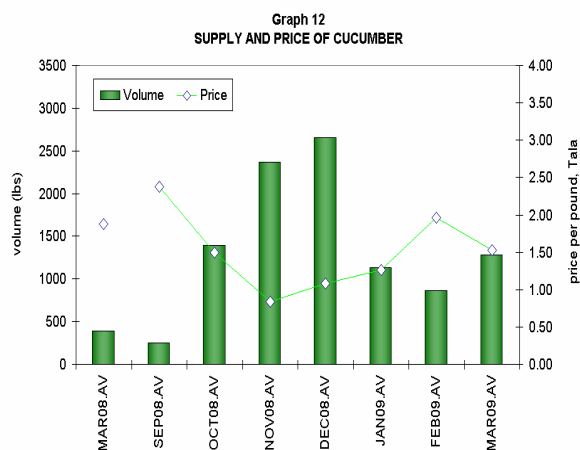
VEGETABLE PRODUCE

Most vegetable produce were available in huge quantities in March 2009 as suppliers geared up for the seasonal demand associated with the annual Faamati for the Congregation Christian Church of Samoa in the month under review.

The average supplies of head cabbage, tomatoes, cucumber and pumpkin increased 138 percent, 26 percent, 49 percent and 28 percent respectively while that of Chinese cabbage was slightly up (by

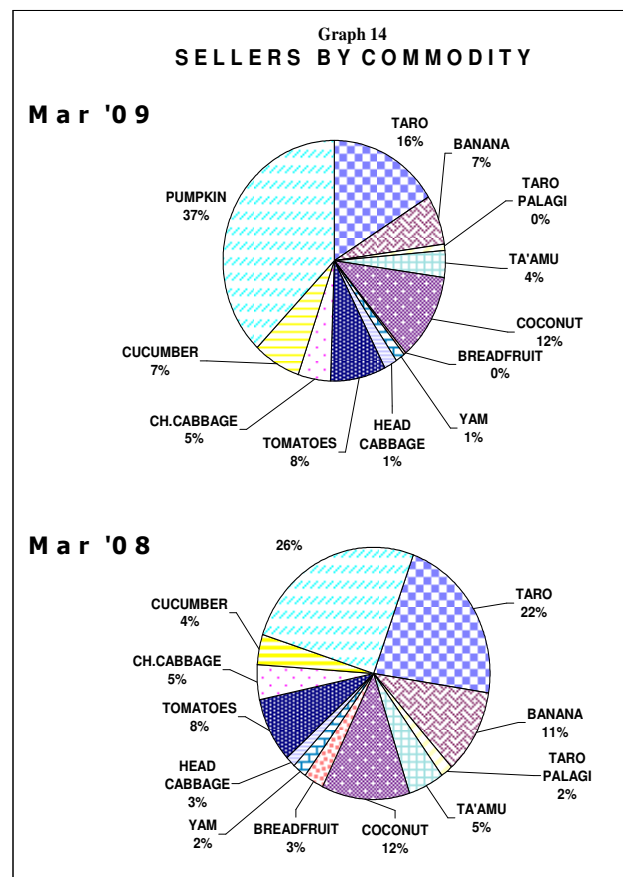
0.2 percent). Consequently, the prices of head cabbage, Chinese cabbage, cucumber and pumpkin fell 37 percent, 52 percent, 22 percent and 17 percent while that of tomatoes rose 2 percent due to higher demand. (See Graph 9 to 13 and Tables 1 and 2.)





SELLERS

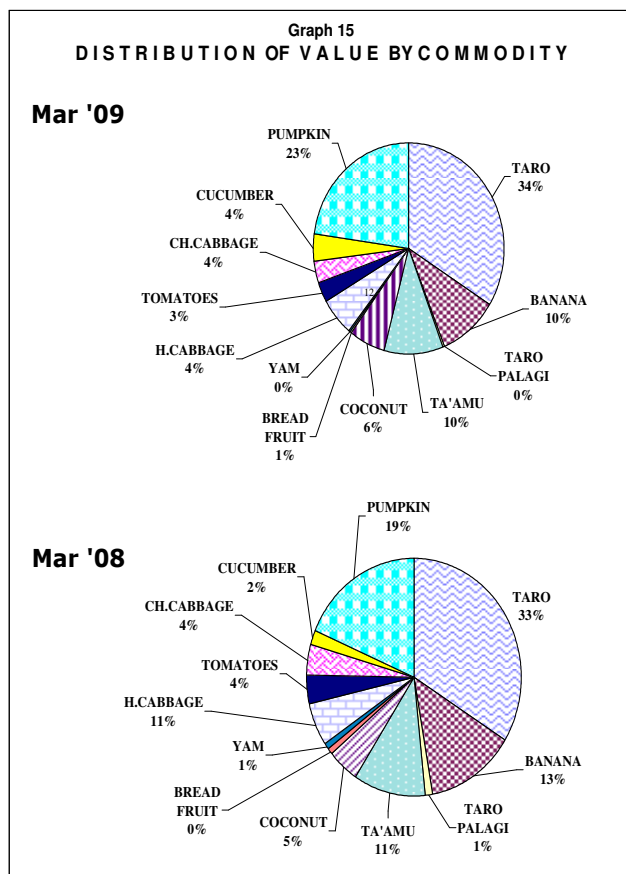
At 316, the number of sellers at the Fugalei Market on the days surveyed in the month under review was 10 percent higher than in February 2009 reflecting increased suppliers of vegetables. And, when compared to March 2008, the current number of sellers was 23 percent higher, with vegetable sellers contributing to the increase over the year. (See Graph 14 and Table 6.)



Pumpkin sellers were the largest group with its total jumping to 119 from 91 in February 2009 and 66 in March 2008. **Taro** sellers followed with a total of 51, down from 66 in February 2009 and 57 in March 2008. **Coconut** sellers were third with 37 suppliers, down from 39 in February 2009 but higher than 32 last year. **Cucumber** and **tomatoes** sellers increased to 22 and 26 respectively from 19 each in the previous month and 10 and 22 suppliers in March 2008 in that order. **Chinese cabbage** and **ta'amu** sellers increased to 15 and 12 respectively from 12 and 6 in the previous month and 12 and 13 in March 2008. Those supplying **head cabbage**, **taro palagi** and **yam** likewise rose to 6, 3 and 4 from 4, 1 and 3 sellers in the previous month and 3, 4 and 6 in March 2008. On the other hand, there was only one **breadfruit** seller in March 2009, from 6 in the previous month and 7 from the year. Those supplying **banana** remained the same at 22 from the previous month and was lower than the 28 sellers in March 2008.

VALUE OF SUPPLIES

Reflecting the lower price levels in March 2009, the average value of selected produce supplied to the Market decreased 8 percent to \$50,000; a level that was 27 percent higher than the same month last year. (See Graph 15 and Table 3.)



cabbage and **cucumber** accounted for 4 percent each. **Tomatoes** recorded a 3 percent share in the month under review while those for **taro palagi**, **yam** and **breadfruit** were marginal.

@ 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.

CENTRAL BANK OF SAMOA
21st April 2009

Taro remained the largest contributor to the total value of produce surveyed in March 2009, despite its lower share of 34 percent, from 42 percent in the previous month due to its lower volume supplied to the Market in the month under review. **Pumpkin** followed with a 23 percent share, similar to that of March 2008 but higher than its 20 percent share last month. **Banana** and **taamu** accounted for 10 percent each of the total value of produce in March 2009, compared to its 12 percent and 4 percent shares in February 2009 and 13 percent and 11 percent shares in March last year. Likewise, **head cabbage** and **coconut** represented 6 percent of the total value of produce in March 2009 while **Chinese**