

# Agricultural Exports Volume August 2017

Release date: 6 December 2017

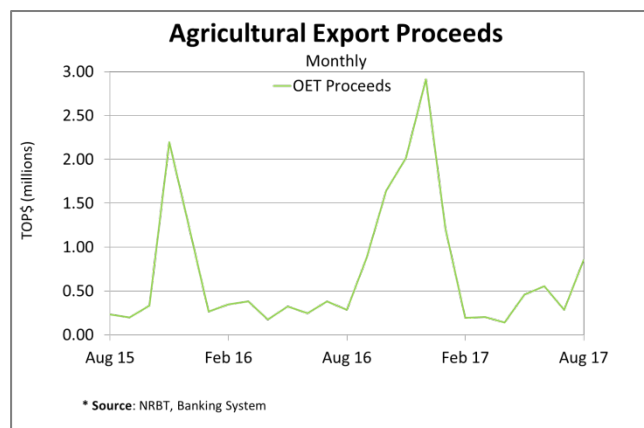
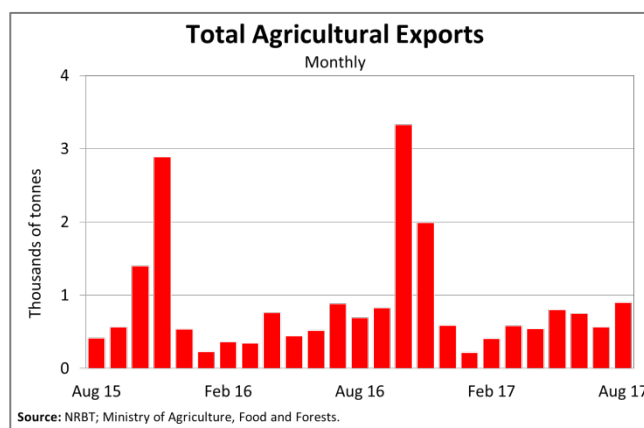
	Aug 17	Jul 17	Jun 17	May 17
Total volume (tonnes)	897.3	561.9	751.3	800.4

## Harvest season for watermelon and squash

The harvesting season for Tongan squash has started in August and exports of squash is expected to rise significantly in the upcoming months. The watermelon season has also commenced which has contributed to the significant rise in total agricultural exports. The total agricultural exports increased by 335.4 tonnes (59.7%) over the month, largely attributed to a favourable harvest in different types of crops during the month. This was led

by the first exported shipment of squash for 2017, a total of 128.6 tonnes which was sufficient to offset the decline in exported Indian mulberry juice and sweet yam. The favourable squash exports was followed by a 113.6 tonnes rise in cassava exports, and a 60.5 tonnes rise in volume of exported coconuts. Other crops which also increased during the month included watermelon, giant taro, yam (other than sweet yam), taro, and kava powder.

The agricultural export proceeds received during the month rose by \$0.6 million to \$0.9 million reflecting the receipts for squash exports, a total of \$0.4 million. This was followed by a \$0.3 million receipt for the export of root crops and other various agricultural produce such as watermelon and coconuts. The proceeds for the export of kava amounted to \$0.2 million.



Over the year, the total agricultural export volume rose by 1,881.6 tonnes (19.6%), supported by better harvest of root crops, the favourable squash, watermelon, breadfruit and plantain seasons. These offset the decline in the export of coconuts, kava-Tonga, vanilla, and sandalwood over the year. The continuous support from the Government’s development loan scheme also supported the growth in the agricultural sector, with a rise of \$2.4 million (25.2%) growth in loans to the agricultural sector. The annual agricultural export receipts also rose by \$5.0 million (78.4%) to \$11.4 million. The higher export receipts were for squash and crops (root crops and traditional crops), supported by the strengthening of the Japanese Yen, US dollar and NZ dollar against the Tongan Pa’anga.

On the outlook, the Reserve Bank continues to expect that the volume of exports and consequently the agricultural sector will continue to increase in the near term. This projection is supported by the latest actual data available which indicates a better harvest period for squash and other root crops. However, uncertainties of the weather poses a significant risk for the outlook for the agricultural sector.

Total Agricultural Export Volumes by Major Categories							
Tonnes							
	Month-ended*				Year-ended		Memo: Share
	Aug 17	Jul 17	Jun 17	Aug 16	Aug 17	Aug 16	
Total	897.3	561.9	751.3	689.6	11,480.9	9,599.2	100
Fruit products	242.3	55.1	122.7	121.7	5,663.0	5,698.4	49.3
Root vegetable products	642.4	498.1	621.3	561.3	5,704.3	3,723.9	49.7
Other vegetable products	2.4	2.0	1.9	2.6	31.0	20.9	0.3
Sandalwood	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	0.6	0.0
Vanilla	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.5	2.2	5.9	0.0
Other**	10.2	6.7	5.5	4.0	82.6	155.5	0.7

\* Series is volatile due to seasonality of crops  
\*\* Includes kava products and coffee beans.  
Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forests.