2024 Mareeba & Atherton Tablelands Horticulture Profile

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Disclaimer

The Tablelands Horticulture profile includes horticulture industries grown in the Mareeba and Atherton Tablelands Regional Council areas only. Data collected is based on various sources including Brisbane Market data, grower and agricultural consultants' insights, peak industry bodies and the Australian Tree Crop Map for a period over the last 12-18 months (prior to October2024), pending crop timing and most recent data available. These figures should be used as a guide only. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest level of accuracy; however, the authors take no responsibility for liability caused as a result of use of this information.

Authors extend thanks to all data contributors.

The Department of Primary Industries proudly acknowledges all First Nations peoples (Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders) and the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the country on which we live and work. We acknowledge their continuing connection to land, waters and culture and commit to ongoing reconciliation. We pay our respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Executive Summary

- Total Gross Value of Production hits $748M, a 42% increase since the last Tablelands Horticulture Profile in 2019.
- The citrus industry has experienced the most growth. It has increased in value by 200% in the past 5 years, due to maturation of high yielding lemon & mandarin plantings with strong market prices.
- Maturing orchards, new plantings and strong market prices have seen growth in banana, citrus, table grape & papaya.
- The avocado industry value has declined. The total hectares of local avocado have doubled in the past 5 years; however, market prices have halved, resulting in a net decrease of $25M. The impacts of tree deaths following last summer's rainfall are yet to be fully assessed.
- These figures do not represent grower profitability. Most commodities have experienced farm gate Gross Value Production growth, but cost of production has increased significantly more.

Gross Value of Production of Mareeba and Atherton Tablelands Horticulture Industries – 2024

Horticultural Commodity	Grower No.	Area (ha)	Volume sold (T)	Industry Gross Value ($)
Australian Natives [A]	**11**	**264**	**304**	**10,551,900**
Avocado	**85**	**5047**	**38335**	**150,774,542**
Banana	**29**	**2017**	**61292**	**169,377,210**
Basil	**<5**	**12**	**5**	**543,750**
Berries	**6**	**195**	**1665**	**47,645,236**
Blueberry	<5	194	1628	47,212,000
Other	<5	1	37	433,236
Citrus	**104**	**1656**	**47166**	**169,615,640**
Grapefruit	6	53	1060	1,590,000
Lime	92	826	16520	49,560,000
Lemon	34	402	16080	51,456,000
Mandarin	6	324	11546	63,505,640
Orange	<5	8	240	408,000
Pummelo	12	43	1720	3,096,000
Coffee	**8**	**300**	**356**	**4,977,000**
Custard Apple	**6**	**14**	**213**	**1,384,500**
Longan	**12**	**250**	**1250**	**7,500,000**
Lychee	**40**	**350**	**745**	**11,175,000**
Mango	**60**	**2900**	**11613**	**53,982,493**
Melons [B]	**10**	**42**	**1667**	**1,417,382**
Mixed fruit – other [C]	**17**	**19**	**351**	**2,530,000**
Mixed vegetable – other [D]	**36**	**45**	**889**	**4,454,000**
Papaya	**8**	**325**	**12673**	**40,202,701**
Red	5	290	10873	35,632,564
Yellow	<5	35	1800	4,570,137
Passionfruit	**18**	**40**	**600**	**3,214,286**
Pineapple	**<5**	**150**	**2800**	**3,360,000**
Potatoes	**21**	**447**	**26129**	**15,425,300**
Potato	18	436	25779	14,575,300
Sweet Potato	<5	11	350	$850,000
Pumpkin	**24**	**250**	**8600**	**5,480,000**
Table Grape	**<5**	**397**	**4446**	**44,464,000**
Total				**748,074,941**

*Gross Value of Production: Value of production figures are based on wholesale prices at Brisbane Markets for the previous 12-18 months, multiple industry, government and grower sources and should be recognised as best estimates only.
A: including finger lime, lemon myrtle, macadamia and tea tree.
B: including rockmelon and watermelon.
C: including carambola, dragon fruit, jackfruit, persimmon, pomegranate, soursop, star apple, stone fruit.
D: including Asian greens, broccoli, capsicum, eggplant, garlic, ginger, other herbs, hydroponics, lettuce, mushrooms, spinach, tomato, zucchini.

Crop Insights – Largest Commodities

Citrus - $170M GVP

Citrus is now the highest valued horticulture commodity on the Tablelands. The industry witnessed phenomenal expansion in mandarin, lemon and grapefruit during 2017-2018. Maturation of these plantings coupled with strong market prices has resulted in the large increase in gross value of production for Tablelands citrus in the 2024 profile. Production is predominantly in Mareeba and Dimbulah.

Banana - $169M GVP

The banana industry remains strong on the Tablelands. The industry has experienced steady growth in the total planted area, coupled with strong market prices for both Cavendish and Lady Finger. Market prices have been significantly higher than usual during 2023-2024, contributing to the increase in value over the previous years. Production is predominantly in Walkamin and Mareeba.

Avocado - $151M GVP

The avocado industry is facing uncertainty on the Tablelands. The industry has rapidly expanded, with total hectares doubling since 2019. However, this increase in production, combined with a market clash with Western Australian fruit has seen market prices significantly decline. The average domestic price per 5.5kg tray of avocado between February - August has halved since 2019, from $40 to $21 in 2023. This decrease in market price has resulted in a net industry decline of $25M for Tablelands avocado, despite production area doubling. These figures are based on 2023 data and do not account for further price declines or tree losses after Cyclone Jasper in 2024, adding further uncertainty to the situation. Production is spread across the Tablelands.

Mango - $54M GVP

The mango industry remains a significant sector on the Tablelands. The industry has faced a gradual decline in production and gross revenue since 2019. During the 2023-2024 season, a significant portion of fruit was downgraded and diverted for processing, due to the impact of Cyclone Jasper on fruit quality. Production is predominantly in Mareeba and Dimbulah.

Berries - $48M GVP

The berry industry continues to expand on the Tablelands. This sector is dominated by blueberries, of which total hectares have doubled since 2019. Average market prices have fallen from $40/kg in 2019 to $29/kg in 2024. Immature and new plantings of blueberry currently in development are not totally captured in this dataset. There are also small volumes of strawberry and raspberry sold locally. Berry production is spread across the Tablelands.

Table Grapes - $44M GVP

The table grape industry continues to grow on the Tablelands. The total planted area has nearly doubled since 2019, coupled with strong market prices, resulting in net growth over the past five years. Production is centred in Dimbulah.

Papaya - $40M GVP

The Papaya industry is a growing commodity on the Tablelands. The industry has doubled in value from $19M in 2019 to $40M in 2024. This is a result of strong prices in addition to an increase in total planted area, most of which is the red variety. Production is predominantly in Mareeba and Dimbulah.

It is important to note all figures presented in this report do not represent grower profitability. Most commodities have experienced Gross Value Production growth, but cost of production has increased significantly more.