



Australian Fodder Industry Association



08 April 2022

# HAY REPORT

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The Hay Report is produced for Dairy Australia by the Australian Fodder Industry Association (AFIA) – the national independent voice for the Australian fodder industry which connects the entire supply chain from seed to feed.  
For further information: [www.afia.org.au](http://www.afia.org.au)

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## NATIONAL SUMMARY

### Driving Prices Up

- Rainfall has led to repeated flooding events across northern New South Wales and Queensland. Water has damaged pastures, summer crops and on farm fodder stores. Mud is impacting stock health. Local fodder supply in the region is dominated by donations and emergency fodder relief packages. Good quality hay is required to support stock recover health.
- In other regions the bureau of meteorology has reported rainfall significantly below March averages for most of the Northern Territory, western and central parts of Queensland, western parts of Tasmania, and across much of South Australia's Eyre Peninsula
- The bureau of meteorology have reported serious rainfall deficiencies (totals in the lowest 10% of historical observations since 1900) affecting parts of southern Australia from December 2021.
- There are reports some transport companies are applying a 5 - 10% fuel levy. Some hay growers, who deliver locally, have indicated they will raise cartage fees by up to 50 cents per kilometre or will apply a fuel surcharge of up to 10%, to cover increased fuel costs.
- Input costs and ongoing labour shortages are expected to impact decisions regarding the new cropping season. During these times of increased production costs and strong export market demand for wheat and canola, those who produce hay opportunistically may chose other crops.
- There is increasing demand for good quality cereal hay and vetch hay. However, supplies of both are low. Lucerne prices are slowly rising as it is being purchased to fill the protein gap.

### Driving Prices Down

- Rainfall and mild weather had boosted pasture growth. Many feed users continue to be confident ryegrasses and other pasture growth will support stock without need for supplementary feed.
- Varied qualities of fodder are available on the market. Growers with lower grade hay, particularly hay stacked outside are expected to actively trade this in the coming months.
- The quality of new season hay was impacted by continuing rain events across most states. Rainfall has meant many crops were harvested later than usual, resulting in coarser hay.

### Local News

- The Darling Downs and northeast New South Wales regions, in particular Lismore, has been again impacted by heavy rainfall and subsequent flooding. The ongoing damage and loss is impacting farmers and their local communities. The local fodder market is unsteady due to donations hay and fodder. High quality feed is needed to support the recovery of stock impacted by mud and rain.
- Farmers and growers surrounding the areas of Gympie, Fassifern Valley and the north coast of New South Wales have continued to provide hay donations to support farmers with livestock affected by the floods. Active fundraising continues to be needed to provide support to cover the high fuel costs which are increasing transport costs to deliver feed into the affected areas.
- Dry conditions in some cropping regions will impact crop choice decisions. In other regions the ongoing availability of pasture, will be a determining factor in whether the market for fodder remains slow.
- Lack of rain in western Victoria, and some parts of South Australia and Tasmania, are driving early enquiries from those looking to secure feed for winter.
- Buyers are encouraged to feed test and view fodder before purchasing to be sure of the quality of the feed.

## Regional Commentary

### Atherton Tablelands

- The weather has been mostly warm and sunny, supporting the cutting of silage. Peanut crops will be harvested in the coming weeks.
- Current cycle of hay production has finished. Growers who recently harvested pasture for seed or hay, decisions are still being made regarding whether pasture is fertilised at current prices between \$3,000 to \$4,000/ acre. Given currently low demand for hay, pastures may be left and used as a green manure mulch for the paddock. Some excess growth may be cut and sold as mulch later in the year.
- Some new season hay will be of lower quality due to the age of pasture when it was harvested.
- Fuel prices are expected to remain high. Some growers will continue waiting to order fuel to see if Government measures lead to actual price reductions for fuel delivered to farm.
- Due to high prices for beef, cattle weaners and store cattle tend to be sold as soon as they are ready rather than requiring supplementary feeding. Slow trade and low movement of fodder.
- Prices remain steady.
- Pasture (Rhodes Grass) hay: +/-0 (\$300 to \$400/t). Prices remain steady.
- Please note: Hay in the Atherton Tablelands is traditionally priced at \$/bale, so it is important to check bale weights for conversion. The price range indicated is for feeds of varying quality with the price range generally indicative of quality of feed. We recommend feed testing and viewing of fodder before purchase to be sure of the quality of feed.

### Darling Downs

- Significant rainfall across the region this week with falls of up to 100mm in some areas. Major and minor flooding has occurred across multiple areas and major riverine flood warnings are ongoing.
- Assessment of the loss of harvested and unharvested crops is still to be confirmed as flood waters remain across some areas restrict access.
- Downgrades to sorghum and mungbean crops likely due to recent rainfall events. As mungbeans were very close to harvest there is a high probability of significant damage from rain.
- Winter crop planting has been delayed with concerns heavy soils will not dry out for months.
- Fertiliser prices remain a concern as sowing plans are being finalised. Some growers are locking in forward contracts with feedlots to obtain manure, which has not been required in the past.
- Fuel prices are still having an impact and the fuel excise reduction has been viewed favourably, however freight levies are still being applied in the short term.
- Due to the rains and the ongoing floods minimal sales this week as growers assess damage and supplies.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$255 to \$275/t). Prices remain steady this week
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$380 to \$420/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$70 to \$90/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$200 to \$240/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Please note: Unless stated otherwise, prices are per tonne, sourced and delivered locally. The price range indicated is for feeds of varying quality with the price range generally indicative of

quality of feed. We recommend feed testing and viewing of fodder before purchase to be sure of the quality of feed.

## North Coast NSW

- Lismore again recorded significant rainfalls which led to flooding. There has been additional damage to pastures from heavy rainfall, flooding and associated mud across the region.
- There remains little if any trade in fodder. Need continues to be filled by hay/silage donations and Government supported emergency fodder programs. Additional hay will be required for an extended period until viable grass returns and paddocks can be accessed. It will be a tight winter for many with fodder, stored for use during winter, being used now.
- Minimal fodder sales for local hay growers, who have donated hay where they can. Many of the emergency fodder drops have been of hay purchased from outside the region. Good quality feed is a priority to support the health of recovering stock and reduce the risk of longer-term biosecurity impacts such as weeds, diseases and pests from poor quality fodder.
- Flood-affected farmers can call the Department of Primary Industries' emergency hotline on 1800 814 647 to request assistance from Agricultural and Animal Services for animal assessment and veterinary support, emergency fodder and, if required, euthanasia and burial. Assistance or further information can be accessed through the online portals:
  - <https://www.nsw.gov.au/floods> or <https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/floods/financial-assistance>
- No changes to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$200 to \$260/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$380 to \$430/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$100 to \$150/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$190 to \$220/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Please note: Fodder prices should be considered as a bookmark rather than a reflection of the local trade due to the reliance on donations and current conditions. We recommend feed testing and viewing of fodder before purchase to be sure of the quality of feed.

## Central West NSW

- Very light rainfall across the region this week, except for the southeast which had some impact from the rain event. Soil moisture profiles are good with winter planting on track. However, some growers are concerned with possible riverine flooding due to rainfall events.
- Growers are expecting high demand for fodder due to the flooding further north and near the coast once the extent of the damage has been assessed.
- Input costs are an ongoing concern, while the fuel excise reduction will alleviate some fuel costs, fertilizer costs worries are still continuing. Interest in growing pulses was high for some producers keen to fix nitrogen in their soil naturally.
- Some growers are looking to add albus lupins into their cropping schedule. This will reduce their need for fertiliser at sowing.
- There has been increasing enquiries for high protein hay, with prices again rising on interest; the belief is that this will continue to rise in the short-term as input costs, freight and labour have an effect.
- Slight change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +0/-0 (\$175 to \$215/t). Prices remain steady this week.

- Lucerne hay: +\$5 (\$305 to \$355/t). Prices increase this week
- Straw: +/-0 (\$60 to \$80/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$160 to \$200/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Please note: Unless stated otherwise, prices are per tonne, sourced and delivered locally. The price range indicated is for feeds of varying quality with the price range generally indicative of quality of feed. We recommend feed testing and viewing of fodder before purchase to be sure of the quality of feed.

### **Bega Valley**

- Moderate to high rainfall across the region with some coastal and eastern areas receiving upwards of 50mm. Due to persistent rainfall, some growers have placed pasture planting on hold.
- Some rural roads are still being impacted by closures because of embankment erosion due to the recent rainfall, leading to delays for deliveries.
- With so much summer rain, weed control has been an ongoing issue this year, and the cost of chemicals has been increasing.
- Small amounts of hay have been moving locally to farmers to feed stock that has been affected by the wet. Requests are also coming through for hay donations to help flood victims.
- Inquiries for hay are continuing to increase as farmers look to secure feed for the coming cooler months, with some growers entering into forward contracts as growers look to conditions further north and possible weather issues impacting availability.
- No changes to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$270 to \$300/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$480 to \$520/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$200 to \$220/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$330 to \$360/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Please note: Unless stated otherwise, prices are per tonne, sourced and delivered locally. The price range indicated is for feeds of varying quality with the price range generally indicative of quality of feed. We recommend feed testing and viewing of fodder before purchase to be sure of the quality of feed.

### **Goulburn/Murray Valley**

- No significant rainfall in the region this week
- Dry conditions have been ideal for hay baling with growers taking advantage of the window of opportunity.
- Maize being cut for silage as the dry conditions persist.
- Sowing program has now ramped up in the region with some growers looking to have it completed by Easter. Some reports of poor soil structure in Shepparton area even with stubble left on the field, and some available moisture.
- Inquiries for premium Lucerne have steadied, Cereal hay inquires have begun to increase mostly Oaten.
- Input costs are still a concern, even with the federal fuel excise being reduced and growers are continuing to incorporate a levy on freight charges where applicable.
- No change to pricing this week

- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$170 to \$200/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$390 to \$420/t). Prices remain steady this week
- Straw: +/-0 (\$70 to \$100/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$210 to \$250/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Please note: Unless stated otherwise, prices are per tonne, sourced and delivered locally. The price range indicated is for feeds of varying quality with the price range generally indicative of quality of feed. We recommend feed testing and viewing of fodder before purchase to be sure of the quality of feed.

## **Gippsland**

- Significant rainfall in the region with flooding reported in riverine and coastal areas with 250mm of rain falling since Saturday.
- For assistance and support due to flooding please access the following website <https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/farm-management/emergency-management/floods/flood-advice-and-support#h2-6> or Gippsland Emergency Relief Fund <https://gerf.org.au/>
- Due to rain events, sowing in affected area has been put on hold.
- Farmers have been forced to move stock from low lying areas and crops may need replanting in the east.
- Hay inquires steady as cooler months approach with prices lifting slightly. A notable number of inquiries were from horse breeders for pasture hay. Whilst there is plenty of on-farm pasture available dairy farmers are looking to forward contract leading into winter.
- Fuel prices have dropped in the area which is a source of relief for growers.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$200 to \$240/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$530 to \$550/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$80 to \$100/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$90 to \$120/t). Prices slightly higher this week.
- Please note: Unless stated otherwise, prices are per tonne, sourced and delivered locally. The price range indicated is for feeds of varying quality with the price range generally indicative of quality of feed. We recommend feed testing and viewing of fodder before purchase to be sure of the quality of feed.

## **Southwest Victoria**

- Little to no rainfall across the region this week.
- Autumn pasture crops are looking promising in a few areas with good soil moisture, with Vetch in particular coming along well.
- Maize crop being cut for silage continues with the favourable weather conditions.
- There is a reasonable belief that there will be a reduction in hay production this season due to increased pasture and/or a move to grain cropping.
- There have been some reports of a reduction in fodder stores as the green feed dries off. More rain will be needed broadly across the region to reinvigorate some pastures.

- Trade remains minimal in most areas with some inquires high quality hay. Increase in demand is expected in the coming months with prices to reflect quality and demand. Some trade into the region for contracted hay.
- As with most regions, cost of production is an ongoing concern, and while the fuel prices have reflected the reduction in the federal fuel levy in the short term, there is still unease over other input costs.
- No changes to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$180 to \$220/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$330 to \$380/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$80 to \$100/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$150 to \$180/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Please note: Unless stated otherwise, prices are per tonne, sourced and delivered locally. The price range indicated is for feeds of varying quality with the price range generally indicative of quality of feed. We recommend feed testing and viewing of fodder before purchase to be sure of the quality of feed.

### **Southeast South Australia**

- No rainfall for the area so conditions are dry.
- The continued dry conditions will influence hay production decisions. Indications remain that some farmers are heading towards preferencing additional pasture rather than cereal hay. Some continued movement towards preparing to sow grazing cereal varieties.
- Fuel and input costs continue impact decisions on the level of inputs applied to pastures which may reduce overall hay production.
- Expected increase in demand for hay, with prices expected to rise due to low supply.
- Current slow trade is due to some levels of understocking and livestock producers holding off purchasing fodder due to hopes for additional rain to support pasture growth. Sheep producers will be starting to look for feed now that paddock feed and the green pick is drying off.
- No changes to prices this week
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$190 to \$240/t). Prices remain steady.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$330 to \$350/t). Prices remain steady.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$100 to \$120/t). Prices remain steady.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$180 to \$220/t). Prices remain steady.
- Please note: Unless stated otherwise, prices are per tonne, sourced and delivered locally. The price range indicated is for feeds of varying quality with the price range generally indicative of quality of feed. We recommend feed testing and viewing of fodder before purchase to ensure quality of feed.

## Central South Australia

- No significant rainfalls across the region. Rain needed in the coming month.
- Significant costs have reduced the profitability of hay production. Many growers are making changes towards either higher paying hay markets or moving into grain crops. At current production costs for both input and equipment use hay is the least profitable/least competitive crop choice. Wheat, lentils and canola will be considered in preference to hay production.
- Due to the combination of high fuel and transport demand reducing available trucks and drivers, transport costs for local delivery have risen by 10-15%.
- Qld farmers are starting to procure hay from the region. High quality hay is heading to feed lots and chaff mills. While there is a reasonable amount of hay stock available it is of variable quality. Some from 2020 lower to reasonable quality, 2021 reasonable to good quality. There may be a shortfall of available hay in coming months. Much of last season's higher quality hay is already under contract so will not be available for purchase. Enquiries from Mallee for sheep feed, usually those enquiries only come in during winter so unexpectedly high demand for Autumn.
- Pricing remains variable and is quality rather than demand driven.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$180 to \$240/t). Prices for poorer quality have decreased slightly.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$390 to \$420/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$90 to \$150/t). Prices remain steady.
- Please note: Unless stated otherwise, prices are per tonne, sourced and delivered locally. The price range indicated is for feeds of varying quality with the price range generally indicative of quality of feed. We recommend feed testing and viewing of fodder before purchase to be sure of the quality of feed.

## Southwest Western Australia

- There has been steady rainfall in areas with significant falls of 40 -120mm of rain for northern, central and midlands wheatbelts of WA. Some other areas have had little to no rainfall but growers are not yet concerned. No further falls predicted for the coming weeks.
- Rain has encouraged sowing of early sheep feed which may reduce fodder demand. Following early rains canola is firming as a preferred crop due to high international prices. However, those in frost prone areas will still consider hay production. Increased late season rainfall during 2021 led to a weed seed burden, hay will be used within the crop rotation program as a clean-up crop
- Increased mice populations are now visible. Baiting to protect the quality of stored fodder has commenced. Monitoring for mice activity remains a strong recommendation in the lead up to sowing. It is recommended where mouse control is required growers spread bait during seeding <https://grdc.com.au/resources-and-publications/resources/mouse-management>.
- Freight costs are increasing due to lack of drivers in addition to fuel costs. Labour shortages across WA have led to delays of up to a month for some hay production programs.
- No changes to prices
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$200 to \$250/t). Price remains steady.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$450 to \$490/t). Price remains steady.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$100 to \$120/t). Price remains steady but demand is increasing.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$160 to \$180/t). Price remains steady.
- Please note: Unless stated otherwise, prices are per tonne, sourced and delivered locally. The price range indicated is for feeds of varying quality with the price range generally indicative of

quality of feed. We recommend feed testing and viewing of fodder before purchase to be sure of the quality of feed.

## **Northwest Tasmania**

- No significant rainfall over the past week, with the exception of moderate rainfall near Launceston. The warm conditions continue with both minimum and maximum temperatures above average.
- The dry autumn forecast continues and pastures are showing signs of deterioration. Rainfall is needed to reinvigorate growth. The ongoing dry conditions are favourable for hay baling with crops coming off well and good quality expected.
- Input costs continue to be a concern, whilst the fuel levy reduction has been welcomed, it has not yet been seen at the pump, and that is only one of the rising costs to be considered and causing concern.
- Interest in pasture hay, mostly from equine purchasers.
- Slight uptick in hay sales, as a continued lack of rain has seen an increase in demand. There is a big variance in quality with earlier hay impacted by weather; more recent hay has been able to be baled without any damage.
- No changes to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$240 to \$260/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$290 to \$340/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$150 to \$200/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$190 to \$230/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Please note: Unless stated otherwise, prices are per tonne, sourced and delivered locally. The price range indicated is for feeds of varying quality with the price range generally indicative of quality of feed. We recommend feed testing and viewing of fodder before purchase to be sure of the quality of feed.