



Australian Fodder Industry Association



02 September 2022

# HAY REPORT

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<b>NATIONAL SUMMARY</b>	
Driving Prices Up	3
Driving Prices Down	3
Local News	3
<b>Regional Commentary</b>	
Atherton Tablelands	4
Darling Downs	4
North Coast NSW	5
Central West NSW	5
Bega Valley	6
Goulburn/Murray Valley	6
Gippsland	7
Southwest Victoria	7
Southeast South Australia	8
Central South Australia	9
Southwest Western Australia	9
Northwest Tasmania	10

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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

- Good quality hay is in demand as supplies have tightened and pasture growth is yet to receive the warmth required to boost growth.
- Growers who had been donating into the impacted areas have significantly reduced the amount of hay they donate due to rising input costs and the need to make a return.
- Input costs continue to impact cropping decisions. This has reduced the quantities of pasture hay produced during late winter and will continue to impact supplies in early Spring.
- Opportunistic hay production has not been seen as a price competitive cropping option in many regions where grain crops are an alternative.
- Fodder users who are concerned about the potential of reduced supply are looking to lock in Spring supply contracts. In a number of regions hay/fodder producers have little hay on the open market for sale to new customers, most has been contracted for sale to long-term buyers.
- Slow but steady increase in enquires to source feed and increase on hand supplies of high-quality hay. Supplies of high-quality cereal hay are now very low in most regions.

### Driving Prices Down

- Confidence pasture growth will support stock without need for supplementary feed has kept demand for hay and fodder steady.
- Growers with lower grade hay from past seasons, particularly hay stacked outside, were actively trading to clear the way for their new seasons hay.
- The slow build-up of enquiries, and a lack of awareness regarding the impact international grain prices have had on crop choices as well as the lack of open market sales may be suppressing market transparency. This is leading to a false sense of security about future available stocks and prices for new seasons hay.

### Local News

- Prices are remaining steady in most regions due to lack of open trade. Most hay, being currently sold was contracted for purchase earlier in the year, so prices do not reflect current costs of production nor the predicted reduction in hay production this Spring.
- The Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) 3-month climate outlook is for above average rainfall for the eastern two-thirds of Australia. With wet soils, high rivers and full dams, and the spring outlook for above average rainfall, elevated flood risk remains for eastern Australia.
- The Bureau's ENSO Outlook continues at La Niña ALERT, indicating at least a 70% chance of La Niña reforming later this year. This is around triple the normal likelihood. La Niña events increase the chances of above-average rainfall for northern and eastern Australia during Spring and Summer.
- The range of biosecurity incidents which may impact Australian agriculture are causing significant concern. Reports of Foot and Mouth Disease in Bali, the incursion of varroa destructor mite and other pest incursions such as slugs are being raised as concerns by many farmers contacted for the hay report. Biosecurity management and control costs are rising.
- There is concern the high price of inputs, lack of availability of farm labour and likelihood of continuing higher than average rainfall in some regions is not being factored into fodder prices.
- Buyers are encouraged to feed test and view fodder before purchase to be sure of the quality of feed.

## Regional Commentary

### Atherton Tablelands

- Small amounts of rain, less than predicted with around 20mm of rain over the past week. Ongoing drizzly condition which is impacting hay production.
- Some shortages expected to become apparent later in the season as growers have preferenced other crops over hay due to rising input and production costs.
- Foot and Mouth disease was causing considerable concern across the region. Information about the Australian Vetplan and preparedness is available at <https://animalhealthaustralia.com.au>.
- Machinery repair costs, long delays to access replacement parts and high input prices will continue to deter many producers from opportunistic hay production this season.
- Fuel prices sitting between \$1.85 and \$2.07 per litre. Some suppliers are already indicating a price rise in the next few weeks prior to the return of the excise which will add additional cost.
- Urea prices have remained high currently around \$1,500 per tonne.
- Increased hay demand across the region but no sign of prices increasing.
- No change to pricing this week due to slow trade but input costs require a price rise to maintain interest in producing hay and fodder. Demand expected to increase in coming months.
- 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

- Little to no rain across the region this week, with falls averaging 5-10 mm of rain, and some clearer days, however temperatures continue to trend below average.
- Wheat crops around Bongeen are coming along well with good growth after some warmer conditions; however, there are fears the earlier wet conditions have affected root depth.
- Nitrogen deficiency in wheat crops, as a result of the wet weather, is becoming more apparent across the region with yellowed crops in water affected fields. Urea to ameliorate this situation is in short supply with ranging from \$1200 – \$1500 p/t depending on availability. Most growers are considering fertilising for yield rather than protein given predictions for a wet Spring.
- Chicory, lucerne and red clover pastures around Goondiwindi are beginning to flourish after a cold start with grazed barley in the same region ready for Spring growth.
- The continual rainfall events have caused damage to already failing regional roads. Road damage is having an impact on getting supplies both into and off farm.
- Enquiries are high with ongoing interest in vetch hay as well as cereal and clover hays. This would normally lead to an increase in prices however, the supply is cannot meet the demand locally. Some hay is being delivered from Victoria and South Australia but the quality is not high. Feedlots are still driving demand. Cattle feedlots are also looking for small quantities of straw which remains in reasonable supply.
- Slight change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$255 to \$280/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$380 to \$420/t). Prices remain steady this week.

- Straw: +\$3 (\$75 to \$135/t). Prices increase slightly this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$220 to \$250/t) Prices remain steady this week.

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## North Coast NSW

- Little to no rain across the region this week, which is a relief for many. Temperatures however continue to be colder than average.
- Wheat crops in the west of the region are coming along well considering their wet start, though there are some concerns additional rains could severely impact yield and quality. The sunnier days are supporting some optimism.
- Some dairy farmers in the south of the region have just finished planting lucerne for a summer cutting crop, and are looking to cut wheaten silage in the next week as long as the weather is favourable. Preparations are also underway in the region for silage corn planting in the Spring.
- Reports of instances of common armyworm in the heavy early barley crops. Thus far there appears to be no effect on yield, but monitoring will continue.
- Whilst the recent sunnier days and the turn towards Spring weather conditions is promising, there are still large parts of the region that are waterlogged. Conditions need to dry out to support proper assessments and planning for the next season.
- Shipments of relief fodder continue to arrive from outside the region however the quantity is slowing down. Quality is still below average due to shortages in other regions.
- Prices are expected to increase across the region due to a lack of local supply for good quality. Hay being purchased from interstate is incurring high transport costs due to the distance travelled, however as the quality is now in the mid-range, the prices for most cereal and pasture hay have steadied or decreased as the quality drops. Straw is becoming harder to source as feedlots in Queensland are purchasing as much as they can.
- Change to prices this week
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$260 to \$350/t). Prices steady but increased average price expected.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$400 to \$550/t). Prices steady but increased average expected.
- Straw: +\$5 (\$110 to \$220/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$200 to \$280/t). Prices steady but increased average expected.

Please note: Cereal hay, straw, and lucerne 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

- Moderate rainfall of around 30mm of rain across parts of the region this week, most of it falling on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> of August as part of a storm band that swept across Victoria and NSW. The rest of the week saw clearer drier conditions.
- Considerable parts of the region remain waterlogged and growers are still coming across pasture paddocks which are too wet to spray without the risk of bogging and damage.

- Canola crops around Lake Cargelligo are coming along very well with good flower emergence, recent rainfall is supporting continued flowering with hopes of strong pod development. Fungicide application is taking place, a little earlier than expected and the forecast for a wet Spring is causing some concern in relation to disease load.
- Late grazed wheat near Canowindra is looking good even with the wet conditions. Stripe rust continues to appear across large parts of the region. 2021 was quite bad year for the disease across the Central West and Riverina, 2022 forecasts for a wet Spring increase the risk of exacerbating the disease. Samples are being sent to track the prevalence and phenotypes, and mitigation activities are underway
- Demand is still on the rise, with an increased understanding of the scarcity of hay in the area. Some enquiries have been in relation to the new season supply. Most of the hay being sold is of mid-range quality and prices reflect this, although transport costs for interstate deliveries do offset some of the low product prices. There is a reasonable amount of fodder coming in from further south and interstate to support herds.
- Slight change to pricing.
- Cereal hay: +\$3 (\$180 to \$240/t). Prices increase slightly this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$305 to \$355/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$65 to \$90/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +\$3 (\$170 to \$235/t). Prices increase slightly this week

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## Bega Valley

- Little to no rain across the region this week with falls of up to 10mm of rain in the northern part of the area; warmer temperatures are also being recorded.
- Grass is beginning to move along well in the Valley, with pastures picking up growth with the ongoing warmer sunnier days. Ryegrass pastures in the west of the region are coming along well with the clearer days and boosted growth.
- Still plenty of subsoil moisture supplemented by light rain to keep the crops ticking along in conjunction with the warmer conditions. Growers are optimistic for a good season.
- Stripe rust and Septoria is being reported in an increasing number of paddocks. Samples are being sent for pathotyping. Information on susceptible varieties and individual pathotypes for stripe rust can be found at <https://nvt.grdc.com.au/nvt-disease-ratings>
- Input costs are still on the minds of growers and with some water affected crops needing some nitrogen. Reports Europe has cut ammonia production and fertiliser plants have been closed is leading to the conclusion that higher prices for inputs will significantly impact profitability.
- There is little hay moving locally. Some higher quality feed coming into the area from South Australia and the Riverina, though as with most areas the quality is beginning to drop. Feedlot interest continues to be strong as they secure supply, with ongoing interest in straw, which appears to be in reasonable supply as farmers seek to clear sheds, though the quality is lower.
- Slight change to pricing.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$265 to \$320/t). Prices remain steady this week.

- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$480 to \$520/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: -\$5 (\$190 to \$225/t). Prices decrease this week due to quality.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$330 to \$360/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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## **Goulburn/Murray Valley**

- Continuing low rainfall totals with some areas missing out completely, whilst others received a weekly total of around 20mm of rain. Most of the rain fell as part of storm bands, however. Temperatures are beginning to warm across the region as well.
- Wheat crops around Invergordon are looking green and healthy after fungicide application to combat the instances of rust. No irrigation has been required since the paddocks are still quite wet, with some paddocks wet enough to cause bogging. All indications are the season is looking good as long as the skies remain clear.
- Cutting is underway in limited paddocks in the south of the region. It is being restricted by some waterlogging and forecasts for rain. Given the estimated moisture levels cuts will need 4-5 days to dry so many are postponing cutting until the forecast gives assurance of enough days to reduce the moisture levels or allow for drying time. Some mixed barley and ryegrass cuts are showing signs of quicker drying.
- Sowing of lucerne paddocks in the north of the region is ongoing as well as urea spreading timed around rain events.
- Silage cutting has started around Waaia, with the rain band earlier in the week causing a slight delay to the start of the season. Hopes of a good season continue.
- Hay enquires are pretty quiet as scarcity has been noted, most are now looking to the next season and some forward contracts with growers servicing existing customers and only taking on new ones when they have a good reserve. There is still some good green feed available so this has offset the smaller amount of fodder available. A number of growers have been sending mid-range hay to Queensland and NSW to clear space for the new season.
- No change to pricing this week
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$170 to \$225/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$390 to \$420/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$70 to \$120/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$215 to \$260/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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## **Gippsland**

- Light to moderate rainfall across the region with most of the rain falling in the west with falls around 25-30mm of rain, however the east of the region saw between 5-10mm of rain and

sunnier days. August rainfall is above average especially in the west of the region with 200mm of rain for the month around Ruby and 215mm of rain in Buffalo.

- Calving season has wrapped up for most, with few births expected in the coming week.
- Paddocks in the west around Ruby and Mirboo North are looking green but actual feed levels are quite low so supplementary grain feeding is ongoing. Silage season for some in the area has been delayed due to weather events and will probably not start until early October.
- With the high rainfall in parts of the region dairy farmers are finding it difficult to feed cows from existing paddocks as much of the soil is too wet to allow for safe grazing and the wet and cold conditions have slowed grass growth considerably.
- Silage cutting has started around the Bairnsdale area in drier paddocks with some already bailed after a few good drying days.
- Canola crops around Lucknow are coming along well, with good growth and flower emergence, growers are expecting good yields.
- Reports of slug infestations in some crops around the Toongabbie area, mitigation being undertaken to prevent yield damage. GRDC is running workshops across Australia to help growers understand management options. <https://grdc.com.au/search?query=slug+management>
- Hay enquiries have lessened, this is partly due to growers busy starting the new season and servicing equipment in preparation so they are not taking a lot of enquiries. Reports of enquiries for Spring hay and silage. There is still demand for quality hay and silage especially from dairy farmers looking to supplement poor, wet pastures, as well as interstate requests for hay of varying quality to meet supply shortages elsewhere.
- No change in prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$200 to \$250/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$530 to \$550/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$80 to \$110/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$90 to \$180/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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## Southwest Victoria

- Widespread rain blanketed the region this week, with averages of 25-40mm of rain across the entire area. Most of this rainfall fell in a storm band on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> of August with the earlier part of the week relatively dry and clear. Temperatures have also been trending upwards with few if any frosts.
- Barley paddocks around Hamilton are being sprayed with Plant Growth Regulator but the ongoing rainfall is hampering applications on wheat in lower lying fields. <https://www.bcq.org.au/plant-growth-regulator-use-in-barley>
- Rainfall has meant expectation of an exceptionally good cropping season are being downgraded due to trafficability/paddock accessibility issues with impact to yields expected. Waterlogged paddocks are impacting management schedules for biosecurity and crop nutrition activities.
- Italian ryegrass variety pastures in the north of the region are showing good growth with mixed pastures of Phalaris, Fescue and sub clover being set for a grazing rotation.

- Hybrid ryegrass pastures around Heywood are lush after a dry July and a very late break in the season. This green feed is supporting dairy cows without the need for supplemental feeding.
- Waterlogged paddocks around Princetown are causing some issues for grazing cows with the predicted start to the silage cutting postponed until moisture levels drop.
- Input costs are always of concern, waterlogged crops will need nitrogen. Reports regarding the shut down of a number of European fertiliser plants is being met with some degree of unease and expectation of increased prices and reduced profitability.
- Enquiries have steadied, with pre-contracted fodder supplies still moving around the area. The wet conditions for some parts of the region are hampering access to pastures therefore some livestock farmers looking to bolster on farm hay stocks. Some is being sourced across the border from South Australia. Straw appears to be in reasonable supply as farmers clear out sheds and is being bought for feedlots both locally and interstate.
- Slight change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$180 to \$230/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$330 to \$380/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +\$3 (\$85 to \$110/t). Prices increase slightly this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$150 to \$190/t). Prices remain steady this week

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### **Southeast South Australia**

- Sporadic rainfall across the region again this week. Falls of between 1mm to 15mm of rain across much of the region during the past week.
- Across the region many crops need warm and sunny days to boost growth and development.
- Forecast is for significantly reduced hay production across the region. While supply availability will become clearer in Spring early contact with hay producers is encouraged to negotiate contracts as supplies are expected to be tight.
- Growers with contracts in place will maintain hay production program. However, farmers have planted additional pasture rather than invest in cereal hay due to input and production costs. Pasture hay will only be a priority for fertiliser application to support additional cuts if profitable hay prices are available come mid Spring.
- Hay and fodder sales have steadily increased and many hay producers are now sold out. New customers should expect to have to pay for additional freight to access hay from further afield.
- Supplies of good quality hay are very low across the region. A lot of the remaining hay is already contracted for sale so reports of shortages expected to increase. The prices remain steady but it is worth noting there are a lack of clear market signals due to a few open market sales across the region.
- Prices have remained steady this week due to few open market sales and supply shortages.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$250 to \$270/t). Prices have remained steady.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$340 to \$400/t). Prices have remained steady.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$110 to \$130/t). Prices remain steady good supply available.

- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$200 to \$230/t). Prices remain steady but supplies are very low.

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## Central South Australia

- Reasonable weather for crop growth, however only minimal falls of between 1-10mm of rain fell across the region during the past week.
- Crops across most of the Yorke Peninsula are doing well following the consistent August rainfall, with growers looking forward to warmer weather boosting growth.
- There is a level of concern about the number of biosecurity incidences currently threatening Australian agriculture and the increased costs this will impose of grain and hay producers. Management options are increasingly expensive and careful cost benefit analysis will be required to protect profitability where the pests are not a risk to market access.
- Diesel remains between \$1.90 to \$2.20 per litre. Fuel levies and increased prices for local deliveries are expected to remain a feature, particularly once the excise is reapplied.
- Hay prices will need to rise to provide clearer market signals to support ongoing hay production and reflect the increasing costs of inputs, labour and commodity prices for alternative crops.
- Steady demand for hay, mostly from long term customers. Good quality older hay is still in demand, pastures in the northern parts of the region have been impacted by frost so supplementary feeding is still required to support stock.
- Pricing remains variable however, stocks of good quality older hay are now in short supply and prices are expected to remain steady or increase as hay has not been a preferred crop this season.
- Steady demand however, supply shortages are prevalent.
- Cereal hay: +\$3 (\$195 to \$260/t). Prices increase this week due to short supply.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$400 to \$430/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$130 to \$150/t). Prices remain steady but supply is extremely short.

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## Southwest Western Australia

- Low rainfall across the region this week, with falls of between 5-15mm of rain across most of the region, though some southern coast areas saw closer to 25mm.
- The low rainfall this week has been a welcome respite for some in the region and the clearer days have boosted pasture growth on good soil moisture profiles.
- Canola crops around Arthurs River are showing 50-60% flower emergence, but are also being hit with both mice depredation and Sclerotinia, spraying and baiting being undertaken to mitigate yield loss in paddocks where it is dry enough to get on, as there is still risk of bogging.

- Wheat crops around Mumballup are showing great growth and taking advantage of good soil moisture, with rainfall coming at the right time to spur growth.
- Early sown oats around Quindanning are outperforming all expectations with the prospect of making good hay towards the end of the year. Early flowering sweet lupins in the area are also showing good primary stem podding.
- Increasing reports of mice in the paddocks and some sightings around sheds and homes continue. Monitoring for mice activity and baiting remains a recommendation across many parts of the region. <https://grdc.com.au/resources-and-publications/resources/mouse-management>.
- Hay enquiries have steadied in recognition of on-going shortages, with some enquiries now for mid-range quality. Higher quality hay is still fetching premium prices, but the price is fluctuating.
- Slight changes to prices.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$210 to \$300/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$350 to \$490/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$100 to \$120/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +\$3 (\$165 to \$180/t). Prices increase slightly this week.

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## Northwest Tasmania

- The northwest region was hit with moderate to heavy falls this week, ranging from 25mm of rain near the coast to close to 100mm of rain in the centre of the region. However, temperatures are trending up as Spring approaches
- Whilst the recent warmer temperatures have spurred pasture growth in the region, the rains have left plenty of pasture paddocks with surface water, drainage is a problem in some areas.
- Calving season continues across the region, with some concern about the impact of wet conditions, but overall, the season is going well.
- Potatoes are being sown in the southern part of the region with a few clearer warm days perfect for planting between rain events.
- Interest in hay has steadied this week as the warmer weather increases pasture growth. Those areas being impacted by large amounts of rain are looking for supplemental feed options.
- Hay is in short supply and thoughts are turning to Spring. What supply is available is still being sourced from the south though the quality is dropping as supplies dwindle and prices lower to match quality in the mid-range, high quality is still attracted premium price where available.
- Slight change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -\$5 (\$240 to \$275/t) Prices decrease this week due to decreasing average quality.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$290 to \$350/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: -\$5 (\$140 to \$200/t) Prices decrease this week due to decreasing average quality.
- Pasture hay: \$8 (\$185 to \$240/t) Prices decrease this week due to decreasing average quality.

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