



Australian Fodder Industry Association



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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

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NATIONAL SUMMARY

Driving Prices Up

- Good quality hay is in growing demand as supplies have tightened and the forecast for a wet Spring raises some concerns about potential pressure on new seasons hay production.
- Growers will be looking to preference supply to those customers who recognise rising input costs and the need for hay producers 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 pasture hay production in Spring.
- Livestock producers are looking for straw and hay to provide bulk to help stock cope with the lush new seasons pastures.
- Fodder users are looking to lock in Spring supply contracts. In many 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.
- High-quality cereal hay is no longer available for purchase on the open market in most regions.

Driving Prices Down

- Confidence in the potential for Spring pasture growth continues due to the forecast for a wet Spring. Some expect stock will not need ongoing supplementary feed.
- Growers with lower grade hay from past seasons, particularly hay stacked outside, were actively trading to clear the way for their new seasons hay which kept the price range wide in some regions and impacted average prices.
- The slow build-up of enquiries in addition to 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 starting to reflect increased enquiries to lock in Spring hay contracts. 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's ENSO Outlook continues firmly predict La Niña, 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.
- With already wet soils, high rivers and full dams, the spring outlook for above average rainfall is predicting an elevated flood risk remains for eastern Australia.
- There are concerns in many regions that Spring hay production may be hampered by wet weather and a lack of clear days for curing and safe baling.
- 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

- The predicted clear weather has not been consistent across the region. Lack of clear days combined with the heavy overnight dew is slowing down the drying of the hay prior to baling. Fresh cut Rhodes grass has a high percentage of leaf matter which may be bleached by the heavy dews.
- Some hay shortages are expected to become apparent later in the season as growers have sown other crops rather than invest in hay production due to rising input and machinery costs.
- 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 are slowly rising with bowser prices now back up to \$2.09 per litre. Some suppliers are already indicating a 25 cent per litre price rise in the next few weeks.
- Urea prices have remained high currently between \$1,300 and \$1,500 per tonne.
- Increased hay demand across the region but no strong 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

- Dry and clear weather across the region this week following moderate falls during the weekend. However, temperatures are still below average which is slowing pasture and crop growth.
- Even with the volume of rain falling across the region this season, many growers are reporting up to 90% of planned crops were eventually planted. While potential for a good season is present, high fertiliser input will be required to support yields and quality and ongoing disease management is required to mitigate the wet start and ongoing moist conditions.
- Slow maturing wheat varieties around Condamine are showing great growth and yield potential. Fungicide application has kept stripe rust under control in these fields, but monitoring is ongoing.
- There are plenty of fields with cotton still to be harvested across the Downs, with the ongoing wet conditions impacting the harvest. Some of the delays to the harvest are not related to the fields so much as damage to roads and infrastructure preventing contractors from arriving.
- Enquiries have slowed as the increase in green feed due to clearer days has slightly eased the pressure on the market. Hay and silage growers are out on paddocks further south. Good quality old season hay is still sought but most enquiries are in relation to the new season.
- Slight change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -\$13 (\$240 to \$270/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$380 to \$420/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$75 to \$135/t). Prices remain steady 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 most of the region this week which is a source of relief for the growers in the area. Clear days are supporting the soil to dry out but temperatures are still below average.
- With the arrival of some clearer days, growers are assessing damage and applying fungicides and fertiliser as needed to water damaged paddocks. There are mixed feelings about the viability of some of the most waterlogged crops.
- In those areas where there has been lower rainfall or drainage activities have been successful the warmer clearer days are supporting the pasture grasses with a welcome increase of green feed available for livestock and dairy farmers.
- Canola crops in the south west of the region are coming along well even with the wet start however growers are applying fungicide due to the damp conditions promoting fungal diseases.
- Due to current weather conditions and the prospect of more rain paddocks where vetch hay was planned are instead being turned into brown manure. Maximising soil nitrogen is more valuable long term.
- The on-going rains have once again highlighted the need for money to be spent on rural roads in the area with many sections being washed away or made impassable. Feedback is that if the roads were in better condition to begin the rains and floods would not have caused as much damage. Reports that some growers who are not flooded cannot access viable farming areas due to road damage.
- Enquiries are flat as a result of scarcity, the new season kicking in further south and the increase in green feed available in the area. Donations are still supplying a fair proportion of the market but are being accepted at whatever quality can be obtained.
- Change to prices this week
- Cereal hay: -\$5 (\$260 to \$340/t). Prices decrease slightly this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$400 to \$550/t). Prices steady but increased average expected.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$110 to \$220/t). Prices steady but increased average expected.
- 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

- Light rainfall across the region this week with falls of around 15mm of rain, with falls spread across the weekend, allowing for clearer days during the week. Temperatures are beginning to trend back up towards the average.
- With warmer conditions following the ongoing rainfall, crops are back on track. Growers are hopeful of high yields as long as the weather continues to trend warmer and sunnier.
- Some early silage cutting is taking place in the east of the region, but it is sporadic.
- High yield wheat around Condobolin are looking good and have plenty of potential, with the milder conditions pushing along growth.

- Pastures around Yeoval are lush and green with good soil moisture and is currently supplying green feed for sheep and cattle in the region.
- Chickpeas around Weethalle sown in June are coming along well. Having had a slow start but are now flourishing with the softer Spring.
- Enquiries have dropped off considerably as the new season commences, cereal hay in particular is not being sourced. Most enquiries are for the next season. Deliveries are still arriving from interstate to supplement pasture and remaining on farm stores.
- Change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -\$10 (\$180 to \$220/t). Prices decrease 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: +/-0 (\$170 to \$235/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Bega Valley

- Low rainfall across the region this week with falls of around 10mm of rain on average; warmer temperatures are also starting to push the average up to more usual levels.
- Pasture growth continues to improve through the valley with the warmer drier days supporting plenty of green feed. This is taking some pressure off supplemental feeding for livestock and dairy herds.
- Growers are waiting for the forecast to show consistent drier, warmer conditions to allow the silage season to commence across the region.
- Ryegrass and clover pastures around Bemboka are putting on a surge of green feed after some well-timed rain and the clear days; this is being grazed by dairy cows in the region.
- Given the wetter than usual conditions and the prospect of a wet spring, there are some reports of scarcity of the inputs required to ameliorate the negative effects of water logging in crops and to boost pasture growth.
- Enquiries are quieter this week with most dedicated growers on the fields, enquires for cereal hay has dropped off and any producers who still have any are lowering prices to clear the way for new season stock. Straw continues to be sold, as sheds are cleared of older stock at reduced prices.
- Change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -\$10 (\$265 to \$300/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$480 to \$520/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: -\$8 (\$180 to \$210/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$330 to \$360/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Goulburn/Murray Valley

- Moderate rainfall across the region this week, heavier falls during the weekend however most days have also had light falls. This is a cause for some concern as cutting continues.
- Silage season continues in the region, with areas being cut expanded where the weather is favourable. Good dry matter percentages being achieved in the cuts and some bales are already being shipped off farm to meet the needs interstate. The season continues to show great potential.
- Wheat crops around Rochester are progressing well, after fungicide applications for rust and urea application to support growth.
- Wheat and Barley crops around Echuca are tall with great potential, the rains having fallen at the right time to boost growth and preventative spraying keeping the current seasons rust variants under control.
- Some reports of grey mould on lentil and vetch crops in the region in areas where there was consistent high rainfall or insufficient drainage. Mitigation is being undertaken.
- There are reports coming out of the western parts of the Mallee of the ground being rain affected and the impact on vetch hay, the hope is for a few weeks of sunshine to allow for curing.
- Hay enquiries are static as most dedicated hay and silage growers are out in the fields at harvest, though some silage growers are shipping direct from fields to NSW and Queensland. Green feed is still available for livestock farms in the region and straw remains relatively plentiful for those seeking it locally, though deliveries are mostly going interstate.
- Slight change to pricing this week
- Cereal hay: -\$3 (\$170 to \$220/t). Prices decrease 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

- Clear and dry conditions across most of the region this week with the central area receiving almost no rain. Average temperatures are increasing towards long-term averages.
- Around Bairnsdale spring is supporting strong growth with autumn planted hay/silage blends getting cut after multiple winter grazings on the paddocks. Potential for paddocks to support four to five cuts over the coming season.
- The drier days have extended the silage cutting into the west of the region, however cutting is sporadic as moisture content and wet paddocks interfere with drying. The season is not expected to be in full swing until October.
- Grazing barley and Italian ryegrass pastures around Lardner are showing some growth, supporting grazing by beef cattle in the area. However, ongoing high water profiles are still impacting the quality of green feed through most of the west and supplementary feeding is continuing for livestock and dairy herds.

- As weaning is now taking place across the region on dairy farms the lack of high quality nutritional green feed is of concern. There are some dairy farmers referring to the conditions in the west as a green drought.
- The fodder market is fairly quiet in the region as growers are out in the paddocks, however there is still fodder being moved from east to west to supplement poorer pastures for livestock and dairy herds. Straw is continuing to be sold out of older stocks as growers clear space for the coming season.
- Slight change in prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$200 to \$250/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: -\$15 (\$510 to \$540/t). Prices decrease 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

- Moderate rainfall over the area this week, but almost all of it fell on the weekend leaving the remaining days of the week relatively clear and dry.
- Dryland pastures in the north of the region are still quite moist with no need to irrigate; some low lying areas still have water pooling after every rainfall. Some early sown crops are considered to be underfed due to the conditions, while later sown are looking better. There is some speculation as to how this will impact the cutting of hay.
- Winter cover cropping pastures around Hawkesdale are looking healthy with a mix of legumes, vetch, peas, ryegrass cereals and clovers and are looking for a boost with the warmer weather to provide excellent grazing.
- Graze and grain barley, wheat and canola in the east of the region is looking great with some warmth boosting growth. These crops provided much needed feed over winter for sheep and cattle and will now be left to come to seed harvested to fill silos for supplemental feeding.
- Lamb marking is underway in the region with the lambing season having produced some excellent results this year, even with the wet weather causing welfare concerns for livestock.
- Enquiries have steadied with many growers in other parts of the state on the paddocks cutting and bailing. There is expected to be movement in the market in the next few weeks as some early season stock becomes available. Hay is still coming across the border in limited quantities, and straw still has some trade ongoing.
- Slight change to prices 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 (\$90 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

- Good falls of rain across most of the region again this week. Falls of between 5mm to 30mm 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 but recent rains have supported growth and the season is looking good for many growers.
- Early contact with hay producers is encouraged to negotiate contracts as supplies are expected to be tight.
- Pasture hay will only be a priority for fertiliser application to support additional cuts if profitable hay prices are available come mid Spring and rainfall improves to justify increased fertiliser expenditure. Machinery repairs and preparation for the hay season are in full swing.
- Hay and fodder sales had 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. Most enquiries are from farmers wanting to establish contracts for new season hay.
- Supplies of good quality hay are sold out 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: +\$10 (\$120 to \$140/t). Prices increase slightly.
- 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, with good falls of between 5-25mm 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 and the recent falls, with growers looking forward to warmer September weather boosting growth.
- Growers are busy out in paddocks undertaking pest control activities and to support productivity in crop paddocks.
- Straw and hay is being sought by livestock producers as farmers look to provide bulk to support stock cope with the fresh, high water content new pasture growth.
- Diesel is increasing in price with between \$1.95 to \$2.30 per litre. Fuel levies and increased prices for local deliveries are expected to remain a feature, particularly once the excise is reapplied. Fuel prices are causing concern.
- 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.

- Pricing remains variable however, stocks of good quality older hay are now in very short supply and prices are expected to remain steady or increase this season due to supply shortages.
- Steady demand however, supply shortages are prevalent and there have been limited open market sales.
- No change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$195 to \$260/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$400 to \$430/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +\$3 (\$130 to \$155/t). Prices increase slightly as supply is extremely short.

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Southwest Western Australia

- Mostly clear this week, however a rain band came through on Wednesday 14th September dumping around 30-40mm of rain in the far south west.
- Pastures are lush with a good supply of available feed for sheep and beef producers.
- Lupins around Williams have shown excellent growth with primary and secondary stem podding. However, some growers are looking to turn some fields into green or brown manure crops due to the market having dropped and the on-going concern regarding nitrogen supplies.
- Annual ryegrass fields around Kendenup are showing vigorous growth after urea application and timely rain and look to be well on track for hay/silage production later in the year.
- Wheat crops all throughout the region are looking healthy and are supporting predictions to bring in a bumper crop as long as the weather holds well.
- Mice continue to be an on-going issue; however the numbers appear to be steady or in some areas decreasing. Monitoring for mice activity remains a recommendation across many parts of the region. <https://grdc.com.au/resources-and-publications/resources/mouse-management>.
- With the bumper grain crop expected this season, there are concerns about the ability of the export infrastructure to cope with the harvest. With the chief questions being raised about road and rail. While the labour and infrastructure at the ports are well supported there are concerns about the lack of support to improve logistics to port.
- Enquiries have steadied as growers are out on the fields and producers take advantage of the green feed available. Many are looking towards the waterlogged paddocks of the eastern seaboard and considering market opportunities due to possible shortages in the new season.
- Slight change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$210 to \$300/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$350 to \$480/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: -\$8 (\$100 to \$115/t). Prices decrease slightly this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$165 to \$180/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Northwest Tasmania

- Reports of snow and frosts across the region this week, but rainfall was light with coastal regions again receiving little rain.
- Whilst there have been some clearer, drier days the underlying wet conditions are causing issues with some crops.
- Calving season continues across the region, with strong growing pastures a boon for livestock and dairy farmers.
- A variety of vegetable crops in the Sheffield region are being sown under perfect spring conditions, with good underlying soil profiles and clear days.
- Interest in hay has quietened with those livestock producers unable to feed from water affected paddocks seeking additional feed options, including grain where available, but almost all hay and fodder supply is coming in from the south so transport costs need to be factored into the equation.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$240 to \$275/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$290 to \$350/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$140 to \$200/t) Prices remain steady this week
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$185 to \$240/t) Prices remain steady this week

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