



Australian Fodder Industry Association



16 December 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

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NATIONAL SUMMARY

Driving Prices Up

- Supply shortages are being felt across most regions and prices are rising to meet demand. Many mixed farmers are keeping fodder supplies on-farm for use by their own herds rather than releasing it to the market.
- Ongoing rainfall in some areas and persistent flooding has significantly reduced expected Spring hay production and is causing concerns due to the delayed start to any summer crop production. This flood water is now starting to impact the South Australian region with reports of some hay producing regions being water affected.
- Rainfall events have disrupted most hay and fodder production plans across the eastern states with widespread reports of crop losses or crops which will no longer be suitable for high quality hay production. High protein hay will be in very short supply given the vetch hay crop failures.
- The tight hay market and the predicted shortfalls in production will reduce the available stocks to market as many producers have indicated they may only be able to produce for pre-contracted supplies. As such there will be less surplus for the open market.
- Some hay producers have had their hay producing activities curtailed as diesel supply is problematic due to road damage and flooding. Rising fuel costs will also be factored into hay and silage deliveries and will make interstate hay transport expensive.

Driving Prices Down

- Pasture growth continues to look promising across some of the eastern states, allowing livestock and dairy farmers to rely on available green feed. Western Australia is also seeing good pasture growth for both grazing and silage/hay production.
- Recent favourable weather conditions across most of the fodder growing regions has allowed for additional crops to be cut and baled.
- Some growers are planting short season summer crops which may produce hay during summer, when weather may better support curing and baling activities.

Local News

- Rainfall has been welcomed in some regions that were looking for a boost to pastures in conjunction with the warmer sunny days. The mostly clear outlook is allowing harvest to continue to try and make up the delay to the start of the season.
- Ongoing input costs as well as labour shortages and continuing road closures and repairs are expected to continue to impact the producing regions of the eastern states well into 2023.
- The Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) predicts that most of the country has close to equal chances of above median rainfall during January to March, while below median rainfall is likely for southern South Australia and the far south-west of Western Australia. January to March minimum temperatures are very likely to be warmer than median for almost all of Australia except over north-eastern New South Wales where the forecast is closer to neutral.
- Buyers are encouraged to feed test and view fodder before purchase to be sure of the quality of feed.

Regional Commentary

Atherton Tablelands

- Fine hot weather over the last week with storms coming across dropping around 20mm of rainfall, but mostly dry and clear.
- Summer planting is still ongoing in the good conditions; however growers are looking for some follow up rain to help bed in the crops. Irrigation is being used to alleviate water pressures.
- Fall Army Worm grubs are continuing to be seen in the corn crops, which have been sprayed this week as conditions were favourable, follow up sprays are being planned with at least two more sprays required to keep the pest in check.
- Fuel prices continue to be of concern in the region with the average being around \$2.35 per litre this is a slight increase on last week, but still within the range that growers have been paying for the last few months.
- Urea prices have remained high currently averaging \$1,400 to \$1,600 per tonne, with blended fertilisers costing between \$1,600 to \$1,800 per tonne. Liquid fertiliser shuttles remain around \$5,500 to \$6,200 per shuttle which while cost effective is a substantial initial outlay. Corn seed is sitting at around \$400 per bag or around \$130 per acre.
- Slow demand for hay in the region, any rainfall sees a drop in demand as livestock farmers look to pastures to support their herds.
- No change to pricing this week and enquiries remain fairly low. An extended dry period will see that lift. Growers are indicating input costs require a corresponding rise in the price of hay 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

- Light rainfall across the region this week with sporadic moderate falls. Dalby received less than 10mm of rain for the week, while Toowoomba had over 45mm of rain. However most fell late last week and on Tuesday 13th leaving the rest of the week clear and dry.
- The last of the grain harvest is being completed after a delayed start. Growers are reporting a drop in the expected prices so many are taking advantage of on farm storage to hold the grain for both better return and also to alleviate issue with the transport network causing delays in deliveries.
- Summer sowing continues in the region with the clear weather aiding in sowing schedules, however growers will be looking for some follow up rain to bed in the newly sown crops. Many growers who usually plant cotton are looking for other crops as it is too late in the season due to the delayed grain harvest and the soil temperatures are not right for a good start.
- Hay cutting continues in the region for relevant crops, some early cereal straw is being assessed for viability, as some growers consider baling rather than leaving the stalks as a weed and moisture mat.
- Enquiries have steadied with demand still consistent. Some new season hay is now appearing on the market, however quite a lot is heading north to flood affected regions to meet the need. Straw continues to be in demand from feedlots and livestock farmers looking for fibre options.

- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +8 (\$275 to \$305/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$380 to \$430/t). Prices steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$95 to \$150/t). Prices steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +8 (\$240 to \$270/t) Prices increase this week.

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North Coast NSW

- Little to no rain across the northern part of the region this week with clear dry days, however storms hit in the southern part of the region with falls of between 25mm and 40mm of rain. Temperatures are continuing to trend upward, though still slightly below average for this time of year.
- Winter crop harvest is continuing across the region where practical. Many growers are implementing fast turnaround from harvest to planting to try and catch up with the season after weather delays.
- Storms which hit the region in the early part of the week again delayed the harvest and caused some minor flooding in areas with already high water content. This rain also hampered the drying of some cut hay in the region, which is adding to the concerns regarding the safe storage of high moisture bales.
- Silage cutting has finished in the region and may recommence if enough rain and warm days allow for pasture growth.
- The Rural Assistance Authority has made grants of up to \$75,000 available in flood eligible areas.
- <https://www.raa.nsw.gov.au/disaster-assistance/storm-and-flood-programs/sdg-aug-sep-2022>
- Enquiries are continuing with reasonable demand. This season hay is beginning to come on the market though most trade is still in silage and last season hay. Not a great deal is coming on to the open market so prices are expected to continue to rise.

- Some change to prices this week
- Cereal hay: +5 (\$295 to \$345/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$400 to \$550/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$115 to \$220/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +5 (\$235 to \$290/t). Prices increase this week.

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Central West NSW

- Light falls across the region this week with 10-15mm of rain falling on Forbes most of it as part of a rain band that came through on Monday 12th, the remaining part of the week has been mostly clear and dry.

- Grain harvest is continuing in the region after at least a month's delay due to flood and other logistic issues. The harvest is coming in very well with good yields though quality is less than was expected.
- There are increased reports of wild pigs in the region, with the flood waters forcing some of the animals out of flooded regions and on to some farming land and causing some issues with harvest.
- Lupin crops around Lake Cargelligo are looking very good, with multiple flowering going all the way to full pods. Crop should be harvested in the next few weeks.
- There is evidence of Fall Army Worm grubs in early sorghum crops around Forbes. Mitigation spraying is underway.
- There are some concerns about the lateness of the cotton plantings, but the warmer recent weather has seen some growth and the rain will aid in boosting the newly planted crop.
- Flood-affected farmers can call the Department of Primary Industries' emergency hotline on 1800 814 647 to request assistance or further information can be accessed through the online portals:
- <https://www.nsw.gov.au/floods>
- <https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/floods/financial-assistance>
- Additionally the Rural Assistance Authority has made grants of up to \$75,000 available in eligible areas.
- <https://www.raa.nsw.gov.au/disaster-assistance/storm-and-flood-programs/sdg-aug-sep-2022>
- Trade continues to lift in the region as clean up continues and farmers replace damaged or destroyed fodder and pastures. Most supply is coming in from out of the region and prices are being influenced by increased transport costs.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +8 (\$210 to \$240/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +18 (\$340 to \$385/t). Prices increase this week..
- Straw: +15 (\$95 to \$110/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: +15 (\$210 to \$250/t). Prices increase this week.

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Bega Valley

- Low rainfall this week after some warm dry days with high winds late last week. Rain fell on most days but very light falls averaging 1-2mm of rain per day.
- After some drying gusty winds late last week the pastures are beginning to dry out, especially on irrigated land. Some early rainfall this week was not enough to alleviate the issue with irrigation now being needed on those grazing paddocks.
- Hay continues to be cut around the region when the weather permits, the recent spell of dry clear days which are causing issues with pasture growth have helped with the hay harvest allowing both cutting and baling under good conditions. However high moisture content is still a concern.

- Winter crop harvest is also continuing in the region, as with other areas this has been delayed by the adverse weather conditions earlier in the year. There is some concern about the viability of summer crops being sown late.
- Enquiries have remained steady with hay being actively sought, with prices beginning to respond to demand. Silage is still moving around the region, though some early season hay is also becoming available but most trade is in remaining stocks of older season hay.
- Slight change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +10 (\$305 to \$330/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$490 to \$520/t). Prices remain steady this week
- Straw: +5 (\$180 to \$210/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$330 to \$380/t). Prices remain steady this week

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Goulburn/Murray Valley

- Light to moderate rain across the region this week with the highest falls in the southern part of the region with falls of up to 25mm of rain, though there were reports of localised heavier rainfall close to the VIC/NSW border. Temperatures are still below average for this time of the year.
- The drier and clearer days last week offered a window of opportunity which was taken advantage of by dedicated hay growers in the region with a high quantity of paddocks being cut and baled. Lucerne and some cereal hay is being cut in the centre of the region with good yields and quality.
- Some mixed farmers in the region are reporting that the drier days have allowed grazing in previously inaccessible paddocks as well as boosting growth for some limited cutting for on-farm use.
- Isolated high rainfall around Barmah has caused some issues with newly planted corn crops with low lying field being flooded due to the already high soil moisture and inability of the full rivers and creeks to take more inflow. Growers are hoping the crops will survive without the need to be replanted.
- The delayed grain harvest continues well in the region, with wheat, barley and canola all being harvested at good yields and in some cases very good quality, this is lifting the outlook for those growers, however there is still a concern about sowing summer crops due to the lateness of the harvest, so short term crops are looking more likely.
- Enquiries have steadied this week, though demand remains strong. Many dedicated growers are taking advantage of the weather conditions to harvest available hay which has put some downward pressure on enquiries as the hopes are for more hay on the market, green feed availability is also balancing out the enquiries.
- Some change to pricing this week
- Cereal hay: +10 (\$245 to \$290/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +8 (\$400 to \$425/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +13 (\$100 to \$130/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$230 to \$270/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Gippsland

- Moderate to heavy falls across the region this week, with the pattern of the west of the region receiving the highest falls continuing. Rainfall of around 50-60mm of rain in Buffalo while Sale recorded 25-30mm of rain.
- Pasture growth in the east and centre of the region is moving along well, offering good grazing conditions as well as providing good regrowth for silage cutting. The good pasture growth is allowing some mixed farmers to retain silage on farm for feeding out next year.
- Hay and silage cutting continues across most of the region, though only silage cutting is ongoing in the west with the prediction of no hay being cut in that part of Gippsland appearing to be panning out.
- The rains in the west of the region are exacerbating issues with wet pastures and low quality green feed being reported by dairy and livestock farmers. Supplemental feeding is needed to keep up herd health in these conditions.
- Enquiries have steadied with growers taking advantage of windows of opportunity to harvest remaining silage and hay. Most of the local interest is coming from the west of the region by dairy and livestock farmers needing to supplement poor quality pasture feed.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +10 (\$240 to \$285/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$500 to \$520/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$80 to \$110/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +18 (\$160 to \$205/t). Prices increase this week.

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Southwest Victoria

- Light to moderate rainfall across the region this week with Hamilton receiving 35mm of rain and 45mm of rain at Warrnambool. Temperatures are back to being much lower than average for this time of the year.
- Faba bean crops around Hamilton are showing good growth and potential yield after a difficult growing period with waterlogged crops and the inability to access fields to apply fungicide and other maintenance processes. However the quality of the crop is still expected to be downgraded with a sizeable portion falling into feed quality.
- Pasture growth is moving along well after the recent burst of warmer weather followed by light rains. This is producing some good green feed as well as other less accessible paddocks now being able to be grazed after drying out.
- Silage cutting around Bullaharrie is completed for the season with no prospect of another cut being feasible with the shorter season due to weather and flooding events. However hay cutting looks as if it will commence in the next week across parts of the region as the weather allows.

- Enquiries are steady this week, the recent sun and follow up rains have kept the green feed of good quality and readily available. Most enquiries are for silage locally produced or new season hay which is beginning to come on to the market in limited amounts from inside the region but most is being sourced more widely.
- Some change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +15 (\$240 to \$285/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +15 (\$375 to \$410/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$90 to \$110/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +5 (\$190 to \$220/t). Prices increase this week.

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Southeast South Australia

- Little rainfall across the region this week with the far south and coastal areas receiving 15 – 20mm of rain, but most of the region had falls of less than 10mm of rain. Temperatures dropped back this week to below average.
- The flood waters which have so badly affected the east coast are now beginning to affect parts of SA close to the Murray River and tributaries. Some hay producers around the Narrung Peninsula are reporting the beginnings of flood across the ground where they are completing hay baling activities.
- Growers around Furner are reporting good pasture growth after some rains with plenty of high quality green feed for sheep in the region.
- The grain harvest is continuing well with grain, barley and canola still being harvested in the region, this is expected to continue for some time. However the moisture content is coming in much higher than expected and many growers are opting to store the grain on farm for a few months to dry and to increase the falling numbers count. Faba beans have also been a bumper crop this year with very good yields and quality being reported.
- Enquiries have steadied, there is still quite a bit of demand for any available older hay as little new season hay is being produced. Some hay is coming in from across the border however there are supply shortages being reported across most areas. Prices are rising both locally and from across the border as the shortage makes itself felt.
- Some change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +5 (\$320 to \$365/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$410 to \$450/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$120 to \$140/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +8 (\$305 to \$345/t). Prices increase this week.

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Central South Australia

- Little to no rainfall across the region this week, with some regions receiving no rain at all and others up to 10mm falling across a number of days. Temperatures are now at or above average for this time of year with many clear dry days.
- Grain harvest is underway across the region with some clear dry weather offering good conditions. There are reported issues with delivering the grain to receival sites with long queues causing transport delays which are having a roll on effect on getting the crop off. Many growers are having to employ temporary storage on farm to keep the harvest rolling while conditions allow.
- There have been increasing reports of mice seen in the fields as the harvest is on-going, with the weather damage causing a higher than normal amount of head loss there is an easy supply of food for the pests. Growers are planning on baiting post-harvest.
- Lentil crops are being harvested across the region to good yields and quality, with little being downgraded. However some growers still have weather affected crops and will hold off on the harvest for another few weeks.
- Hay cutting continues throughout the region as well as limited barley and cereal straw production taking place. Hay is having to be left to dry longer than usual due to higher moisture content when cut as well as sporadic rain events.
- Enquiries have steadied but demand is still strong with livestock famers looking for feed options. Some new season stock is coming on to the market but most growers are supply to long term customers before moving to the open market. Straw remains in decent demand.
- Slight change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +5 (\$280 to \$330/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$405 to \$450/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw +/-0 (\$140 to \$165/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Southwest Western Australia

- Mostly clear with little to no rainfall across the region, heaviest rainfall fell to the north of the region closer to the wheat belt with 10mm of rain recorded. Temperatures are also trending towards average.
- After a halt in the earlier part of the week due to a harvest ban under fire restriction guidelines, grain harvest continues throughout the region with the bumper harvest predictions being on track. Many growers are storing on-farm due to delivery delays at receival points and road damage causing issues with harvest turnaround times.
- Hay production is in full swing in the region for those dedicated hay growers, and production of some cereal straw is underway as part of the grain harvest. Silage cutting is still ongoing in the north of the region.
- Green feed is still in good supply however the drier conditions and the hot winds over the last week are causing some concerns with livestock farmers looking for some more rain to keep the pastures moving along. Some are now irrigating those pastures to boost growth.

- Enquiries have steadied; many growers are out harvesting and the supply of green feed as well as on farm silage is keeping the market fairly level. Much of the hay production has already been contracted so enquiries are looking for surplus. Silage is also being traded across the region for livestock and dairy herds.
- Some change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +5 (\$245 to \$300/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$355 to \$470/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$105 to \$115/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +3 (\$185 to \$205/t). Prices increase this week.

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Northwest Tasmania

- Light to moderate falls across the region this week with falls of around 20mm in Smithton and Marrawah but falls of 40mm along the western coast in a rainband earlier in the week.
- Hay cutting has been ongoing around Henrietta with good quality and yield however the recent rain band through the area has delayed the drying of the harvest.
- Silage and hay cutting, curing and baling has been proceeding well around Sheffield with the period of clearer weather allowing the harvest to ramp up quite fast with constant shifts to take advantage of the conditions.
- The cold and wet spring and the ongoing below average summer temperatures has caused some issues with the brassica crops with nitrogen deficiencies which are requiring expensive inputs to balance as the season continues.
- Pastures in the region are showing good growth after a few warmer days followed by rains to keep the growth moving along and supplying good quality feed to livestock and dairy herds.
- Hay enquiries remain steady with a moderate demand being reported. New season hay from the region is now being produced however silage is still the major fodder being traded.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$240 to \$285/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$310 to \$350/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$140 to \$200/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$195 to \$245/t) Prices remain steady this week.

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