



Australian Fodder Industry Association



23 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 producers are storing fodder supplies on-farm for use by their own herds rather than releasing it to the market which is reducing the already short supplies.
- The effects of the 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 moving through the South Australian region with reports of some hay producing regions being water affected.
- Hay production is an expensive endeavour and with the higher than average input costs of fertilizer, fuel and supplies, growers will need a premium on the price of the product to cover their costs and make margin.
- Many growers are supplying only to their long term or contracted end users, due to the lack of supply.

Driving Prices Down

- Pasture growth continues to look promising across some of the eastern states, supplying good quality green feed for dairy and livestock herds. Western Australia is also seeing an above average season in silage and hay production.
- There is reported to be an increase in feed quality grain for the current bumper grain harvest due to weather damage and rainfall during the growing season. This will offer alternative fodder options for farmers.
- Lucerne plantings are providing some good quality protein hay which was predicted to be very short due to the loss of the vetch crops.
- 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

- Clear conditions have been welcomed by hay producers to aid in drying activities however this is requiring some growers to irrigate pastures and fields to boost growth.
- Labour shortages and on-going issues with road and rail infrastructure is expected to continue to impact the industry for quite some time. Most transport infrastructure repair work is slated to continue 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

- Low rainfall across the region this week, falling as a drizzle across most days, temperatures are also lower than average.
- Planted summer crops are taking advantage of the rainfall to bed in well, but it is delaying the plating of additional corns and legume crops. However growers are happy enough to stagger the planting schedule to mitigate risk later in the season.
- No hay is being cut in the region with the ongoing damp days making drying impossible.
- Fall Army Worm grubs are being managed in the corn crops, with spraying ongoing. There is hope that the rains will help with controlling the pests as grubs tend to drown inside the corn stalks if they are small enough.
- Fuel prices continue to be of concern in the region though the prices have dropped a little this week, but the forecast is for an increase over the holiday period.
- Urea prices have remained stubbornly high fall an extended period with prices 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, as pastures are looking green and lush in the region which are supporting livestock herds. The rains are helping to boost pasture growth.
- 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

- Little to no rain across the region this week with clear sunny days and temperatures trending upwards.
- Grain harvest has completed in the region and the crop is now being prepared for sale either by storage on farm to manage moisture levels or being sent to receival sites. The conditions of the roads and the availability of drivers to cart the grain are requiring some scheduling management.
- Sorghum crops in the region are coming along well taking advantage of the good soil moisture as well as the clear dry days boosting growth, but continued rain will be needed. Cotton sowing is ongoing for those growers who have decided to follow a usual sowing schedule however short season summer crops are being planted by some growers in the region due to the delayed harvest pushing back the summer planting schedule.
- Hay cutting and baling is continuing with great drying conditions. There have been some losses due to the floods earlier in the season but the quality being reported is quite good, and better than expected for some.

- Enquiries remain fairly consistent with good demand, as newer hay begins to come on to the market however there is still quite a bit of older shedded hay available. Demand is mostly from outside the region in flood affected northern NSW. Straw demand is also steady with most enquiries from feedlots in central QLD.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +20 (\$295 to \$325/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +13 (\$395 to \$440/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$95 to \$150/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +10 (\$250 to \$280/t) Prices increase this week.

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North Coast NSW

- Low rainfall across the region this week with average falls of 5-10mm of rain. Some localised heavier falls in the north near the QLD border. Temperatures are continuing to trend upward, though still slightly below average for this time of year.
- The grain harvest is continuing in the region, with growers taking advantage of windows of opportunity to replant quickly after the harvest. Soybean crops in the region are showing some good growth with ample soil moisture and clearer days boosting the newly sown crops.
- Sorghum crops sown in the region are showing some signs of degradation and will need some follow up rains to keep them moving along.
- Pasture regrowth is coming along well with dairy and beef herds in the Clarence Valley enjoying some good quality green feed and reducing the need for supplemental feeding. Most grazing paddocks are now accessible again which is providing plenty of feed in the region.
- Hay cutting and baling is continuing in the region. The expected production is below the usual and there are quality issues and concerns regarding moisture but on the whole the season is progressing as well as can be expected with the flooding events that have hamper growth and maintenance of the crop during the year.
- 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 a steady demand. Some limited hay from this season is appearing but the majority of the trade is still older hay and new silage. Shortages in the fodder market are well established now and prices are expected to continue to rise.
- Some change to prices this week
- Cereal hay: +10 (\$305 to \$355/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +20 (\$420 to \$570/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +5 (\$125 to \$220/t). Prices increase this week.

- Pasture hay: +13 (\$245 to \$305/t). Prices increase this week.

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Central West NSW

- No rain fell across the region this week with all days clear and dry. However temperatures are still up to 5 degrees below average for this time of year.
- Grain harvest is continuing in the region after a delayed start with growers expecting to be harvesting into 2023. Some reports of quality downgrade where crops were flood affected but the yields are still quite strong. There will be more feed grain available than expected. Canola crops are coming in quite well with good yields and quality.
- Some growers in the areas where flood waters have receded are taking advantage of the high subsoil moisture and planting summer grasses, with the hope of follow up rains to boost growth and quality.
- Fall Army Worm grubs continue to be reported in the crops around Forbes and Parkes with some reports further south. Spraying is underway to control the pest.
- 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 as the clean-up efforts are ongoing and livestock farmers replace damaged or destroyed fodder and pastures, however that is offset by a reduction of herds in the region that were moved or lost due to the flooding. 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: +5 (\$210 to \$250/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$340 to \$385/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +18 (\$110 to \$130/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: +10 (\$220 to \$260/t). Prices increase this week.

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Bega Valley

- Very light falls across the region this week though slightly heavier in the far south close to the Victorian border. Most days have been clear and dry, though temperatures are still below average.
- The ongoing warm and sunny conditions are continuing to dry out grazing pastures with most now being irrigated. Forecasts of heavier rain over the Xmas weekend is bringing some relief to mixed farmers in the region.
- Silage is being cut sporadically in the region however most of the cuts are moving to long term pits rather than going on to the market.
- Hay continues to be cut around the region with good drying conditions allowing quite a bit of production to be completed. Hay is also coming in a much more acceptable moisture level and incidents of invertebrate pests are much lower than was reported earlier in the season.
- Grain harvest is continuing in the region, as with other areas this has been delayed by the adverse weather conditions earlier in the year. There is a strong belief the harvest will extend well into January, which is exacerbating concerns about the viability of summer crops being sown late.
- Enquiries have remained steady with hay still being actively sought; silage is being traded though as indicated quite a lot of the latest cuts are going into pits on farm rather than coming on to the market. Some early season hay is appearing but most trade is in remaining stocks of older season hay.
- Slight change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +5 (\$305 to \$340/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$490 to \$520/t). Prices remain steady this week
- Straw: +13 (\$190 to \$225/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$320 to \$390/t). Prices remain steady this week

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Goulburn/Murray Valley

- Little to no rainfall across the region this week with averages of 1-5mm of rain falling in the east of the region, the rest received no rain at all. Temperatures are still below average for this time of the year.
- The lack of rainfall in the area is leading to some dedicated growers around Shepparton to irrigate their hay production paddocks to keep growth going. Further north the residual soil moisture from the floods is delaying irrigation requirements.
- Pastures for livestock are requiring irrigation as well to keep the growth moving as the drying winds reduce the quality of green feed.
- Grain harvest continues in the region after delays. Reports that grazing wheat in the north of the region is coming off with very good yield and quality, growers are also planning on making cereal straw after harvest.

- Summer crop sowing is ongoing in fields where harvest has already completed. Quite a bit of corn has been planted, this is planned to be for chop silage. Millet is also being planted in the region.
- Hay cutting and baling is continuing across most of the region where weather permits. The drier days are allowing access to previously wet paddocks where the risk of bogging was too high. The cuts coming off these paddocks are not of high quality but growers are seeking to salvage what harvests they can.
- Demand remains strong in the region with farmers looking to source supplies against the predicted shortfall. However reports that some are turning to the abundance of feed quality grain available as well as the new season hay coming into the market which is helping to mitigate the rising cost of hay and silage.
- Some change to pricing this week
- Cereal hay: +10 (\$250 to \$305/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +8 (\$410 to \$430/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +10 (\$110 to \$140/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: +18 (\$255 to \$280/t). Prices increase this week.

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Gippsland

- Very light falls across the region this week with an average of 5mm of rain across the west and central, the furthest east of the region did receive heavier falls of up to 20mm of rain.
- Pasture growth in the east and centre of the region is continuing to come along well with plenty of green feed for grazing dairy and livestock herds. Mixed and dedicated livestock farmers in the region are hoping to get to mid-January before supplementary feeding will be required.
- Growers are looking to start some paddock repair efforts following several wet and damaging months.
- Hay and silage are continuing to be cut across the region. The localised rainfall around Bairnsdale on the weekend has delayed cutting and drying but growers are expected warmer temperatures to allow for drying to continue. Silage cutting is ongoing in the west of the region but hay cutting is still not considered viable by growers.
- While this week saw almost no rainfall the underlying wetter conditions in the west of the region continue to create issues for dairy and livestock herds with poor quality pasture and the need to continue with supplemental feeding.
- Enquiries are lifting a little, with most of the local interest coming from the west of the region by dairy and livestock farmers needing to supplement poor quality pasture feed. Silage is still the majority of the trade with some older hay as well on the market.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +13 (\$255 to \$295/t). Prices increase this week.

- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$500 to \$520/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +8 (\$90 to \$115/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: +13 (\$180 to \$210/t). Prices increase this week.

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Southwest Victoria

- Little to no rainfall across most of the region this week with the east seeing up to 5mm of rain while the border country and most of the western coast saw no rain.
- Grain harvest is in preparation in the region with canola being windrowed before harvest, and some early wheat crops coming off the fields.
- Recent rains have boosted pasture growth in the region the clearer drier days and warmer temperatures are helping build some good green feed for livestock and dairy herds.
- Silage cutting is continuing in the region with some producers able to bring in another cut before Christmas due to the good regrowth. There are still some concerns regarding the pest load in the new cut silage however the cuts are being treated before pitting or baling.
- Enquiries have quietened this week as many producers are either harvesting or planting late summer crops. Green feed is still readily available which is also keeping demand in check. Most enquiries remain for locally produced silage 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: +5 (\$250 to \$285/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +13 (\$395 to \$415/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +10 (\$105 to \$115/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$190 to \$220/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Southeast South Australia

- Clear and dry for most of the week however moderate rainfall arrived in the middle of the week with falls of 20-25mm of rain in Naracoote
- Flood waters continue to move through South Australia and are now impacting some prime hay and grain producing land. Some producers are cutting and harvesting earlier than they had planned to ensure they can salvage some of the threatened crops. Others are erecting or strengthening emergency levees.

- Grass is still quite green in the southern areas, and may continue to be into the new year which will have an impact on demand for hay.
- Growers are reporting a higher number of conical snails in the wheat and barley harvests coming in; this is due to the weather conditions but is adding to costs and delays due to the requirement for additional seed cleaning.
- The grain harvest is continuing well but with the delayed start is predicted to continue well into 2023. Whilst yields are coming in well the crop is heavy and is slowing down the normal harvest schedule. Many growers are storing grain on-farm as a mitigation effort to counter delays at receival sites and to also dry the grain for better quality assessment. However there is still expected to be a larger than usual amount moving into feed quality.
- Enquiries have been stable in part due to the fact most are out with the grain harvest and the good quality of green feed is keeping herds well supplied. Some demand from cattle and pig feedlots is being recorded. The shortage is well noted for good quality hay.
- Some change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$320 to \$365/t). Prices remain steady 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: +5 (\$315 to \$345/t). Prices increase this week.

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Central South Australia

- Mostly clear and dry throughout the area with localised light falls of 10mm of rain reported. Temperatures are moving back into the average range for this time of year.
- Grain harvest continues to roll out across the region with most growers reporting good yields and quality. All efforts are on bringing in the harvest while the weather conditions permit. Some growers however with forecasts of significant downgrades are expecting to harvest in 2023.
- Mice continue to be seen in the harvest with reporting of numbers increasing. The amount of dropped seed is providing good feed conditions for them.
- Hay cutting is continuing in the region, though baling has been delayed a number of times where localised weather is causing issues. Barley and cereal straw production is also taking place which are mostly going to feedlots.
- Enquiries are quiet as expected at this time of year. Many are out harvesting grain and there is less reported demand. Feedlots still seeking quality fodder and straw is being produced to demand.
- No change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +10 (\$300 to \$330/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +5 (\$415 to \$450/t). Prices increase this week.

- Straw +/- (\$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, the heaviest falls were along the southern coast but that was still only around 5mm of rain. Temperatures are now at or above their average for this time of the year.
- Grain harvest continues with reports of good yields and quality. However many growers are storing on-farm due to delivery delays at receival points and road infrastructure problems causing issues with harvest turnaround times. Additionally the price being quoted for deliveries are beginning to drop as the amount of harvest becomes apparent.
- Hay production is coming to an end in the region after some very good production levels with both good quality and quantity.
- Pastures are being irrigated now to keep boosting green feed for livestock herds; silage is being fed out to sheep herds in the north of the region, however dairy herds around Busselton are still feeding from pastures without the need for additional feeding.
- Enquiries have levelled with most hay production completed and exporters having filled their books so the remaining stock is now available to the market. However the green feed availability as well as the ongoing grain harvest is keeping enquiries at a low level.
- No change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +/- (\$245 to \$300/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/- (\$355 to \$470/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/- (\$105 to \$115/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/- (\$185 to \$205/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Northwest Tasmania

- Little to no rainfall across the region this week but there is forecast for some rain over the coming weekend, fog and some frosts have also been recorded. Temperatures well below average with the state recording the coldest temperatures for December in 50 years.
- Hay cutting and baling is continuing sporadically throughout the region, the cold and damp conditions are causing delays in drying of any cuts. Silage cutting throughout most of the region is ongoing with some very good quality being recorded for first and second cuts. Regrowth is also coming along well so there is some cause for optimism that silage will fill gaps left by a below average hay production year.

- Pastures are continuing to provide good green feed to dairy and livestock herds throughout the region which is supporting farmers storing silage on farm for feeding out in the new year.
- Forage crops such as turnip and kale are showing good growth with high soil moisture and sunny days giving the crops a good boost.
- Hay enquiries remain steady with a less than average demand continuing to be reported. New season hay from the region is now being produced however silage is still the major fodder being traded. Most hay is coming from the south of the state where requested.
- Some 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: +5 (\$205 to \$245/t) Prices increase this week.

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