



Australian Fodder Industry Association



27 January 2023

# HAY REPORT

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

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## NATIONAL SUMMARY

### Driving Prices Up

- Supply shortages are now firmly entrenched, and the lack of good quality protein hay is seeing the price of some alternatives, especially Lucerne, continue to rise.
- Demand is strong, notably for this time of year, which is usually pretty quiet, with the known shortfall bringing more end users into the market, especially farmers who traditionally had a locked in supplier who could not meet supply due to weather or flooding events.
- Pastures are continuing to dry without summer rains, most significantly in NSW and SA which is reducing the amount of available green feed.
- Recent heavy falls of rain in Northern and Central Queensland are bringing more livestock producers on to the market looking for supplies.

### Driving Prices Down

- Pasture growth continues to look promising in some of the eastern states, most especially in Victoria, supplying good quality green feed for dairy and livestock herds. Parts of Gippsland and the South West are producing more hay than was expected. Western Australia is also seeing an above average season in silage and hay production.
- There is an abundance of feed grain options due to the bumper harvest combined with some adverse weather conditions leading to a downgrade of some grains.
- There is some optimism in relation to the amount of Lucerne which will be coming on the market as growers under irrigation are looking for multiple cuts.
- Silage production has been quite good across parts of the country, which is helping to fill some fodder shortages.

### Local News

- Ongoing clear conditions in the eastern mainland and Tasmania have been welcomed by hay producers to aid in hay production. However the dry conditions are causing some issues and requiring some growers to irrigate pastures and fields to boost green feed growth as well as bed in any summer plantings.
- Road and rail infrastructure continues to show the strain from the bumper grain harvest as it moves through the states. Contractors are unable to meet some requests due to long delays at receival sites preventing drivers being available for other cartage operations.
- The Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) predicts that most of the country has close to equal chances of above median rainfall during February to April while below median rainfall is likely for southern South Australia and the far south-west of Western Australia. South Australia and Western Australia have an increased risk of unusually dry conditions. February to April 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

- Moderate rainfall across the region this week, though there were a few clear and drier days, however most clear days were interspersed with showers.
- Corn crops in the region continued to be planted, with the high rainfall giving them a good starting boost however the continued wet conditions are causing issues with bogging of planting and spraying machinery.
- Hay cutting is continuing sporadically in the region, taking advantage of windows of opportunity. However there have been few dry days in a row to aid in curing and some cut hay is being weather affected.
- Input costs have steadied with fuel coming back to around \$2.15 per litre and fertiliser whilst still high has steadied at around \$1,400 per tonne. Blended fertilisers are still costing around \$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.
- Hay demand is still slow in the region, as pastures are looking green and lush and are supporting livestock herds. The rains are becoming more of a concern now with paddock accessibility and some clear dry days would help with safer grazing.
- No change to pricing this week and enquiries remain fairly low with the good rains keeping pastures green; however an extended dry period is expected to see an increase in demand. Few, if any, trucks are to be seen carting fodder in the region, though some are reported to be headed further west.
- 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

- Most of the region saw limited rainfall with averages around 10-15mm of rain however localised higher falls were recorded with Toowoomba receiving almost 35mm of rain midweek. Temperatures continue to trend back to average.
- Some early sown Sorghum crops are getting close to harvest; with prediction of good yield and quality, the earlier sown crops have helped in drying some waterlogged paddocks. There are some concerns for late sown crops as there has been little follow up rain and the crops are struggling.
- Millet and pasture hay is being made in the region with the warm dry conditions excellent for curing and bailing. Oaten hay production in the region has completed. Most cereal hay was sold direct from the paddock or harvested to meet existing contracts.
- Reports that corn plantings have been higher than normal this year with the crops ability to be left standing and still bring in good yields while other more vulnerable crops need to be maintained and harvested within strict timelines having been noted in the recent adverse conditions. The plan is that much of this corn will end up as animal feed.

- Enquiries continue reasonably strong with growers clearing their new season hay almost as soon as it is made in some cases. High quality is being sought both in and out of the region. Feedlots are picking up as much supply as they can. The high rainfall in Central QLD is seeing many livestock producers look for additional fodder supplies.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$330 to \$400/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +10 (\$490 to \$565/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +10 (\$140 to \$200/t). Prices increase this week
- Pasture hay: +13 (\$340 to \$385/t) Prices increase this week.

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### **North Coast NSW**

- Low to moderate rainfall across most of the region this week, with inland areas receiving higher rainfall totals of around 25mm of rain; however some regions received less than 10mm of rainfall.
- Spraying and spreading has been ongoing in some parts of the region with the indication that there will be some rainfall to produce more favourable growing conditions.
- Dry conditions continue to cause issues with some pastures drying out and green feed dying back, irrigated pastures are still supplying good feed options but good soaking rain is needed.
- Previous floods produced good soil moisture which is helping sustain some crops in the ongoing dry conditions, however it leached nutrients which is requiring additional fertilizer spreading to supplement.
- Invasive weeds are causing some concern with the earlier wet conditions and inability to get on paddocks to spray leading to some being able to establish a firm hold. Fleabane is of particular concern this season.
- Demand has stayed stable this week with enquiries still from farmers looking to build reserves and feedlots who have seen an increase in animals as producers move them on. Older shedded hay from previous seasons is still available, and straw is in reasonable supply.
- Some change to prices this week
- Cereal hay: +15 (\$395 to \$435/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +5 (\$500 to \$620/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$165 to \$250/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +10 (\$325 to \$365/t). Prices increase this week.

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## Central West NSW

- Light to moderate falls across the region this week, with Forbes receiving 15mm of rain while Coonabarabran had falls of 35mm of rain. Temperatures are trending up to average for this time of year.
- The last of the grain harvest is being completed for most in the region with harvesters now taking off weather damaged or downgraded crops. Cereal hay is also being made after the harvest for some growers looking for an additional cash crop.
- Hay making continues in the region on those drier days. Some limited rainfall has hampered cutting and drying, however growers are taking advantage of warmer days to clear as much as is left available. There are reports of some good quality Lucerne on irrigated land. Straw production has also continued in the region.
- Preparation work is underway for the next season crops, for those who did not choose to plant a short season summer crop and are looking at the next season. While rainfall is low, there have been reports of bogging in silt left behind from the riverine flooding.
- Enquiries have steadied this week, but demand remains relatively high. Some additional hay is being made in the region as well as straw and is being sold quite quickly after bailing. Feedlots are placing orders for straw for fibre options.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +8 (\$265 to \$320/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$475 to \$525/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +15 (\$150 to \$175/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: +10 (\$295 to \$320/t). Prices increase this week.

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## Bega Valley

- Little to no rain across the region this week, most days dry and clear with very light showers except in the north of the region which saw up to 25mm of rain falling.
- The continued mostly dry spell is seeing irrigated pastures supplying green feed in the region but dryland pastures are drying out quite considerably. Silage is being fed out to some dairy herds.
- Some sowing ongoing in the region with the limited rainfall to help bed in the crops. Paddock preparation and some repair to previously damaged paddocks are also ongoing.
- Grain harvest is wrapping up in the region with most growers now preparing for the next season; some cereal straw cutting is taking place, most to order from customers.
- Enquiries have remained steady with farmers still looking to build on-farm supply for the warmer months ahead. There was quite a bit of silage cut last year which is still on farm and is helping to mitigate demand. Most good quality hay is coming in from Victoria and parts of the Riverina.
- Some change to pricing this week.

- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$335 to \$370/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$510 to \$550/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$225 to \$275/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +5 (\$350 to \$410/t). Prices increase this week.

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### **Goulburn/Murray Valley**

- Mostly clear and dry across the region this week with patchy rainfall of up to 20mm of rain in some areas, with higher totals close to the NSW border.
- Hay production is continuing in the region with good cutting and curing conditions, the season is delayed, with some speciality equine hay products being cut now when they would normally have been cleared before Xmas. The delay has caused some quality issues but overall the quality is good to excellent. Rain in the latter part of the week has halted cutting of Lucerne around Shepparton but this will continue once conditions clear.
- Reports of mice seen in the paddocks, but also a might higher instance of rats being seen. Mitigation measures are underway.
- Grain harvest is continuing in the region, with growers moving on to less quality harvest now most of the high quality or vulnerable crops have been taken off the fields. Chickpeas have come in with a good result in the region.
- Preparations are underway for the next sowing season with paddock repair and spraying and spreading being undertaken before the next sowing commences. There have been reports of quite a few instances of entrenched weeds due to the prolonged wet spring and inability to get on the paddocks to spray.
- Enquires remain steady, with new season hay still being cut and moved on to the market. Quite a bit of the stock is moving interstate to fill needs left by the less than average hay production elsewhere but local demand is still reasonable.
- Some change to pricing this week
- Cereal hay: +8 (\$280 to \$355/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$440 to \$495/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +3 (\$140 to \$195/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$300 to \$350/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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## **Gippsland**

- Low rainfall across most of the region this week with some moderate falls in the east and on the western coastal regions. Most days have been clear and dry.
- While there has been some reasonable rain falling in patches which has been helpful in keeping pastures going in the areas where it fell, many pastures are beginning to dry out and will need follow up rains to keep the growth moving along.
- Pastures of chicory are looking lush and green around Poowong and offering good green feed for dairy cows in the region. This has been aided by timely rainfall keeping the pasture growth moving well.
- Lucerne crops around Bairnsdale continue to be cut and bailed with good quality being produced. Some rainfall has delayed the production, but there have been good windows of opportunity to keep the season going, with many paddocks left to cut. The rains are also boosting regrowth which will allow for additional cuts.
- The west of the region continues to produce both silage and limited hay with the recent spell of dry hot weather allowing more access to paddocks. Green feed in the region is also showing good growth and supplying beef and dairy herds.
- Enquiries are steady as the conditions allow for the continued production of hay and silage in the west of the region, there is some demand out of the south west of the state but many enquiries are from interstate with a number of deliveries heading into NSW.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +5 (\$320 to \$360/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$500 to \$520/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +10 (\$130 to \$185/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: +10 (\$270 to \$310/t). Prices increase this week.

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## **Southwest Victoria**

- Light rainfall across the region this week with falls on average of around 15-20mm of rain, higher in the coastal areas.
- Grain harvest is continuing in the region after a delayed start. Many growers are reporting great yield and quality even with a higher than average portion of the crop downgraded to feed quality.
- Pasture growth continues strongly, with recent rain reviving crops which were beginning to dry out. Most good green feed is still on irrigation however and more falls will be needed to bolster dryland pastures.
- Summer crop plantings are looking in better condition after the recent rainfall, but additional rains will be needed to maximise growth.
- Enquiries remain steady with the good green feed availability as well as reasonable stocks of silage stored by local farmers keeping demand reasonable. Many farmers are still looking to

build up stocks and are looking for good quality hay, but some dairy herds in the region should be covered well until the autumn break.

- Some change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +10 (\$305 to \$340/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +8 (\$445 to \$495/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$130 to \$165/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$240 to \$270/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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### **Southeast South Australia**

- Low rainfall totals across the region this week with the highest falls along the coastal region, mostly clear and dry.
- Flood waters continue to impact on prime agricultural land and are expected to do so for some time. The full profile this will create will be of benefit in the next sowing season however repair and rehabilitation will need to be undertaken before many paddocks will be viable again.
- Hay continues to be cut in the region with quality variable, but producers are happy enough to be harvesting some viable crops.
- Most non-irrigated paddocks are now dry with only irrigated paddocks offering green feed to herds, farmers are feeding out previously stored silage and grains.
- Grain harvest is continuing in the region with good yield and quality reported, there is still quite a lot of lesser quality being stored on farm and forecasts for a fair amount of feed quality grain being available.
- Enquiries remain steady with many growers harvesting grain or continuing to cut and bail hay while the conditions are favourable. Supply is still tight even with new hay on the market as some dedicated producers are only filling orders of existing customers. Irrigated green feed is still available, and some new season hay is coming on the market.
- Some change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$340 to \$385/t). Prices remain steady this week
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$430 to \$470/t). Prices remain steady this week
- Straw: +5 (\$145 to \$190/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$325 to \$355/t). Prices remain steady this week

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## Central South Australia

- Clear and dry throughout the week with little to no rainfall reported. Temperatures are back to the average for the area at this time of year.
- Grain harvest continues in the region, though the majority of the high priority harvest has completed. Reports of good solid yields and quality, though as expected greater than average amounts downgraded to feed quality. There are still concerns around the delay in receival sites accepting grain and tying up drivers and contractors.
- Faba bean harvest has finished in the region with some very good yields this season for those who managed to have good disease control.
- Summer crop sowing continues in the region with growers looking to make up some of the delay caused by a late grain harvest. Reports of an increase in pest species such as fleabane as well as higher populations of mice and rats being seen in the stubble continue to be made.
- Summer spraying is ongoing in the region when the conditions are favourable; growers are warned about checking for correct conditions as incidents of spray drift across new crops have been reported.
- Oaten hay production in the region has been completed for most; cereal hay is still being produced as well as straw.
- Enquiries appear to be slowing, with many growers taking a break or having sourced sufficient supply to deal with short to midterm needs. Many are using a mix of fodder options to mitigate the shortage of hay and the higher prices. Straw being produced in the region is being sourced for fibre options.
- Some change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +10 (\$330 to \$365/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +5 (\$445 to \$480/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw +/- (\$150 to \$185/t). Prices remain steady this week

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## Southwest Western Australia

- Very light falls of less than 5mm of rain fell in the southern coastal region, most of the south west saw no rain this week.
- Ongoing dry conditions are causing pastures in the region to brown off with only irrigated pastures supplying any green feed. Most dairy and livestock herds in the region are being fed out fodder. Summer rains are needed to build up some growth.
- Grain harvest is winding down in the region, though there are some major concerns with the ability to deliver to ports and receival sites with many trucks parked on the sides of the roads waiting to unload. Most growers are storing as much as possible on farm in permanent and temporary storage.
- Hay production is mostly completed for this round with straw still being bailed in the region for domestic use.

- Summer crops sown in late December after the rains have bedded in well, though need irrigation to keep growth going.
- Enquiries have slowed in the region as farmers have assessed future needs and many have sufficient for short to medium term requirements. A good supply of feed quality grain being available as well as good hay and silage production by mixed farmers is keeping demand low.
- No change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$275 to \$310/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$400 to \$470/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$105 to \$125/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$200 to \$230/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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### **Northwest Tasmania**

- Some light falls near the coast this week with higher totals further inland, averages of 10mm of rain in the coastal regions with up to 50mm rainfall in the more central parts.
- Hay production continues in the region with good quality grass and mixed pasture hay being produced. The recent burst of warm clear days has allowed some additional hay production with good curing conditions before baling.
- Pastures are remaining green and lush in the region supplying good quality feed for dairy and livestock herds. Some drying was experienced but rains have pushed growth along again.
- Grain harvest has started in the region with wheat crops being pulled off the fields around Smithton. Spring planted barley crops in the same region are ripening up well in preparation for harvest.
- Paddocks of forage turnip around Devonport are bulking up well and taking advantage of the warmer conditions to add plenty of biomass. These crops are set for dairy and livestock grazing in February.
- Enquiries are lower than last week as additional hay production as well as good quality green pastures providing green feed to herds in the region keeps demand lower. Some movement of hay to those areas that are beginning to dry out, most sourced within the region, though there have been some additional supplies from the south of the state.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$255 to \$285/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$330 to \$380/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$150 to \$205/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$225 to \$250/t) Prices remain steady this week.

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The Australian Fodder Industry Association (AFIA) is the independent, national peak body for Australia's fodder industry.

Since our establishment in 1996 our network of members, sponsors, supporters and engaged participants has worked for over 25 years to help the fodder industry grow

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