



Australian Fodder Industry Association



10 September 2021

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

- The seasonal outlook released by BOM is predicting above average rainfall for the eastern parts of Australia as well as parts of Western Australia. A wet spring again this year has the potential to reduce the production of good quality cereal hay.
- Currently the hay industry is at an all-time low with regards to trade, but some farmers are taking the opportunity to seek out existing good quality hay that can be stored for dryer times. This continued trade will cause slight fluctuations in pricing.
- Labour shortages continue to impact growers as they race to secure staff for the upcoming harvest with many having to pay increased wages to remain competitive. Many growers are also waiting on new machinery that continues to be held up due to COVID impacts overseas.
- Despite a strong cattle market feedlots are increasing numbers to meet export markets and will need the fodder to support this demand.

Driving Prices Down

- Trade is minimal at present with many now waiting to see what will be available from the new season, with pricing expected not to significantly increase in the short term.
- Good spring conditions will see many farmers producing and conserving as much silage as they can themselves, particularly along the NSW Coast and Victoria.
- Australia continues to do well with no significant drought or natural disaster requiring the high volumes of hay being traded to all states that we have seen previously over the last ten years.

Local News

- A dryer week for most states following significant rainfall across South Australia, Victoria, and New South Wales. Many river systems have risen including the Murray below the Hume Dam and the Goulburn with minor flooding expected to continue.
- Boarder closures and permit requirements continue to be a concern for contractors as we approach the new silage and hay season.
- Silage is underway in Northern Victoria, with Southern Victoria to follow towards the end of September depending on conditions.
- Crops continue to do well with recent rain giving one last lift as we head into the final 4 – 6 weeks of the growing season.
- In the north demand in the Atherton Tablelands remains steady with a small amount moving locally. Following the ongoing rainfall in Northern QLD many parts including the Tablelands continue to have an influx of fresh grass. The Darling Downs region reporting one of the best starts to a season following good rainfall for the first half of the year. Barley crops have started to be cut in the area for hay.
- Southern Australia is again on track for a good season with timely rain, most regions are reporting good growth. Northern Victoria have started to cut silage, with many growers looking to turn these paddocks around for hay with good conditions. Several key factors still needed to take place and a relatively dry spring to improve on last year's season.

- Western Australia has recorded one of its best season breaks. Rain has continued to fall during August but not the record falls recorded in July. High yields expected through the region as the season continues to progress well. Prices remain strong for all fodder types in WA.
- Buyers are encouraged to feed test and view fodder before purchasing to be sure of the quality of the feed.

Regional Commentary

Atherton Tablelands

- Atherton has been plagued by ongoing light rain and mild temperatures.
- Conditions have been up and down for growers wanting to bale rhodes grass with rain continuing to make conditions difficult and growers not getting the required drying time with 1 – 2mm of rain every day.
- Plenty of green feed in the region for grazing stock following winter rain across most of the Atherton area.
- Trade continues to be well down as many farmers have been able to produce a product further west which is more economical than freighting from the Tablelands.
- No changes to prices this week.
- Pasture (Rhodes Grass) hay: +/-0 (\$300 to \$330).
- 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 recorded this week across the Darling Downs.
- Majority of the Darling Downs is on track for a good season, St George has missed out on significant rain over the last four weeks. Some growers have irrigated new season crops, more rain would be ideal now.
- Earlier barley crops are now being cut for hay, reports that these crops are producing good hay.
- Many crops are later this year with some only being in the ground now for six weeks following late cotton crops. Reports of mice climbing new season crops and chewing heads as soon as they appear. Growers are having to air bait to control mice numbers.
- Majority of new season fodder is going into storage for personal use as demand in the area continues to be well down.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$260 to \$280/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$390 to \$430/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$60 to \$70/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$200 to \$240/t) Prices remain steady this week.

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North Coast NSW

- Light rain for the North Coast this week.
- Growers have started to cut silage. Crops have been slower with dry conditions and warm days. Rain would be ideal now to boost cereal crops in the west.
- Reports not as much silage will be made this season with demand down and many still carrying over from last season.
- Trade continues to be steady with local coastal growers selling to smaller farming operations and equine clients over the last six weeks.
- Cereal hay, straw, and lucerne prices quoted are for supplies to be carted into the region.
- No changes to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$250 to \$300/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$380 to \$430/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$100 to \$150/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$200 to \$230/t). Prices remain steady this week.
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Central West NSW

- Up to 40mm of rain was recorded across the Central West this week.
- High yields are forecast for the region. With warmer conditions now following ongoing rainfall, crops are on track and no further spring rain needed.
- No increase in mice at this stage in region but growers and farmers continue to be vigilant. Hay production will be well down with many growers preferring to go through to grain due to current attractive prices and minimal ongoing trade of fodder.
- Trade is minimal in the region with reports of Queensland feedlots seeking straw and good quality oaten hay for entry cattle from New South Wales growers. Lucerne moving to the New England area for farmers weaning cattle.
- <https://www.nsw.gov.au/initiative/mouse-control-support-program>
- <https://www.nsw.gov.au/media-releases/50-million-support-package-to-help-regional-communities-combat-mouse-plague>
- No changes to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$180 to \$210/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$310 to \$360/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$60 to \$80/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$160 to \$200/t). Prices remain steady this week.
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Bega Valley

- Good rainfall again this week for the Bega region, with 45mm recorded for the first two weeks in September.
- Growers waiting for dryer conditions so silage can be made. Warmer weather has seen improved growth in grasses and pasture.
- Winter was not a difficult time in the region for farmers with many not having to feed out until June. Significant conserved fodder from last spring has continued to be utilised to carry stock through.
- Trade continues to be low with reduced amounts of cereal hay coming onto the coast for dairy farmers. Small squares of lucerne also trading mainly to equine customers.
- No change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$290 to \$320/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$480 to \$520/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$200 to \$230/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$350 to \$400/t). Prices remain steady this week.
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Goulburn/Murray Valley

- Significant rain in the last seven days with reports of 30 – 40mm falling.
- More silage to be cut in the area, growers waiting for paddocks to dry out before starting again.
- Very minimal rain needed now, paddocks are still wet. Growers wanting to make hay will need big windows this year for drying time with heavy crops being reported.
- Small amounts of good quality lucerne continue to move into New South Wales primarily the North Coast.
- No changes to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$180 to \$200/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$450 to \$500/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$70 to \$100/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$230 to \$280/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Gippsland

- Widespread rain this week across Gippsland with the north recording 30mm.
- To dry out the region needs to keep receiving small amounts of rain. Growers and farmers set to make a significant amount of silage again this season.
- Rain has been timely this week and will give a boost to pastures that have been set aside for silage.
- Cereal and vetch hay continues to be traded into Gippsland from the Mallee for dairy farmers calving in cattle. Farmers only taking what they need to get through now.
- No changes to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$210 to \$250/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$550 to \$650/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$70 to \$85/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$90 to \$110/t). Prices remain steady this week.
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Southwest Victoria

- The Southwest recorded 12mm of rain in most places this week.
- Good rainfall is still needed now in the Wimmera and Mallee for cereal crops to finish well. Reports that growers are turning sheep onto vetch crops due to the lack of rain.
- Conditions still damp in the south with several overcast days. Pasture is slow growing, but growers are reporting a good season ahead.
- Farmers are still buying in feed in the Warrnambool region and other southern parts until pastures are more viable. Vetch coming from the Wimmera and cereal hay is currently freighting into the area from Ararat.
- No changes to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$170 to \$220/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$350 to \$400/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$60 to \$80/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$150 to \$180/t). Prices remain steady this week.
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Southeast South Australia

- Up to 10mm was recorded across the region in the last seven days.
- Conditions have been wet for the region, but crops are looking good, and the region is on track for a good season. Reports that silage and hay production will be well down on previous years.
- Paddock feed slowly returning, farmers with heavier stock numbers still needing to supplement feed.
- Steady trade for growers to beef and sheep farmers. Also, opportunist buyers that have storage are taking advantage of any good quality fodder on the market. Some inquiry for straw from farmers but a majority at this stage are not wanting to buy significant amounts of fodder leading into the spring.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$200 to \$230/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$330 to \$350/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$100 to \$120/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$180 to \$200/t). Prices remain steady this week.
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Central South Australia

- Rain this week for the Central South with 7 – 10mm being recorded, not as much as had been anticipated following warm and windy conditions.
- More rain would be ideal now for these winter crops as they head into their last four weeks of the growing season.
- Local trade has slowed as paddock feed continues to improve. Many now waiting to see what the new season hay season will bring before committing to any more fodder purchases.
- Exporters will only take a reduced amount of new season cereal hay and it will need to be a premium product.
- No change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$170 to \$200/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$400 to \$450/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$90 to \$140/t). Prices remain steady this week.
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Southwest Western Australia

- No significant rain this week with daytime temperatures on the increase.
- Reports of water still laying in lower parts of paddocks. Waterlogging has been a significant widespread problem this season. Conditions are starting to improve, warmer weather needed now following ongoing rain and generally cold weather.
- Minimal domestic trade at present with reports still on the demand for straw. Only a small amount of straw stored undercover this season, as the chicken industry continues to seek out a good quality product.
- The season is still on track to be a success in the west with big yields already being forecast for grain and hay growers. Mixed reports on how much hay will actually be produced this season.
- No changes to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$260 to \$310/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$450 to \$490). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$130 to 180/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$180 to \$200/t). Prices remain steady this week.
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Northwest Tasmania

- The Northwest has recorded 700mm year to date, matching the average yearly rainfall.
- Grass has started to grow and improve in quality. The start of silage season is still a minimum of four weeks away.
- Reports growers are preparing for a big hay season. Ongoing wet weather could push the season out. The latest season start for the Northwest have been the second week of November.
- Demand continues to be steady as farmers continue to feed out until paddocks can carry stock again. Majority of cereal hay produced last spring has all but been traded now.
- No changes to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$220 to \$280/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$300 to \$350/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$150 to \$200/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$200 to \$240/t) Prices remain steady this week.

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