



Australian Fodder Industry Association



10 March 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

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NATIONAL SUMMARY

Driving Prices Up

- Dry conditions across parts of the country have reduced the availability of pasture feed, requiring supplemental feeding and the replacement of on farm stores of fodder.
- Supply shortages continue to affect the market, keeping prices high. Though this is countered somewhat by reduced sales at the higher price points.
- Feedlots are reporting a larger than usual stocking rate combined with the cancellation of some sales which is keeping levels high. This has meant they are looking for a large quantity of good quality produce and are sourcing across a wide area.
- As we move into autumn farmers are looking to build up on-farm supplies for the cooler months ahead.

Driving Prices Down

- Green feed continues to be available in areas which have received autumn rains; this is keeping demand down locally.
- A number of mixed farmers produced enough hay and silage for their own short to medium term use over the last season so they are not adding to the demand on the market.
- 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. More of this is being incorporated into the fodder mix.
- Hay and straw production is still ongoing in limited quantities, supplying the local market.

Local News

- Trade in hay has slowed down across most regions which is traditional at this time of year. Though those areas seeing extended dry spells are increasing demand which is being met both locally and from interstate.
- There is expected concern across the livestock sectors, especially sheep graziers in relation to the latest updates on the sheep live export trade. This is mostly in WA but concern about flow on effects across both livestock and fodder industries is widespread.
- In South Australia there is some talk about a proposed plan to re-open some closed narrow gauge railway lines between privately owned receival sites and ports. Many growers are of the opinion the money would be better spent on the roads and investing in standard gauge rail.
- Local roads and infrastructure are in serious need of repair and maintenance and these repair works are expected to continue for some months, especially in areas hit by flooding events in 2022. This will have on-going effects on farm businesses in those regions.
- The Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) states that La Niña has weakened in the tropical Pacific Ocean and is likely near its end. Ocean indicators of La Niña have returned to neutral levels, while atmospheric indicators that remain at La Niña levels have started to weaken. All but one of the surveyed international climate models suggest sea surface temperatures in the tropical Pacific will remain neutral through autumn. ENSO outlooks extending beyond autumn should be viewed with caution as models typically have lower forecast accuracy at this time of year.
- Buyers are encouraged to feed test and view fodder before purchase to be sure of the quality of feed.

Regional Commentary

Atherton Tablelands

- After a mostly dry and sunny weekend the rains have returned this week with falls of around 60-70mm across the region this week. There have been sporadic sunny periods during the week, but they are relatively short-lived.
- Corn crops continue to be cut for silage in the region, though most silage cutting around Atherton is expected to be a few weeks away. The ongoing wet conditions are causing an issue with getting choppers onto the fields.
- Drier sunny days over the last weekend did allow for some maintenance of planted crops in relation to disease control and growth.
- The continued wet makes it impossible for growers to be able to bale any substantial amounts of pasture grass for hay. There have not been enough consecutive days to allow for drying. There is concern around the quality of any hay that will be cut due to the conditions.
- Seed harvest is continuing in the region and there are reports of some limited hay and silage production around Dimbulah for local use only.
- Pastures continue to be green in the region supplying good quality grass to herds. However there are some concerns regarding bogging and herds are being rotated more frequently than usual.
- Input costs have steadied for the last few weeks with petrol down to around \$1.99 per litre and fertiliser has steadied at around \$900 per tonne. Blended fertilisers are still costing around \$1,000 to \$1,200 per tonne. Liquid fertiliser shuttles while cost effective remain a substantial initial outlay.
- No change to pricing this week and enquiries remain fairly low with the good rains keeping pastures green in the region, some movement of hay to the west but nothing that has an impact on pricing. The concern around the availability and quality of any hay produced locally due to the lack of dry sunny days to enable cutting and curing continues to be expressed.
- 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

- Another week of limited rainfall across the region with falls of between 0mm and 5mm of rain, some areas received no rainfall at all. Most days were dry but overcast.
- Dry conditions continue in the region placing more stress on already sown crops looking for growth before harvest and the planting of the next season crops into favourable soils. Sheep herds in the region are looking for any green shoots in mostly dry fields, and herds are being fed out fodder supply.
- Early sown sorghum crops in the region are being harvested with reports of good yields. Most of the early sown have now been taken off.

- Continuing dry conditions are an issue for most growers however they are allowing for more repair work to fields and infrastructure affected by floods as well as levelling operations in melon hole areas.
- Fleabane and other invasive weeds continue to be an issue in the area with many growers unable to access fields during the early stages of growth in order to control the weeds, and now having to resort to more intensive methods.
- Enquiries have lifted a little due to the ongoing dry conditions putting pressure on herds in the region. Many farmers do have a reasonable supply of fodder on hand but some are looking towards the winter months and looking to lock in some supplies early given the last season.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$340 to \$410/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$490 to \$565/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +3 (\$145 to \$210/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: +10 (\$350 to \$395/t) Prices increase this week.

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North Coast NSW

- Moderate rainfall along the coast close to the QLD border with falls of between 20 – 40mm of rain. Further south and inland received much lower totals averaging between 5 -10mm of rain. Some sunny days, but mostly overcast.
- With the recent rain some growers in the region are starting a planting schedule; most notably oats are being sown across a number of inland areas.
- Some growers have assessed the later sown sorghum crops in the region and have determined even with the recent rainfall they will not be in a harvestable state until mid-winter so have decided to bail them for silage in a few weeks once the crops have a little more growth.
- Dryland pastures have taken advantage of the rainfall with some green blush being seen, however most green feed is still being sourced from irrigated pastures.
- Demand remains steady in the region with the dry pastures driving some enquiries, though the recent rain has slowed that somewhat. Additionally, sufficient on-farm storage from the earlier season is keeping most mixed farmers supplied in the medium term. High prices for good quality protein hay are seeing some lower quality moving.
- Some change to prices this week
- Cereal hay: +3 (\$400 to \$435/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: -5 (\$510 to \$600/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$175 to \$250/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$335 to \$395/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Central West NSW

- Mostly dry and sunny across the region this week with limited, less than 5mm of rain, falling across most region, except for isolated heavier falls of around 20-25mm of rain in Grenfell.
- Ground preparation and rehabilitation continues in the region in advance of sowing, most growers are waiting on a decent fall of rain before commencing plantings, though some are considering dry sowing if good rains do not arrive soon.
- Some early sorghum crops in the region are being sprayed in preparation for harvesting; many later sown crops are not looking good.
- Growers are advised that a number of diseases in grain are expected to have a major impact in the next season, most especially crown rot, so growers are cautioned to check seed for cleanness before sowing.
- Continued dry conditions in the region are seeing most paddocks under irrigation in order to continue pasture growth, some areas in the east that saw some of the recent rains have added a little green but most pastures are brown and dry.
- Demand is reasonable with dry conditions fuelling enquiries from livestock producers who are feeding out herds in the region, as well as some enquiries from feedlots looking for hay and straw. A bit of movement into the region from interstate to fill some demand gaps.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +8 (\$310 to \$355/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$475 to \$525/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$160 to \$185/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$300 to \$325/t). Prices increase this week.

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Bega Valley

- Another week of mixed rainfall totals across the region with Bega seeing around 5mm of rain for the week but further north and in the far south falls of 20-25mm of rain were recorded.
- Pastures in the region are showing some green after recent rains and supplying a portion of the green feed, but most are coming from irrigated pastures. Dairy and livestock herds in the region are being fed out fodder.
- Growers are reporting a larger than usual pest insect population being seen in the crops in the region.
- Some growers and graziers in more inland parts of the region are becoming increasingly concerned about the lack of rain and the forecast for lower than average rainfall over the next

three months. Many have exhausted the higher soil moisture from the wet spring and are considering crops choices in the next sowing season that are less water dependent.

- Sowing of oats is continuing in the region for those areas that received some rainfall, with the hope of follow up rain to bed in the crops.
- Enquiries continue at a stable level with some local interest, but most coming from other parts of the state. Most local farmers still have a good supply of fodder on farm, though there have been some early enquiries for locking in some winter feed options.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$335 to \$380/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$510 to \$540/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$225 to \$275/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

- Mostly dry across the region this week with average falls between 1 – 5mm of rain. Some slightly higher falls recorded close to the NSW border of 10mm of rain. A mix of clear and cloudy across the region.
- Hay production is finishing for most in the region, some straw is still being made and dedicated growers are still looking for any additional cuts, but most effort is now being directed to the next season.
- Pasture seeding is continuing in the region with light falls of rain helping to bed in the seeds, though it is still being sown on irrigated land. Dryland pastures are still awaiting favourable conditions and the autumn break.
- Corn crops around Barmah are coming along well after spraying and showing great growth. In the same region clover pastures are showing good growth with great subsoil moisture and sunny days boosting the pastures.
- Some grain growers are putting canola in this week with some moisture from recent light rains and the existing soil moisture from earlier flooding giving the crops a good start.
- Enquiries are fairly stable, many farmers have sourced a reasonable supply for the short to medium term and there are still green feed options available in the region keeping demand lower. Straw is still in good demand but there appears to be sufficient supply.
- Some change to pricing this week
- Cereal hay: +5 (\$310 to \$375/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: -3 (\$440 to \$500/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$140 to \$195/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: -3 (\$320 to \$345/t). Prices decrease this week.

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Gippsland

- Reasonable falls in the region this week, mostly in the central and western parts with some light to moderate falls of 20- 25mm around Sale, but around 10mm in Bairnsdale. Some mixed farmers are hoping this may be the onset of an early autumn break.
- After a number of dry weeks the recent falls across much of the region has greened up the pastures and had mixed farmers and growers spreading urea to continue the growth.
- Most hay and silage production has now completed in the region, though dedicated growers are looking at the recent rains for the possibility of regrowth for another cut.
- Mixed pastures of chicory and clover around Moyarra are looking very green on hilly country and feeding dairy herds in the region. Pastures were late sown and will probably only get 3 grazings rather than the expected 4 before being sprayed out for grass sowing.
- Enquiries have steadied again this week after some welcome rainfall. However there are still ongoing enquiries from farmers who are looking to the winter months and a possible continuing fodder shortage. Demand is predominantly from local farmers but some supply is being sent into NSW.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$330 to \$370/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$490 to \$520/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$135 to \$195/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$280 to \$320/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Southwest Victoria

- Another week of widespread rainfall across the region with the average of 15-25mm of rain across the entire region, some isolated heavier falls along the coast in the east of the region.
- Pastures in the region have been boosted by the continued rainfall with growers spreading fertilizer to continue the growth. Herds are finding reasonable green feed on some previously drying pastures.
- There are number of sheep graziers in the region who are concerned in relation to the Federal Government's current announcements about the Live Export sheep trade and the impact that may have on the sustainability of the industry. While the exports are predominantly from WA the impacts will be felt throughout the whole sheep and livestock industries.
- Some pasture seeding is being undertaken across the region as the continued rainfall boost confidence going into the next season.

- Hay and silage production has completed in the region with growers now preparing or sowing for the next season.
- Enquiries continue steady with some good quality green feed still around and many mixed enterprises still supplying silage and hay for local on-farm use. Some hay is being carted out of the region to NSW and SA but most is being supplied for local use.
- Some change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$315 to \$350/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$445 to \$495/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$135 to \$175/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +3 (\$265 to \$300/t). Prices increase this week.

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Southeast South Australia

- Rainfall across the region this week was mostly concentrated in the southern coastal region and a small area inland, with falls recorded there of around 15-20mm of rain, most other parts of the region saw lower totals of 5-10mm of rain.
- Grass pastures continue to be quite dry though recent sporadic rainfall has added a bit of green to the paddocks.
- Grain growers are reporting quite a bit of the stored harvest has been moving off farm over the last few weeks, meeting predictions of a gradual rollout due to issues with road, rail and port infrastructure being capable of coping with excess deliveries without causing significant delays. Feed-grain quality is also being moved to local farmers and feedlots seeking additional fodder supplies.
- Hay and straw production continues where conditions permit, though the hay season is mostly complete.
- Enquiries continue quite steady this week with straw readily available and of good quality. High quality hay is difficult to source, with many local growers having filled their sheds with pasture and protein hay for private use and not making it available to the market. Some deliveries coming across the border from Victoria to meet the shortfall.
- No change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$340 to \$385/t). Prices remain steady this week
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$430 to \$480/t). Prices remain steady this week
- Straw: +/-0 (\$160 to \$195/t). Prices remain steady this week
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$325 to \$355/t). Prices remain steady this week

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Central South Australia

- Some limited rainfall across the region this week, with falls of between 5 – 10mm of rain reported across the whole of the region, though some heavy falls up to 15mm in the east.
- Hay and straw continues to be made in limited quantities in the region, most of it pre-contracted or sold direct from the paddock.
- Preparation for the next sowing season is ongoing with spraying and field work being undertaken in the hopes of an early autumn break.
- Pastures are dry in the region with fodder being fed out to herds, the low rainfall totals do not seem to have spurred much in the way of green growth.
- Current activity on farm is centred around soil remediation by spreading chicken manure, lime, and gypsum.
- Enquiries are fairly stable this week with producers looking to replace supply that has been fed out to herds in the region. Most enquiries are for cereal hay, though some protein hay enquiries are coming in. Straw is also in some demand but is being sourced easily in the local region.
- No change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$340 to \$395/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$445 to \$490/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw +/-0 (\$155 to \$205/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Southwest Western Australia

- Another dry week across the region, with the maximum falls of around 8mm of rain in the far south coast, but most areas seeing between 1-5mm of rain, and some areas having no rainfall at all.
- Ongoing dry conditions in the region have seen dwindling green feed available. Irrigation is being employed to keep some green feed going; most mixed and livestock farmers are supplemental feeding.
- As expected a lot of discussion about the Federal Government's current announcements in relation to the banning of the live export sheep trade and the impact that may have on the sustainability of the industry. Most believe without a live export market, the woolgrowers will find it difficult to have a sustainable industry in WA, which would have a knock on effect on markets for fodder production.
- Field and paddock preparation for the next season is taking place in the region with manure and slurry spreading as well as lime application.
- Enquiries have remained steady this week as the ongoing hot conditions are requiring herds to be supplementally fed and reducing some on-farm supply. Lamb feedlots in the region are purchasing straw and grain in higher than usual amounts. Cereal hay is in moderate demand as well as protein and straw.
- Some change to prices this week.

- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$285 to \$320/t). Prices remain steady this week
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$400 to \$470/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +10 (\$125 to \$145/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: +5 (\$200 to \$250/t). Prices increase this week.

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Northwest Tasmania

- Moderate to heavy rainfall across the region this week with the coastal areas seeing around 30mm of rain and higher totals as you move further inland, with falls of up to 70mm of rain recorded.
- Ongoing rains are keeping the pastures moving along and providing good grazing to dairy and livestock in the region.
- Some early sowing is taking place in the region with good rainfall helping to bed in the crops and wash in applied fertilisers. However other areas are still finishing repair and remediation work on fields that were flooded back in October 2022 in preparation for the next sowing season.
- Grain harvest is still ongoing in the region though most crops have now been harvested and fields are being prepared for the next sowing window after a late start.
- Rains have caused a delay in the vegetable harvest though most growers in the region are reporting good quality produce, though less than usual due to earlier climatic conditions.
- Enquiries remaining fairly low with many growers having sufficient on-farm supply as well as good green feed availability supplying herds with good quality forage. The south of the state has reasonable stores available, all of which is keep demand reduced.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$270 to \$290/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: -5 (\$330 to \$380/t) Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: -3 (\$150 to \$200/t) Prices decrease this week.
- Pasture hay: +/- (\$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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