



Australian Fodder Industry Association



5 May 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

- Some areas which have seen good rainfall, have not had sunshine and warmth to bolster growth and soil temperatures remain low, which has led to an increase in demand for hay.
- The price of cattle and sheep has meant some livestock producers are holding on to stock that would normally go to the saleyards, which is requiring more fodder supplies to keep them fed. This is mostly affecting WA and QLD which in the latter case has led to fodder supplies being sourced from the southern states at higher premiums.
- More livestock and dairy farmers are looking to lock in winter feed options and are generating some early interest and demand.

Driving Prices Down

- There is continued confidence from producers that pasture growth will supply feed for stock and this has led to lessening of demand for resupply purposes.
- Feed quality grain remains readily available to farmers at a good price point. Many farmers are buying grains due to concerns regarding the quality of some of the available hay.
- The quality of available hay varies quite significantly with high quantities of lower quality on the market than usual due to delayed harvesting last season, this lowers the average price point.

Local News

- The cotton harvest in QLD and Northern NSW is taking up a significant portion of the transport options in the region, reducing the availability for deliveries of other produce, including on-demand fodder supplies.
- Trade in hay is quiet in most regions with the recent rains, though hay supplies from Victoria are still moving up to QLD and NT to supply farmers and feedlots. However quite a bit of the demand is being met by feed grain options due to both price and consistent quality.
- There are concerns amongst mixed farmers who have cropping as part of their enterprise with the change to the MRL of Haloxyfop in Canola for EU export and the indication this reduction of acceptable residual levels could extend into the pulses sector. While this does not yet affect the domestic market there are concerns in relation to cross contamination.
- Concerns continue to be voiced in WA in relation to the live export trade, with many graziers as well as others in the supply chain indicating that the information that is being provided is not sufficient and that there is a feeling that the real-world concerns of those producers are not being heeded.
- The Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) has stated for May to July, below median rainfall is very likely for almost all of Australia. Both maximum and minimum temperatures are very likely to be warmer than median for the majority of Australia. This forecast is being influenced by several factors including an ENSO-neutral pattern tending towards El Niño in the latter part of the forecast period, and the chance that a positive IOD event may develop in the coming months.
- Buyers are encouraged to feed test and view fodder before purchase to be sure of the quality of feed.

Regional Commentary

Atherton Tablelands

- Rainfall has returned to the usual for this time of year with patches of sunshine and low rainfall total of 5mm or less falling on most days.
- Corn silage continues to be cut in the region with yields reportedly to be quite good, some figures quoted of 9-10t/hectare. Most of the fresh silage is being delivered straight to dairy and livestock producers for pitting on-farm. Lentils are then being sown into the corn stubble.
- Hay production crops continue to grow in the region, but with the weather conditions there has been no cutting as there is no opportunity to cure the cuts. Some growers have mulched some previously earmarked hay crops as they have moved past viable production.
- Grass seed production crops have been headed in the region with the remainders being cut as mulch for avocado producers locally.
- Legumes in the region are being harvested, and the peanut harvest looks to be on track for good yields this season even with the harvest being undertaken in in less-than-ideal conditions.
- Growers in the region are starting to plant cereal crops for hay production, with wheat and oats being sown, some vegetable growers in the region are putting in their potato crops.
- Pastures continue to be green in the region supplying good quality grass to herds, though the rains are helpful, the pastures really need a few days of sunshine to bolster growth and keep the quality up.
- Input costs have steadied for the last few weeks with petrol prices averaging around \$1.90 per litre. Fertiliser remains steady 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. Hay production is not occurring, though mulch and silage is being made, and little hay is being moved locally. Some enquires are coming in from the show circuit livestock producers who are looking for cereal hay to be available in June and July though given the crop is only now being sown this will likely be sourced from outside the region.
- 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 all areas receiving at least 5mm of rain and most recording totals of between 10mm and 15mm of rain.
- Growers were looking for some rainfall to help bed in newly sown crops and provide a good start for current sowing schedules, the recent light rainfall this week has provided a boost and kept the season on track, though most are looking for some follow up rains.
- Pastures continue to supply some good green feed to herds in the region with the recent rains and sunshine bolstering the grasses, though most herds are still being supplemented by fodder.

- Winter planting is continuing in the region with earlier sown crops beginning to emerge. Cereal crops are the main plantings currently and will be for the next few weeks. Conditions have been favourable for a good start to the sowing season through large parts of the downs, with reports of good crop emergence and growth.
- Cotton harvest is continuing in the region with reports of excellent yields after a somewhat difficult start for some growers. There is plenty of movement of cotton bales being seen in the region as the crop moves to local gins. The harvest continues to apply pressure to the transport infrastructure, as is usual at this time of year with deliveries of other goods, including fodder, seed and crop maintenance supplies being delayed due to the reduction in the number of trucks available for other deliveries.
- The cooler weather has seen a lift in interest as it prompts some producers to lock in winter feed supplies. With the current cotton harvest transport options are limited and buyers are being advised to order with more lead time to ensure they do not have a shortfall. Feedlots continue to require higher than usual supplies and straw continues to have some interest.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$340 to \$400/t). Prices remain steady this week
- Lucerne hay: -3 (\$490 to \$550/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$145 to \$190/t). Prices remain steady this week
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$350 to \$405/t) Prices remain steady this week

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North Coast NSW

- Light to moderate rains in the region this week, mostly along the coast with falls of between 35mm and 50mm of rain with inland areas receiving lower totals of 15mm to 25mm of rain. All of the rain fell over the weekend with the remainder of the week clear and dry.
- Sowing of the winter crop continues in the region, with the conditions remaining favourable for the winter crop plantings. Faba beans and mung beans are mostly in with canola still being planted out, barley and wheat will also be going in over the next week or two if good conditions continue.
- Recent rains and then sunny conditions have boosted pasture growth, with pastures showing green and providing some good feed for dairy and livestock herds in the region. Current conditions are keeping the pastures green and have also allowed some grass silage cutting to take place on mixed farms after the rains, with the silage going straight into pits on-farm for winter feed options.
- Feral pigs continue to be a pest of concern in the inland region, though there are also sporadic reports closer to the coast. The animals are causing extensive damage to arable land and infrastructure.
- Cotton picking and baling is continuing in the inland parts of the region after a delay due to rains, with the harvest reportedly producing some excellent yields.
- Enquires are steady with many producers feeding from available pasture, as good green feed is available, though there are more producers looking to lock in winter feed supplies as the weather

cools and growth slows. Quality protein hay is still being sought but the cost remains a barrier for some end users. Straw is also in fairly decent demand but supply is good in the region.

- Some change to prices this week
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$405 to \$435/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: -3 (\$500 to \$565/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: -5 (\$175 to \$210/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$335 to \$390/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Central West NSW

- Light to moderate rainfall widespread across the area over the weekend, with falls on average of 15mm of rain, though some areas received up to 30mm of rain, however the remainder of the week was clear and dry.
- Dryland pastures in the north of the region continue to dry out with limited rainfall, though plenty of sunshine is boosting growth on irrigated pastures which is providing some green feed options. Conversely dryland pastures in the south of the region continue to provide some green feed for herds. Fodder is still being fed out, though there is more feed grain in the fodder mix than usual due to availability and consistent quality.
- Winter canola crops in the north of the region sown in early April are showing a good start after a wet March, however there are concerns that the sowing moisture is running out in the region and while the falls over the weekend were welcome, more follow up rains are needed as sowing continues.
- There was increased aphid pressure in summer crops last season and the pest have now migrated to early sown winter crops around Lake Cargelligo, reinforcing the need to include insecticides in seed treatments. The pests are being managed in the region to reduce damage.
- There are increasing reports of mice sightings in fields and around machinery and sheds. Growers are advised to bait early and monitor the pests. There are concerns there may be an explosion in mice numbers due to the large volumes of grain on the ground following a big harvest last year.
- Enquiries continue to hold steady with mixed producers in the north keeping a replacement supply of fodder turning over, and winter feed enquiries continue to come in. However most growers are out sowing the winter crop so sales are down. Protein hay is still in demand and Lucerne is in short supply throughout NSW, so end users are looking at other options.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$320 to \$375/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$475 to \$525/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$160 to \$180/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$300 to \$325/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Bega Valley

- Good rains fell over in the first part of the week with falls of around 40mm of rain at Angledale, there were some quite heavy falls north of the region with falls of up to 80mm, the rest of the region saw average falls of 15mm to 25mm of rain.
- Pastures in the region are green and got a good boost with the weekend rain after a few drier weeks, though this sunnier period has aided with keeping soil temperatures higher. Dairy and cattle herds in the region are take advantage of the good green feed. Though hay is still being fed out to many herds in the region.
- Pasture seeding and hay production seeding continues in the region around the rainfall events, but conditions are still reported as very good, with a promising start to the season. Croppers are continuing with the winter crop sowing schedule into good soil profiles.
- Grass and corn silage cutting is continuing in the region, with mixed farmers putting it straight into pits on-farm for winter feed. though there has been some limited supply to local dairy farms, some of whom are incorporating it fresh, though most are ensiling.
- Enquiries are consistent with many mixed farmers still reporting good quality green feed and fodder supplies. Protein hay is still being sought and local supply is short, so some deliveries are coming in from interstate. Requests for winter feed availability are ongoing, and straw has also seen an uptick in demand.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$340 to \$380/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$490 to \$540/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$215 to \$255/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: -5 (\$350 to \$390/t). Prices decrease this week.

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Goulburn/Murray Valley

- Light rainfall across the region this week with most areas receiving between 5mm and 10mm of rain. Frosts were reported over the weekend as temperatures move towards winter, though days remained mostly clear and sunny.
- Pastures are still green in the region but after another low rainfall week, dryland pastures are beginning to dry out. Irrigated pastures are still providing good green feed and the sunshine is boosting growth.
- Vetch and lucerne crops continue to be seeded as future hay production crops in the region. Canola crops are still being sown and cereals are commencing and will continue over the next few weeks. Some earlier sown canola has already begun to emerge 6-7 days after planting.

- Corn silage continues to be chopped in the north of the region close to the NSW border, silage is going straight into pits either on mixed enterprise farms for on-farm use or delivered fresh for ensilage on dairy farms in the region. Most of this silage has already been sold off the paddock.
- Enquiries continue to be steady with more enquiries in laying in winter feed, especially as some pastures begin to dry out. There has been some interest in silage availability, and straw is also in demand. Freight is being reported as an issue as most transport is directed towards sowing, so delays are being reported and buyers are advised to order earlier than needed. On-farm stores of fodder remain reasonable.
- Some change to pricing this week
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$315 to \$375/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: -5 (\$440 to \$490/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: -5 (\$140 to \$180/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$320 to \$355/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Gippsland

- Widespread rainfall across the region this week with the far east and far west seeing the highest falls of around 30mm of rain, central parts averaged 15mm to 20mm of rain. Some frosty mornings have been reported in the region as temperatures begin to drop.
- Pastures across most of the region continue to be green and are offering good green feed to dairy and livestock herds. Many mixed farming enterprises are reporting excellent pasture quality for this time of year.
- Grass and legume silage cutting is continuing in the region with conditions very good for regrowth, there is also some limited hay cutting however this is less certain with very few periods of consistent dry weather to allow the cuts to cure.
- Paddock and pasture seeding continues in the region under good sowing conditions with grasses, clover, lucerne and vetch all being sown into good soil moisture. The season looks to be commencing very well.
- Winter crop sowing is continuing in the region with oilseeds and cereals being planted.
- Enquiries remain quiet with the current conditions keeping green feed available and many farmers having reasonable on-farm supply, additionally many dedicated growers are currently seeding crops. Enquiries continue for high quality protein and pasture hay as well some straw enquires; silage is also being sought for storage as winter feed.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$330 to \$370/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$480 to \$510/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$135 to \$195/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$270 to \$320/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Southwest Victoria

- Mostly dry across the region in the earlier part of the week, however there were good rainfall totals mid-week of between 15mm and 25mm of rain across the majority of the region, with higher falls closer to the coast, however there were also sporadic reports of hailstorms affecting some crops.
- Pastures in the region are looking lush and green and supporting sheep, cattle, and dairy herds with quality feed. Some comments indicate the region is undergoing almost spring like conditions rather than late autumn. These conditions have led some graziers to plan for a June lambing season.
- Winter crops sowing in the region is continuing into good conditions. Pastures and hay production paddocks are also being sown or fertilised to take advantage of the good soil moisture and ongoing favourable conditions. The hope of a good season to make up for shortfalls in the last continue to be expressed.
- The reports of mice being seen in paddocks and around machinery and sheds have been increasing as sowing moves ahead. Growers are advised to bait early to control numbers.
- Grass silage cutting is ongoing in the region with the good paddock conditions and mix of rain and sunshine aiding in regrowth opportunities. This silage is going into pits in most cases, though there is some baling going on when conditions are favourable.
- Enquiries are low with an abundance of good green feed continuing to be available as well as reasonable on-farm stocks from the previous season. Enquires continue from some livestock producers in the region looking to confirm availability and supply for winter feed, and some enquiries from across the border into SA to replace stores used during the recent dry period.
- No change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$330 to \$360/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$445 to \$495/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$125 to \$165/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$265 to \$300/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Southeast South Australia

- Light to moderate rainfall across the region this week, with a number of gusty showers reported throughout the week. Rainfall totals of between 20mm and 30mm across most of the region.
- Pastures continue to be green in the region after the recent ongoing rainfall and some sunny days to boost along growth, they are providing good green feed for cattle herds and sheep flocks, as ewes move into lambing.

- A promising start to the season continues with the winter sowing schedule for oilseed, beans and cereal crops as well hay and silage production mixed pasture seeding continuing in good conditions, with reports that newly sown crops are taking full advantage of the available moisture and are emerging well.
- Graziers in the region have moved sheep out of containment and into grass pastures to take advantage of some good green pick that is available.
- Some clay-based sandy paddocks are completing soil amelioration activities with lime and manure incorporation in preparation for pasture seeding,
- Enquiries are quiet with the good feed available to livestock producers and dairy herds, keeping volumes lower. Enquiries for quality protein hay are still fairly steady with some movement into QLD being reported as supply is short across most hay growing regions. Interest in straw remains fairly regular, but can be supplied locally quite easily.
- No change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$340 to \$385/t). Prices remain steady this week
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$440 to \$490/t). Prices remain steady this week
- Straw: +/-0 (\$160 to \$180/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$330 to \$360/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Central South Australia

- Light to moderate falls of rain across the region this week with most areas along the coast receiving 25mm of rain, with inland areas averaging between 10mm and 20mm of rain.
- The warmer drier conditions last week followed by rain this week, have helped boost the, pastures across the central district. Livestock are getting access to some good green feed in production pastures, though some supplemental fodder supplies are still being fed out.
- Hay production and pasture feed crops are being sown with the vetch and ryegrasses sown over Easter continuing to show good potential. Mixed grass pastures are showing good growth after seeding mid-April. Given there is a likelihood of a drier than average May, many growers are wanting to get the seed in the ground earlier to take advantage of any available moisture to strike the crop.
- Canola sowing is continuing in the region with the recent rains giving growers some optimism for good germination. Faba beans are already sown in most areas, barley is commencing with wheat to follow and is expected to continue over the next few weeks, though croppers are expecting some drier conditions into May which could cause some issues with getting the crop well established.
- Hay production off irrigated paddocks continues in limited quantities, recent rainfall has delayed some cutting, or required conditioners for rain affected hay. Quality is still be reported as quite good.
- Enquiries remain low, in part because of better green feed options reducing the amount of fodder to be replenished, and also that many growers are out seeding to take advantage of

available moisture. Straw remains in some demand and there are some early indications of a shortening of supply.

- No change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$345 to \$385/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$450 to \$495/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw +/-0 (\$155 to \$200/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Southwest Western Australia

- A much drier week this week after the heavy rainfall totals of last week, falls of between 5mm and 15mm fell on average across the whole region, though the mid southern coast saw totals up to 25mm of rain.
- Recently sown pastures around the southern tip of the region continue to show good growth and potential and are on track to supply winter feed for dairy herds from the end of May onwards.
- Perennial pastures of phalaris, tall fescue, cocksfoot, chicory, and plantain around Redmond are showing some excellent growth and are providing good green feed to cattle herds in the region.
- Oats are being sown in the north east of the region into good soil moisture. Winter crop sowing is continuing throughout the region in reasonable conditions.
- Mice continue to be reported in the region, though the numbers do appear to be stable without the immediate concerns in relation to an explosion in numbers. However, growers are advised to monitor closely given the amount of grain availability after the bumper harvest.
- The trade in sheep in WA has slowed considerably as the uncertainty around the future of the live export trade flows along the supply chain. Many graziers are reporting an inability to move stock through saleyards at a reasonable price and are therefore keeping more on farm which require addition fodder sources, while weighing up the value of the next lambing season.
- Enquiries remain low but steady with the better availability of green feed and the prospect of winter feed crops coming through in the near future. Some livestock producers in the north of the state are sourcing hay and silage supplies for sheep and cattle herds due to dry conditions reducing pasture feed. Straw is in reasonable demand but being sourced well locally.
- Some change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +3 (\$300 to \$320/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$390 to \$450/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$125 to \$145/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +3 (\$210 to \$250/t). Prices increase this week.

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Northwest Tasmania

- A similar outlook this week, with light to moderate falls across the region, with northern coastal areas receiving the least amount of rain, with falls on average between 10mm and 15mm of rain, higher falls further inland and along the mid-west coast. Mostly cloudy days with some limited sunshine.
- Mixed pastures of chicory, clover and ryegrasses around Burnie are showing plenty of biomass and providing late autumn and early winter feed for dairy herds in the region.
- Pasture and paddock sowing is ongoing in the region for both winter feed options as well as future hay and silage production. Recent rainfall has delayed some crop maintenance processes however growers are reporting good emergence of recently sown paddocks.
- Maize silage cutting is commencing in the region with good yields being reported, and no issues with moisture. Most of the cuts are being delivered direct to dairy farms for on-farm ensilage in pits.
- Winter crop sowing is continuing in the region with beans, barley and wheat being sown into good moisture profiles.
- Enquiries remain steady with good green feed availability for livestock and dairy herds. Though additional frosts and cooler temperatures have seen an increase of fodder usage which will need to be replenished. Enquiries for winter feed are beginning to increase.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$265 to \$290/t) Prices remain steady this week
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$330 to \$380/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$150 to \$190/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +3 (\$225 to \$255/t) Prices increase 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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