



Australian Fodder Industry Association



2 February 2024

# HAY REPORT



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>NATIONAL SUMMARY</b>	<b>3</b>
Driving Prices Up	3
Driving Prices Down	3
Local News	3
<b>Regional Commentary</b>	<b>4</b>
Atherton Tablelands	4
Darling Downs	4
North Coast NSW	5
Central West NSW	6
Bega Valley	6
Goulburn/Murray Valley	7
Gippsland	8
Southwest Victoria	8
Southeast South Australia	9
Central South Australia	10
Southwest Western Australia	11
Northwest Tasmania	11



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

- Western Australia's dry conditions continue with the requirement for additional fodder supplies to supplement available dry pasture feed for herds. This coupled with a smaller hay production this year is putting steady and upward pressure on prices in the state.
- High cattle and sheep prices and the potential impact on fodder needs are causing some producers to forward contract fodder to ensure they have supplies needed.
- Exporters continue to be a player in the market and are looking to fill shipments as well as secure reasonably high volumes of available stock on hand. This is having an effect on export grade cereal prices, with a flow on effect to other fodder lines.

### Driving Prices Down

- Pastures remain green across large parts of Australia and this feed is keeping demand lower than expected for this time of year traditionally. In some places this is seeing a reduction in pricing to get some fodder moving, but the market appears to be quite flat with little fluctuation currently.
- Some previous season lower quality cereal hay is available in the market as producers who have had additional fodder producing opportunities look to empty some sheds of older stores.
- Ongoing silage and hay production in most of Victoria, Tasmania and NSW is continuing to add more supply to the market keeping buyers optimistic about availability moving into autumn and winter.

### Local News

- Concerns have been raised among graziers and members of the supply chain in relation to the MV Bahijah and the public perception of the conditions for the sheep and cattle on-board. Including the ramifications for the live export industry. This issue as well as the broader live export trade has been in the minds of many fodder producers as they contemplate long term business decisions.
- The Bureau has stated that El Niño continues in the tropical Pacific Ocean. However sea surface temperatures have peaked and are now declining. We are expected to return to neutral El Niño–Southern Oscillation levels in the southern hemisphere in autumn 2024. Some atmospheric indicators, such as cloudiness near the Date Line, are close to normal levels. The typical drying influence of El Niño on Australia's climate usually reduces during summer, especially in the east; however, below median rainfall is still often observed in north-east Australia. As we have seen this year and through historical data, high-impact rainfall events can occur during El Niño years, particularly during October to April when severe storm frequency peaks.
- 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 with Cyclone Kirrily providing some additional rain over the weekend, with Atherton seeing around 55mm of rain. The rest of the week has been dry though humidity has been high.
- Pastures in the region continue to be lush and green with a full moisture profile and continuing good rains on which to draw. Herds are being well supplied by fresh green growth. Some growers would like a few clear sunny days however.
- Corn crops in the region are flourishing and have put on quite a bit of height over the last few weeks. FAW continues to be of concern though there are some comments that the recent rainfall may help with the grubs.
- Hay production remains on hold for most in the region without enough clear dry days to ensure safe curing of the cuts. Some earlier cuts have been badly affected by rain and winds and are now only suitable for mulch.
- Some paddocks and pastures on the tablelands are having issues with high water content and standing water, so aerial spraying and fertiliser application is being employed to maintain those paddocks.
- Input costs remain high; though petrol appears to have stabilised at less than \$2 per litre. Urea prices are starting to lift as demand begins to increase for the next season sowing and is around \$1100 p/t with blended at over \$1300p/t and indications are these prices will stay high.
- No change to pricing this week as good green feed availability and a reasonable amount of on-farm storage is keeping the trade flat for local buyers. Feedlots and on-board feed requirements for cattle shipments are still driving some demand, but the enquiries remain quiet
- Pasture (Rhodes Grass) hay: +/-0 (\$350 to \$450/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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

- Heavy rainfall across the region this week with most days seeing some falls, Dalby recorded 90mm of rain while Goondiwindi saw 45mm for the week. Most days were warm and wet.
- Pastures in the region are green and lush and the latest warm weather followed by heavy rains will keep that growth moving along well. Livestock herds are being well supplied by pasture growth however additional roughage is being fed out.
- Grain sorghum planted in early spring in the region is looking very good and filling out well. This crop is slated to go into feed mixes after grazing and comments suggest that the growers are seeing good response to both the warm conditions and recent rains.
- Hay production in the region is continuing where possible with Lucerne continuing to be cut and baled around Toowoomba. There are reports of some freshly cut paddocks being affected by the recent heavy rains, but most baled hay has come in at good quality and moisture levels with plenty of leaf. Irrigated forage sorghum crops in the same area are scheduled to be cut in the middle of February, weather permitting.

- Enquiries are low with not a lot of additional movement. Good green feed is continuing to temper demand and livestock producers appear to have sufficiently prepared for the short to medium term. Protein hay demand remains fairly firm. Enquiries in relation to straw remain low as feedlots and producers have abundant supplies.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$230 to \$340/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$ (\$360 to \$440/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$80 to \$110/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$230 to \$315/t) Prices remain steady this week.

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## **North Coast NSW**

- Moderate falls across the region this week with widespread falls of at least 25mm of rain across the entire region. Casino saw 45mm of rain while Grafton saw upwards of 50mm for the week.
- Grass pastures in the region are providing plenty of green feed opportunities for local herds, so roughage is being fed as supplemental feed.
- Forage sorghum crops in the north of the region are producing excellent growth and are providing good green feed for weaner cattle.
- Fodder production is continuing in the region, however recent heavy rains in the northern parts, especially along the coast and QLD border have put production on hold.
- The recent good rainfall as well as warmer conditions is providing excellent growing environments for some newly sown autumn crops, with emergence within days of planting for some crops.
- Dryland cotton crops on the north of the region have seen a great deal of rain since planting and are filling out well.
- Enquiries are flat in the region with the ready availability of pasture grasses as well as forage crops for livestock and dairy needs. Some lower quality cereal hay is moving, but only in isolated parcels. Straw continues to be in abundance.
- Some change to prices this week
- Cereal hay: -5 (\$285 to \$340/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$350 to \$420/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$70 to \$100/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$240 to \$340/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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quality of feed. We recommend feed testing and viewing of fodder before purchase to be sure of the quality of feed.

## **Central West NSW**

- Mostly clear and dry across the region with only the northern parts seeing any substantial rain, while central and southern areas had a clear week with no rainfall recorded and temperatures in the mid to high 30's for the week.
- Grass continues to grow in the region with good rainfall and sunshine keeping growth moving along and supplying green feed to local herds.
- Hay production is continuing in the region for irrigated pastures of lucerne as well as short summer crops such as millet which have been cut and baled this week. Reports are that most producers have been able to work around any rain events and the warm conditions have boosted regrowth of paddocks. Comments suggest that there will be plenty of lucerne produced this season of varying qualities.
- There are increased reports of mice being seen around feed sheds and in the paddocks in the central parts of the region. Growers are advised to bait before sowing in the next crop.
- Enquiries remain fairly low in the region with good green feed and reasonable on-farm supplies keeping the market slow. Feedlots are moving through some cereal hay though straw continues to see little demand.
- No change to prices this week
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$240 to \$335/t). Prices remain steady this week
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$350 to \$420/t). Prices remain steady this week
- Straw: +/-0 (\$80 to \$100/t). Prices remain steady this week
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$270 to \$325/t). Prices remain steady this week

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## **Bega Valley**

- Little to no rain across the region this week with less than 5mm of rain recorded. Most days were clear and dry, with some light winds.
- Grass continues to grow in the Valley with good seasonal conditions keeping local herds well supplied with green feed options. Some additional roughage is going out to supplement pasture feed.
- Hay and silage production is continuing in the region, with reportedly more silage being made than hay, though both irrigated and dryland lucerne stands as well as some abundant pastures continue to provide good hay making opportunities. The weather this week has been excellent for the production of hay with plenty of consecutive clear dry days.

- Pastures of cowpeas and lablab in the region sown into the good soil moisture after the heavy rain late last year are showing excellent growth and some early sown pastures are now open for grazing for cattle and dairy herds, these legumes will be locked up for silage or hay production after two grazing cycles.
- Enquiries are low due to the good availability of green feed as well as the on-going fodder production being undertaken in the region by mixed enterprises who are storing on-farm for personal use. Some over the fence silage sales are reported, but that appears to be for quick refilling of depleted pits. Some lower grade older cereal hay and some limited straw is still being sourced for roughage.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$250 to \$320/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$360 to \$400/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: -3 (\$85 to \$110/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$260 to \$330/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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## **Goulburn/Murray Valley**

- A mostly dry week this week with widespread falls of less 5mm recorded over the weekend with the remainder of the week clear and dry with temperatures mostly in the low 30's.
- Grass is growing in the region with no sign of slowing down any time soon, plenty of rain and warmth is keeping the pastures lush and providing excellent feed opportunities. Some additional roughage is being supplemented where pastures are watery.
- Hay production is sporadic in the region with the run of mostly clear days this week aiding some cutting of lucerne stands that had been moving past optimal cutting stage. Pasture hay and silage is also being made in the region as the conditions continue to see good regrowth on dryland pastures.
- With the flood waters now fully receded assessments are being made about potential loss of fodder crops and pastures in the region, especially around Seymour and Rochester which have reported some damage to lucerne stands and an expectation of reduced yield as the season progresses.
- Lentil crops are going into the ground in the north of the region with good subsoil moisture and warmth to help establish the crop early. Some canola plantings are also going in with growers weighing up the good seasonal prospects against the possible lower market price.
- Comments suggest there is a perceived shortage of available herbicides in the market and with the abundance of summer weeds due to the season this may cause some maintenance issues if the shortage cannot be remedied in the short to medium term.
- Enquiries remain low in the region with the easy availability of good green feed and a fair amount of fodder stored on-farm. Export level cereal hay is the exception as exporters are still

active in the marketplace and are sourcing high quality parcels. There is also some demand for lower quality cereal hay for roughage so there is a wide spread on that line.

- Some change to pricing this week
- Cereal hay: -3 (\$255 to \$325/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: -10 (\$350 to \$390/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$90 to \$100/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$260 to \$320/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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## **Gippsland**

- A mostly dry week across the region with little to no rainfall recorded across the west and central parts and falls of less than 10mm in the east. Mostly clear and sunny conditions with some light to moderate winds.
- Pastures in the region continue to see excellent growth and regrowth with herds being well supplied with good green feed, and some mixed producers indicating the growth is outpacing the herds.
- Forage crops in the western part of the region are showing exceptional growth, with mixed pastures of chicory and clover providing good feed to dairy cows. Some of these pastures will be cut for silage as the season has promoted excellent regrowth conditions leading to an excess of available feed for some mixed enterprises.
- Millet crops sown in early December into good subsoil moisture in the central parts of the district are showing excellent growth and are now being grazed before being locked up for fodder production.
- Fodder production is ongoing in the region with the majority of production currently in silage, though some hay has been made when the weather allows for good curing.
- Local enquiries are very flat in the region with most dairy and livestock producers having an abundance of green feed as well as forage and fodder options available. Silage pits continue to fill with excess pasture growth. Some movement from Gippsland to the south west to meet livestock needs, and a few parcels of protein hay into South Australia.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -5 (\$240 to \$320/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$330 to \$420/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$90 to \$105/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$240 to \$290/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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### **Southwest Victoria**

- A dry week across the region with only sporadic low rainfall along the coast of less than 5mm of rain. Mostly clear and dry for the remainder of the week.
- Pastures remain green throughout most of the region with plenty of availability for herds. Some western coastal areas are seeing drying out of pastures, as they did not receive the majority of the rainfall seen by the rest of the region this month.
- Silage production is continuing in the region with most areas seeing good growth and regrowth after cutting or grazing. Most of this silage is being ensiled on farm or sold to local dairy farms for ensilage.
- Hay production on irrigated and dryland lucerne as well as some pastures was ongoing this week with large parts of the region seeing no rain, and conditions good for the curing of crops. Some indication that earlier cut pastures saw rain damage when they were in the windrows but comments suggest there is an available market for these bales.
- Grain harvest got a bit of a boost this week with a number of days that were good for pulling off the crops. Some croppers have indicated that they are now done with harvest through there are still some ongoing due to the previous wet conditions.
- Local demand in the region continues to be steady but at a low volume, as good green feed availability for most tempers need. A number of livestock producers near the SA border are looking for additional supplies to supplement pasture feed. Some lower grade, rain affected pasture hay is appearing in the market at a lower price point, and is moving fairly quickly.
- Some change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$260 to \$330/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$330 to \$390/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$90 to \$100/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: -18 (\$190 to \$240/t). Prices decrease this week.

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### **Southeast South Australia**

- A repeat of last week with another dry week across the region with most areas seeing no rainfall and patchy falls of less than 5mm of rain along the southern coastal tip. Sunny clear days for most of the week.
- After another mostly dry week some pastures in the region are beginning to turn brown, though most are still supplying good feed options and drawing from subsoil moisture, however herds are being supplied with supplemental fodder.
- Hay production of irrigated lucerne is continuing in the region with the warm dry days beneficial to the curing of the cuts. Reports indicate that the quality is very high.

- The grain harvest has been able to move forward over the last week with more good harvesting days allowing croppers to get much more of the crops off. A number of growers are making straw after harvest given the prospect of a constrained fodder market moving into autumn and winter.
- Enquiries are continuing to be steady in the region with some drying causing a slight lift in fodder requests; however with green feed still available those enquiries are modest. There does continue to be enquiries to lock in feed for autumn against a forecast shortfall.
- No change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$270 to \$320/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$320 to \$380/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$90 to \$110/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$220 to \$265/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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## **Central South Australia**

- A mostly dry week across the region with falls only being recorded over the weekend with the remainder of the week providing sunny clear days, though temperatures were mostly in the mid 20's.
- Pastures in the region are continuing to be green, and the reasonable rainfall over parts of the area this week will boost the condition of those pastures. Some herds are being fed out in areas where pastures are beginning to see some drying.
- Hay production is continuing in the region off irrigated pastures and lucerne stands, with the expectation of a number of clear dry days next week, producers are looking to bale up some good quality hay.
- Grain harvest continues to move slowly through the region with croppers taking advantage of any available harvest days to get on the headers. Straw is being made by a number of croppers after harvest.
- Enquiries are steady in the region with reasonable green feed tempering demand, but livestock producers are looking to lock in some supplies leading into autumn and winter. Protein hay continues to be in fairly good demand and is moving from local supply. Some requests for straw and older cereal hay coming in from Victoria.
- No change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$260 to \$325/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$320 to \$390/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$95 to \$105/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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### **Southwest Western Australia**

- No rainfall across the region this week with hot dry conditions across the entire region, with light winds recorded. Fire danger is high in the region.
- With continuing dry and hot conditions pastures in the region remain brown and dry, and while they are continuing to supply dry feed to livestock, additional fodder is being fed out. Some kikuyu pastures are still showing green, but do not have the bulk to provide good feed for a reasonable period.
- With the warm conditions irrigated lucerne is showing some good growth; however there are some concerns being raised about quality if continued high temperatures persist. With grain harvest complete and the ongoing dry conditions some growers are opting to turn stubble into moisture mats rather than make straw.
- Fields are being cleared and primed in preparation for the sowing of canola, barley and oat crops in the southern parts of the region.
- Enquiries are continuing at a steady pace as livestock and dairy producers replace fodder that has been fed out to bolster herds. Lower grade cereal hay continues to show movement, while good parcels are still destined for the export market and are being picked up by exporters.
- No change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$300 to \$340/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$350 to \$410/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$100 to \$125/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$210 to \$270/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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### **Northwest Tasmania**

- Light falls across the region this week with the higher falls inland, coastal areas saw less than 15mm of rain. Some clear days with light winds reported.
- Pastures continue to be green in the region and are supplying good green feed options to livestock and dairy herds.
- Hay production is continuing in the region, with pasture and protein hay being baled under good conditions with comments suggesting that excellent quality hay is being produced. Silage production is also ongoing for paddocks with good regrowth.
- Ground preparation is underway for sowing of autumn forage crops in the region with good soil moisture and some warm days forecast giving growers some optimism the crops will establish well.

- Grain harvest is continuing in the region with the majority of croppers harvesting barley and wheat. Comments suggest that a reasonable amount of straw is continuing to be produced post-harvest.
- Enquiries are fairly flat in the region with the ongoing good green feed availability keeping most demand tempered. Some interest in both high and medium quality cereal hay has been noted, and straw enquiries have lifted a little for roughage needs. Indications are that producers are looking to lock in some winter feed options.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$235 to \$290/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$300 to \$370/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$85 to \$120/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$205 to \$275/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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For more information contact AFIA:

[info@afia.org.au](mailto:info@afia.org.au) [www.afia.org.au](http://www.afia.org.au)

PO Box 527 Ascot Vale VIC 3032



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