



Australian Fodder Industry Association



17 May 2024

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

- Western Australia is seeing some early greening of pastures that received rain; however fodder will still need to be supplied for some time before pastures become productive for good grazing.
- The recent trend of fodder moving from north to south to meet needs is continuing as the southern states remain fairly dry; this is incurring additional freight costs.
- Demand has lifted as producers look to fill on-farm storage before the onset of cooler winter conditions slow pasture growth. The lack of rain across the southern states has led to a lack of growth and will likely lead to a winter feed gap. It is strongly suggested that farmers look to lock in supplies as there is a good degree of belief that there will be shortages in winter.

Driving Prices Down

- Sowing of quick feed as well as hay and silage crops is continuing throughout QLD and NSW in good conditions.
- Some sporadic and final hay production is taking place in parts of Victoria and in areas which have seen good pasture growth additional silage is being cut and ensiled.
- Varied lines of fodder are still readily available, especially older hay and fodder supplies out of the southern states, some of this is of lower quality but is well suited to supplemental feeding and feed mixes.

Local News

- The south west of Victoria remains stubbornly dry and has much reduced pasture feed availability. However for established pastures to the west of Hamilton the soil moisture is low but sustainable and the soil temperature remains favourable and is well set to flourish should rains arrive.
- Financial support for WA farmers experiencing the dry season has opened. The availability of grants is subject to eligibility criteria, and funds being available. Applications close 30 June 2024 or when funding is fully committed. <https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/hardship-support-grant>
- As expected with the release of the date for the phase out of the live export of sheep many WA growers are contemplating a change in sowing components moving forward as sheep numbers are set to drop as graziers look to exit the industry and switch to cropping or other farming activities.
- The Bureau has stated that El Niño has ended and the El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) has returned to neutral. Climate models indicate ENSO will likely continue to be neutral until at least July 2024. Models indicate that central Pacific Sea surface temperatures (SST) to reach La Niña thresholds in July, El Niño and La Niña predictions made in mid-autumn tend to have lower accuracy than predictions made at other times of the year. This means that current forecasts of the ENSO state beyond July should be used with caution.
- Buyers are encouraged to feed test and view fodder before purchase to be sure of the quality of feed.

Regional Commentary

Atherton Tablelands

- It was a drier week in the region with limited falls impacting on farming areas. Mareeba recorded less than 10mm of rain and most days had sunny periods.
- Pastures continue to be green in the region with good warmth and moisture keeping growth moving along. Herds are being well serviced by pasture growth and some additional feed in the mixes.
- Some hay and grass silage has been cut in the region with a string of drier days allowing some of the cuts to be baled at reasonable moisture content. Some fair to good bales have come off around Atherton and to the west where conditions are drier, quality has been excellent.
- Most of the corn that was slated for silage has been unable to be cut due to the ongoing wet conditions and a will now be harvested for feed grain.
- Input costs continue to remain a concern; petrol is has dropped a little to \$1.99 per litre. Urea prices are also high at \$1100 p/t with blended at over \$1300p/t and comments continue to indicate the price will stay high for the foreseeable future.
- Pricing remains fairly steady in the region as the continuation of good green feed availability and on-farm storage continue to keep the market stable. Speciality purchases such as the equine trade are moving a good amount of hay. Feedlots and export ships continue to be steady customers with regular deliveries moving.
- Pasture (Rhodes Grass) hay: +/-0 (\$330 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

- Overall a drier week in the region with widespread but light falls of between 5mm and 10mm of rain for the majority of the area. Some higher falls of up to 20mm of rain recorded in the western downs. Most days were clear and dry, and temperatures continue to be above average
- Pastures remain green in the region; however the high rainfall that fell over a week ago is causing some issues with trafficability on any low lying or flood plain pastures with conditions quite wet underfoot for safe grazing. The warmer temperatures are keeping growth moving along fairly well and pasture feed is in good supply.
- Sowing in the region is continuing, though there have been delays due to high rainfall periods, but growers and croppers are taking advantage of the conditions to get through the sowing schedule while the conditions are favourable.
- Sorghum crops in the west of the area were taken off in the last few weeks, though given the generally wet conditions the harvest was sporadic and the moisture levels higher than optimal.
- Recently sown dryland hay production pastures in the north and west of the region appear to be establishing well given the good rains and warmer days during the sowing and early germination period.
- Enquiries in the region are steady with established customers picking up loads, as well as some farmers looking to lock in some winter supply even while they have current good pasture feed

availability. There has been an increase in enquiries from outside the area into the southern states to deal with the drier conditions there and the needs of producers, though freight costs are a factor for those customers.

- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$240 to \$320/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$350 to \$440/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +5 (\$90 to \$120/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: -5 (\$220 to \$325/t) Prices decrease this week.

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North Coast NSW

- Moderate to heavy falls across the region this week, with the coastal strip seeing the highest rainfall at around 50mm of rain. Further inland the falls were between 15mm and 40mm decreasing as you moved west. Temperatures are continuing to trend downward but still slightly above average for this time of year.
- Pastures in the region are green and lush, with continued rainfall and warmer temperatures. The high rainfall is creating some issues in lower lying areas but most grazing is on elevated land. Pasture growth is moving well.
- Maize silage is still being chopped in the west of the region, most to be pitted on farm, corn grain varieties are also being harvested for animal feed use. Sorghum crops that were desiccated at the start of May are now being harvested.
- Winter sowing schedules are continuing in the region around rain events, these crops are going into good soil moisture and should have an excellent start.
- Cotton harvest is still ongoing for some in the west of the region, due to the rainfall, though comments suggest that many growers have finished baling at fairly good yielding harvest this year.
- Enquiries are fairly stable in the region with good pasture growth and conditions keeping demand tempered. Producers are looking towards winter and are picking up some additional loads, but there is no real urgency. Pre-contracted hay is moving, and some demand is coming from the southern states.
- No change to prices this week
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$250 to \$330/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$340 to \$410/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$80 to \$120/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$240 to \$300/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Central West NSW

- It was a much wetter week across the Central West with widespread falls of at least 25mm recorded across the entire region. Some parts of the south received almost 100mm of rain for the week, though most areas saw around 40mm of rain.
- Pastures in the region remain green, and the good rainfall will turn around some earlier indications of drying. However there are now some issues with safe grazing on pastures that have seen some flood or draining issues. Most herds are being well serviced by pasture growth.
- Some areas which saw excessive rain over the last fortnight have seen some limited flooding, especially on flat ground. In many areas the rainfall was sufficient to top up soil profiles, and provide good conditions for sowing. Those areas with flooding will have winter sowing schedules delayed for a number of weeks.
- Winter sowing is continuing in parts of the region that were not adversely affected by the rains, with a most fodder and hay production plantings completed, canola and cereal crops are being sown into fairly good conditions. However in the south of the region canola crops that were sown in early April have come up well and are looking good after timely rain.
- Cotton harvest in the region has been delayed due to the heavy rainfall, and there are some concerns that this may affect yield in some pockets.
- Enquiries continue to lift as winter approaches, but the good pasture availability is tempering what would be normal demand, as on-farm stores are not being run down and needing to be replaced. Some demand is coming from further south in the drier parts of Victoria and South Australia. Fodder continues to move to feedlots and pre-contracted producers. Vetch appears to be in some demand in the region.
- Some change to prices this week
- Cereal hay: +5 (\$290 to \$345/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +5 (\$360 to \$430/t). Remain increase this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$80 to \$130/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$260 to \$300/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Bega Valley

- Very heavy rain in the region over the last two weeks with Bega receiving over 100mm of rain. Further north rainfall was much higher with parts of the south coast receiving over 250mm of rain. Some flooding has been reported in the region.

- Pastures remain green in the region, with the recent rainfall topping up the soil moisture profile to give plenty of support to pasture growth, though some areas in the Valley were subject to flooding. Grass is continuing to grow with temperatures still reasonable for promoting growth.
- Further silage supplies continue to be cut in the region opportunistically where the pastures are running ahead of the herds, recent rainfall has delayed any additional cutting.
- Sowing in the region has been delayed by the rains, though the spate of clearer days before the falls did allow most of the schedule to be completed, when conditions dry again growers will be planting into excellent soil moisture.
- Enquiries are fairly steady and strong in the region. The abundance of green feed is keeping most producers well supplied, so fodder supplies are being used to bolster health and roughage needs. However comments suggest that producers recognise the need to have a good supply to hand so are keeping sheds topped up in preparation for winter. Many shipments are coming into the region as local supply is not sufficient.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +20 (\$320 to \$400/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +15 (\$440 to \$490/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +5 (\$140 to \$200/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: +15 (\$330 to \$390/t). Prices increase this week

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Goulburn/Murray Valley

- After a number of dry weeks, there was some rainfall in the region this week with Shepparton and Yarrawonga both recording between 15mm and 20mm of rain. Temperatures continue to trend above average for this time of year.
- Pastures in the region continue to be mostly dry and are providing dry feed unless under irrigation. The recent rains should help spark some additional green growth, as long as temperatures remain warmer than average and follow up rains arrive.
- There are some concerns that newly sown pastures will not have time to establish well before winter conditions arrive to stall growth.
- Canola plantings are continuing to go in in the region as well as cereal crops. Hay and fodder production crops are being sown with plenty of oats going in especially in the west of the area. Recent rains have helped add to available soil moisture to help both spark germination and give growers a boost for seeding, But additional rains are still needed to build a good sustainable soil profile.
- Previously and newly sown crops were under irrigation in the west of the region to give the seeds a start before the expected rains.
- Enquiries in the region continue to be fairly robust with recent rains lifting optimism a little but producers are aware this will not see a turnaround in pastures in the near future and winter is approaching, so they are buying in to ensure available supply. Lucerne and Vetch are moving

well and demand is also being driven from the south west who are taking parcels to combat the dry pastures.

- Some change to pricing this week
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$285 to \$315/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +13 (\$370 to \$410/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$95 to \$120/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +5 (\$240 to \$290/t). Prices increase this week.

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Gippsland

- Little to no rainfall across the region this week with light falls of around 1mm to 5mm across most of the region, but the central coastal strip saw no rain for the week. Temperatures are a little above average for this time of year, but are dropping to winter temperatures.
- Pastures in the region remain mostly green, though signs of drying are becoming more apparent, even with light falls the soil moisture in the east and central parts is below usual for this time of year and the dryland pastures are reflecting that situation.
- With the lack of good follow up rain and dropping temperatures grass growth has stalled in parts of the region, with farmers irrigating pastures where possible to keep the pasture moving. Comments indicate for many this is considered unusual in May.
- Winter sowing is continuing in the region, some earlier sown crops are being watered to keep them moving after establishment.
- Enquiries are lifting in the region in response to the conditions, with less pasture growth and cooling temperatures. On-farm storage remains reasonable, and many mixed enterprises have a good amount of conserved fodder in the form of silage. Trucks continue to cart hay out of the region to the south west and into South Australia.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +5 (\$270 to \$350/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +10 (\$390 to \$460/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +5 (\$120 to \$170/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: +5 (\$220 to \$270/t). Prices increase this week.

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Southwest Victoria

- Little to no rainfall across the region again this week, with most areas recording less than 5mm of rain and some areas no rainfall at all. Most days have been clear and dry and some light frosts have also been reported.
- Dryland pastures in the region remain dry and brown with little green to be seen. Irrigated pastures are still providing green availability, but this is insufficient for most herds and flocks. Many producers are reducing and hand-feeding animals. Rain is desperately needed in the region.
- Mixed pastures of ryegrass and clovers are being dry sown around Drumborg in the hope of some rains before the temperatures begin to drop and heavy winter rains come in, to allow the pastures to establish. Growers are looking to extend irrigation to normally dryland pastures where viable.
- Some of the far western and northern parts of the region have good subsoil moisture and are continuing to dry sow fodder and cereal crops. Many are drilling the crops in to reach the deeper moisture as the top soil remains dry and brittle.
- Little has changed in the region as the dry conditions continue and dryland pasture provides little to no green feed availability. Hay and other fodder supplies continue to come into the region to support local herds and flocks. Demand is very high in the region and not looking to change soon.
- Some change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +5 (\$260 to \$340/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$350 to \$410/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$90 to \$100/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +10 (\$220 to \$280/t). Prices increase this week.

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Southeast South Australia

- The continuing pattern of rain only falling in the southern coastal strip has continued this week, with very limited falls of less than 5mm of rain falling along the southern coast. The remainder of the region received no rainfall.
- Pastures in the majority of region continue to be brown and dry, though the southern coastal tip is continuing to see some green pick availability as the low but fairly consistent rainfall continues to fall there each week. The rest of the region is only seeing green feed availability under irrigation. Flocks and herds are being hand fed.
- Sowing has started for many in the region as the window for the season is getting smaller; so many growers are dry seeding or sowing deep to chase any available moisture. Comments indicate that the southern tip of the region has close to average soil moisture so conditions there are reasonable for planting but the further north you go, the lower the moisture availability in the soil. Growers are hoping for a late break to spark the crops and give the season better prospects.

- Comments suggest that graziers are looking at continuing to destock to alleviate feed needs in the area, though saleyard prices are not very favourable the return is still considered to be better than feeding out some of the herds.
- Enquiries in the region are rising as the pastures wait for rains and livestock continue to require additional fodder supplies. There are some shortages being reported across most hay lines in the region, and livestock producers are looking for other options for feed mixes and also sourcing supplies from the north of the country to meet local needs.
- Some change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +15 (\$280 to \$340/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$330 to \$390/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$90 to \$115/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +10 (\$245 to \$290/t). Prices increase this week.

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Central South Australia

- Another dry week across the region this week with little to no rainfall recorded for the majority of the area, some falls in the far north of the region, but only around 5mm of rain.
- Dryland pastures remain brown and in some cases have run out of dry feed options as well. Green feed is only available under irrigation and more producers are irrigating remaining pastures to keep feed available. Flocks are in containment feeding.
- Dry sowing is continuing in the region with more growers looking to put in the crop dry to get it in the ground in a reasonable seeding window. Growers are making a call about varieties to sow and most are indicating a reduction in canola due to the conditions with more going into cereal seeding.
- Recently sown Vetch crops have come up around Tailem Bend, and are looking to have established well after first watering. Lucerne is being sown into irrigated pastures in the same area and growers are then looking to move into dryland cereal seeding.
- Enquiries in the region have lifted this week, with indications that some hay lines are tightening and only being supplied to contracted purchasers. The dry conditions are fuelling the demand as producers look to keep animals healthy and safeguard supplies into winter. Quite a number of enquiries are being serviced out of the northern states.
- Some change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +5 (\$270 to \$315/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +10 (\$340 to \$380/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$90 to \$110/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.

Southwest Western Australia

- Widespread light to moderate rainfall across the region again this week, with the southern tip receiving the highest falls and decreasing as the rainfall moved east. Busselton saw around 30mm of rain with Manjimup receiving 20mm of rain. A number of clear dry days interspersed with the rainfall.
- With the rainfall at the beginning of May and the follow up rains as well as warm soils, there has been a spread of green across many pastures in the region as established pastures rebound with the rain. Some pastures are available for limited grazing opportunities but most will require some more time before animals move on to graze well.
- Sowing is moving throughout the region with the good rainfall giving growers the opportunity to get the seeds in the ground while still in a good sowing window. A range of varieties are going in from fodder and hay production, to cereals and legumes. There has been some indication of tightening of some oat seed availability in the north of the region.
- With recent rains comments indicate there has been a rapid increase in the instances of snails and beetles in the newly sown paddocks. Growers are advised to begin baiting as soon as there is a forecast rain free period before the crop comes up.
- While the greening of pastures is lifting some optimism the immediate needs of livestock producers still require fodder supplies so demand is still fairly high in the region and a lot of hay is moving to producers. A fair amount of enquiry continues from smaller users such as the equine industry who are looking for good quality hay. Exporters are still in the market place.
- Some change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +15 (\$340 to \$390/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$390 to \$450/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$110 to \$135/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +5 (\$230 to \$310/t). Prices increase this week.

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Northwest Tasmania

- Light falls across the northwest coast with averages of 10mm of rain, higher falls further inland with Edith's Creek recording 25mm of rain for the week. Temperatures are dropping towards winter levels.
- Pastures in the North West continue to show green where rainfall has been consistent, but temperatures are dropping and there has been some indication in a slowing of grass growth. The inland parts of the region and the rest of Tasmania are unseasonably dry.

- In some of the drier parts towards the centre of the region grazing cover crops of beans, vetch, tillage radish, oats and clover are being dry sown, these are slated to be feed for dairy cows. These crops will be irrigated if rains do not arrive to spark germination.
- Pastures of kale to the south of Sheffield are showing excellent growth and biomass and comments indicate it is slated to provide a large amount of dry matter for cows in mid to late July where there will be a feed gap.
- Enquiries continue to come from other parts of the state where conditions are much drier, though there has been some additional rains in those areas, they will still need follow up rains and warmth to provide good pasture feed, so fodder is required. Hay is moving through the region to pre-contracted farms.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$245 to \$320/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +5 (\$330 to \$380/t) Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$85 to \$130/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +10 (\$295 to \$365/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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