



Australian Fodder Industry Association



31 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

- While Western Australia is seeing some limited pasture feeding availability due to the rains, the majority of the area is still dry and requires fodder supplies for animal health and support. South Australia is still very dry and is now only supplying locally which is reducing availability elsewhere.
- Fodder is still moving against the usual trend from the north to the south and from central regions to the coasts to meet the unusual seasonal conditions.
- Demand is strong 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

- Good growth in short maturity winter feed varieties in QLD and NSW is reducing demand in the marketplace in areas where this feed is available, which does have a limited follow on effect outside those areas.
- Older fodder supplies remain available on the market as producers clear out sheds to meet demand, some of this is quite low quality which is reducing the overall price point, however this hay is usually weather damaged from previous seasons and has limited usage.
- Other fodder options than hay and silage are available, such as almond hulls to add to feed mixes, which is helping balance some demand.

Local News

- South West Victoria continues to be dry for almost all of the area, with the exception of some parts in the east near the Otways. The reduced pastures and tightening of available fodder supplies is seeing producers source feed from QLD and NSW as well as central Victoria to meet needs.
- Tasmania's dry conditions continue for most of the state and supplies are running low. Fodder continues to be sourced from the mainland, but the process can be slow due to biosecurity measures.
- The Central West of NSW appears to be currently facing a shortage of good quality cereal hay and is looking to bring in supplies from the Riverina.
- 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

- Low but fairly steady rainfall this week, with most days seeing some light falls, which is keeping everything fairly wet.
- Pastures continue to be green in the region, however the continued rain is seeing the nutritional quality of some pastures dropping as the grass is watery. Herds are still be serviced by pastures but supplemental nutrients are being fed out.
- No hay is being cut around Atherton due to the damp conditions, however further west where conditions have been drier; hay is being produced for specialty markets and for dairy farms in the region.
- Silage and feed grain corn crops continue to be harvested in the region; almost all of the silage is being ensiled on farm for local dairy farmers. Comments suggest contractors have to juggle the availability of suitable harvesting days due to the conditions.
- The last of the peanut harvest is expected to come in over the weekend with a forecast of some drier conditions to allow farmers to get on the fields without causing much damage. Fields will then need to be turned around to allow for some forage and hay production crops to be planted for the next season.
- Input costs continue to remain a concern; petrol is steady at \$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 is unchanged in the region as demand is fairly sluggish. Green feed availability remains the main reason for slowness in the market, though with the lower nutrition in the pastures some additional supplies are being sought. 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

- A dry week in the region with only the far eastern parts seeing any rain, and that was light and sporadic with total falls of less than 5mm of rain. Most days were clear, sunny and warm.
- Pastures continue to be green, and herds remain well serviced by available green feed options, as well as some additional feed for herd health.
- Areas around Condamine which had seen excessive rainfall and some flooding have now dried out for the most parts and the fields are accessible. Some re-sowing is being undertaken due to extended periods of submersion.
- Winter sowing is continuing in the region with barley going in around Pittsworth into excellent soil moisture and temperatures. Oats sown throughout the region on the back of good rains in April have established well and are on track to provide excellent feed for herds in the region during winter.

- Canola plants sown earlier in the season are showing excellent growth around Dalby, these crops will be used for winter grazing options for herds in the region.
- Some final sorghum harvesting is taking place along the border with NSW for some late planted crops.
- Enquiries in the region are fairly steady, with a good amount of hay and fodder being moved as local farmers look to fill sheds as winter arrives, and continued enquiries from the southern states to fill gaps not provided for by the lack of pasture growth and dry conditions.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +10 (\$260 to \$320/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$350 to \$440/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$90 to \$120/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +10 (\$240 to \$325/t) Prices increase this week.

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North Coast NSW

- Little to no rain across the region this week, with most areas seeing less than 5mm of rain, and some receiving no rain for the week. The coastal strip close to the QLD border did see slightly higher falls. Most days were clear and dry, though temperatures are beginning to cool.
- Grass is continuing to grow in the region with good rainfall, and still warm soil keeping growth moving along well. Herds are being well looked after by the available pastures, and producers have plenty of options and are able to keep animals away from some remaining wet land until it becomes safely trafficable.
- With a string of clearer days there has been a flurry of activity in the region as producers clear out non-viable summer crops and get on to planting for the next season into some excellent soil moisture and temperatures. Growers are hoping for fast emergence to try to make up some of the time lost due to wet conditions.
- In the more inland parts of the region the good soil moisture and temperatures has seen recently sown crops emerging and establishing well. These crops are seeing some incursion from Fall Army Worm which is being monitored and mitigated.
- Enquiries in the region continue to be fairly high. Good green feed availability is being offset by the wetter conditions in some parts and the rapid approach of the winter conditions. On-farm stores look to be well placed, due to the extended pasture availability, but local farmers are ensuring they have sufficient supply, and demand from the south continues to drive the movement of fodder.
- Some change to prices this week
- Cereal hay: +10 (\$270 to \$330/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$340 to \$420/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

- A dry week through the region this week, with no discernible rainfall recorded. Most days were clear and dry, though some frosts were recorded in the south; most areas are still fairly temperate.
- Pastures in the majority of the region are looking green and supplying local herds, however some areas are seeing early signs of drying and some supplemental feeding is being undertaken.
- Mixed pastures of ryegrass, phalaris, cocksfoot and chicory sown at the end of April and having received good timely rain are showing excellent growth and will be available for herds as part of a winter feeding program.
- Feed corn harvesting is continuing in the southern part of the region with the seasonal conditions proving very good for high yield and high protein feed.
- Some early planted canola has been affected by frosts in the south of the region, with growers watching the fields to see if the plants recover or if reseeding will be required.
- Enquiries in the region have picked up again this week as winter approaches. While pastures are still providing good feed, producers are looking to a feed gap in winter and aiming to fill sheds. Quite a bit of the fodder will be coming from the Riverina, which has a good supply. Cereal hay looks to be quite tight in the region.
- Some change to prices this week
- Cereal hay: +20 (\$300 to \$385/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$360 to \$430/t). Prices remain steady this week
- Straw: +5 (\$90 to \$140/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: +5 (\$260 to \$310/t). Prices increase this week.

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Bega Valley

- Little to no rain across the region this week, with clear sunny skies most days. Temperatures are trending downwards towards winter levels.
- Pastures in the region continue to be green and lush and are providing excellent feed options to dairy and cattle. Some low lying areas are still seeing some standing water issues.

- Dry and still somewhat warm days have seen a fair amount of growth in pastures, which has allowed for the continuation of some additional opportunistic silage cutting. This product continues to be pitted on local dairy farms for future use.
- Forage and cereal planting is continuing in the region into good conditions which have been bolstered by recent rains. Growers are looking for a clear dry spell to boost emergence and early growth.
- Enquiries remain fairly strong in the region as winter temperatures are beginning to be felt. Green feed availability is continuing to temper some demand, protein and cereal hays are seeing a fair amount of demand from dairy farms in the region and that continues to be supplied from outside the area.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +30 (\$360 to \$440/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +5 (\$460 to \$500/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$150 to \$210/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$330 to \$390/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Goulburn/Murray Valley

- Another dry week in the region with no rainfall recorded for the majority and totals of less than 5mm of rain in the south central parts. Some frosts have been recorded.
- Pastures in the region continue to be dry except under irrigation or in the south western areas where pastures received sufficient rain in May to top up soil moisture and keep the grasses growing.
- Winter sowing is continuing in the region, into fairly dry soil in most places. However growers are looking to the meet sowing windows rather than seasonal conditions in a number of instances and comments suggest that the seed is better in the ground than in the shed. Quite a number of growers have held off sowing as long as possible but the window is closing.
- There are concerns that the dry conditions will prevent recently sown pasture crops from establishing well before the cooler winter conditions set in and stall growth so more areas are being irrigated to give these crops the chance to emerge and establish.
- The mostly warm conditions in the region are seeing irrigated fodder crops such as lucerne put on some excellent growth.
- Enquiries in the region are continuing to respond to the dry and cooler conditions as winter begins to arrive. Enquiries are still being driven out of the south west of Victoria and into South Australia and hay trucks are moving to meet that need. Cereal and protein hay remain in high demand.
- Some change to pricing this week
- Cereal hay: +20 (\$300 to \$350/t). Prices increase this week.

- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$370 to \$415/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$95 to \$120/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$240 to \$290/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Gippsland

- Low rainfall across the west of the region this week, with falls averaging around 10mm of rain. The central and eastern parts saw no rain this week. Temperatures are falling and frosts were also reported on some mornings.
- Pastures in the west of the region continue to show good growth even with temperatures dropping the soil temperature is still providing vigour. Through the central and eastern parts of the region, pastures are beginning to look a little dry and growth is slowing.
- Forage oats sown in the central parts of the region are showing good early vigour and will be available for grazing in winter and spring before being locked up for hay making.
- Lucerne crops around Maffra are being cut under good conditions, after receiving timely rain and warmth produced some excellent growth.
- Enquiries have lifted in the region as temperatures begin to fall, and demand from the south west of the state continues to drive a fair amount of demand. Protein hays as well as cereal hay appear to be of highest demand, though there is some enquiries for straw for dry cows.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +20 (\$300 to \$380/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +10 (\$410 to \$470/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +5 (\$130 to \$170/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$220 to \$270/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Southwest Victoria

- Very light falls across the eastern and central parts of the region this week, with most areas receiving less than 5mm of rain. The west up to the border recorded no rain for the week. Frosts have been recorded on most days.
- Pastures in the region remain brown and dry with little to no growth being seen on dryland pastures, especially with the multiple frosts this week bringing down soil temperatures. Irrigated land is still showing some growth, but it is also slowing due to temperatures.

- Some recently sown pastures around Heywood have seen early germination, but the ground is still very dry and needs additional rains to give the crops a chance to establish well. There are concerns that even with winter rains these paddocks will not provide good pasture options until August.
- Sowing of winter crops is continuing in the region, with growers looking to the calendar rather than the skies to meet their planting windows. Comments suggest that some varieties of oats are in short supply for those looking to plant, but most other seed is readily available and going in quickly.
- Enquiries in the region continue to be high from dairy and livestock producers as the usual supply of pasture feed continues to be in short supply. Hay trucks are moving fodder into the region from other parts of the state as well as across the border from the Riverina and further north. Cereal hay is in high demand, as well as good quality vetch and lucerne.
- Some change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +20 (\$290 to \$370/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$350 to \$410/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +5 (\$90 to \$110/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$220 to \$290/t). Prices remain steady this week

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Southeast South Australia

- No rain fell in the region this week, with warm, clear sunny days. Temperatures continue to be above average.
- Pastures continue to be brown and dry and in some cases have disappeared completely. Irrigated areas are still showing some green, and the southern coastal strip also has some dryland pasture with limited green feed availability. Containment feeding continues for herds and flocks.
- Many growers in the areas are indicating they have completed their revised sowing schedule for the season. The process was much quicker than usual due a mix of the dry conditions causing no delays and the change in seed and areas being planted as farmers looked to the conditions and made choices accordingly. Comments suggest that there is still room within the sowing window to put in extra areas if the rains arrive in the next 2 or 3 weeks.
- Irrigated fodder crops in the south of the region appear to be doing very well in the warm conditions and putting on a fair amount of growth.
- Enquiries in the region remain quite high, but many producers are only supplying to pre-contracted or long standing customers and not taking on any new customers due to supply constraints. Older produce is on the market at reduced prices as fodder producers empty out sheds in the face of demand, but the quality is also lower so is not meeting all needs. Supplies continue to be trucked in from Victoria and NSW.
- Some change to prices this week.

- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$280 to \$340/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$330 to \$400/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$90 to \$115/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +10 (\$265 to \$300/t). Prices increase this week.

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Central South Australia

- Dry across the region this week with no rainfall recorded across the entire centre parts of the state. Warm clear days for the entire week.
- Little has changed since last week, with dryland pastures continuing to be brown and dry and some pastures having no feed left. Green feed is only available under irrigation and more producers are irrigating remaining pastures to keep feed available. Flocks remain in containment feeding.
- Lucerne crops under irrigation are producing excellent biomass in the warm conditions and putting on substantial growth.
- Cereal sowing continues in the region, for both grain and hay production crops. Comments confirm that the amount of ground sown to canola this year has been reduced due to the dry conditions, though there appear to be an increase in wheat and barley, some of which will be turned into straw post-harvest.
- Enquiries continue to be high in the region given the conditions. Many fodder producers are either keeping back supply for their own use or are only supplying to contracted or long term customers, so demand is far outweighing available local supply. Fodder continues to be brought in from outside the state to meet demand.
- Some change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$270 to \$315/t). Prices remain steady this week
- Lucerne hay: +5 (\$350 to \$400/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$90 to \$110/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Southwest Western Australia

- Moderate and widespread rainfall across the region with this week with all areas seeing at least 15-25mm of rain and the southern coast strip receiving up to 35mm of rain. Outside the region north of Perth saw good rainfall of over 50mm of rain.
- Pastures in the region continue to show green blush but there will still be a number of weeks before many of them can sustain grazing, so fodder continues to be fed out. The recent rain has

seen some forage crops emerge and it is expected the follow up rains will see good establishment before cooler temperatures stall growth.

- Mixed pastures of early germinated barley, legumes and medic along the southern coast have established well and are being used as grazing for local flocks.
- With the follow up rains that have arrived this week, dry sown pastures and paddocks are showing emergence and early establishment. Growers are continuing to sow in crops into the new moisture but comments suggest additional rains will be needed to join up the moisture profiles with the available deep layer.
- Continued rain and green spreading across pastures is lifting optimism, but farmers continue to feed out animals and deplete stores, so some replacement is taking place. This has lessened somewhat this week. Some export quality oaten hay is making its way into the domestic marketplace, however this hay is at a very high premium and even with dry conditions is not moving at any great volume.
- Some change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +45 (\$360 to \$460/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +5 (\$390 to \$460/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$110 to \$135/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$230 to \$310/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Northwest Tasmania

- Light to moderate widespread falls across the region this week, with almost all areas receiving at least 10-15mm of rain, and the mid north coast seeing up to 25mm of rain. Outside the region the central and southern parts of the state continue to see very little rainfall. Temperatures continue to trend towards winter levels.
- Pastures in the region continue to be green, though the falling temperatures are beginning to see some slowdown in growth. Some of the more easterly pastures are showing moisture stress due to the lack of rain, but herds are still being fairly well serviced by pasture availability.
- Pastures of forage barley and oats, field peas, millet and buckwheat are showing excellent growth around Forth near the coast, and are being grazed by local herds.
- Some silage has been produced over the last few weeks in the northern coastal areas where pastures have remained green. With the cooler temperatures this opportunistic cutting has completed as growth slows.
- Winter sowing schedules are continuing in the region, the recent rains will bolster previously dry sown paddocks, and will see more paddocks sown into the new available moisture.
- Enquiries in the region remain high, with both local farmers and southern farmers looking for supplies. The central and southern parts of the state remain dry and are driving demand, and fodder supplies continue to come in from the mainland.
- Some change to pricing this week.

- Cereal hay: +10 (\$275 to \$330/t) Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$330 to \$390/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$85 to \$130/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$295 to \$365/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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