



Australian Fodder Industry Association



25 October 2024

HAY REPORT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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



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

- Vetch and lucerne hay are likely to be in short supply this season which may result in higher prices.
- In South Australia, there is very strong interest from the equine market for lucerne hay, particularly small square bales, which are in short supply.

Driving Prices Down

- In some areas of Victoria which received rain, cereal hay crops have been cut earlier than planned, resulting in a reduction in quality, while in South Australia, rainfall is likely to have reduced the quality and price of oaten hay although much of this was destined for the export market.

Local News

- The BOM has released a Climate Driver Update, reporting that the El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) is neutral, with both sea surface temperatures (SSTs) in the central equatorial Pacific Ocean and atmospheric patterns at ENSO-neutral levels. Atmospheric indices, such as those related to patterns of surface pressure, cloud and trade winds, are broadly consistent with an ENSO-neutral state. Although some have displayed La Niña-like signals over the past several weeks, these signals have not been consistent. The Bureau's model suggests SSTs are likely to remain within the ENSO-neutral thresholds throughout the forecast period to February 2025. The next update will be released on 29 October.
- Buyers are encouraged to feed test and view fodder before purchase to be sure of the quality of feed.

REGIONAL COMMENTARY

Atherton Tablelands

- A dry week on the Atherton Tablelands with no rain recorded in Atherton, Mareeba or Millaa Millaa. Most days were partly sunny with some cloud cover. Temperatures continue to be in the low 30's and in line with seasonal trends.
- Enquiries in the region remain slow. Sheds are full of hay and little hay is moving in the marketplace.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Pasture (Rhodes Grass) hay: +/-0 (\$300 to \$400/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

- Mostly dry in the region this week, though a number of days were overcast. No rain fell in Toowoomba or Goondiwindi, however there were isolated falls of less than 5mm of rain around Stanthorpe. Temperatures range from the high 20's to low 30's and are slightly above seasonal averages.
- Grass is continuing to grow in the region with the good moisture and warmth seeing plenty of growth. There is some limited damage to standing forage crops due to the hail storms of last week, but grass pastures are holding up well with only isolated reports of stem breakage.
- Some parts of the region are seeing a substantial delay in the harvesting of hay production crops due to the rain. The crops will need some time to dry down before they can be cut. Frequent rain events are prolonging the process, though this week has allowed some drying and in those areas which avoided the highest rainfall, delays are being reported but some hay is continuing to be cut and baled.
- The grain harvest is also being delayed in areas where the rains and hail have produced unfavourable harvesting conditions.
- In those areas where paddocks have been harvested, summer crops are being sown, with the soil moisture and temperature conducive to a good start for the new crops.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$300 to \$400/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$350 to \$500/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$100 to \$160/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$250 to \$325/t) Prices remain steady this week.

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North Coast NSW

- Light falls across the region this week with most falls over the weekend and early in the week, with mid-week onwards mostly dry. Overcast on a number of days, and rainfall totals range from 5mm of rain in Lismore and Casino to 15mm of rain in Grafton.
- Grass growth is continuing in higher elevation pastures however there is some concern around the viability of some of the lower-lying pastures due to prolonged wet conditions. This is impacting both the nutritional value of the grass and trafficability for herds to safely graze.
- Hay crops in the region continue to be delayed due to the persistent wet or overcast conditions. The string of drier days in the latter part of this week has seen some opportunistic cutting, but most crops still need time to dry down.
- Barley crops near Tenterfield have taken advantage of the recent well-timed rainfall to fill grain.
- Newly sown sorghum crops in the west of the region have emerged well and are showing good early vigour. In the north-west, corn crops sown in September are showing good growth after early emergence. These crops are slated for silage production later in the year.
- No change to pricing this week.

- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$320 to \$330/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$370 to \$410/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$100 to \$140/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$250 to \$280/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Central West NSW

- Light rains across the region this week, almost all of it falling on the weekend and early week with the remainder clear and dry. Forbes recorded 10mm of rain, while Parkes recorded 15mm of rain. Temperatures are in the mid to high 20's.
- Pastures in the region continue to provide green feed availability, though some isolated pockets that have been in rain shadows or simply missed timely falls are seeing early signs of moisture stress and slowdown in growth. The falls of late last week should see an uplift in soil moisture.
- Dryland oaten and wheaten hay is being made around Parkes this week, with reports indicating reasonable yields, while vetch hay is being baled around Condobolin and down into the Riverina.
- Grain harvest is moving through the region, with comments indicating that the uneven harvest is leading to a reduction in the availability of contractor equipment. The unusual growing conditions as well as rain events in Queensland and New South Wales have led to staggered harvesting which is causing a domino effect in transport logistics.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -10 (\$300 to \$335/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$390 to \$430/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$130 to \$150/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$240 to \$280/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Bega Valley

- Little to no rain this week with Bega recording less than 5mm of rain and all of that over the weekend, with the rest of the week dry though cloudy most days. Some rain is expected at the end of the week, but only light falls.
- Pastures in the region continue to show some signs of moisture stress due to the underlying conditions and lack of good soaking rains. Pastures remain viable and available to herds, but growth has slowed.

- Oat crops in the north of the region are looking reasonable, especially given the reduced rainfall and soil moisture. These crops are slated for hay production in the next week if the conditions are favourable.
- Comments indicate that the reduced amount of hay that has been produced thus far this season is not of good quality, as crops have been moisture stressed, short, and some have lost the bottom leaf.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -23 (\$370 to \$400/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$490 to \$540/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$200 to \$250/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$330 to \$380/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Goulburn/Murray Valley

- Light to moderate falls across the region this week, with Shepparton recording 20mm of rain, Yarrawonga saw 35mm of rain and Strathbogie recorded over 50mm of rain. Most of this fell over the weekend with the rest of the week returning to dry conditions. Temperatures continue to trend above average for this time of year, and some high winds were recorded.
- Pastures in the region continue to be affected by the low moisture availability and lack of good spring rains. Dry feed is available and some limited green pick, but most green pastures are under irrigation. The recent reasonable rainfall is not expected to see much turnaround in the short term, and sustained soaking rains are needed to rebuild the soil moisture profile.
- Irrigated barley crops in the west of the region have lodged due to the recent rains and winds; however comments indicate the croppers are confident the crops will be back up before harvest.
- Hay crops cut around Shepparton mid-last week saw little rainfall and were baled before the heavier falls over the weekend.
- Comments indicated that the dry conditions and lack of good rains during the growing period has led to a noticeable drop in yield of recently cut hay production crops in the region.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -10 (\$315 to \$325/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$400 to \$460/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$130 to \$160/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-10 (\$270 to \$310/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Gippsland

- Light to moderate falls across the region this week, with Sale recording 20mm of rain and Warragul 30mm of rain though Bairnsdale saw less than 5mm of rain for the week. Temperatures are in line with seasonal averages though this week did see some higher than usual temperatures in the region.
- Some limited reports of frost damage to pastures, but most of the region continues to be green. While recent rains have been welcomes, some additional rains, especially in the central parts would be beneficial to bolster topsoil moisture profiles for shallow rooted grasses to pull from.
- Fodder beet planting is being undertaken around Lance Creek on mixed farming enterprises. These crops will provide good feed options of local dairy herds.
- Silage production around Mirboo North is in full swing, with reports of very good production results and second cuts potentially ready by mid-November. As indicated previously, most of this is going straight into long term storage, though demand from the south-west and South Australia is seeing some of this silage shipped west.
- Enquiries in the region remain fairly low.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -10 (\$340 to \$380/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: +3 (\$460 to \$495/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$180 to \$200/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$260 to \$300/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Southwest Victoria

- Hailstorms were recorded in the latter part of last week, in isolated patches around Casterton as part of a storm that moved across the area. That storm dropped between 20-30mm of rain, however it was mostly dry with rainfall of less 5mm of rain across the region for the rest of the week.
- After the recent frosts, some parts of the frost-impacted areas in the south west were hit with hailstorms in the latter part of last week. While pastures look to have only limited breakage, standing forage crops were extensively damaged around Casterton with significant leaf stripping.
- Irrigation is still being employed in the region to keep up some available feed options for dairy herds and sheep, though with the recent rains, comments suggest the area around Camperdown should soon be able to rely on rainfall and existing soil moisture.
- Silage production is continuing in the region for both usual producers as well as dairy farmers who destocked or agisted herds and now have some additional pasture availability to conserve fodder.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -5 (\$330 to \$300/t). Prices decrease this week.

- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$390 to \$430/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$115 to \$165/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$265 to \$300/t). Prices remain steady week.

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Southeast South Australia

- Hailstorms hit the area at the end of last week as part of a storm front, which also saw between 15 and 20mm of widespread rain. The remainder of the week returned to mostly dry conditions with light falls of less than 5mm in the early part of the week and the latter part dry and clear.
- Dryland pastures continue to only provide dry feed options for local herds and flocks. Irrigated pastures are looking good with the warm daytime conditions, but these are in the minority. Some hail damage has been reported in areas that saw hail during the storms, but since most areas are on dry feed there were no leaves to break. Containment feeding is continuing to be utilised.
- Barley crops near Naracoorte have been assessed for frost with damage coming in in some paddocks from 30% to 50%. Some of these will be cut for hay, but comments suggest that there looks to be enough moisture to grain fill, so they will be pushed through to harvest.
- Lentil crops in the north of the region are looking fairly good, given the conditions, with the crops podding and filling in areas which did not see any frost events. The growers are hoping for lower than 30-degree days for the next few weeks to ensure a good yield.
- Enquiries in the region remain strong. Fodder continues to come into the region.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$350 to \$390/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$410 to \$445/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$130 to \$170/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$285 to \$320/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Central South Australia

- The storm front which moved through the region late last week also supplied some light to moderate rainfall with Murray Bridge recording 16mm of rain, while Kangaroo Island saw 25mm of rain. The rest of the week was dry though somewhat overcast.
- Pastures in the region continue to dry out and nothing green is growing unless under irrigation. Containment feeding is being undertaken for some flocks. The recent rains will do little to turnaround the underlying soil moisture deficit.

- Lucerne and oat crops are being cut and baled in the region where irrigation was employed, or moisture was sufficient. Comments indicate that some of the cuts are being sold straight off the baler due to the shortage in the area.
- Some dedicated hay producers around Langhorne Creek are indicating that anything they had which was dryland is now done, with no more viable crops to turn into hay bales. Irrigated Lucerne, as well as mixed meadow and ryegrass, are still on the rotation and will be turned to hay but all other slated crops are complete or were non-viable for production.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$340 to \$375/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$400 to \$450/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$130 to \$165/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Southwest Western Australia

- Mostly dry and clear across the region this week, with some mid-week falls along the southern coast. Bunbury saw 8mm of rain and Manjimup recorded 10mm of rain. Temperatures in the region remain in line with seasonal averages.
- Grass is looking lush in the region with plenty of biomass and is providing great green feed availability to local herds and flocks.
- Recently cut hay around Manjimup saw some rainfall, however comments indicate that the falls were light resulting in little damage and the bales made after raking and conditioning were of good quality.
- Lupins are being swathed around Mount Barker. In the same region mixed pastures of peas and oats are being baled.
- Mixed pastures of oats, ryegrass and clover are being cut for silage around Williams after a last grazing.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$340 to \$380/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$380 to \$430/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$100 to \$145/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$260 to \$300/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Northwest Tasmania

- Moderate to heavy falls across the region this week with Smithton recording 22mm of rain, while Burnie recorded 45mm of rain. Temperatures are trending to seasonal averages.
- Pastures in the region continue rebounding after a rocky start, with good soil moisture and temperate conditions seeing growth moving well.
- Silage cutting is on hold due to the wet conditions; however mixed dairy enterprises are starting to plant forage mix that will either be grazed over the summer or made into silage in January.
- Some lucerne crops in the region are ready to be cut and there is a fair demand for the hay, but the wet conditions have delayed cutting.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$350 to \$410/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$350 to \$410/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$120 to \$160/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$370 to \$460/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

For more information contact AFIA:

info@afia.org.au www.afia.org.au

PO Box 527 Ascot Vale VIC 3032



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