



Australian Fodder Industry Association



19 September 2025

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

- Victorian cereal hay prices have increased this week, the first rise in eight weeks. It could be a sign the market is settling after July's record highs, but is more likely tied to growers turning cereal crops to hay instead of grain, due to oversupply and grain price pressure. One to watch.
- Darling Downs pasture hay prices also lifted this week. First cuts are yielding less than cereal hay in the region, which may be pushing prices up. This is the first area to see fresh supply coming in, thanks to strong growth and favourable conditions.

Driving Prices Down

- Hay prices mostly continue to ease after July's record-highs, as the market resets following months of drought and limited early producer planning.
- Many buyers expect fresh hay imminently. Delays from dry conditions mean new-season hay may not reach sheds until late October.
- With grain prices under pressure from strong harvests here and overseas, some growers are baling wheat and barley instead. This should bring cereal hay to market in the coming weeks, marking the first real lift in national supply in months.
- Buyers should note that most online listings represent carryover hay. Prices do not always reflect shed-floor value, particularly for higher-grade loads.

Local News

- **BOM national weather summary and outlook**
 - Widespread rain across Central West NSW delivered up to 100 mm of rainfall, easing short-term dryness and improving conditions for spring hay cuts in the region.
 - Southwest Vic, and Central and Southeast SA recorded 10–50 mm of rain, helpful but modest, given that rainfall this year has remained in the lowest 5–10% of all periods since 1900, prolonging drought conditions in these zones.
 - Northwest Tasmania saw weekly rainfalls of 50–100 mm, breaking winter dryness, particularly in pasture-based areas. However, streamflows remain low heading into spring, with the rainfall outlook below average, adding some uncertainty.
 - East Gippsland and Southwest Vic continue to face below-average soil moisture, and rainfall since February is still the driest on record, while parts of the eastern seaboard are experiencing improved moisture levels and a slightly positive seasonal shift.
 - October–December forecast suggests above-median rainfall remains possible for parts of the Central West NSW and East Gippsland. Forecast confidence has weakened in Victoria and South Australia, reducing expectations for a broad seasonal recovery.
 - Water storage levels in the Murray-Darling Basin are down 12% compared to last year; a key concern for the Bega, Central West, and Goulburn/Murray regions, where irrigation support for hay may come under pressure if dry conditions persist.
 - View and download the latest Weekly Agriculture, Climate and Water Update [HERE](#).

Buyers are encouraged to **feed test and view fodder** before purchase to ensure feed quality.

REGIONAL COMMENTARY

Atherton Tablelands

- Hot conditions and light rain showers are helping sustain pasture growth, with Atherton receiving 60mm over three days this week. Operations paused temporarily, with growers hopeful that these more consistent showers, rather than the usual patchy September storms, will support barley crops. Heavier falls further south may contribute more meaningfully to subsoil moisture and broader crop momentum.
- Rhodes grass hay is listed online at \$280/t for new season, untested product. Small bales are fetching up to \$350/t at saleyards, driven by rising demand from beef producers. New cuts are scheduled within 3–4 weeks, which may ease local pricing depending on yield and quality.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Pasture (Rhodes Grass) hay: +/-0 (\$280 to \$400/t). Prices remain steady this week.

Please note: Hay in the Atherton Tablelands is traditionally priced at \$/bale, so checking bale weights for conversion is important. The price range indicated is for feeds of varying quality. We recommend testing and viewing the feed before purchase to ensure its quality.

Darling Downs

- Warmer, drier conditions have followed consistent winter rain. Growers have taken advantage of clearer weather to cut and bale cereal hay, and good volumes are now entering the market.
- Online listings are increasing, especially for horse-grade cereal hay, priced between \$400 and \$700/t, with barley hay in small bales up to \$1,000/t. Some lucerne is listed at \$1,227/t ex-farm in small bales, but these higher prices are aimed at hobby markets and do not influence reported trading values.
- Contractors are selling new-season pasture hay at \$300–\$350/t, though yields are lower than cereal cuts. Straw is still around a month away, while vetch hay is scarce but available at \$400/t. Lucerne remains tight and is also around a month from harvest.
- Livestock-grade barley hay is moving online at \$350–\$400/t ex-farm, and growers are directly selling new-season cereal hay at around \$300–\$350/t ex-farm. Meanwhile, mid-range Rhodes grass from January is priced at \$370/t, offering dairy producers a range of feed options.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -100 (\$300 to \$400/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$530 to \$670/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$230 to \$290/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +15 (\$280 to \$350/t). Prices increase this week.

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North Coast NSW

- A wet year so far, and the ground remains very soft across much of the region. While there is no shortage of grass, ongoing moisture is starting to affect feed quality in some areas. Warmer days are helping, but paddocks need more time to dry out properly. Growers are keeping an eye on conditions, hoping for a drier run to catch up, but slight showers are forecast next week.
- Wheat and barley growers in the region are watching prices and are considering booking baling contractors to turn crops into cereal hay, given high yields and easing grain prices. This could mean a plentiful cereal hay supply shortly and further easing of prices.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$300 to \$400/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$380 to \$500/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$150 to \$250/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$250 to \$310/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Central West NSW

- Frosts and dry conditions continue to limit crop and pasture growth. With no meaningful rain to date, paddocks are under pressure. Light showers are forecast for Friday, bringing up to 10mm in Coonabarabran and Dubbo, and around 9mm in Narromine and Parkes. It will not shift root zone moisture, but it may freshen crops and give growers a lift.
- Demand remains low and prices have eased. Growers are cautious, moving only small volumes as many buyers hold off.
- The region has the highest number of online listings, as growers clear last season's reserves ahead of spring cutting. Untested wheat straw is listed from Gilgandra at \$185 per tonne ex-farm, and A-grade tested bales out of Pallamallawa are listed at \$250 per tonne. Lucerne is widely available online from \$440 to \$600 per tonne, depending on quality.
- Cutting is about eight weeks away for many. Without spring rain, yields will stay low. Some growers are already reassessing harvest plans in light of falling grain prices. If dry conditions continue, more crops could be cut for hay, adding to supply in the coming weeks.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -50 (\$380 to \$480/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: -20 (\$480 to \$620/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$110 to \$170/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: -50 (\$310 to \$410/t). Prices decrease this week.

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Bega Valley

- Recent rainfall of 15–30 mm has boosted confidence among local agronomists, with experts labelling it one of the most valuable falls in recent seasons. It has arrived at a critical time for winter crops and pasture regrowth, helping to shore up yield potential and support local hay availability through the spring season.
- Reports say that water storage levels remain under pressure, with allocations limited across southern NSW. For producers in this region, that means continued reliance on rain-fed growth, putting more weight on each rainfall event to drive pasture and hay production through spring.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -50 (\$470 to \$590/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: -20 (\$580 to \$720/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$220 to \$270/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: -50 (\$420 to \$540/t). Prices decrease this week.

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Goulburn/Murray Valley

- Crisp, clear days are helping with harvest and transport logistics, but soil moisture is low and frost risk remains high. A slight to medium chance of light showers across the region into next week will not be enough to change root zone moisture, but will help biomass and crop growth.
- Local agronomists say crops around Bendigo have started to catch up over the past fortnight. Growth is still around two weeks behind in terms of biomass, but improving. Areas like Raywood, Serpentine, Bridgewater and Elmore are also bouncing back, with recent rainfall nearing the seasonal average.
- Cereal hay prices have risen for the first time since mid-July, when they last reached their peak. This week, the average sits at \$470/t in Elmore and \$480/t in Shepparton; up from \$350/t and \$360/t at the same time last year. That represents a 34% year-on-year increase, marking the biggest jump among the key grain indicators.
- Multiple hay types are listed on online marketplaces, with wheat straw asking between \$175/t and \$225/t for various grades, plus tested barley vetch hay surplus to needs at \$400/t all ex-farm.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +10 (\$410 to \$530/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: -30 (\$460 to \$620/t). Prices decrease this week.

- Straw: +/-0 (\$90 to \$110/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: -50 (\$280 to \$440/t). Prices decrease this week.

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Gippsland

- Dry conditions continue across the region, with little to no relief from recent light showers. Subsoil moisture is low, and pasture growth remains slow. Rain is forecast for the next 7–10 days, but daily totals are looking light, with up to 9mm of rain for Warragul, but just 3mm of rainfall for much of the east. A decent break is still needed to turn things around before spring feed runs out.
- The Victorian Farmers Federation have reported concerns among hay and grain producers in the region's east, with grass beginning to turn due to lack of rainfall, and the little growth they have had so far this season is not enough to make hay. Concerns now shift to water storage levels as well as feed.
- In line with other regions in Victoria, cereal hay prices have increased for the first time since mid-July, when they last peaked. The current price is 29% higher than it was this time last year. With input costs also rising, it remains to be seen whether this signals a new price floor. Some grain growers are now considering cutting grain for hay due to pressure on grain prices, which may shift supply dynamics in the coming weeks, even though demand remains relatively low.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +10 (\$440 to \$590). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: -30 (\$540 to \$650/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$115 to \$175/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: -50 (\$320 to \$480/t). Prices decrease this week.

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Southwest Victoria

- Cold, dry conditions persist, and paddock growth remains limited. Despite this, hay demand is soft and prices have eased in recent weeks. Most buyers are still sitting tight, waiting to see if spring brings follow-up rain and stronger feed outlooks.
- Windy conditions from Friday will put a pause on hay operations, and a very high chance of showers into next Tuesday will be a welcome reprieve in a bid to boost growth and soil moisture.
- In line with other regions in Victoria, cereal hay prices have increased for the first time since mid-July, when they last reached their peak. The current price is around 30% higher than this time last year. With input costs also rising, it remains to be seen whether this signals a new

price floor. Some grain growers are now considering cutting their grain for hay due to pressure on grain prices, which may shift supply dynamics in the coming weeks, even though demand remains relatively low.

- Growth is still delayed by 5–10 weeks in most paddocks; rain in the coming weeks will be crucial in helping to push crops into a viable window for cutting.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +10 (\$430 to \$570/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: -30 (\$470 to \$630). Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$100 to \$150/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: -50 (\$310 to \$420/t). Prices decrease this week.

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Southeast South Australia

- Sunshine and dry conditions dominate, and with no significant rainfall, pasture regrowth is slow. Supply remains tight, but low demand is helping manage the situation.
- Rainfall has been in the lowest 5 to 10% of records for most of southern South Australia since February 2024, with poor root zone soil moisture reported. Crops remain 5–10 weeks behind in ideal growth stages, and will rely on the ability of industries to recover from drought conditions.
- With forecast showers from Friday, daily totals are low (up to 6mm of rain in Naracoorte, and 4mm in Keith), but will help bring a sense of relief and boost crops trying to catch up.
- We have found oaten hay of varying quality and harvest for sale on online marketplaces from \$350–\$400 per tonne. While growers are still waiting to cut and bale, this suggests a desire to clear sheds of old stock before the new season cuts are ready.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -50 (\$425 to \$525/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: -20 (\$510 to \$650/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$150 to \$200/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: -50 (\$385 to \$465/t). Prices decrease this week.

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Central South Australia

- A dry fortnight has left many waiting on follow-up rains. Crops and paddocks are drying out again, and local hay stocks are down to essentials. Some emergency feed has come through events and programs, but consistent rain is still the missing link.
- Rainfall has been in the lowest 5 to 10% of records for most of southern South Australia since February 2024, according to official BOM reports, with poor root zone soil moisture. Crops remain 5–10 weeks behind in ideal growth stages, and will rely on the ability of industries to recover from drought conditions.
- Forecasted showers from Friday could bring some relief, especially for growers thinking ahead to pasture or cereal hay. While only small daily totals (up to 4mm of rain in Roseworthy), follow-up rain will be needed to shift conditions meaningfully.
- Local experts suggest that growers may opt to produce cereal hay instead of grain, thereby increasing the availability of hay across the region in the coming weeks.
- No online hay listings, with hay contractors able to be selective with who they give limited allocations to.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$415 to \$545/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$425 to \$495/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$200 to \$280/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Southwest Western Australia

- Showers from a recent front gave some moisture, but cold air and heavy paddocks from earlier rain are slowing ground access. Rainfall during August was average to above average across the region, contributing to widespread improvements in soil moisture, while causing waterlogging in isolated areas, especially along the coast, limiting machinery access to paddocks for fungicide and fertiliser applications.
- Previous long-term rainfall deficiencies have eased. Root zone soil moisture remains average to above average across the zone.
- Pricing remains steady once again this week, as hay producers continue to wait for the soil to dry to enable a proper assessment of when hay can be cut, and its quality.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$230 to \$310/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$400 to \$500/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$130 to \$190/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$300 to \$350/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Northwest Tasmania

- Recent showers have brought some relief, but cold nights and frosts are holding back growth. Contractors report that there is virtually no hay available, and any spring recovery will depend on the return of reliable rain by mid-to-late September.
- A series of cold fronts will arrive from Friday, bringing a very high chance of showers to the region and optimism to the back end of the growing season.
- Little to nothing is available online, with hay contractors able to be selective with who they give limited allocations to.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$325 to \$415/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$460 to \$540/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$130 to \$190/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$270 to \$330/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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