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Summary

Driving Prices Up
– Pastures have rebounded well in the north of the country; however producers are still looking for high quality vetch and lucerne hay and are keeping prices elevated. In WA the very dry conditions are driving demand across all fodder lines as pastures are unable to supply quality green feed.
– Livestock producers are seeing a lift in the price at saleyards and are continuing to put on weight before sales or moving stock into feedlots to finish off which is increasing demand.
– The benchmark price set by exporters looking to fill shipments is continuing to keep cereal hay in demand and as a consequence, replacement fodder line pricing are being kept buoyant to cover the reduction of supply available to the domestic market.

Driving Prices Down
– Good green feed availability across most of the southern states is meeting short term livestock needs with a commensurate reduction in demand for fodder lines.
– Straw appears to have been made in abundance in QLD and NSW and feedlots are reportedly well stocked, which is reducing demand for the product.
– Silage and hay production in most of Victoria and parts of Southern NSW are filling local needs quite well, with much fodder only moving locally, which has a lowering effect on the additional transport costs.

Local News
– Heavy rainfall across parts of southern NSW and Victoria has led to riverine flooding across pastures and paddocks as well as damage to buildings. The effect on fodder production will be assessed once flood waters fully recede.
– Western Australia’s hay production for the season is confirmed as being below average with a sizable reduction in yield combined with low rainfall leading to little green feed availability. There is growing certainty there will be some supply constraints in late summer and autumn.
– The Bureau has stated that the long-range forecast for Australia indicates warm days and nights nationwide. During January, there is an increased chance of above median rainfall for parts of Queensland, NSW and Victoria, and more neutral rainfall chances across much of the country. Chances favour drier than average conditions for western parts of WA and the Top End of the NT. The El Niño event continues in the tropical Pacific – the typical drying influence of El Niño on Australia’s climate usually reduces during summer, especially in the east.
– Buyers are encouraged to feed test and view fodder before purchase to be sure of the quality of feed.
Regional commentary

Atherton Tablelands

– A mostly dry week, with limited rainfall of less than 10mm of rain across most of the region. Humid conditions and overcast days.

– Pastures in the region are lush and green with the recent heavy rainfall filling up the subsoil moisture profile. However some well-draining country is seeing a bit of surface dryness and growers would like a little more follow up rain.

– Some crops have needed to be resown in the region because of seed burst due to the heavy rainfall in December. Some corn crops have also been badly affected by Fall Army Worm and have been turned over before the paddocks resown with a new corn crop. Mitigation efforts are underway with a fair amount of spraying in the region being undertaken.

– Legumes and forage millet and sorghum are being sown in the region to take advantage of the good subsoil moisture and for a quick summer grazing option. However producers would like some additional follow up rains to connect the topsoil to the good subsoil moisture available.

– Some limited hay making is still being undertaken in the region, but with demand a little muted most of this is now going into sheds rather than being sold straight off the paddock.

– Input costs continue to be a factor for growers in the region; petrol prices are stable at around $2.05 per litre. Urea prices are staying high as demand begins to lift for the next season sowing and is around $1000 p/t with blended at over $1200p/t and indications are these prices will continue to lift.

– Some change to pricing this week as good green feed availability and a reasonable amount of on-farm storage is seeing producers pull back on purchases in the short term. Feedlots are still driving some demand, but the enquiries are fairly flat currently.

– Pasture (Rhodes Grass) hay: -5 ($360 to $450/t). Prices decrease 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 across the region this week, with sunny days. Up to 25mm of rain fell during the week but this was on a single day with the remainder of the week dry and clear, though with reasonably high humidity. The west of the region did see higher average falls of up to 35mm of rain.

– Pastures in the region are supplying a good amount of green feed, with the rains and sunshine over the last few weeks solidifying the earlier bounce back in pastures after the extended dry period. Current humid conditions are perfect for grass which grows best during February and March. Soil moisture in the central and eastern parts of the region is high, giving a fair degree of optimism around the viability of these pastures moving through summer. However some areas as still reporting dryness in the topsoil, though subsoil moisture is good.
Recently sown paddocks and pastures through most of the region are showing good growth, however reports of patchy rainfall over some of the western downs has led to some new crop failures with growers spraying out the crops.

Sorghum crops are showing excellent growth in fields around Toowoomba with the crops taking advantage of the availability of moisture and a number of warm sunny days over the last few weeks. However there have been some reports of a high number of sorghum midge being detected around Allora, mitigation efforts are underway.

Enquiries are picking up a little coming out of the end of year break; however there is good green feed availability which is tempering demand. Vetch and Oaten Hay continues to be in demand and is keeping prices elevated. Enquiries in relation to straw remain low as feedlots and producers appear to be well supplied.

Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +10 ($230 to $340/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +20 ($360 to $440/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: -5 ($80 to $110/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 ($260 to $315/t) Prices remain steady this week.

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North Coast NSW
- After very heavy rainfall at the start of the year in the northern part of the region this week saw a return to much drier conditions with average rainfall of less than 15mm of rain across the entire area. Clear and sunny most days.

- Conditions have been very good for the growth of grass pastures in the region, though the wet conditions in the far northern parts is apparently causing some issues with safe grazing for some herds. Hilly country is offering very good pasture options.

- Summer planting has been sporadic in the region with high rainfall events over the festive period making it difficult to get on to the paddocks to put in the crops. However crops sown in mid-December or earlier have taken advantage of the good rainfall to establish well as long as they had emerged before the heaviest falls. Some comments suggest there has been patchy loss of seed due to bursting. Especially in the far north near the QLD border.

- Cotton crops in the west of the region are coming along well with the good rainfall and warm conditions boosting along dryland crops.

- Forage sorghum continues to show excellent growth in the region, though there have been reports of some storm damage to stands with a bit of height, but most appear to have weathered these events well and continue to show grazing potential.

- Enquiries are picking up a little in the region; however the abundance of good green feed options as well as the prospect of good growth in summer crops is tempering demand. Nevertheless given the wet conditions some additional fodder is being sourced to keep livestock herds moving along well.
Some change to prices this week

Cereal hay: +/-0 ($285 to $340/t). Prices remain steady this week.

Lucerne hay: +10 ($350 to $410/t). Prices increase this week.

Straw: +/-0 ($80 to $100/t). Prices remain steady this week.

Pasture hay: +10 ($240 to $340/t). Prices increase this week.

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Central West NSW

Widespread moderate to heavy rainfall across the region this week with Forbes recording 80mm of rain and Lake Cargelligo over 90mm of rain for the week. Mostly overcast and humid days in the north of the region.

Dams around Eugowra are filling up with all the recent rains and the pastures continue to rebound well from the earlier dry conditions. Good green feed is now available for herds in the region though comments suggest that producers are still rotating herds through the pastures at a higher rate to protect new growth, and some supplemental feeding is still being undertaken.

Lucerne hay had been cut and baled in the region under good growing conditions during the festive period however recent rains have delayed the latest round of cuts as producers look for a few consecutive days of sunshine to bale the crop. Some producers around Canowindra have stands ready to cut which will be moving beyond optimal cutting due to the expected rains.

Forage Sorghum in the south of the region is showing excellent growth with the plants responding well to good moisture availability and sunny days boosting growth. These crops will be grazed before being locked up for fodder production later in the year.

Enquires are still fairly low in the region with a mix of green feed availability becoming more readily available as well as reasonable stores of on-farm supply brought in during the drier period. New season good quality hay is also becoming more available which is allowing some producers to switch to having lower on farm stores and therefore lower immediate demand.

Some change to pricing this week.

Cereal hay: +10 ($240 to $335/t). Prices increase this week.

Lucerne hay: +10 ($350 to $420/t). Prices increase this week.

Straw: +/-0 ($80 to $110/t). Prices remain steady this week

Pasture hay: +10 ($270 to $325/t). Prices increase this week.

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Bega Valley

- Widespread light to moderate rainfall across the region this week with all of the valley and surrounding areas seeing between 15mm and 25mm of rain. Most days saw some rainfall with few clear dry days recorded.

- The Bega valley has bounced back quite dramatically after the rainfall in December. The region was on track to have recorded its driest year for more than 20 years before over 250mm of rain across the region brought the totals back into line with average falls. This has caused an upswing in pasture growth and the availability of good green feed for local dairy and cattle herds with the high subsoil moisture expected to keep the growth moving along well into summer.

- Corn crops in the region are coming along well and are showing good growth, these crops are slated for silage production later in the year. In the north of the region forage sorghum crops are being fed to dairy cows before being locked up for fodder production.

- Silage continued to be cut across the region over the Xmas period with mostly mixed enterprises taking advantage of the abundance of grass growth to start to rebuild some depleted silage pits. Additional silage cutting is scheduled in the region once there are a few clear dry days.

- Enquiries are still reasonable in the region with much more available green feed tempering demand but some shortfalls that still need to be replenished as well as some additional fodder requirements for current herds. Vetch and Lucerne are in high demand and being sourced out of Northern Victoria.

- Some change to pricing this week.
  - Cereal hay: +/-0 ($250 to $330/t). Prices remain steady this week.
  - Lucerne hay: +5 ($360 to $410/t). Prices increase this week.
  - Straw: +3 ($90 to $110/t). Prices increase this week.
  - Pasture hay: +/-0 ($260 to $330/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Goulburn/Murray Valley

- Widespread heavy rainfall across the region this week has led to localised flooding around Shepparton and Rochester, 110mm of rainfall was recorded in Seymour. Riverine rises have impacted farmland as well as towns.

- Riverine flooding in the region has impacted some of the towns and farms with reports of losses of fodder supplies. Rochester has seen major flooding for the second time in 15 months and assessments will be undertaken once flood waters recede.

- Recent persistent and heavy rainfall has reportedly downgraded some hay which had not been shedded or was insufficiently protected, with high winds and storms causing some covered bales to be exposed to the rains.
Pastures in the region are green and lush and providing good green feed opportunities, however there are concerns regarding some low-lying pastures with the recent heavy rainfall and flooding. Hilly country is providing excellent pastures for local herds.

Corn crops in the north of the region are showing excellent growth with the past few weeks providing outstanding growth and pollination conditions.

The grain harvest was completed or reaching the end for most growers, however after the recent heavy rains and storms, almost all remaining unharvested grain will be cut for soil health or mulch as the damage is too extensive to salvage most of the harvest.

Enquiries are fairly stable in the region with a fair amount of good quality hay, especially lucerne, vetch and oaten hay available in the market, and some reasonable demand for the product. Green feed availability is continuing to temper some demand, but high quality parcels of hay are still moving. Some shift in requests for straw.

Some change to pricing this week

- Cereal hay: +/-0 ($270 to $345/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +10 ($350 to $410/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +5 ($95 to $110/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 ($260 to $320/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Gippsland

- Widespread rainfall across the region this week, with most areas seeing at least 25mm of rain with the eastern and western parts of the region recording up to 45mm of rain. Warm conditions with high humidity recorded.

- Pastures continue to be green in the majority of the region and are providing very good green feed availability to dairy and livestock herds. Due to heavy rains there are some trafficability issues in some low-lying pastures but elevated and hilly country is offering excellent feed.

- Croppers in the region are concerned in relation to the possibility of mould on the grain harvest due to the high humidity and with very wet paddocks there is little ability to get on to the paddocks to pull off the crop and assess any downgrades or losses.

- Silage continues to be cut in the region around any rain events, with reports of abundant regrowth allowing for additional cuts. Comments suggest that after an excellent spring season in southern Gippsland for pasture growth and silage production the wet and warm start to summer is prolonging the ability to cut quality fodder crops.

- Enquiries remain fairly stable in the region with abundant green feed availability across most of Gippsland and additional silage being cut to bolster on-farm supplies as well as move into the market place. There is some indication there may be an excess of feed grain available locally which is also giving producers a number of options. High quality hay is still in some demand especially Lucerne and Vetch, and some movement in straw is being seen.
– Some change to pricing this week.

– Cereal hay: +/-0 ($250 to $320/t). Prices remain steady this week.

– Lucerne hay: +15 ($330 to $430/t). Prices increase this week.

– Straw: +/-0 ($90 to $115/t). Prices remain steady this week.

– Pasture hay: +10 ($240 to $290/t). Prices increase this week.

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Southwest Victoria

– Widespread light to moderate falls across the region this week, with most areas seeing at least 20mm of rain. Hamilton recorded 30mm of rain, while Dartmoor saw over 40mm of rain.

– Pastures in the region have continued their turnaround and are providing excellent feed options to local herds. The mix of soaking rains as well as bursts of warm sunny days has seen good growth and regrowth in grazing pastures.

– Some livestock producers around Hamilton were glad of the earlier dry start to spring to enable the reduction in the accumulated wet that was affecting some grazing opportunities, and are now seeing much more productive pastures.

– Silage production in the region continued over the festive season with producers taking advantage of the good summer storms and warmer days to cut on excellent regrowth. Most of this silage is being stored on-farm or being sold over the fence to local dairy farmers, so little of it is currently appearing in the marketplace.

– Grain harvest is ongoing in the region and for some around Hamilton they are just beginning to harvest their wheat crops due to the very wet conditions preventing growers from getting on to the paddocks before Christmas. There is some concern regarding moisture content, but reports indicate most is coming in at safe storage levels.

– Enquiries in the region remain fairly steady with good green feed availability continuing to temper some demand and the additional fodder supplies that were able to be made in December and early January bolstering some on farm supply. Good quality protein hay such as vetch and lucerne are still in demand.

– Some change to prices this week.

– Cereal hay: +10 ($260 to $350/t). Prices increase 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: +3 ($215 to $250/t). Prices increase this week.

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**Southeast South Australia**

- Moderate rainfall across the region this week with the highest falls on the southern coastal tip of around 40mm of rain, the remaining parts of the region recorded around 25mm of rain for the week.

- Pastures in the region are showing reasonable green, and providing some good green feed to local herds, though there is still less than the usual amount of pasture available and herds continue to be fed out fodder. The wetter summer may see the pastures continue to provide for some time yet.

- Stands of lucerne continue to produce excellent regrowth and harvesting opportunities with some stands on to their third cuts in the region. Comments suggest the only issue with the production of quality hay is the delays caused by weather events moving some crops out of the optimal cutting window.

- Grain harvest is continuing in the region with a series of rain and storm events reducing the amount of days available for successful harvesting of the crops. Most growers are almost complete and are starting to turn around paddocks for the next sowing. A fair amount of straw continues to be made for supplemental feeding.

- Enquiries are beginning to lift in the region with some producers looking to lock in some guaranteed supply with the general feeling in the area that there will be some shortfall in available fodder. Producers are looking for parcels of high protein vetch and lucerne in particular and there is more movement of trucks being seen as demand lifts.

- Some 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 ($95 to $110/t). Prices remain steady this week.
  - Pasture hay: +15 ($220 to $265/t). Prices increase this week.

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**Central South Australia**

- Patchy rainfall across the region this week, with some areas seeing up to 25mm of rain but most parts of the region recording less than 15mm for the week. Conditions have been muggy and overcast.

- Pastures in the region have taken advantage of the good rainfall to aid in the rebound of available green feed, which is supplying the local herds. However additional fodder supplies continue to be sourced and fed out.

- The ongoing wet conditions around Langhorne Creek have seen a sizable reduction in the usual amount of hay and silage being produced. Comments suggest that some fodder production
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Paddocks are now being used for grazing. While hay and silage production quantity appears to be down, the quality being produced is reportedly quite high.

- Some croppers are indicating they have only just finished off the last of their barley harvest due to weather conditions delaying the expected harvesting by up to 3 weeks in the region. These growers are now turning around the fields in preparation for autumn sowing. Quite a bit of straw appears to have been made across the region after harvest.

- Enquiries are lifting in the region, though the greater availability of pastures is tempering some demand, fodder is still being fed out. Lucerne and vetch remains in some demand. Exporters are continuing to look for cereal hay to fill shipments which is keeping a floor price in place.

- Some change to prices this week.
  - Cereal hay: +/-0 ($260 to $325/t). Prices remain steady this week.
  - Lucerne hay: -5 ($320 to $390/t). Prices decrease this week.
  - Straw: +/-0 ($95 to $105/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Southwest Western Australia

- Little to no rainfall across the region this week with only the eastern coastal areas seeing any rainfall, and that was less than 5mm of rain for the week. Dry and sunny all week.

- Pastures in the region continue to be brown and dry except under irrigation. Even the southern tip of the region is brown in most pastures as the continued dry conditions cut into available green pasture feed. Brown feed is readily available and fodder is being fed out.

- Sowing of the next season is underway across parts of the region that have sufficient subsoil moisture or are under irrigation to give the new crops a chance at germination and a good kick start.

- Grain harvest is complete for most in the region with many croppers indicating it was an early finish for the season due to the hard cut off and lack of good spring rains, making for some fast crops and some downgrades in quality. A fair amount of feed quality grain is now becoming available and will remain so into autumn.

- Enquiries are steady this week, with producers assessing available supply on farm and looking at the reduced fodder yield for the last season before looking to lock in some supply into autumn. Mixed farmer who cut early have reasonable supply on-farm but those who waiting for follow up rains will need to add to their stores.

- Some change to prices this week.
  - Cereal hay: +/-0 ($300 to $360/t). Prices remain steady this week.
  - Lucerne hay: +10 ($350 to $410/t). Prices increase 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

- Moderate widespread rainfall across the region this week with most areas seeing at least 25mm of rain. Some sunny days, but most were overcast.

- Pastures continue to supply excellent green feed availability to herds in the region with good rainfall and some warmth over the last few weeks keeping the grass growing.

- Paddocks of forage turnips and kale are showing good growth after being sown in October and are now providing excellent feed for dairy cows in the region. Additional plantings of forage brassicas are going in on the back of summer rains for autumn and winter feed options.

- Some reports of army worm being detected in pastures around Henrietta, with mitigation underway to control the pest.

- Hay production is continuing around rain events, but most of the current season has now completed first cuts, and will be second cut in the next few weeks if the weather is favourable. Silage continues to be made and mostly ensiled on-farm.

- Grain harvest is continuing in the region with canola mostly harvested and now barley and wheat coming off. Comments suggest that a reasonable amount of straw is being made post-harvest.

- Enquiries are flat currently with an abundance of grass feed availability as well as forage crops for grazing. Good amount of silage have been made and on-farm stores of fodder appear to be sufficient for most in the short term.

- Some change to pricing this week.

- Cereal hay: +/-0 ($245 to $290/t) Prices remain steady this week.

- Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($310 to $370/t) Prices remain steady this week.

- Straw: +/-0 ($85 to $120/t) Prices remain steady this week.

- Pasture hay: -5 ($205 to $275/t) Prices decrease this week.

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