

# Hay Report

01 November 2024

DELIVERING  
*for* DAIRY





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# Summary

## Driving Prices Up

- Vetch and lucerne hay are likely to be in short supply this season which may result in higher prices.
- Strong demand from dairy farmers in Western Australia is driving domestic hay prices up, while export costs have decreased.
- 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

- On the North Coast of New South Wales storms are impacting the harvest season and the demand for hay is quiet. Pricing may be impacted by poor quality grass on the market, mainly due to the usual amount of rainfall in recent months.

## Local News

- The BOM has released a Climate Driver Update, reporting that the El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) remains neutral, with sea surface temperatures (SSTs) in the central equatorial Pacific Ocean 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. While some atmospheric indices have displayed La Niña-like signals over recent months, a consistent/sustained shift has not been observed. The next update will be released on 12 November.
- 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 Innisfail. Most days were partly sunny with some cloud cover. Temperatures range from high 20's to mid 30's and in line with seasonal trends.
- Conditions here are largely dry with a few light showers, supporting steady hay production for pasture hay.
- 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 several days were overcast. Storms predicted for Toowoomba with 1mm to 6mm of rainfall. Less than 2mm of rainfall for Goondiwindi, however storms and showers with up to 10mm of rain is predicted around Stanthorpe. Temperatures range from the mid 20's to high 30's and are slightly above seasonal averages.
- The recently dry and slightly warmer weather may favour cereal hay cutting soon. Light showers are anticipated, but high temperatures could cause some moisture stress on pasture hay.
- 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, but some hay is continuing to be cut and baled.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$300 to \$400/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$400 to \$450/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +5 (\$120 to \$150/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$250 to \$325/t) Prices remain steady this week.

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## North Coast NSW

- An unusual amount of rainfall for the season has impacted hay harvesting.

- The current outlook is positive despite more storms predicted, prompting some silage to be wrapped. Rainfall ranges from 4mm of rain in Lismore to 10mm of rain in Dorrigo.
- Conditions remain favourable for hay production, especially for pasture hay. There have been periodic light showers, supporting hay growth and replenishing soil moisture levels.
- The local market is steady but poor-quality grass is impacting sale prices.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$300 to \$350/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: -15 (\$350 to \$400/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: -5 (\$100 to \$130/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Pasture hay: +10 (\$250 to \$300/t). Prices increase this week.

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### **Central West NSW**

- Dry across the region this week with no rainfall recorded. Days were mostly clear, with some cloud cover. Temperatures continue to trend slightly above the average for this time of year.
- Mixed weather with light showers and warm temperatures has supported growth but caused some delays in hay cutting, especially for cereal and lucerne hay.
- Vetch hay is good due to the warmer weather and is currently being cut, whereas Oaten Hay is limited across the region due to frost damage. Frost-damaged crops are being harvested and are producing an excellent yield.
- 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 expecting less than 1mm of rain. Some rain is expected at the end of the week, but only light falls.
- Stable, drier conditions allow hay production to continue, especially for pasture hay. Some moisture remains in the soil, aiding in nutrient retention and growth.
- No change to pricing this week .

- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$370 to \$400/t). Prices remain steady 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**

- Temperatures peaked at 32 degrees but then settled to mid 20's in Echuca. The rest of the region has also experienced higher than usual temperatures allowing baling to commence.
- Low but consistent rainfall and moderate temperatures support healthy growth in lucerne hay fields, although more significant rain would improve the pasture and straw hay crop conditions.
- Prices in Goulburn/Murray Valley reflect localised demand pressures, particularly for irrigated lucerne hay.
- Farmers are starting to bale given the warmer conditions but are still juicing their silage to ensure they retain moisture.
- In Tallygaroopna, Sorghum is going in the ground now for the summer. The moist soil structure is good and should yield a good crop over the coming months.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +5 (\$300 to \$350/t). Prices increase 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: -5 (\$250 to \$320/t). Prices decrease this week.

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### **Gippsland**

- Light to moderate falls across the region this week, with Sale recording 26mm of rain and Warragul 7mm of rain though Bairnsdale saw less than 1mm 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.
- The recent rains have boosted topsoil moisture. This supports hay, particularly pasture and lucerne, though conditions could turn drier in the coming days.
- Over the past week, crop conditions in Gippsland have been favourable for hay production, thanks to moderate and partly cloudy weather with intermittent rain. Daytime temperatures have mostly been mild, around 15-20°C, with nighttime temperatures dropping to about 10°C,

providing an optimal climate for pasture and hay crop growth. There were light showers toward the end of the week, improving soil moisture levels slightly, though overall precipitation remained low, with only isolated areas seeing brief rains of 2mm.

- With temperatures staying moderate and limited rain in the forecast, moisture levels could become a challenge for some crops, particularly if dry conditions persist.
- Current conditions are largely supporting pasture and hay production, with cloud cover helping retain some soil moisture essential for sustaining quality crops across the region.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$340 to \$380/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: -3 (\$450 to \$500/t). Prices decrease 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**

- Over the past week, crops in Southwest Victoria have been impacted by a combination of relatively dry conditions and cooler temperatures, which have influenced moisture levels and yield projections. While there has been some recent rain, it has not been sufficient to restore optimal moisture levels for crop growth, particularly for pulses and other sensitive crop types.
- Key crop areas in Southwest Victoria, along with parts of the Wimmera, are currently in need of additional rainfall to support yield expectations and avoid moisture stress in the coming weeks.
- In Condah, the recent rainfall has produced a strong grass crop when it was previously thought it would only produce average yields, with twice as much growth available for cutting.
- Despite the overall dry spell, the forecast for the upcoming days does suggest possible rain, which could help stabilise crop conditions if received in sufficient amounts.
- Local crop managers are particularly vigilant as this period is critical for winter crops like wheat, barley, and certain pulses, which benefit from sustained soil moisture for optimal development.
- Significant change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -30 (\$300 to \$330/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: +15 (\$400 to \$450/t). Prices increase 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**

- Over the past week, Mount Gambier has experienced mild, mostly dry weather with occasional light showers, reaching a total of about 27.8 mm for the month of October so far, which is below the historical average for this period. However, Keith has experienced higher than usual temperatures for this time of year.
- Daytime temperatures have been relatively cool, ranging from low to mid 20's, while occasional cloud cover has helped maintain moisture levels without significant drying from intense sun exposure.
- This combination of mild temperatures and low precipitation has allowed harvest operations to continue smoothly, with minimal impact on crop quality.
- Crop conditions over the past week have been influenced by a mix of insufficient rainfall and ongoing moisture deficits. This region, typically reliant on spring rains to support winter crops like wheat, barley, and lentils, is facing stress due to lower-than-average precipitation this season.
- While lighter rains have been recorded, they have not been enough to address deeper soil moisture needs. As a result, final yields for these crops could be at risk if significant rainfall does not arrive soon.
- Faba beans and lentils, important in this region, are also affected by the moisture shortfall, with faba bean production expected to decrease compared to last year. Lentil crops, while more resilient in low-rainfall conditions, still require consistent moisture to avoid crop stagnation, especially as temperatures rise through spring. Despite this, some lentil areas, particularly those in sandy soils, are performing better than others given their adaptability to dry conditions
- 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**

- Recent rainfall has been light, with several stations across the region reporting minimal precipitation over the past week. Rain gauges in areas like Berri, Loxton, and Clare recorded minor daily amounts ranging between 0.2 mm to around 2.2 mm in isolated showers, contributing to a generally dry period.
- Crop conditions have been influenced by continued dryness, impacting soil moisture and limiting growth potential for key crops, especially winter varieties like wheat, barley, and canola.
- This season has seen generally below-average rainfall, which has led to a challenging growing environment and reduced yield prospects. The lack of late winter and spring rain has heightened moisture stress on crops, with concerns around yields for wheat and canola, which are sensitive to low soil moisture in the final stages of growth.



- 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**

- The region experienced light rainfall across various locations, though totals were lower than 1mm.
- Baling has commenced around Lake Grace with a mixed quality for Oaten Hay due to recent rainfall. Comments suggest that demand for hay is high for dairy farmers. The higher demand domestically has meant prices are being driven up, while export costs have decreased.
- Canola crops will be harvested soon in Yorke and straw is being delivered to mushroom farms.
- 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**

- Intermittent rainfall and cool temperatures have benefitted the region this week, providing favourable moisture levels for crop growth. Burnie recorded 3mm of rain with less than 1mm in Sheffield. Temperatures are trending to seasonal averages.
- Grass-based silage and pasture hay are seeing optimal growth due to favourable moisture and mild temperatures, which are ideal for cutting and preservation.
- 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.
- Spring-sown barley is also progressing well in some areas as part of dual-purpose rotations that support both fodder and grain uses.
- 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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**Acknowledgement**

Dairy Australia acknowledges the funding from levy payers and contribution by Commonwealth Government.

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