

Hay Report

9 August 2024

DELIVERING
for DAIRY

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Summary

Driving Prices Up

- Pasture feed in the dry parts of Victoria and South Australia continues to be inconsistent, and there remains little available supply in those regions which is requiring fodder to be sourced elsewhere and therefore freight is adding a substantial additional cost to fodder supplies.
- This is leading to localised reduction in available northern NSW supplies as some producers obtain better margins by shipping fodder south.
- End users of fodder are entering into forward contracts with producers, especially in areas with low stocks, this is feeding into the expectation of less supply being available as the season progresses and pushing up the cost of currently available supply.
- Fodder producers continue to hold back some available supply for their own use as a bolster against a possible feed shortage in late winter and spring.

Driving Prices Down

- Conditions in Western Australia continue to improve with the good and steady rain more pastures are becoming available for grazing and in some cases there is reportedly excess rains, though this is aiding in soil moisture profiles topping up.
- Early production of new season hay in southern Queensland is adding to the availability in the marketplace, though this is having a limited effect currently.

Local News

- The dry conditions in the southern mainland states has been somewhat alleviated by the recent rains, but pastures are still rebounding and not at full utilisation. South Australia has seen the tap turned off this week, and there are concerns regarding the currently available soil moisture not being sufficient to continue the rebound growth.
- Tasmania's dry conditions continue for most of the state, most especially in the south and supplies are remaining tight, though the North West does have good pasture availability. Fodder continues to be sourced from the mainland, but the process can be slow due to biosecurity measures.
- The wet conditions which hit northern NSW and parts of Queensland has reduced the availability of hay supplies, in both weather affected stores and the ability sow or resow paddocks for hay production. This is now showing some shortfalls.
- The El Niño–Southern Oscillation is currently neutral. Sea surface temperatures in the central Pacific have been cooling since December 2023. This cooling is supported by a cooler than average sub-surface in the central and eastern Pacific. In June, the rate of cooling has decreased. La Niña Watch is in effect due to early signs that an event may form in the Pacific Ocean later in the year. A La Niña Watch does not guarantee La Niña development, only that there is about an equal chance of a La Niña developing. Early signs of La Niña have limited relevance to mainland Australia and are better reflections of conditions in the tropical Pacific.
- Buyers are encouraged to feed test and view fodder before purchase to be sure of the quality of feed.

Regional commentary

Atherton Tablelands

- Low rainfall across the region this week, with most days seeing some falls. There were a couple of dry days, but these were mostly overcast. Colder temperatures are cooling the soil.
- Pastures in the region continue to see the effects of recent frosts with limited regrowth, soil moisture and temperature is good, but the earlier damage needs to be overcome which will take some time. Green feed is still available to local herds however additional fodder is being utilised.
- The ongoing damp conditions are again prevented the cutting of any available hay or silage in most of the tablelands. Some lower grade hay being cut for mulch has been undertaken around the rain events for delivery to local avocado farms.
- Wheat crops in the region slated for future hay production are looking good but could do with some maintenance activities which are currently being hampered by the wet conditions
- Oat crops in the north and west of the region that have seen few rain events and clearer conditions are being cut for hay currently with the comments suggesting these bales are coming in at very good quality.
- Input costs continue to remain a concern; petrol is steady at \$1.96 per litre. Urea prices are high but seeing some drop to around \$900p/t with blended at over \$1100p/t. Growers are weighing up the return on usage, and the current need from cane farmers is keeping the input prices high.
- Enquiries are fairly stable this week, the lower pasture availability is moving some fodder but there is a lack of supply in some lines, and farmers are looking to pick up any available supplies. Trucks are being seen moving in the region more frequently, but there is not a lot of hay being made to meet the demand. Some supply is coming in from the west.
- Pasture (Rhodes Grass) hay: +/-0 (\$340 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

- Mostly dry across the region this week, with the early part of the week clear and sunny, light rainfall arrived mid-week with falls of between 5mm and 15mm spread across the Darling Downs with the highest falls in the Western Downs. Temperatures remain cold, as expected this time of year.
- Pastures continue to be green in the region, though as indicated in previous reports there is both a slowing of growth and a lower nutritional value in some of the regrowth due to fairly wet conditions in the soil profile. Fodder continues to be fed out to herds and flocks to bolster animal health.
- The string of clear dry days in the region has allowed some early hay production to commence. Most dedicated producers are still expecting the season to kick off in another 2 to 3 weeks but there is a fair amount of early crops that are being cut in preparation for baling while the

conditions remained favourable. There are some reports of some limited rain damage to cut crops due to the rain that fell mid-week, but most of the early hay was already baled before the rains arrived.

- Oat crops in the north of the region are looking good and are on track for hay production. There have been some frost events which has caused limited damage to some crops, but most are powering along well.
- Enquiries remain robust in the region as cold conditions see producers looking to bolster stock and pastures. Most producers continue to have some on-farm storage and with the new season beginning to kick off, will see that being replenished, but they are still looking for additional good quality as well as some roughage. The southern states continue to drive demand.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$300 to \$370/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: -5 (\$350 to \$450/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$100 to \$140/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$250 to \$345/t) Prices remain steady this week.

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North Coast NSW

- Light falls across the region this week, with most of the falls arriving mid-week and the remaining days clear and dry. Coastal areas saw the lowest falls, and some parts in the far north saw no rain at all, while inland areas recorded between 5mm and 10mm of rain. Temperatures were moderate for this time of year.
- Pastures continue to show green in the region though as expected in winter regrowth is slower and providing less value. However the conditions are providing a fair amount of it in areas which have not seen high rainfall and subsequent waterlogging in early growth phases. Fodder continues to be fed out to supplement green feed.
- Hay and fodder crops in the inland and coastal regions continue to show good growth. Due to the wetter conditions earlier in the year, the coastal crops are a little behind where they would normally be at this time of year, but comments suggest they have made up some of the delay with the recent more favourable growing conditions.
- Some, very limited, hay production has taken place in the inland areas, close to the QLD border, but this is sporadic and opportunistic.
- Cereal crops in the north are looking excellent and maintenance activities are being undertaken to bolster growth.
- Enquiries in the region remain higher than usual for this time of year, in part due to a reduction in the areas sown to fodder and hay production due to earlier wet conditions and the perceived lack of local supply in spring. This is being partially offset by available pastures. The southern states continue to drive demand.
- Some change to prices this week

- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$320 to \$370/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$370 to \$430/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +5 (\$100 to \$140/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$250 to \$300/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Central West NSW

- A mostly dry week across the region with the central and southern parts seeing little to no rain, and rain falling in the north from mid-week onwards with a clear and dry early part to the week. Falls were low with totals of less than 15mm of rain in areas which saw rainfall. Temperatures remain low and frosts continue to be reported.
- Pastures on the region remain green, and are providing some good feed availability, though winter temperatures are slowing or stalling growth, as is usual, especially where the areas have been hit by repeated frosts. Fodder continues to be fed out for roughage and herd health.
- Spring wheat crops around Canowindra are looking excellent and are currently providing good feed options to grazing cattle. This wheat will be locked up for grain production in the next few weeks.
- Faba beans in the east of the region are powering along well in the conditions, and putting on fairly impressive growth.
- Maintenance activities continue for most on-farm in preparation for hay and fodder production in late August and September.
- Enquiries in the region on par with seasonal averages, though there does seem to be a little more local building of on-farm stores, though the reports of early hay production in southern Queensland is tempering demand as is green feed availability. Demand is still being driven out of the unseasonal drier parts of Victoria and the usual requirements out of the Bega Valley.
- Some change to prices this week
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$340 to \$395/t). Prices remain steady this week
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$380 to \$440/t). Prices remain steady this week
- Straw: +3 (\$135 to \$155/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: -5 (\$260 to \$300/t). Prices decrease this week.

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Bega Valley

- A dry week in the region this week with little to no rainfall recorded across the Valley and surrounding areas. Temperatures continue to be cold and some frosts and foggy mornings have been reported.
- Pastures in the region are green and continue to provide green feed, but the colder days are seeing a slowing or stalling growth as soil temperatures drop, and there has been some loss of pastures due to the frosts.
- The continued lack of rain in the north is seen as a positive outcome as it has allowed further drying and drainage of some quite wet pastures, which have opened some of them up to limited grazing opportunities where the grass is sufficient. However rains will be welcomed again soon.
- Some limited silage is being cut again in the region, though this is only being used on-farm or in limited farmer to farmer trading.
- Maintenance activities are now being undertaken on fodder and cereal crops in the region.
- There have been reports of some animal incursions into pastures, such as kangaroos and wild deer that are looking for feed. Mitigation efforts are underway to control the pests.
- Enquiries continue to be robust in the Valley as expected this time of year, and this will not change until the season does. Pasture availability as well as on-farm stores are continuing to keep some demand in check but there is need for cereal and protein hay as well as straw for local dairy herds. Local supply does not meet demand so fodder is coming in from southern NSW and Victoria.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$380 to \$460/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$480 to \$540/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$180 to \$250/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

- Dry across the region this week, with most days clear and sunny. Some light rains of less than 5mm in the eastern parts, but the remainder saw no rain this week. Temperatures are low with occasional frosts continuing to be reported.
- Pastures in the region are continuing to be green, though some of the regrowth has been of lower quality, but soil moisture and temperatures are remaining reasonable and keeping availability fairly consistent, though fodder continues to be fed out to supplement pasture feed.
- Ryegrass pastures in the region are showing some good growth, and are on track to be available for local herds in the next few weeks with some additional warmth expected to boost growth.

- New season crops in the region are beginning to pick up and the clearer drier days are giving growers an opportunity to get onto paddocks for spraying and final fertiliser applications.
- Canola crops in the northern part of the region are coming along well and showing good growth on the back of rains and soil warmth.
- Local enquiries continue to be in line with winter trends, with fodder being fed out and replaced but pastures still providing some tempering of demand. As has been the case for some time demand continues to be driven out of the drier parts of the state and into South Australia as even with recent rains conditions remain dry and fodder is in short supply.
- Some change to pricing this week
- Cereal hay: +10 (\$340 to \$380/t). Prices increase this week
- Lucerne hay: +5 (\$400 to \$440/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +3 (\$120 to \$155/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$280 to \$320/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Gippsland

- A drier week across Gippsland this week with most areas recording no rain, and limited rainfall of less than 5mm recorded in the far west and in the parts of the north. Temperatures continue to be on average, though less frosts have been recorded this week,
- Pastures in most of Gippsland are remaining green and lush and are providing good green feed availability to local herds and flocks. Winter temperatures are slowing growth, but there is still good pasture availability. Some fodder continues to be fed out for roughage.
- Silage production has commenced around Maffra with the drier period allowing the mowers on to the pastures to cut and bale the grasses, however this is an early cut and most silage production will not take place for another 6 weeks.
- Producers are looking to bolster pastures with spraying and spreading ahead of the next rain forecast.
- Dairy calving is moving through the region with farmers reporting good conditions for new calves.
- Enquiries in the region are lifting a little as winter conditions continue, but this is well in line with the usual local demand. Good pasture availability and on-farm stores are tempering some demand. Comments indicate that a number of producers are low on supply The south west of the state is still driving the need for hay with quite a bit moving and all lines seeing some enquiries.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +5 (\$370 to \$420/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$450 to \$490/t). Prices remain steady this week.

- Straw: +/-0 (\$150 to \$190/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +5 (\$260 to \$300/t). Prices increase this week.

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Southwest Victoria

- A return to a dry week in the region, with almost no rainfall recorded across the entirety of the south west. Some very light falls of less than 5mm of rain near the Otways and the coastal strip near the SA border.
- Grass continues to rebound in the south west, though some parts, especially near the Otways are seeing a much better turnaround than other parts which are still in a green drought and are needing supplemental and hand feeding for local herds.
- Dairy calving is continuing to move through the region with farmers monitoring calves closely due to cold conditions and feed requirements.
- Pastures which were re-sown after the recent rains are continuing to show good growth and vigour and look to be making up some of the missed growth time; however there is still a general lack of pasture feed in the region.
- Enquiries in the region are still quite robust but comments suggest that the urgency has dropped due to the increasing availability of some feed options and that a fair number of farmers have agisted their herds, to allow pasture regrowth and drop the need for fodder in the short term. Vetch and cereal hay as well as straw is being sought and supplies continue to come into the region from other parts of Victoria as well as SA and the Riverina.
- No change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$360 to \$400/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$370 to \$425/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$100 to \$145/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$245 to \$310/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Southeast South Australia

- Little to no rain across the region this week with only the coastal areas receiving low falls of less than 5mm of rain. Inland recorded no rainfall for the week. Temperatures are at historical averages for this time of the year, though daytime is slightly above average.
- Pastures in the region are showing green, but the recent reduction in rainfall is seeing the grasses pulling from low soil moisture and slowing or stalling growth. Some pastures are still

providing feed availability, especially anything with deep rooted perennial plants, and anything irrigated is doing well. Fodder continues to be fed out.

- Lambing is continuing in the region with some of the month old animals now moving into pasture feeding, which is placing additional pressure on available pastures.
- Comments suggest that both fodder and cereal crops in the inland parts of the region are beginning to struggle with the low soil moisture, with estimates that only 2-3 weeks of current extraction rates will lead to bone dry top layers, and while there is moisture at deep levels this is currently inaccessible.
- Enquiries remain steady and fairly high in the region, with pasture availability tempering some demand, but the overall conditions of low feed availability and low on-farm storage is keeping fodder moving. Vetch appears to be in high demand in the region and is reportedly seeing some price jumps.
- Some change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$360 to \$400/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +8 (\$380 to \$445/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +5 (\$120 to \$160/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$275 to \$310/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Central South Australia

- Low rainfall across the region this week with most inland areas only seeing less than 5mm of rain, though some coastal parts and the Yorke Peninsula received up to 10mm of rain for the week. Temperatures are on trend for the season though daytime temperatures continue to be above average.
- Pastures in the region continue to show green with some low rainfall, but subsoil moisture is still very low and will need substantial winter and spring rains to rebuild. Some pasture feeding is continuing, and irrigated pastures are taking advantage of warmer daytime weather. Fodder continues to be needed.
- Containment feeding is continuing to be employed, and some producers who had intended to move animals back on to pastures full time need to delay that move given the current state of available pasture feed.
- Cereal, fodder and oilseed crops in the northern part of the region appear to have stalled on the back of limited rainfall, with the growth rates slowing significantly.
- While recently sown hay production crops have been able to tap into some residual moisture and have germinated, there are concerns about a lack of follow up rains. Some previously dryland areas are being irrigated in order to keep the plants moving along and to give them a reasonable start before the arrival of additional spring rainfall.
- Enquiries in the region continue to be high and a wide range of hay quality is entering the market as sellers start to reach the last of total stocks. Fodder and grains continue to go out to

supplement herds. Vetch and lucerne are being sought, with comments suggesting vetch is in high demand, and straw continues to see some movement.

- Some change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: -5 (\$330 to \$385/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: +5 (\$380 to \$440/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +5 (\$110 to \$155/t). Prices increase this week.

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Southwest Western Australia

- Moderate to high rainfall across the region this week, however most of that fell mid to late week with the start of the week fairly dry and clear. Bunbury recorded 40mm of rain and Windy Harbour over 70mm of rain. Daytime temperatures continue to be a little above average.
- Pastures in the region continue to show good green feed availability; however the recent heavy rains is reportedly causing some issues with trafficability and safe grazing options. Nevertheless most pastures are seeing the rains refill depleted subsoil moisture profiles and draining fairly quickly.
- Very little containment feeding is still ongoing in the region, and only in those areas which had a fairly high stocking rate and low rainfall combination.
- Vetch crops in the north of the region have out in a good deal of growth with the warm and wet conditions bolstering the fodder crops. These crops are slated to be cut for hay in September.
- Cereal crops, especially wheat and barley have shown excellent response to the conditions in the region and are putting on good growth. Some comments indicate an upsurge in weeds, but these are being managed. The crops are also being bolstered by fertiliser application.
- Enquiries in the region have lessened considerably given the good feed opportunities, though farmers continue to buy in stores to replenish the amount used during the unseasonal dry conditions earlier in the year. Good quality parcels as well as some roughage is still being sought and is moving well.
- Some change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: -5 (\$360 to \$400/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$390 to \$450/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$110 to \$145/t). Prices remain steady this week
- Pasture hay: +5 (\$260 to \$320/t). Prices increase this week.

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Northwest Tasmania

- Moderate rainfall across the region this week with all of the northwest recording at least 20mm of rain, with the exception of King Island which saw low falls of less than 5mm of rain. Temperatures are within seasonal averages and frosts have been recorded.
- Pastures in the northwest continue to provide good feed opportunities for the local herds and flocks; however there have been some instances of waterlogging as the winter rainfall continued this week. Winter temperatures are seeing the expected slowdown or stalling of regrowth.
- Mixed pastures of cocksfoot, white clover, prairie grass and lucerne are showing excellent growth near Black river on the northwest coast. These pastures are showing good results even with high rainfall levels.
- Ryegrass pastures around Moltema are showing excellent growth and have run ahead of some of the local herds to the point that some opportunistic silage cutting is being undertaken, around rain events.
- Enquiries in the region remain high, though the availability of pasture feed is tempering some of that demand. Most enquiries continue to come out of the much drier south, though local hay sheds have reduced stores and producers are looking for additional supplies. Fodder is continuing to be shipped from the mainland to meet some of this demand as local supply is insufficient.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +5 (\$320 to \$360/t) Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$330 to \$390/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +5 (\$110 to \$140/t) Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$285 to \$365/t) Prices remain steady this week.

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