

Hay Report

15 November 2024

DELIVERING
for DAIRY



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Summary

Driving Prices Up

- Green drought enveloping much of Victoria has squeezed margins further with fodder prices rising in recent weeks.
- Vetch is setting back farmers more than \$400 a tonne, depending on the region, while cereal hay is hovering around the \$350 a tonne mark.

Driving Prices Down

- Barley prices have been lacklustre due to frost, a lack of in-crop rainfall and hail. Farmers are hedging their bets by storing a portion of grain on farm and selling directly from the header to spread risk.
- Weather conditions across the country has seen prices significantly decrease across the board. Rumours regarding frost damage, low quality hay, and the need to harvest early has impacted pricing. In conversations with farmers, this did not eventuate to the degree reported, however the news affected a drop in price regardless.
- There is very little movement of hay across the country, in part due to it being the harvest season. Many are waiting to see how the season concludes before allowing sales to recommence.

Local News

- Northern NSW's favourable seasonal conditions have farmers reporting average yields of 5t/ha to 6t/ha averages for dryland wheat.
- In comparison, southern NSW and Victoria have suffered from dry seasonal conditions, frost and hail which have taken a toll on crops.
- Successful crops across NSW, QLD and WA are more than offsetting the losses faced in SA and Western Victoria.
- Frosts across the Wimmera Mallee have forced some farmers to bale their lentils or barley.
- The current shortage of high protein crops will push up the price for Lucerne hay and could directly impact dairy farmers if prices are unaffordable.
- 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 26 November.
- Buyers are encouraged to feed test and view fodder before purchase to be sure of the quality of feed.

Regional commentary

Atherton Tablelands

- Over the past 10 days the region has experienced consistent rainfall, with daily totals ranging from 5mm to 15 mm. The persistent wet conditions hindered hay curing and baling processes, leading to delays in production and potential quality degradation due to moisture exposure.
- Temperatures in Walkamin have ranged from high 20s to low 30s
- 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

- The region experienced intermittent showers, accumulating approximately 20 mm of rainfall over the past ten days. These sporadic rains caused challenges in scheduling hay cutting and drying, resulting in potential delays and quality concerns for both cereal and lucerne hay.
- Temperatures peaked in Dalby, Miles and Texas with highs in the mid 30s. Toowoomba received the highest amount of rainfall with 60mm falling early this week.
- Severe hailstorms and heavy rainfall during this period caused substantial damage to various crops, including those designated for fodder and silage. The intense weather events led to lodging and quality deterioration, complicating harvesting efforts and reducing the nutritional value of the harvested fodder.
- Farmers are being advised on best practices to salvage and utilise the damaged crops effectively. Strategies include timely cutting and ensiling to preserve as much nutritional content as possible, despite the compromised quality.
- Significant change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -55 (\$270 to \$320/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: -40 (\$360 to \$410/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$110 to \$160/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: -43 (\$220 to \$270/t) Prices decrease this week.

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North Coast NSW

- Persistent rainfall over the past ten days led to increased moisture levels in fields, complicating the harvesting and curing processes essential for producing high-quality fodder and silage.
- Excessive moisture not only delayed harvesting schedules but also heightened the risk of mould development and spoilage in stored fodder, potentially reducing its nutritional value and marketability.
- Temperatures range from mid 20s to low 30s across the region, with Grafton and Murwillumbah experiencing more than 108mm of rainfall. Yamba and Ballina also received up to 85mm of rainfall.
- Some producers are exploring alternative storage methods, such as covered bunkers or wrapped bales, to protect the fodder from further moisture exposure.
- Significant change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -20 (\$280 to \$330/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: +20 (\$370 to \$420/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +30 (\$120 to \$170/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: -20 (\$230 to \$280/t). Prices decrease this week.

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Central West NSW

- The region experienced variable weather, with some days of light rain totalling about 15 mm and others remaining dry. This variability allowed for limited hay production windows; however, the inconsistent conditions posed challenges in ensuring optimal drying and baling times.
- Temperatures across the region varied between 28 degrees in Grenfell to 35.8 degrees in Walgett, which also received no rainfall. The highest rainfall recorded was in Peak Hill with 9mm of rainfall recorded in one day.
- Moderate temperatures and consistent rainfall during this period contributed to robust growth and optimal moisture levels in pastures and forage crops, enhancing both yield and quality.
- Farmers in the region have been actively harvesting various fodder crops, including cereal hays and silage, capitalising on the conducive conditions. The timely rains have not only supported crop growth but also facilitated easier harvesting and curing processes, resulting in high-quality fodder suitable for storage and future use.
- Additionally, the favourable weather has allowed for the successful ensiling of forage crops, ensuring the preservation of nutritional content for livestock feeding in the coming months. Overall, the recent period has been advantageous for fodder and silage production in Central West NSW, with farmers reporting satisfactory outcomes in both yield and quality.
- Significant change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -25 (\$260 to \$310/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: -10 (\$350 to \$400/t). Prices decrease this week.

- Straw: -10 (\$100 to \$150/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Pasture hay: -35 (\$210 to \$260/t). Prices decrease this week.

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Bega Valley

- Predominantly dry conditions over the past 10 days, with light midweek rainfall totalling less than 10mm. Temperatures were ranging between low 20s to mid 30s, and most days were clear. However, recent rainfalls may impact harvesting with 11.4mm of rainfall received on Thursday morning.
- 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

- The area experienced light to moderate rainfall, totalling around 25mm. Temperatures across the region are averaging in the mid 20s. Strathbogie has received over 6mm of rainfall recently, compared to Kyabram and Shepparton which have not seen any rainfall in the past week.
- Favourable weather conditions have positively influenced fodder and silage crop production. Moderate temperatures and consistent rainfall during this period contributed to robust growth and optimal moisture levels in pastures and forage crops, enhancing both yield and quality.
- Farmers in the region have been actively harvesting various fodder crops, including cereal hays and silage, capitalising on the conducive conditions. The timely rainfall has not only supported crop growth but also facilitated easier harvesting and curing processes, resulting in high-quality fodder suitable for storage and future use.
- Significant change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -30 (\$270 to \$320/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: -45 (\$360 to \$410/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: -10 (\$110 to \$160/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Pasture hay: -40 (\$220 to \$270/t). Prices decrease this week.

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quality of feed. We recommend feed testing and viewing of fodder before purchase to be sure of the quality of feed.

Gippsland

- The region recorded significant rainfall, with totals reaching up to 60mm. The excessive moisture content in the fields made hay production challenging, leading to potential quality issues such as mould and spoilage in pasture and cereal hay.
- Light to moderate falls across the region this week, with Wilsons Promontory recording the most at 6.6mm of rain. Temperatures are in line with seasonal averages though this week did see some higher than usual temperatures in the region last week.
- For some, harvest season is now over and the baling of straw has begun.
- Commentary suggests that once the Wimmera season concludes, prices will rise again.
- Significant change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -55 (\$280 to \$330/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: -80 (\$370 to \$420/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: -45 (\$120 to \$170/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Pasture hay: -25 (\$230 to \$180/t). Prices decrease this week.

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Southwest Victoria

- Southwest Victoria experienced predominantly dry conditions, with minimal rainfall (receiving less than 5mm) and temperatures ranging from low teens to mid 20s.
- Harvest season for many in region has either concluded or they are in the final stages of baling.
- In Woodhouse, the ground is currently rock hard, but the rainfall fell at the right times to ensure a successful harvest.
- Demand for hay in the region has dropped off.
- Significant change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -15 (\$275 to \$325/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: -35 (\$365 to \$415). Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$115 to \$165/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: -33 (\$225 to \$275/t). Prices decrease this week.

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Southeast South Australia

- The region saw moderate rainfall, with most areas receiving less than 5 mm. These conditions extended drying times for hay, posing challenges in maintaining optimal moisture levels for baling and storage, particularly affecting cereal and lucerne hay.
- Feed shortages across the region are impacting dairy farmers, forcing some to tap into their winter reserves.
- The dry conditions have adversely affected fodder and silage crops, leading to reduced pasture growth and lower yields. The lack of sufficient moisture has also impacted the quality of harvested fodder, necessitating careful management to maintain nutritional value.
- Significant change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -80 (\$265 to \$315/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: -49 (\$355 to \$402/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: -20 (\$105 to \$155/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Pasture hay: -63 (\$215 to \$265/t). Prices decrease this week.

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Central South Australia

- Light rainfall events, accumulating to about 20 mm, were recorded. While the conditions were relatively favourable compared to other regions, the intermittent rains still required careful scheduling of hay production activities to ensure quality.
- 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.
- Significant change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -73 (\$260 to \$310/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: -50 (\$350 to \$400/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: -23 (\$100 to \$150/t). Prices decrease this week.

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Southwest Western Australia

- The area experienced minimal rainfall, with totals around 10mm. The drier conditions were conducive to hay production, allowing for efficient drying and baling processes, resulting in high-quality straw and pasture hay.
- Reports state that the hay is heavier this year and that there is a lot more too. One comment stated that their hay is the thickest they have seen in years.
- The weather has not been too hot, therefore the hay is drying slower producing quality product.
- Significant change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -85 (\$250 to \$300/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: -40 (\$340 to \$390/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: -8 (\$90 to \$140/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Pasture hay: -55 (\$200 to \$250/t). Prices decrease this week.

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Northwest Tasmania

- The region recorded significant rainfall, totalling approximately 70 mm. The persistent wet conditions severely impacted hay production, leading to delays and increased risks of quality issues such as mould and spoilage in pasture and cereal hay.
- Smithton and Marrawah each recorded 9mm of rain this week. 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.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -75 (\$280 to \$330/t) Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: -15 (\$370 to \$420/t) Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +5 (\$120 to \$170/t) Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: -160 (\$230 to \$280/t) Prices decrease this week.

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Dairy Australia Limited ABN 60 105 227 987
Level 3, HWT Tower
40 City Road, Southbank Vic 3006 Australia
T +61 3 9694 3777 F +61 3 9694 3701
E enquiries@dairyaustralia.com.au
dairyaustralia.com.au



Australian Fodder Industry Association

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