

Hay Report

20 December 2024

DELIVERING
for DAIRY



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Summary

Driving Prices Up

- Growers who have access to suitable storage facilities are prepared to hold on to their hay for four to six months after baling. The tax-effective scheme of Farm Management Deposits provided by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, allows growers to set aside pre-tax income into eligible accounts, and pay tax only in the year the cash is withdrawn. By waiting until the hay market is more favourable, hay sale prices could increase based on demand in areas that have had low yields throughout this year.

Driving Prices Down

- Crop affected areas in northeastern Victoria and southern NSW are finding that the quality of their harvests have been impacted by the recent rainfalls, which is therefore negatively impacting the price of hay sales.

Local News

- The hot, dry and windy conditions earlier in the week generated an extreme fire danger across parts of south eastern SA and western Vic on Monday. These conditions could have been even more dangerous with thunderstorms and possible dry lightning, which could spark bushfires in hot and dry conditions such as these. These thunderstorms may generate damaging wind gusts, posing additional threats. If there is abundant dry matter and plant material on the ground, this is highly flammable and poses danger.
- Reports state that the cropping area of Western Australia is celebrating its third-largest harvest on record, with wheat yields looking to average 3.5 tonnes per hectare. Despite this great achievement, the Grains Industry Association of Western Australia's crop report for December states that "pre-harvest estimates of grain yields for wheat, barley and canola have ended up being well below actual yields".
- Cereal hay is trading well in southern Australia as those whose crops were frost-affected during flowering, and whose primary focus is on grain production, were cut were hay instead.
- Red Fire Ant Invasion of QLD and NSW: Under the [*Biosecurity Act 2014*](#), everyone—including individuals and organisations—has a general biosecurity obligation (GBO) to take all reasonable steps to prevent the spread of fire ants.
- Buyers are encouraged to feed test and view fodder before purchase to be sure of the quality of feed.

Regional commentary

Atherton Tablelands

- The Atherton Tablelands have experienced typical early summer weather patterns. Daytime temperatures have ranged from approximately 29°C to 33°C, with nighttime lows between 24°C and 26°C.
- This period has been characterised by warm and humid conditions, with a high chance of showers and possible thunderstorms. Rainfall has been consistent with the region's seasonal expectations, contributing to the area's lush landscapes.
- Enquiries in the region remain slow.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Pasture (Rhodes Grass) hay: +/-0 (\$350 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 has experienced significant weather events, including severe thunderstorms and heavy rainfall. On Tuesday night, storms brought intense downpours, with some areas receiving up to 80mm of rain per hour, leading to extensive flooding and numerous rescues.
- Major highways, including parts of the Burnett and D'Aguilar highways, were closed due to localised flooding. Swiftwater rescue teams were deployed to multiple locations, rescuing individuals from flooded vehicles.
- The Bureau of Meteorology issued warnings for severe thunderstorms with heavy rainfall and flash flooding, particularly affecting the Gympie, Brisbane, and Toowoomba regions.
- Following these storms, the forecast anticipates an improvement, with clear skies and dry conditions expected by Thursday, continuing into the weekend. However, while the southeast anticipates relief, other parts of Queensland remain under threat from ongoing storms and severe weather.
- Producers are preparing for summer sorghum planting, weed control and preplant fertilising is taking priority. Some growers are using dry soil conditions (after winter crop) to maintain, repair and build new contour banks to minimise soil erosion and prevent fields from becoming too rough.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$275 to \$325/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +5 (\$370 to \$410/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$100 to \$150/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$240 to \$280/t) Prices remain steady this week.

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North Coast NSW

- Daytime highs have ranged from approximately 28°C to 30°C, with nighttime lows between 16°C and 22°C. The region has seen light to moderate rainfall, with some areas experiencing brief showers.
- There has been predominantly light to moderate winds from the northeast, with occasional stronger gusts during storm activity. Humidity levels have been moderate to high, typical for this time of year.
- Lismore has seen a lot of rain lately with over 100mm falling over two days. This had delayed harvesting, but with the sun out allowing the fields to dry, reports state that growers are out cutting the last of their hay, with baling to follow shortly.
- Very little movement of hay across the region.
- The Red Fire Ant invasion remains a concern and is being constantly monitored, managed and treated.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +5 (\$280 to \$350/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$370 to \$420/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$120 to \$170/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +33 (\$275 to \$350/t). Prices increase this week.

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Central West NSW

- It has been mostly dry and hot across the region this week. Daytime temperatures again ranged from the high 20s to mid 30s during the week, with Coonamble, Condobolin, Parkes, Trangie and West Wyalong due to reach 38+ degrees on Saturday, and Coonamble and Dubbo expecting a high of 39 degrees on Sunday.
- Growers may have to halt harvesting until the weather is cool enough to be safe if soaring temperatures impose fire restrictions.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$260 to \$300/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$380 to \$460/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$110 to \$160/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$230 to \$270/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Bega Valley

- Mostly sunny throughout the week with possible showers and thunderstorms due on Sunday/Monday. Temperatures headed into the low 30s during the week which is unusually high for the region.
- There has been minimal recorded rainfall in the Bega Valley, with Ulladulla receiving just over 1mm this week.
- Sales are slow even though there is very little feed around.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$350 to \$390/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: -10 (\$440 to \$520/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$210 to \$250/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$320 to \$380/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Goulburn/Murray Valley

- Warm and sunny days across the region this week, with fire bans implemented early in the week due to soaring temperatures and strong dry winds. Kyabram reached a high of 43 degrees on Monday with Yarrowonga, Shepparton and Tatura all exceeding 41 degrees.
- As with other areas across the country, growers may have to halt harvesting and baling until the weather is cool enough to be safe if soaring temperatures impose fire restrictions.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$270 to \$300/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$380 to \$440/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$110 to \$150/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$240 to \$270/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Gippsland

- Mostly sunny throughout the week across the region with daytime temperatures reaching highs in the mid 20s to low 30s on Friday. The weather then takes a turn over the weekend turning cloudy, with highs in the mid 20s. A few showers are predicted to arrive on the weekend, with thunderstorms expected by Monday.
- The BoM is forecasting maximum and minimum temperatures of above median with a likelihood above 90%.
- BoM rainfall forecast for the three months from December 2024 to February 2025 is predicating an above median rainfall, with December likely to have best change of above average rainfall.
- Pasture growth is currently being supported by soil moisture reserves, however the higher-than-average temperatures forecast combined with wind, could see rapid drawdown of soil moisture.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -5 (\$320 to \$340/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: -5 (\$450 to \$480/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: -10 (\$170 to \$180/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$245 to \$265/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Southwest Victoria

- The region has experienced a mix of hot and dry conditions. Temperatures have soared, with some areas reaching over 40°C, leading to increased fire risks and power outages. These extreme conditions have significantly impacted the 2024 summer harvest season, causing crop stress and potential yield reductions.
- The BOM rainfall forecast indicates 58% chance of exceeding median rainfall in December, with January showing normal rainfall. The main risk is the forecast of higher temperatures and average rainfall could result in the continued depletion of soil moisture, potentially reducing total pasture growth, and continuing to impact water availability.
- Movement of hay is slow across the region this week, however, those with strong relationships with buyers are still able to move stock rather than store it.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$300 to \$330/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$360 to \$440). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$115 to \$165/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$240 to \$280/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Southeast South Australia

- The heatwave across the country also affected this region, with Naracoorte recording 41.4 degrees on 16 December. Other towns were more fortunate as temperatures only reached the high 30s.
- Cloud cover leading into showers will eventuate over the weekend, dropping the temperature. However, the sunshine will return early to mid next week, along with temperatures expected in the low to mid 30s in most towns.
- Movement of hay is slow as growers wind down to take a break over the holiday period.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$340 to \$390/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$420 to \$450/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$135 to \$165/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$250 to \$330/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Central South Australia

- Soaring temperatures across the region haven't helped many growers, with daytime temperatures exceeding 40 degrees in Freeling, Port Pirie, Roseworthy and Snowtown this week.
- Temperatures did not get quite as high closer to the Yorke Peninsula but were still in the high 30s.
- As one hay and straw grower stated this week, Central South Australia as a region is on track for its worst year ever, with returns on their crops only 25% of their annual average. Many farmers have had to buy hay from Broken Hill and Mildura where irrigation flows easily.
- There is very little movement, and many are doing their best to close out the summer harvest on a positive note.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$330 to \$380/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$410 to \$470/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$120 to \$160/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Southwest Western Australia

- The stiflingly warm weather impacting the southern region of Western Australia is the state's hottest so far, with Perth enduring 35-degree temperatures on Thursday and 40 degrees on Wednesday.
- In addition to the storms, high fire dangers are forecast for Friday across much of Western Australia's south, with extreme fire danger and a fire weather warning in place for the Avon fire weather district.
- Reports state that the cropping area of Western Australia is celebrating its third-largest harvest on record, with wheat yields looking to average 3.5 tonnes per hectare. Despite this great achievement, the Grains Industry Association of Western Australia's crop report for December states that "pre-harvest estimates of grain yields for wheat, barley and canola have ended up being well below actual yields".
- Reports from Witchcliffe state that the season is wrapping up with straw being cut and baled, and anything not completed before 25th December will have to wait until after the new year commences. Many growers have not had a break since September.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$280 to \$350/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$400 to \$500/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$100 to \$140/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$250 to \$300/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Northwest Tasmania

- Northwest Tasmania has experienced a range of weather conditions. In Burnie, temperatures have varied from a low of 10.3 degrees to a high of 27 degrees, with the warmest day on 16 December reaching 27 degrees.
- Smithton recorded similar temperatures, with lows around 10.3 degrees and highs up to 27 degrees on the same day. Devonport's temperatures ranged from a low of 8.1 degrees to a high of 24.8 degrees during this period.
- A significant heatwave affected various parts of Australia during this time, with Tasmania experiencing temperatures up to 36 degrees in Low Rocky Point on 16 December.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$310 to \$350/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$380 to \$430/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$110 to \$150/t) Prices remain steady this week.

– Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$280 to \$320/t) Prices remain steady this week.

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