

# Hay Report

19 April 2024

DELIVERING  
*for* DAIRY



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# Summary

## Driving Prices Up

- Western Australia's dry period continues without any forecast rain on the horizon. With the demand on fodder supplies still high to meet the needs of herds and flocks. This is leading to tightening in some lines of fodder.
- Rainfall over some of the previously dry parts of Victoria and Tasmania is beginning to see a response from pastures; however, follow up rain will be needed to make grazing viable. With temperatures beginning to drop and growth slowing, fodder supplies are increasingly being needed to supplement pasture feed.
- More farmers are looking to secure winter feed supplies and are contracting their requirements, this is providing a floor value for some producers on in-demand fodder lines.
- Exporters remain a player in the marketplace and continue to provide a baseline price for a wide range of cereal fodder supplies.

## Driving Prices Down

- Green pastures, in those areas in Queensland and NSW which have seen both rain and warmth, continue to boost confidence that ryegrasses and other pasture growth will continue to support stock.
- Sowing of winter fodder crops is continuing in Queensland and NSW as well as some parts of Victoria which is continuing to bolster confidence of good feed availability as temperatures drop.
- Varied quality of fodder is still available on the market. Growers with lower grade hay, particularly hay stacked unprotected outside are expected to actively trade this in the coming months.

## Local News

- Limited reports of seed burst for those areas affected by flooding in early April, which will require re-seeding.
- The Bureau of Meteorology (The Bureau) has stated that El Niño has ended and the El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) has returned to neutral. Climate models indicate ENSO will likely continue to be neutral until at least July 2024. Sea-surface temperatures (SSTs) have been the warmest on record for each month between April 2023 and March 2024. The global pattern of warmth is affecting the typical historical global pattern of SST associated with ENSO variability.
- Buyers are encouraged to feed test and view fodder before purchase to be sure of the quality of feed.

# Regional commentary

## Atherton Tablelands

- A return to much wetter conditions in the region this week, with Atherton seeing over 70mm of rain. However, this was after a string of clearer dry days.
- Conditions in the region remain good for pastures, however there are some issues in relation to safe grazing in areas that have seen repeated high rainfall events and are very wet underfoot.
- Hay, which was cut last week in the hopes of a few days of clear weather to cure, was able to be baled before the heaviest rainfall came through. This hay is of good quality, though as with most hay produced in the region this year it has been cut late.
- Peanuts in the region are ready to harvest, however the wet conditions have made it difficult for producers to get on the paddocks to harvest the crops, and the wet will deteriorate the plants which will make harvesting more difficult once they are accessible.
- Corn crops in the region are still looking very good where pest mitigation efforts have been successful; corn silage that was being produced did get some more harvesting done, but the rain has again delayed chopping. This will resume once conditions are favourable. Comments suggest this silage will move fairly fast once baled.
- Input costs remain high; petrol is steady at \$2.03 per litre. Urea prices are also high at \$1100 p/t with blended at over \$1300p/t and some comments suggest given the difficulty in sourcing the product due to geopolitical factors there will be a lift in pricing fairly soon.
- No change to pricing this week as the good green feed availability as well as the sight of choppers and balers moving through the region again this week is keeping optimism lifted among local livestock producers. Export and feedlots continue to pick up supplies.
- Pasture (Rhodes Grass) hay: +/-0 (\$330 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

- Little to no rainfall across the region this week, though there were some sporadic falls of between 5mm and 10mm of rain in the western downs. This fell late in the week and the remainder was clear and dry.
- After a wet week last week, conditions have returned to clear and dry, which has seen grass continue to grow and some of the standing water has drained. Herds are being well serviced with green feed in the region, though roughage is being fed out.
- Winter feed crops continue to be sown, on the back of good moisture and clear conditions allowing growers to get on the paddocks. However some areas remain affected by standing water and will need a few more dry days to make the paddocks trafficable.

- As expected, reports continue to be made around damaged sorghum crops from the heavy rain that fell around Easter with a number of growers indicating a high number of affected crops being downgraded.
- Enquiries remain fairly steady in the region, with good green feed availability balanced against the interest from some livestock producers to build up some winter supplies. The recent flooding will see some pastures unusable for a period which is also adding to the demand for short term supplies.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +15 (\$240 to \$320/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$ (\$350 to \$440/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$90 to \$110/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$230 to \$325/t) Prices remain steady this week.

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## **North Coast NSW**

- Mostly dry through the region this week with isolated patches along the mid-north coast that saw up to 15mm of rain for the week. The remainder of the region saw less than 5mm of rain and some inland areas recorded no rainfall.
- Pastures continue to supply good quality grazing feed to herds in the region, while the recent heavy rain did see some low-lying areas affected, much of the grazing land is elevated. Roughage continues to be fed out.
- For those growers who can now access their paddocks safely after the rain, forage and winter production crops are beginning to be sown. However, comments suggest that there may be some areas that are still too wet to allow for safe sowing without bogging.
- Sorghum crops in the west of the region have been cut for silage after having avoided most of the damaging rainfall. This fodder was contracted to supply local feedlots, and most will not enter the wider marketplace.
- Enquiries in the region remain fairly stable, with good pasture availability being balanced against farmers looking to lock in winter feed and fill sheds and pits in preparation as the cooler months approach.
- Some change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +5 (\$250 to \$330/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$340 to \$410/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +5 (\$80 to \$110/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$240 to \$300/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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## Central West NSW

- A much drier week in the region, with widespread falls of between 5mm and 10mm of rain, however most days were clear and dry, and temperatures are beginning to trend lower.
- Pastures remain green in the region, and some early drying appears to have been turned around with the recent rainfall. Subsoil moisture is good but will quickly deplete without additional rain during spring, so growers are hoping for wetter conditions ahead.
- Winter sowing is moving along well in areas that have seen some good rain, with the run of recent clear days conducive to the start of the sowing season in the north of the region. Canola was planted early with wheat going in some areas this week. Fodder crops are also being sown into good moisture to fill a feed gap in winter for some mixed enterprises.
- Canola crops sown at the end of March have taken advantage of the good conditions and are already starting to emerge in the south of the region.
- Growers and farmers in the region are seeing limited mouse activity but are engaging in mitigation as seeding commences to keep those numbers under control. There is some narrow reporting that the mice have caused damage to hay stores.
- Enquiries remain fairly stable in the region without much movement this week, with the continued availability of pastures and most producers busy with the next season. Regular parcels are still moving to livestock producers as well as feedlots and chaff mills.
- No change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$270 to \$335/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$340 to \$430/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$70 to \$130/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$260 to \$300/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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## Bega Valley

- A drier week in the region this week, with light falls of between 5mm and 10mm of rain for the week. Most days were clear but cool.
- The region is now in a good position after recent rain and previous warm conditions have seen pastures remain green with good feed options. Some slowing of growth is now being noted as temperatures begin to drop, but herds are being well serviced.

- Forage crops in the region have seen excellent growth with the recent conditions and are keeping the mixed farming enterprises in the area well supplied. This is providing a level of confidence for farmers as they head into the cooler months.
- Sowing which had been delayed due to the heavy rain and the need to allow some paddocks to dry is now beginning to ramp up again. However, comments indicate that there will need to be some extra drying days for some lower lying land which is still quite wet underfoot.
- Enquiries remain stable in the region, with good pasture feed availability as well as reasonable on-farm silage stores tempering demand. Offsetting that, is some farmers looking to build-up on-farm hay supplies for the winter which is keeping prices moving upwards as local supply cannot meet demand.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +20 (\$280 to \$380/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +20 (\$400 to \$460/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +15 (\$120 to \$160/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: +10 (\$300 to \$370/t). Prices increase this week.

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## **Goulburn/Murray Valley**

- Dry across the region this week with no rain recorded over the last seven days and temperatures in the low to mid 20's. Sunny conditions most days.
- Pastures in the region are showing some green availability even with the drier week this week, there is optimism the pastures will continue to turn around and provide good grazing opportunities.
- Summer crop harvesting continued in the region with the clear and dry days providing excellent conditions for growers bringing in maize crops.
- Winter feed and grain crops are continuing to be sown in the region, with vetch and oats going in as well as some cereal crops. Comments suggest moisture levels aren't as high as some would like but sufficient to start the crops off well, but additional rain will be needed.
- Enquiries in the region have increased as pastures are yet to rebound, so additional spot loads of fodder are being sourced and carted. Most movement appears to be to regular customers, and loads are still heading into the south west.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +5 (\$275 to \$315/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$340 to \$410/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$90 to \$120/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$240 to \$280/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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## **Gippsland**

- Very light falls across the region this week, with widespread totals of between 5mm and 10mm of rain across the entire region, though the west did see increased rainfall of up to 15mm for the week. Temperatures are in the mid 20's and on par with seasonal averages.
- Pastures in the region continue to re-green, with light falls keeping the regrowth moving along for dryland pastures; however additional rain would be welcomed by many mixed farmers in the area. Fodder continues to be fed out.
- Sowing of fodder and winter crops is moving through the region especially in areas that saw good rain at the start of April. Vetch and oats are going in as early plantings, though there have been comments that some oat varieties have been hard to source.
- Previously planted, or drilled, ryegrass is showing favourable growth in the central and western parts of the region.
- Enquiries in the region remain fairly stable, with cooler weather and drier pastures increasing the demand for winter feed supplies. However, there is still a fair amount of on-farm silage stored by mixed enterprises which is tempering the demand. Silage supplies appear to be readily available, but some hay lines are seeing a tightening as demand continues from south west Victoria.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +10 (\$270 to \$330/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +10 (\$370 to \$450/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +13 (\$110 to \$150/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$220 to \$260/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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## **Southwest Victoria**

- Widespread but very low rainfall across the region this week, with most areas only seeing between 1mm and 5mm of rain. The eastern coastal strip did see higher weekly falls of up to 15mm of rain, but this was only in isolated patches.
- Pastures in the region continue to show a re-emergence of green in areas that saw good rain early in the month and additional light falls, however most dryland pastures have yet to see any significant turnaround.



- Farmers in the region are planting in ryegrass pastures, even with concerns regarding the low moisture content in the soil. Most are still looking for an autumn break but are taking advantage of any available moisture to start the pastures off.
- Corn crops near Macarthur are coming along well with some being cut for silage this week. Most of this fodder is remaining for on-farm use in mixed enterprises, though some has been seen moving locally to dairy farms.
- Enquiries remain fairly steady in the region as the dry conditions continue for most, though the emergence of some early green pick has seen a slight pull back from the earlier demand. Hay is still being brought into the region from other parts of the state to meet needs, especially for dairy farms which have missed significant rainfall and are planning for the remainder of autumn into winter.
- Some change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$260 to \$330/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$350 to \$410/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: -5 (\$90 to \$100/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Pasture hay: +5 (\$220 to \$250/t). Prices Increase this week.

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## **Southeast South Australia**

- Another dry week, with only very limited falls of between 1mm and 5mm of rain on the southern tip of the region, while the remainder saw no rainfall. Temperatures are also trending below average for this time of year.
- Dryland pastures in the area remain brown and dry with no rain to spark any green growth and cooler temperatures also keeping any possible growth restricted. Dry feed continues to be readily available, but herds are continuing to be fed out.
- Due to the ongoing dry conditions, reports indicate that some producers are moving what would previously have been saleable fodder supplies to supplement their own herds, further reducing some availability.
- Most producers in the region are indicating that all ground preparation is complete, and they are waiting on the autumn break to begin sowing in earnest, while also being prepared to dry sow if necessary.
- Enquiries in the region remain steady as dry conditions continue to put pressure on pasture feed and require additional fodder supplies. More contracted hay is being removed from the marketplace as these farmers shore up their supply.
- No change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$270 to \$320/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$330 to \$390/t). Prices remain steady this week.

- Straw: +/-0 (\$90 to \$115/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$230 to \$270/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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## Central South Australia

- Little to no rain fell across the region this week with some very light falls of less than 5mm of rain along the Fleurieu Peninsula, however the remaining parts of the region were clear and sunny.
- While there are still green patches in dryland pastures for anything deep rooted, the lack of follow up rainfall has stalled any new growth. Irrigated pastures are still providing good green feed for flocks and herds, but fodder is being fed out to keep up stock condition.
- Most producers are indicating that on-farm activity in preparation for sowing is now complete and current activity on farm is dormant until the autumn break arrives, or producers look to dry sow at the end of the month.
- Mice continue to be seen in the paddocks and around sheds and outbuildings in the region, and mitigation efforts are underway to keep the pests controlled before seeding ramps up.
- The dry conditions continue to keep demand turning over fairly steadily. Hay is moving both locally and across the border to the drier parts of Victoria. Feed in the region is becoming limited with a lot of the hay now committed.
- No change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$260 to \$335/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$320 to \$400/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$90 to \$110/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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## Southwest Western Australia

- Another week of almost no rain across the entire region this week, with small, isolated patches of between 1mm and 5mm of rain falling along the southern coast. Dry, warm, and sunny days continue.
- With the dry conditions continuing for another week, pastures remain brown and brittle and are only offering dry feed. Fodder continues to be fed out to local cattle, sheep and dairy herds and water is also being carted for animal use.
- Given the ongoing dry conditions, a number of farming meetings are being held in south west to share information and seek solutions to maintain stock health in the region.

- Ground preparation work in the region is mostly complete with producers now looking for either an autumn break or contemplating choices for dry sowing. Some indications are that canola plantings will be replaced with barley or lupins if the rain doesn't arrive by early May.
- Some growers in the northern part of the region have already dry sown a number of paddocks as a hedge against a late start for the rain.
- The dry conditions continue to drive demand in the region as more mixed producers run low on conserved fodder stores due to the prolonged period of feeding that has taken place this year. Livestock producers are sourcing varied feed options to keep any animals still on farm in good condition, though destocking continues to have an impact on fodder requirements.
- Some change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$300 to \$360/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +10 (\$370 to \$450/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +10 (\$110 to \$135/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$230 to \$270/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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## Northwest Tasmania

- Light to moderate falls across parts of the region this week, with the west coast seeing the highest falls of between 15mm to 25mm of rain with rainfall reducing as the band moved eastward with the mid north coast seeing no rainfall. Inland areas saw widespread low falls of between 10mm and 15mm of rain.
- In those areas along the west coast that have seen good continual rainfall over the last few weeks, the deficit in soil moisture and pasture growth has been turned around and there are green feed opportunities beginning to become available for local herds. However, many parts of the North West are still seeing little or sluggish pasture growth and need some additional rain.
- Pastures of ryegrass and fescue planted in February around Smithton are showing good growth and are available to local herds. These paddocks were mostly dryland with some limited irrigation to push them through the recent dry period.
- Winter crop planting is continuing in the central part of the region where reasonable rainfall has boosted available soil moisture.
- Enquiries remain fairly steady in the region with some areas beginning to see some green feed availability while others are still quite dry and are sourcing spot loads to carry them through until the rain falls or the pastures rebound after recent rainfall.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$245 to \$320/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$300 to \$380/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$85 to \$130/t) Prices remain steady this week.

– Pasture hay: -5 (\$275 to \$345/t) Prices decrease this week.

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Australian Fodder Industry Association

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