

# Hay Report

26 April 2024

DELIVERING  
*for* DAIRY





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# Summary

## Driving Prices Up

- Western Australia’s dry period continues unabated, with little to no rainfall being recorded across the south west, and pastures unable to support livestock and dairy herds.
- Some green pick has emerged from recent rain in Victoria and Tasmania, but the underlying conditions remain quite dry. 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

- Queensland and most of NSW continue to see good growing conditions, both for existing pastures and newly sown fodder crops.
- 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.
- Fodder of varied quality 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

- Tasmania is continuing to see drying conditions which is putting pressure on available fodder supplies. Some parts of the state are recording their lowest rainfall on record.
- Dry conditions in Western Australia are continuing to see livestock producers, especially sheep graziers, making decisions regarding the viability of their enterprises moving forward, with many continuing to destock, or conserving core breeding stock only.
- 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 remain neutral until at least July 2024.
- Buyers are encouraged to feed test and view fodder before purchase to be sure of the quality of feed.

# Regional commentary

## Atherton Tablelands

- After several wet weeks, this week saw a string of warm dry days with limited light rainfall in the region.
- Pastures remain green and lush and are providing good green feed opportunities for local herds and flocks.
- With the string of mostly dry days, there was some movement in the production of hay and silage, with producers taking advantage of any opportunity to get mowers and balers on the paddocks.
- The peanut harvest has kicked off in the region, with the drier conditions enabling growers to harvest the crops, though there have been some issues due to the lateness of the harvest which is slowing it down. Where harvesting can proceed, growers are attempting a fast turnaround on those paddocks for the next sowing.
- Corn crops in the region continue to be cut for silage and are looking to have produced some good quality product where pest mitigation efforts were successful.
- 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 and on-farm storage continue to keep prices steady. Feedlots and export ships remain steady, customers with regular deliveries moving.
- 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

- Light to moderate falls across the region this week, with the eastern parts of the region seeing the highest falls of around 25mm of rain, while in the east saw averages of around 15mm of rain for the week. Rainfall was patchy and isolated with a number of clear, dry days.
- Pastures remain green and continue to provide good feed opportunities; warmth is keeping the grass growing with no indication of any significant slowing down as the cooler months approach.
- Sowing of winter feed and cereal crops are continuing where feasible. The continuing rainfall is keeping some areas quite wet which has delayed sowing as the risk of bogging and paddock damage is too high.
- Limited reports of some increased mouse activity in the region. Producers are baiting in line with the sowing schedule to keep the pests under control.

- Sorghum crops in the region that were sown late and therefore were not badly affected by the rain and hail over Easter are now coming off with good yields and potential. Comments suggest this will not make up the shortfall lost due to the earlier storms but will provide some good returns.
- Cotton defoliation and harvest is continuing in the region with good yields and an expectation of a fair amount of available cottonseed.
- Enquiries in the region remain stable with feedlots and repeat customers moving the bulk of the fodder supplies, as most herds are being well serviced by pasture feed coupled with conserved fodder on farm. Some roughage is being requested, but supplies are good.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$240 to \$320/t). Prices remain steady 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**

- Moderate falls across the region this week with most days seeing a mix of light rainfall and sunny periods. The heaviest falls were in the coastal region, with up to 50mm of rain in the far north of the region, while inland recorded an average of 15mm to 20mm of rain. Temperatures are in the mid-20's.
- Pastures remain green and lush and are providing good green feed availability to local herds and flocks. Some areas are still quite wet underfoot, but most elevated pastures are in good condition.
- Sowing of winter grain and feed crops is continuing in the region, with most growers looking to get all the seed in the ground by the beginning of May. Comments indicate that a fair amount of oats are being sown.
- Ryegrass pastures which had been sown by dairy farmers and mixed enterprises in the region look to be establishing well with the reasonable available moisture.
- Sorghum crops which were planted late are looking very good in the west of the region and the harvest is continuing with good yields.
- Enquiries in the region remain fairly stable, with good pasture availability being balanced against farmers looking to lock in winter feed and fill sheds for a drop in pasture growth as winter moves in.
- Some change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$250 to \$330/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$340 to \$410/t). Prices remain steady this week.

- Straw: +5 (\$80 to \$120/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 split in the weather patterns this week with the north of the region seeing some falls while the central and south was mostly dry. Temperatures are trending below average for this time of year.
- Pastures remain green in the region, though there are some indications of a slowing of growth; the green feed is still widely available for herds and flocks in the region. Some additional fodder continues to be fed out for animal health.
- Winter sowing is continuing in the region, with good conditions in both subsoil moisture and a run of clear days to allow growers to run seeders and sprayers continuously.
- Fodder and hay production crops are continuing to be sown in the region, comments suggest the southern parts are showing better early emergence, but most areas are seeing good response from the conditions.
- Early sown canola in the south of the region is beginning to emerge and is showing good early establishment.
- Enquiries remain stable, without much movement this week as the continued availability of pastures and the good conditions keeping optimism high. Hay is still being carted in the region to contracted producers as well as feedlots.
- Some change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +5 (\$280 to \$335/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$340 to \$430/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +5 (\$80 to \$130/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$260 to \$300/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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## Bega Valley

- Light rainfall in the region this week, with falls in the valley of between 10mm and 15mm of rain. Most days were clear with sporadic falls during the week. Temperatures are trending cooler again this week.

- Grass continues to grow in the Valley, with good rain and milder days keeping the growth moving along, though some slowing is being noted as temperatures drops. Nevertheless, there are plenty of pastures available for herd rotation.
- Recently sown ryegrass pastures in the region have responded well to the growing conditions and are showing excellent growth and biomass.
- Winter sowing is now moving through the region again after a delay due to some heavier rains, some areas are still a little too wet underfoot for safe sowing, but most areas are seeing seed going in.
- Enquiries in the region continue to be reasonable, but stable, with demand mostly being met from outside the area as local supply cannot meet demand. Good green feed availability and conserved fodder is tempering demand, but comments indicate producers are looking to buy in supply now and keep previously conserved fodder in reserve.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$280 to \$380/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +5 (\$400 to \$470/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +10 (\$120 to \$180/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: +5 (\$310 to \$370/t). Prices increase this week.

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## **Goulburn/Murray Valley**

- Another dry week, with no rainfall recorded across almost the entire region, and very light falls of less than 5mm on the southern edge. Temperatures continue to be on trend with seasonal averages but have seen some unseasonal fluctuations.
- Many pastures in the region are continuing to be irrigated to keep the grass growing as drying continues. While deep rooted pastures can continue to pull from subsoil moisture most dryland pastures are seeing the effect of another dry week.
- Some very late hay production is continuing in the region, this was due to the late start, wet summer and drier autumn combining to delay sowing and growth. Silage cutting has also being extended for some in the region, with final cuts being planned to the beginning of May.
- Previously sown winter feed and grain crops are beginning to show early establishment with green shoots being seen across most paddocks and pastures as the crops draw from available soil moisture.
- Winter sowing is continuing in the region, with most growers looking to get the majority of the crop into the ground by early May. Oats and vetch are going in with some continued concern around the availability of some oat seed varieties.
- Enquiries are fairly stable in the region with contracted loads moving to livestock producers as well as feedlots and mills. South west Victoria continues to drive demand with loads being seen moving down in that area.

- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$275 to \$315/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$340 to \$410/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +3 (\$95 to \$120/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$240 to \$280/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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## Gippsland

- Light falls across the region this week, with the far west and far east seeing the higher falls of around 15mm of rain, the remainder of the region saw between 5mm and 10mm of rain. Temperatures are trending lower, but still within seasonal averages.
- Dryland pastures in the region are continuing to green up again, though the cooler temperatures are keeping growth slower. Irrigated pastures are providing excellent green feed opportunities; however, fodder continues to be fed out.
- Pastures of mixed grasses and chicory in the west of the region are looking lush and are providing good feed to local dairy cows.
- Sowing is continuing in the region for both winter grain and fodder crops, with the expectation that the continued high demand from the south west may see some short-term shortages in the region as producers move usually local sales intrastate.
- Enquires are stable in the region, pasture availability is lower, so producers are looking for spot deliveries until they rebound, however irrigated pastures are providing good feed which is balancing demand. Silage supplies appear to be readily available, but some hay lines are seeing a tightening as demand continues from south west Victoria and into South Australia.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$270 to \$330/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$370 to \$450/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +5 (\$110 to \$160/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$220 to \$260/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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## Southwest Victoria

- Another week of widespread but very low rainfall across the region, with most areas only seeing between 1mm and 5mm of rain. The coastal strip, which has seen some of the lowest rainfall this season did receive up to 15mm of rain in isolated patches. Temperatures are dropping and some limited reports of frost in the northern parts of the region.
- Pastures in the region are quite dry with little green pick available. Some areas which had seen a turnaround with earlier rain are dry again. Subsoil moisture is quite low in the southern parts and pastures have little to draw on for growth.
- Irrigated pastures in the region are still offering good green feed availability, and most mixed producers are employing irrigation where possible to keep pastures viable.
- Winter cereal crops are being sown in the region. Comments suggest canola is going in this week in the north of the region into dry soil; however, growers are hoping that spring rain will spark the crops in May.
- Enquiries in the region remain steady as the dry conditions continue and dryland pastures provide little to no green feed availability. Hay and other fodder supplies continue to come into the region to support local herds and flocks.
- Some change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$260 to \$330/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +10 (\$350 to \$410/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$90 to \$100/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +5 (\$220 to \$260/t). Prices Increase this week.

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## Southeast South Australia

- A mostly dry week across the region, with the southern tip once again being the only area that saw any significant rainfall, with falls of up to 15mm of rain, the remainder of the region saw between 1mm and 5mm of rain for the week.
- Pastures in the region remain dry with little green pick to be seen, rain is desperately needed to turn around the current subsoil conditions and give some green feed options.
- Most on-farm activity is in maintenance mode until the rain arrives or dry sowing becomes the only option. Herds and flocks in the region are on supplemental feeding.
- Some producers in the region have commenced a dry sowing program, with the expectation that grain, and cereal crops will germinate once the rain arrives. Comments suggest that most are still waiting to see what the end of April and the beginning of May brings.
- Enquiries in the region remain steady, as dry conditions persist, and producers continue to require additional fodder supplies to meet herd health. Many have a reasonable amount of on-farm availability of feed mixes but are looking towards the cooling winter months.
- Some 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: +3 (\$235 to \$270/t). Prices increase this week.

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### **Central South Australia**

- Little to no rain across the region this week, with widespread falls of less than 5mm falling on the weekend, but the remainder of the week being clear and dry.
- Dryland pastures are mostly brown with only patches of green; the lack of any significant rainfall has stalled any new growth. Irrigated pastures are still providing good green feed for flocks and herds, but fodder continues to be fed out to keep up stock condition.
- As the dry conditions continue, mixed enterprises are opening up some long-term silage pits to feed out to flocks in the region.
- Paddock preparation work is now complete for most and producers are looking for rainfall, however comments suggest that dry sowing will be undertaken by most this year as the forecast is not looking promising for the short-term.
- Some dedicated hay producers in the north of the region are starting to dry sow in some production crops.
- Enquiries remain fairly stable in the region, as the dry conditions push demand. Comments suggest some of the higher quality hay availability is tightening though there is still a good amount of good quality available. Hay is moving both locally and across the border to the drier parts of Victoria.
- Some change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: -5 (\$260 to \$325/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: -10 (\$320 to \$380/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$90 to \$110/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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### **Southwest Western Australia**

- Little to no rain fell across the region this week, with the southern coastal strip and some small distance inland seeing between 1mm and 5mm of rain, however the southern tip of Western Australia and the west coast saw no rain. Temperatures remain higher than seasonal averages.

- Dry conditions continue to keep pastures brown and brittle and 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.
- Some dairy farmers in the southern part of the region are opening up silage pits sealed 5 years ago to feed out to their herds, indications are these stores are in very good condition and are providing good feed for dairy cows until the rain arrives and pasture growth commences.
- Reports continue to come in of sheep being culled in parts of the region as there are no markets and no viable feed options to continue the flocks in good health. However, this currently appears to only be taking place in limited situations as most graziers planned for the conditions by reducing stock early, not joining ewes or storing a reasonable amount of hay and fodder on farm.
- Hay producers in the region are putting in oats, with some commenting that they are unsure how much will germinate, however the outlook is for very good return on hay production later in the year and into 2025, so worth the early investment.
- Ground preparation work in the region is mostly complete with producers now looking for either an autumn break or contemplating choices for dry sowing. More comments are indicating a much-reduced expectation on canola plantings due to the lack of rain, unless opting for a fast-growing variety.
- Dry conditions continue to drive demand in the region, as the extended dry period is seeing some livestock producers needing to supplement their on-farm stores as they begin to deplete. Much of the region is currently in a holding pattern waiting for the rain, or for windows for planting to narrow. Exporters are still taking on good oaten parcels.
- No change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$300 to \$360/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$370 to \$450/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$110 to \$135/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$230 to \$270/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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## **Northwest Tasmania**

- Another week of light and patchy falls with the west coast again seeing the highest falls of up to 15mm of rain and totals dropping further eastward, with the central parts only recording between 1mm and 5mm of rain. Some frosts have been reported.
- Pastures in the region continue to dry out except along the western coast where continued light rainfall has kept them green. Irrigated pastures in the region continue to provide green feed opportunities, however cooler temperatures are also seeing the growth slowing where it is occurring.
- Some mixed pastures of ryegrass, cocksfoot and clover which were dry sown just before Easter around Sheffield managed to get some timely rain and are now showing excellent germination and growth. This feed is slated for beef and lamb grazing.



- Winter fodder and grain crops are continuing to be sown in those areas which have available moisture though some growers are completing weed management this week before moving through the next crop sowing schedule. Some growers are also dry sowing crops in areas which have not seen the usual rainfall for this time of year.
- Enquiries in the region continue to respond to the drier than usual conditions, most parts of the north west have seen some rain or had available soil moisture but there are patches where drying is becoming more pressing. Additionally, other parts of the state are much drier than usual and are driving demand.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$245 to \$320/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +5 (\$310 to \$380/t) Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$85 to \$130/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +10 (\$275 to \$365/t) Prices increase this week.

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Australian Fodder Industry Association

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