

# Hay Report

3 May 2024

DELIVERING  
*for* DAIRY

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# Summary

## Driving Prices Up

- Even with the recent rainfall, Western Australia remains dry and unseasonably warm which is continuing to put pressure on available fodder supplies. While many farmers keep a good supply of conserved fodder in case of adverse conditions, this is being depleted and is driving increased demand.
- The southern states remain quite dry even with some earlier rain and are looking for good parcels of varied fodder types to keep up herd health, this is seeing fodder moving from north to south to meet needs which is incurring additional freight costs.
- 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

- Sowing of winter fodder, as well as hay and silage production crops, is continuing through the northern and into the southern states in mostly good conditions, especially southern Queensland, and almost all of NSW. Dry sowing of crops is ongoing in the south, in preparation for rain which should spark good growth.
- Some late summer crops are still being made into hay and silage in parts of Victoria which continues to add to available supply.
- 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

- Tasmanian dairy and livestock producers are looking to source supplies from the mainland as local supply is unable to meet the earlier than usual need due to the dry conditions in the central and southern parts of the state. This endeavour is constrained by the high biosecurity requirement for shipping supplies into Tasmania.
- The suggestion of a ban on export hay out of Western Australia (WA), in light of the continuing dry conditions, is not being met favourably by dedicated hay producers who have invested in the export market. Comments from the WA Government indicate this suggestion does not have a high likelihood of being implemented.
- 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.
- Buyers are encouraged to feed test and view fodder before purchase to be sure of the quality of feed.

# Regional commentary

## Atherton Tablelands

- The region returned to light but consistent rainfall on most days this week, with only sporadic clear sunny periods. Most days saw rain and the totals for Atherton were around 30mm of rain.
- Ongoing rain and warmth is keeping grasses moving along. Some pastures are running ahead of the herds and producers are considering some limited grass silage production if the weather becomes favourable.
- With a return to wetter days, hay production has ceased around Atherton again, however to the west in Dimbulah the conditions are much drier and a fair amount of hay is being cut and baled, mostly in small bales for the equine market.
- A good amount of the early sown peanut harvest has come in, and the growers are turning around the paddocks for the next sowing. However, the return to wet conditions is hindering the remainder of the harvest.
- Input costs remain high; petrol is steady at \$2.05 per litre. Urea prices are also high at \$1100 p/t with blended at over \$1300p/t and comments continue to indicate the price will stay high for the foreseeable future.
- No change to pricing this week as the good green feed availability and on-farm storage continue to keep prices steady. Speciality purchases such as the equine trade are moving a good amount of hay. 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

- Overall, a drier week in the region, with limited and isolated falls which averaged between 5mm and 10mm of rain. Most days were clear and dry.
- Pastures in the region remain green and are providing good green feed options for local herds. The drier week this week has removed some issues with safe grazing, though cooler conditions are beginning to see a slowdown in growth.
- Sowing is continuing in the region with the clearer days a boon to growers looking to complete parts of the sowing schedule especially into areas which had been quite wet underfoot.
- Mice continue to be seen as sowing is undertaken or continued, so baiting is being carried out to mitigate the impact. Comments suggest the numbers are not excessive but are noticeable.
- Sumer crop harvesting is still ongoing for some in the region due to the late start and the climactic conditions during the growing period.
- Enquiries in the region remain mostly unchanged, 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. Availability remains good for most lines, though there have been some additional enquiries into higher end supplies as temperatures begin to drop.

- 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**

- Light falls across the region this week, with the coastal areas seeing the highest rainfall, with averages of between 15mm and 25mm. Falls were much lighter further inland with some of the hinterland seeing no rainfall for the week. Temperatures are beginning to trend downward but are still slightly above average for this time of year.
- Pastures in the region remain green and are providing good green feed availability to local herds and flocks. Continued coastal rainfall is keeping some pastures wet underfoot, but most grazing is on elevated land. Pasture growth does not appear to have slowed significantly.
- Sowing of the winter grain and feed crops remains on track for most to get the bulk of the seed in the ground by the start of May. Some paddocks still have fairly high water content and may need a little more drying before they can be planted without the risk of bogging.
- Corn crops in the west of the region continue to be chopped for silage. Most of these crops are already contracted to local livestock producers and feedlots for ensilage on-site.
- Enquiries remain low and stable in the region with the rain and slightly above average temperatures keeping pasture growth moving along. Most fodder movement is pre-contracted, though there are some livestock producers getting additional winter supplies in early.
- No 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: +/-0 (\$80 to \$120/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$240 to \$300/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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## Central West NSW

- Much drier across the region this week, with limited isolated falls of up to 10mm of rain being recorded in the central parts but mostly clear and sunny days. Temperatures are trending slightly below average for this time of year.
- Pastures in the region continue to provide green feed availability, though there are some early indications of drying in some areas. Growth has also begun to slow as temperatures drop, though nothing of any significance yet. Some additional fodder continues to be fed out for animal health.
- Winter sowing schedules for fodder and grain continue in the region, with the run of good conditions continuing. Subsoil moisture and sunny days providing warmth is sufficient to spark good germination from new plantings.
- Some limited reports of grasshoppers in early emerging cereal crops in the west of the region, though not in large numbers. Growers are applying mitigation to protect the crops.
- Cotton harvest in the region is in full swing with reports indicating it is a very high yielding harvest with a good amount of cottonseed expected to be available.
- Enquiries have picked up a little in the region as temperatures begin to drop, however pastures are still providing good availability and forage crops are going in under excellent conditions, so optimism remains fairly high. Fodder continues to move to feedlots and pre-contracted producers.
- Some change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +5 (\$290 to \$335/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +5 (\$350 to \$430/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$80 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

- Little to no rain through the Valley this week, with falls of less than 5mm and most days clear, though some fog has been reported in the mornings. Temperatures are trending cooler again this week and are slightly below average for this time of year.
- Pastures in the valley remain green and are offering excellent feed opportunities to local herds. Some slowing of growth is being noted but not in any significant amount.
- Silage continues to be sporadically made in the region with mixed pastures of kikuyu, ryegrass and clovers being cut and ensiled where conditions are favourable.
- Winter sowing in the region is once more moving along with some drier days allowing growers to get on to some of the lower lying and wetter paddocks and pastures.

- Enquiries continue to turn over fairly well, with green feed tempering demand, but colder days having producers considering their stock on hand and the balance of conserved versus new fodder supplies. Comments indicate producers are looking to buy in supply now and keep previously conserved fodder in reserve. Most supplies are being trucked into the region with local supply not sufficient to meet demand.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +10 (\$300 to \$380/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +15 (\$420 to \$480/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +15 (\$140 to \$190/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: +5 (\$320 to \$370/t). Prices increase this week.

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## **Goulburn/Murray Valley**

- Mostly dry across the region this week, with no rainfall recorded across almost all of the area, and very light falls of less than 5mm through the central parts. Temperatures continue to be on trend with seasonal averages. Some light frosts have been recorded.
- Many pastures in the region are only providing green feed if they are under irrigation though dry pasture feed is readily available. Deep rooted pastures can continue to pull from subsoil moisture however dryland pastures are seeing the effect of another dry week.
- Winter sowing is continuing in the region, with oats and vetch in for most and other hay production and cereal crops now going in. Subsoil moisture is available for these crops, but the ground is dry and additional rain is needed. Growers are keen to get as much of the crop into the ground before soil temperatures drop.
- Enquiries continue to gradually increase as temperatures begin to drop and the lack of rain is seeing available green feed diminish. On-farm storage appears to be holding up fairly well, but livestock producers are looking to winter and the conditions in other parts of the state and making buying decisions earlier than usual.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +5 (\$285 to \$315/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +5 (\$350 to \$410/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$95 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

- Widespread light falls across the region this week with most areas seeing between 5mm and 10mm of rain, though the western parts saw up to 15mm for the week. Some clear days, though light frosts have also been reported.
- Grass is growing in the region, though as the temperatures drop this is beginning to slow. Continued light rainfall is keeping pastures moving, but most herds are on supplementary fodder supplies.
- Fodder and grain crop sowing is continuing in the region. Comments indicate that growers are looking to bolster available winter forage options as the dry conditions in the west of the state look to reduce availability as winter sets in.
- Ryegrass pastures sown earlier in the month are showing good growth and will be available for local dairy herds by the start of winter.
- Enquiries in the region are lifting a little as cooler temperatures and the situation in other parts of the southern Australia have livestock producers looking at their on-farm stores and planning for winter earlier than they would normally. Trucks continue to cart hay out of the region to the south west and into South Australia.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +5 (\$270 to \$340/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +5 (\$380 to \$450/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +5 (\$120 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

- Widespread very low rainfall across the region again this week, with most areas seeing between 1mm and 5mm of rain. Most days have been clear and dry and some light frosts have also been reported.
- Pastures in the region remain dry with little green pick available. Some areas which had seen a turnaround with earlier rain are dry again. Most producers are handfeeding stock.
- Mixed enterprise farmers are planting ryegrass pastures however concerns of low moisture content in soils is top of mind for many. Most are still hoping for a timely autumn break but are planning out other strategies.
- Winter fodder and cereal crops continue to be dry sown in the region, as growers look to closing viability windows and the decrease in soil temperature. Irrigation is being employed to give some crops an early boost though most are waiting on rain.
- Farmers are continuing to report a large increase in the number of kangaroos being seen in paddocks and pastures as the animals look for feed sources on farmland.



- Little has changed in the region as the dry conditions continue and dryland pasture provides little to no green feed availability. Hay and other fodder supplies continue to come into the region to support local herds and flocks.
- No 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: +/-0 (\$90 to \$100/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$220 to \$260/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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### **Southeast South Australia**

- The pattern of the last few weeks continued this week, with only the southern coastal tip seeing any reasonable rainfall, with around 10mm of rain falling in that area. The remainder of the region saw between 1mm and 5mm of rain for the week.
- Pastures across much of the region remain dry, though the southern coastal tip is seeing some green feed rebound due to the low but fairly consistent rainfall over the last few weeks. Everywhere else is only seeing green under irrigation.
- While some sowing is being undertaken as the season progresses, most on-farm activity is in maintenance mode until rain arrives or dry sowing becomes the only option. Reports that oats and vetch are continuing to be sown in both dryland and irrigated pastures. Herds and flocks in the region continue to be hand-fed.
- Enquiries remain steady as the pastures wait for rain and livestock continue to require additional fodder supplies. On-farm supplies are reasonable but producers are looking at cooler conditions and the possibility of more animals on farm due to low saleyard prices and are planning accordingly.
- 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: +5 (\$245 to \$270/t). Prices increase this week.

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## Central South Australia

- A dry week across the region this week with no rainfall of any significance recorded across the entire area. Temperatures continue to trend downward in line with seasonal averages.
- Dryland pastures are brown and dry in the region, and are providing dry feed options only. Irrigated pastures continue to supply green feed, though with temperatures beginning to drop some limited slowdown is being seen. Fodder continues to be fed out to keep up stock condition.
- Most pastures and paddocks are well prepared for sowing and are waiting on rain or the forecast of rain before the majority of the sowing schedule commences.
- Some dry sowing is being undertaken in the region as growers aim to plant deeper than usual to chase any available moisture or look to put in crops that should spark when the rain arrives.
- Vetch plantings are going in around Langhorne Creek and planting of irrigated fodder production crops is continuing in the region.
- 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 \$315/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$320 to \$380/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$90 to \$110/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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## Southwest Western Australia

- After many months of little to no rainfall, this week saw falls across the entire South West with Bunbury recording upwards of 40mm of rain, Busselton 30mm of rain and Manjimup 20mm of rain.
- While the recent rainfall is offering a great sense of relief, conditions on the ground have not changed, with 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. This should rebound in the coming weeks as the effects of the rainfall are felt.
- Hay and fodder production crops are going in for some in the region, dry sown for the most part though some are planted under irrigation. The warm conditions are helping to give any irrigated crops good germination prospects especially with the recent rain.
- Some mixed enterprises are drilling ryegrass into irrigated kikuyu pastures around Brookhampton.
- Calving is continuing in the region which is placing some additional strain on fodder supplies to keep cows and calves healthy in the dry conditions.

- Dry conditions continue to drive demand as the extended dry period is seeing some livestock producers needing to supplement their on-farm stores as they begin to deplete. The holding pattern that was in place in much of the region will now be replaced with activity as growers get on seeders. Exporters are still taking on good oaten parcels.
- Some change to prices this week.
- Cereal hay: +20 (\$320 to \$380/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +10 (\$390 to \$450/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$110 to \$135/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +15 (\$230 to \$300/t). Prices increase this week.

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## **Northwest Tasmania**

- Widespread rain across the western coast, but much lower falls further east, with the north central coast seeing very low rainfall of between 5mm and 10mm of rain for the week. Some frost reported.
- Pastures in the region are providing green feed, though some drying is continuing to be seen as rainfall in the region remains below average. Any pastures along the western coast are doing very well and providing good feed options.
- Mixed ryegrass pastures are being planted in the northern coastal areas as winter grazing options for local herds and flocks as well as silage production later in the year. These pastures are going into reasonable soil moisture and earlier sown pastures are already showing signs of germination.
- Mixed pastures of ryegrass, red and white clover and oats sown around Edith Creek at the beginning of April are now filling a feed gap and will be grazed before being made into silage later in the year.
- Sowing of winter fodder and cereal crops is continuing in the region, with some crops going into good soil moisture and other areas dry sowing ahead of autumn rainfall.
- Enquiries are coming from outside the region for the most part as the north west of Tasmania has seen reasonable rainfall, with the exception of King Island where quite dry conditions continue. Green feed availability is still good for most local producers and on-farm stores are reasonable.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$245 to \$320/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +5 (\$320 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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