Dairy Australia

Hay Report

31 October 2025

DELIVERING *for* DAIRY

Contents

The hay report is produced for Dairy Australia by the Australian Fodder Industry Association (AFIA) – the national independent voice for the Australian fodder industry which connects the entire supply chain from seed to feed. For further information: www.afia.org.au

Summary

Driving Prices Up

- Export demand for high-grade oaten hay remains steady, with offers between $305–$330/t delivered to Victorian plants.
- Domestic demand is rising for wheat and barley hay, especially in southern regions where dry finishes have lifted bale quality.
- Rain in southwest Victoria and Gippsland has improved paddock feed and boosted on-farm reserves, helping to stabilise short-term supply expectations.
- Harvest delays are tightening supply in the short term, as many growers and contractors work through wet paddocks and catch-up workloads.
- Straw in Central SA and Rhodes grass in the Atherton Tablelands are trading at elevated, variable prices, driven by producer-level insights as growers work to rebuild shed stocks.

Driving Prices Down

- Lucerne pricing remains stagnant for a fourth consecutive week across most regions, with volumes low and competition flat across much of the southeast.
- Straw prices continue to hover near the bottom of the market, with little incentive to move as growers confirm current rates are unlikely to drop further.
- Vetch pricing has eased slightly, though early sales continue to clear at reasonable returns where quality is high.
- Ongoing wet weather and limited buyer urgency are slowing trade in some regions, as end-users wait for broader supply availability before locking in purchases.

Local News

- **National weather summary and outlook**
  - Rain has halted haymaking activity in several regions, preventing windrows from curing and delaying the supply of new-season hay to market.
  - Most regions remain 2–3 weeks behind, with cereal hay still being baled post-rainfall in the Mallee and parts of South Australia.
  - Light to moderate October rainfall was recorded in eastern and far southwestern parts of the country, while northern and western areas experienced above-average falls.
  - Significant frost in Vic and southern NSW this week saw morning lows of -1°C, with growers assessing pasture damage. The recent rain may have moderated impacts.
  - According to the Bureau of Meteorology's long-range outlook, eastern Australia is likely to experience above-average rainfall from November to January.
  - View and download the latest Weekly Agriculture, Climate and Water Update via The Bureau of Meteorology **HERE.**
- Buyers are encouraged to **feed test and view fodder** before purchase to ensure feed quality.

Regional commentary

Atherton Tablelands

- A severe heatwave warning remains in effect for the region, with maximum temperatures ranging from the low 30s to near 40°C and minimums in the high teens to mid-20s. These hot, dry conditions are expected to continue into next week, particularly affecting areas like Aurukun and Weipa.
- Weather remains variable and challenging for haymaking, with a slight chance of showers, thunderstorms, and some cloud cover expected heading into the weekend. Growers continue to bale during the heat of the day, which is reducing bale weights and overall yield.
- Most cereal hay is sold out, with limited paddock supplies of Rhodes grass rounds still available at $55 for 120 kg bales, or $450–460/tonne. Large bales are selling for $400/t.
- Old-season straw is trading at $200–$220/tonne, but quality is inconsistent. Limited feed testing across the region is making it difficult to assess nutritional value with confidence.
- Lucerne has yet to be planted, while corn for silage will be planted in late November, with harvest scheduled for March–April.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Pasture (Rhodes Grass) hay: +50 ($320 to $460/t). Prices increase this week.

Please note: Hay in the Atherton Tablelands is traditionally priced at $/bale, so checking bale weights for conversion is important. The price range indicated is for feeds of varying quality. We recommend testing and viewing the feed before purchase to ensure its quality.

Darling Downs

- A slight to medium chance of showers, along with some fog, is creating variable conditions. With temperatures rising to 38°C in parts by Saturday, many hay producers are taking a daily 'wait and see' approach.
- Southern Queensland is now in full swing for both grain and hay harvest, with strong receivals of barley, wheat and chickpeas noted around Goondiwindi last week, all showing consistently high quality. Farmers are also reporting one of the best seasons in recent years, with haymaking underway and much of the early cut being kept for on-farm use.
- Lucerne hay is currently selling at $470 per tonne, having dropped further again this week. Green hay (a mix of oats and barley) is trading at $350-$400 per tonne. Cereal hay, pasture hay and straw remain steady, but prices may ease with more supply entering the market.
- Lucerne and cereal hay are at their lowest prices since January.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 ($300 to $400/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: -80 ($430 to $510/t). Prices decrease this week.:
- Straw: +/-0 ($150 to $250/t). Prices remain steady this week.

- Pasture hay: +/-0 ($300 to $350/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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North Coast NSW

- Favourable curing conditions continue, with mild, partly cloudy weather and temperatures in the low 20s supporting final crop preparation. However, forecast showers next week may delay cutting and baling in areas where paddocks are still drying.
- Hay production is progressing across the region, particularly around Moree and Burren Junction, alongside an active grain harvest. Supply is expected to remain firm into November.
- Last season oaten and failed crop hay is trading in the low $200s per tonne, while early new season oaten hay is priced around $300 per tonne. Wheaten hay is yet to enter the market in any volume.
- Lucerne ranges from $400 to $450 per tonne, with irrigated hay attracting a premium. Straw is selling at around $200 per tonne, and no pasture hay is currently available.
- Pricing in this region appears more volatile because it is based on individual insights from producers who are actively working to restore hay supply.
- Recent rainfall has reduced short-term demand, as buyers take a wait-and-see approach in case follow-up rain boosts paddock feed conditions.
- Enquiries are lower than last month, with soft cattle prices influencing decisions. Many producers are opting to sell stock rather than invest in supplementary hay.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -10 ($290 to $390/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($380 to $500/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 ($150 to $250/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: -10 ($240 to $300t). Prices decrease this week.

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Central West NSW

- A slight chance of showers in the south, but conditions remain dry and mildly warm across most areas, creating favourable conditions for cutting, curing and baling.
- From Saturday, daytime temperatures are set to reach up to 35°C in some parts, which may limit haymaking activity during peak heat hours.
- Local hay producers report strong early demand for cereal hay, with many supplies already committed. Growers are advising clients to place orders early as tight supply is expected across the region.

- Based on grower feedback, lucerne hay is trading at $400 to $450 per tonne, with cutting now underway on river flats.
- Local sources are reporting wheat and oaten hay at $300–$330 per tonne, pasture hay around $350, and oat/barley blends at $300 per tonne> Please note these figures are in addition to official market pricing.
- Straw is yet to come onto the market, but farmers expect it to trade around $150–$170 per tonne once available.
- Several failed crops are being redirected to hay. Local producers warn that some are being baled before fully curing, increasing the risk of spontaneous combustion from slow-drying, unripe material.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -5 ($285 to $385/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($425 to $555/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 ($110 to $170/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 ($270 to $370/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Bega Valley

- Grain harvest is only just getting underway, with early canola and barley receivals reported in northern parts of southern NSW, while most other areas prepare to start. Hay production appears to be in alignment.
- Partly cloudy, mild weather and little chance of rain continues into next week and will provide optimum conditions for groundwork, particularly cutting, drying and baling.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -5 ($375 to $495/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($500 to $640/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 ($220 to $270/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 ($420 to $540/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Goulburn/Murray Valley

- Minimum temperatures fell to minus 1°C across the region earlier this week, prompting ongoing frost assessments. Recent rainfall may have helped limit potential damage.

- Partly cloudy, cool conditions continue to support cutting, curing, and baling. A pause is likely around Friday due to rain, but conditions are expected to improve next week.
- Frost warnings have now cleared, providing more certainty for growers preparing to cut hay.
- Digital Agricultural Services reports 3.3 per cent of Victoria's barley crop has been cut for hay, up from 2.9 per cent last year, indicating increased conversion to manage seasonal risk.

- Some change to pricing this week.
  - Cereal hay: -5 ($285 to $405/t). Prices decrease this week.
  - Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($410 to $570/t). Prices remain steady this week.
  - Straw: +/-0 ($90 to $110/t). Prices remain steady this week.
  - Pasture hay: +/-0 ($240 to $400/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Gippsland

- Partly cloudy days and foggy mornings continue across the west and south. A high chance of rain on Friday may delay haymaking, but conditions are expected to improve next week.
- Minimum temperatures dropped to minus 1°C across parts of Victoria this week, prompting growers to assess potential frost damage. Recent rainfall may have helped protect some crops. In the east, frost warnings have now cleared, offering relief after a tough start marked by failed autumn and spring breaks.
- Rainfall totals of 25 to 50 millimetres across the region have refreshed paddocks and improved dam levels, but may affect curing quality for recently cut pasture.
- Digital Agricultural Services reports that 3.3 per cent of Victoria's barley crop has been cut for hay, up from 2.9 per cent last year, indicating increased supply from cereal conversions.

- Some change to pricing this week.
  - Cereal hay: -5 ($315 to $465). Prices decrease this week.
  - Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($490 to $600/t). Prices remain steady this week.
  - Straw: +/-0 ($115 to $175/t). Prices remain steady this week.
  - Pasture hay: +/-0 ($280 to $440/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Southwest Victoria

- Partly cloudy, mild conditions continue to support cutting, drying, and baling. Rain forecast for Friday may briefly delay activity; however, drier weather is expected into next week.

- Rainfall of 25 to 50 millimetres over the past week has refreshed pastures and improved dam levels, but may affect curing quality for hay already on the ground.
- Temperatures dropped to minus 1°C earlier this week across parts of Victoria. While lentils may be at risk, many hay and grain crops are likely past critical stages. Read more
- Digital Agricultural Services reports that 3.3 per cent of Victoria's barley crop has been cut for hay, up from 2.9 per cent last year, reflecting increased crop conversion across the state.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -5 ($305 to $445/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($420 to $580). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 ($100 to $150/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 ($270 to $380/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Southeast South Australia

- A medium chance of rain heading into the weekend is offering hope for growers aiming to give late-season hay a green finish before cutting.
- Dry soils remain widespread across the region, and recent light rainfall is not expected to significantly alter hay quality or visual appearance.
- Current conditions continue to support cutting, curing and baling, particularly for those already underway.
- Digital Agricultural Services reports that 30,000 hectares (3.6 per cent) of barley and 39,000 hectares (1.9 per cent) of wheat have been cut for hay so far across South Australia.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -70 ($345 to $445/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($480 to $620/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 ($150 to $200/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: -30 ($325 to $405/t). Prices decrease this week.

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Central South Australia

- Favourable weather is helping with clean baling, with dry soils and no rain forecast supporting good curing conditions in most areas. However, recent rainfall (30–50 mm of rain) in some northern and central export zones has downgraded tens of thousands of tonnes, making curing more difficult and reducing export value.

– Hay supply is shifting, with significantly more cereal crops cut for hay this season than in previous years. Digital Agricultural Services reports 30,000 hectares of barley (3.6% of crop area) and 39,000 hectares of wheat (1.9%) have been redirected from grain to hay.

– Cereal and lucerne hay prices are sitting at their lowest levels in over 12 months, reflecting seasonal trends and variable quality from rain-affected areas.

– Wheat and oaten hay is trading between $250 and $300 per tonne, depending on region and feed quality. Supply is mixed, with rain creating inconsistencies in bale presentation.

– Lucerne prices are at $400–$450 per tonne, though volumes remain limited early in the season. Pasture hay is exchanging hands at $300–$350 per tonne according to local reports.

– Carryover straw continues to move, with clean, shedded product selling at $200-$250 per tonne. New-season straw is not yet in market.

– Some change to pricing this week.

– Cereal hay: -5 ($240 to $320/t). Prices decrease this week.

– Lucerne hay: -40 ($390 to $480/t). Prices decrease this week.

– Straw: +25 ($180 to $270/t). Prices increase this week.

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Southwest Western Australia

– Warm, dry spring conditions continue to support steady harvesting following strong winter rainfall. Soil moisture has returned to typical levels for this time of year. Variable weather over the next few days, including showers and wind, may cause brief delays to baling and curing. Drier conditions from Sunday should allow harvest to resume and stay on track into mid-November.

– Growers are cutting pasture hay as some paddocks begin to brown off. Prices are around $70–$75 per 360 kg roll, or $190–$210 per tonne.

– Oaten hay yields are better than expected, with quality significantly improved on last year. Pricing ranges from $150 to $300 per tonne, depending on grade and demand.

– Old-season straw continues to sell at $100–$120 per tonne. Storage space is becoming limited as baling activity increases across the region.

– Significant change to pricing this week.

– Cereal hay: -35 ($150 to $300/t). Prices decrease this week.

– Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($400 to $500/t). Prices remain steady this week.

– Straw: -30 ($100 to $190/t). Prices decrease this week.

– Pasture hay: -100 ($190 to $240/t). Prices decrease this week.

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Northwest Tasmania

- Soil moisture has improved across the region following a dry winter and spring. October rainfall has lifted levels for the first time this year, setting up crops well but delaying cutting in some areas.
- Silage is in full swing, but wet paddocks are limiting access. Some early operations have faced bogging, and timing remains a challenge.
- The region remains busy, with around 45 silage contractors operating between Smithton and Devonport.
- Prices in this region can appear more volatile, as pricing is based on local producer insights, leading to more short-term fluctuations.
- Pasture hay is trading at $200 to $220 per tonne, the lowest in over a year. Lucerne is priced between $300 and $350 per tonne, also at its lowest level since May 2024. Cereal hay, including wheat and oaten, is now back to autumn levels at $250 to $280 per tonne for the fourth consecutive week.
- Softer prices reflect strong grass growth and improved paddock feed following October rain. With more feed on hand, buyer urgency has eased.
- On-farm hay stocks are still low after last season’s shortfall. Limited cutting windows lie ahead, plus weather and paddock access will determine what makes it to market.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 ($200 to $300/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: -25 ($300 to $380/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 ($100 to $140/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: -70 ($200 to $260/t) Prices remain steady this week.

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Acknowledgement
Dairy Australia acknowledges the funding from levy payers and contribution by Commonwealth Government.

5584 | Dec 2023