Dairy Australia

Hay Report

10 July 2026

DELIVERING for DAIRY

Contents

AFIA
Australian Fodder Industry Association

Summary

Driving Prices Up

- Frost risk across Victoria and southeast South Australia may impact crop yields and quality, creating uncertainty around hay supply.
- Strong restocking activity across the Darling Downs, North Coast NSW and Central West NSW is lifting demand for hay as producers rebuild livestock numbers.
- Localised supply constraints in Queensland, where quality hay remains difficult to source, are lifting prices in northern markets.
- Ongoing wet conditions in the Atherton Tablelands are delaying harvest and reducing hay quality, limiting usable supply to the market.

Driving Prices Down

- Widespread rainfall across key southern regions has reduced immediate hay demand, with buyer enquiry dropping as pasture confidence improves.
- Buyers stepping away from existing purchase commitments are increasing available supply and easing prices.
- Lucerne prices have eased across Victoria, New South Wales and southern regions, reflecting lower seasonal demand and solid supply.
- Strong crop outlook across South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania is building expectations of higher production, with growers likely to clear on-farm hay stocks later in the season.
- Steady supply and moderate demand in Tasmania, along with a shift toward silage, is contributing to easier pricing.

National Weather Summary and Outlook

- Australia recorded temperatures 0.96°C above average for January to June, with very warm conditions across southern regions.
- National rainfall for January to June was 30% above average, with widespread inland rainfall driven by tropical systems and slow-moving lows.
- South Australia recorded its second-wettest start to the year on record, while above-average rainfall extended across much of central, northern and southern inland Australia.
- Below-average Jan–June rainfall occurred in Tasmania, north-east New South Wales, south-east Queensland and parts of Western Australia, with rainfall deficiencies persisting.
- Rainfall for July–Sept is likely to be below average across much of south, west and eastern inland, with above-average temperatures and ongoing frost risk expected.

  Download The BOM's ***Weekly Agriculture, Climate and Water Update*** *for more information.*

- Buyers are encouraged to feed test and view fodder before purchase to ensure feed quality.

Regional commentary

Atherton Tablelands

- Ongoing drizzle and limited dry windows have delayed farm operations for much of the season. Many growers have been unable to complete sowing, fertilising, or harvest on time.
- Hay production has been heavily impacted. Large areas are ready to cut but cannot be accessed without damaging paddocks or roads. Delays are pushing hay past optimal timing, resulting in coarser, stock-grade quality and reduced value. Some hay has already been downgraded to mulch due to wet conditions.
- Supply is building in the paddock but remains unavailable to the market, creating delays in getting hay off farm. Quality and timing challenges are likely to carry through the season.
- Many growers have now shifted toward silage as a more reliable option in the wet conditions, providing some income where haymaking has stalled.
- Planting area for grain crops is down on last year due to the late, wet start, which may reduce overall hay and fodder availability later in the season.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Pasture (Rhodes Grass) hay: +/-0 ($200 to $300/t). Prices remain steady 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

- Rainfall since late May has eased soil moisture deficits and improved crop establishment. Crops are growing well under mild conditions but remain behind due to the late seasonal break.
- Unseasonably warm conditions are driving early growth, with crops bouncing out of the ground after a late planting window.
- Recent rain has prompted restocking, with strong competition for stock keeping livestock prices high. This has increased demand for hay and other feed as cattle numbers rebuild, while local supply of quality hay remains tight and difficult to source.
- Mostly clear and sunny conditions are expected in the coming week, with mild overnight temperatures and little to no rainfall. This will help crop growth in the short term, but more rain is needed to maintain soil moisture and keep hay production on track.
- The longer-range outlook suggests rainfall may be below average from July to September, which may limit hay supply if seasonal conditions do not improve.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 ($330 to $430/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($600 to $700/t). Prices remain steady this week.:
- Straw: +/-0 ($150 to $200/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 ($220 to $270/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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North Coast NSW

- Rainfall since late May has eased soil moisture deficits and improved crop establishment. Crops are growing well under warm conditions but remain behind due to the late break.
- Unseasonably warm weather is driving early growth, with crops bouncing out of the ground across the region.
- Continued rainfall has limited field access, though conditions are expected to dry out early next week. This will give growers a window to access paddocks and carry out farm operations.
- Rainfall has triggered restocking activity, pushing cattle prices higher and increasing demand for hay and feed as producers rebuild numbers.
- There is some caution around irrigated production due to declining water storages.
- The longer range outlook suggests rainfall may be below average from July to September, which may limit hay production if follow-up rain does not arrive.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 ($300 to $350/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($400 to $500/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 ($120 to $160/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 ($230 to $310/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Central West NSW

- Rainfall through late May and into recent weeks has improved soil moisture and supported winter crop establishment. Crops are growing well under mild conditions but remain behind due to the late seasonal break.
- Locals report a visible lift in pasture and a return of ground cover after dry conditions.
- Recent rainfall has also supported livestock confidence, with restocking activity lifting and cattle prices strengthening.
- Some clear weather has allowed farmwork to progress. Showers are expected from Saturday, along with slightly cooler temperatures, which will build soil moisture further.
- No frost risk has impacted crops to date, supporting steady development through early winter.
- There is some caution around irrigated production, with declining water storages still a concern.
- The longer-range outlook suggests rainfall may be below average from July to September, which could limit hay production potential if follow-up rain does not arrive.

- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 ($320 to $410/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: -10 ($450 to $580/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: +/-0 ($140 to $200/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 ($230 to $330/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Bega Valley

- Rainfall across 2026 to date has been well above average. Runoff has improved dam levels and eased stock water pressure across the region.
- Recent rainfall has further lifted soil moisture, with crops now running two to three weeks ahead of typical growth stages.
- Daytime temperatures remain mild for this time of year, around 17 to 18 degrees, while overnight temperatures are cold at 0 to 3 degrees. Frost risk remains present under these conditions.
- Little rainfall is forecast in the short term. Mostly sunny conditions will support yield potential and improve field access.
- Lucerne prices have eased this week, a trend seen in the southern hay growing areas. This reflects seasonal conditions, with fewer cows in milk and solid hay supply across the region.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 ($370 to $490/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: -10 ($525 to $665/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: +/-0 ($240 to $290/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 ($280 to $410/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Goulburn/Murray Valley

- April to June rainfall was above average across much of the region. Soil moisture is high, with some paddocks waterlogged and limiting access in the short term.
- Rainfall across 2026 to date has been well above average, with runoff filling dams and easing stock water pressure.
- Conditions are warm for mid-winter, with temperatures running four to eight degrees above average at times. This is pushing crop development along despite wet soils.
- Minimum temperatures remain high, with very few frosts recorded so far. Yield potential has continued to build under these conditions.

- Frost risk is increasing, with temperatures down to -1 degrees forecast. Early crops may be vulnerable heading into August.
- Rain is forecast from Saturday across Shepparton to Cohuna and surrounding districts, which will further build soil moisture and support yield potential, though may delay paddock access.
- If seasonal conditions hold across Victoria and South Australia, strong crop outcomes may see growers turn attention to moving on-farm hay stocks later in the season.
- Lucerne prices have eased this week, like much of the southeast of the country. This reflects seasonal conditions, with fewer cows in milk and solid hay supply across the region.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 ($245 to $365/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: -10 ($430 to $590/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: +/-0 ($115 to $135/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 ($170 to $330/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Gippsland

- Rainfall from April to June was below average across parts of the region. More recent rainfall has improved runoff and helped refill dams, easing stock water pressure.
- Rain is forecast across the region from Saturday. West Gippsland may receive up to 8mm of rain on Sunday, with light showers in the east and broader showers across South Gippsland. These conditions will support pasture and crop growth.
- Minimum temperatures remain high for mid-winter, with very few frosts recorded so far. A frost event down to -1 degrees is forecast, though milder conditions are expected to follow.
- Yield potential across the region has continued to build under these conditions.
- Lucerne prices have eased this week. This reflects seasonal factors, with fewer cows in milk at this time of year and solid hay supply across the region.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 ($275 to $425). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: -10 ($510 to $620/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: +/-0 ($135 to $195/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 ($155 to $325/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Southwest Victoria

- Above average rainfall has led to high soil moisture across the region, a clear shift from 2025. Some paddocks are waterlogged, limiting access and slowing short-term crop growth.
- Crops are at advanced stages, with strong yield potential under current conditions.
- Rainfall through the first half of 2026 has been well above average. Run-off has filled dams and improved on-farm water availability.
- Minimum temperatures remain high for mid-winter, with very few frosts recorded so far. This has allowed crops to progress steadily.
- Frost warnings late in the week bring some risk to flowering crops, particularly if temperatures drop further.
- Rain forecast from Saturday will add to soil moisture and catchments, though it may delay paddock access and field work.
- If seasonal conditions continue and crops meet expectations across Victoria and South Australia, growers are likely to look at moving hay stocks later in the season.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 ($235 to $375/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: -10 ($435 to $595). Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: +/-0 ($120 to $170/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 ($175 to $255/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Southeast South Australia

- Above average rainfall has built strong soil moisture across the region. Some paddocks are waterlogged, limiting access and slowing short-term crop development.
- Crops are at advanced growth stages, with solid yield potential under current conditions.
- Rainfall in 2026 has been well above recent years, with full profiles and dams filled across much of the district.
- Minimum temperatures have remained high for mid-winter. Frost activity has been limited until now, allowing crops to progress without early damage.
- Recent frost events around Mt Gambier, with temperatures down to 0 degrees, may pose a risk to flowering crops.
- Rain forecast from the weekend, along with milder nights, will add to soil moisture but may delay field work due to access issues.
- High livestock prices are seeing producers compete for stock to make use of available feed, influencing hay use on farm.
- Hay and straw markets remain quiet. If crop yields meet expectations across SA and Victoria, growers are likely to look at moving on-farm hay stocks later in the season.

- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 ($225 to $305/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($400 to $540/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 ($125 to $175/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 ($190 to $260/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Central South Australia

- Above average rainfall has led to strong soil moisture across most regions. Some paddocks are waterlogged, limiting access and slowing short-term crop growth.
- Crops are well advanced, with mild conditions and very few frosts so far this season. Yield potential is building under these conditions.
- Rainfall to date has been well above recent years, with dams filling and a strong start to the season reported across the region.
- Warmer minimum temperatures and delayed frost activity are reducing early risk. Frost risk remains possible later in the season but is not a current issue.
- Another rainfall event is forecast from the weekend, which will maintain moisture but may extend access challenges in wetter paddocks.
- High livestock prices are driving competition for stock, as producers look to make use of available feed. This may reduce hay carryover in some areas.
- Hay and straw movement remain slow, with limited new sales and growers holding firm on price. Some existing fodder is being delivered into the market.
- Strong crop outlook in SA and Victoria may shift focus toward clearing on-farm stocks later in the season if production meets expectations.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 ($245 to $305/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($430 to $550/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 ($160 to $250/t). Prices remain steady this week

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Southwest Western Australia

- Winter crops across the wheatbelt are progressing well. This points to steady hay supply into the southwest as fodder moves through WA markets.
- Rainfall from April to June has been below average across parts of the southwest and nearby grain regions. Soil moisture is limited, and follow-up rain is needed for hay yield potential.

- Drier conditions are expected into next week, with only light showers forecast. This allows fertiliser spreading and field work to continue but may slow pasture growth without rain.
- Growers report a stop-start season with patchy rainfall. These conditions have driven higher pest levels, particularly slugs and bugs, adding to management workload.
- Pasture growth is tracking well, with rye and clover around 6 inches high in the Bunbury area. This is a positive sign for pasture hay production if conditions hold.
- Hay demand remains slow, with limited buying activity.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 ($190 to $280/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($590 to $790/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 ($110 to $170/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 ($220 to $270/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Northwest Tasmania

- Good pasture and crop growth continues across the region, driven by steady rainfall and improving soil moisture profiles. Inland areas are expecting up to 25mm of rain daily from Saturday, which will maintain strong feed conditions.
- Cold overnight temperatures of 1 to 2C are slowing growth rates slightly, but overall conditions remain favourable for biomass production.
- There has been a lift in hay enquiry this week, though demand is still moderate as many dairy cows are not in milk at this time of year.
- Conditions are well suited to silage production, with growers reporting a likely shift back into silage given the mix of rainfall and workable weather windows.
- Hay supply is steady, with presold winter feed continuing to move into major dairies. This is contributing to some easing in hay prices.
- Straw demand remains slow, with little change in market activity from last week.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -70 ($160 to $200/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: -35 ($290 to $370/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: -20 ($90 to $130/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 ($260 to $320/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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