Dairy Australia

Hay Report

11 September 2026

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AFIA
Australian Fodder Industry Association

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

1. Summary

1.1. Driving Prices Up

- Cereal hay on the Darling Downs rose sharply this week, with local feedlot demand and smaller hay volumes possibly increasing competition for available supply. We will monitor this outlier.
- Dry soil moisture conditions and below-average September rainfall forecasts across most hay-growing regions, particularly in NSW, southern QLD and Southwest WA, may reduce pasture growth and spring fodder yields.
- Wet paddocks, wind damage and crop rot in the Goulburn-Murray Valley may reduce the volume of quality oaten hay and vetch entering the market.
- Cattle restocking across Victoria could add to fodder demand later in spring and summer if pasture growth slows.

1.2. Driving Prices Down

- Early cutting across southern Australia may bring new-season hay to market sooner, increasing supply and prompting sellers to discount carryover hay to free shed space.
- Strong crop and pasture growth in southeast and central South Australia points to good fodder yields, while immediate hay buying remains low where pasture feed is plentiful.
- Larger-than-anticipated hay yields in Gippsland may lead to heavy discounting of lower-quality cereal hay. Older uncovered hay is also being discounted to clear stock.

1.3. National Weather Summary and Outlook

- September rainfall is likely to be below average for large parts of the country, including south-western Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, north-east Tasmania, southern and central eastern Queensland.
- October to December rainfall is likely to be below average for Tasmania, Victoria, southern New South Wales and far north Queensland. There is a chance of exceeding average rainfall for large parts of Western Australia, South Australia, northern New South Wales and into Queensland.
- From October to December, most of Australia is likely to be warmer than normal, with more than an 80% chance of above-average temperatures. Southern Australia is likely to experience very warm overnight temperatures, unusual for this time of year.
- Overall Australia's total water storage is currently around 71%. Storages across the Murray–Darling Basin are currently 67% full.

  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.

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2. Regional commentary

2.1. Atherton Tablelands

- A drier outlook from October to December may help growers dry out paddocks after a wet winter that has limited hay plantings and reduced haymaking success.
- Wet conditions have favoured mulch, haylage and silage production, but consistently dry weather is still needed for conventional hay.
- Light daily showers around Mareeba are maintaining humidity and will make grass drying difficult. Atherton is expected to remain cooler, cloudier and slightly wetter.
- A dry September would make water availability and soil moisture key factors in pasture growth and fodder planning.
- High fuel costs continue to add to production and freight costs.
- 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.

2.2. Darling Downs

- Some western Downs growers are baling barley and wheat hay for local feedlots at around $450/t, with smaller hay volumes attracting more value than forward-sold grain.
- Cereal hay prices have risen by around $120/t this week, reaching their highest level in a year. The increase may prove short-lived, but prices will be watched closely as more crops are harvested.
- Below-average rainfall is forecast for southern and central eastern Queensland in September, while October to December rainfall is more likely to be above average across northern New South Wales and Queensland.
- Low stored soil moisture and below-average winter rainfall have reduced grain yield potential across much of Queensland. This may limit cereal hay supply where crops do not meet grain specifications.
- Water availability remains a key concern for the Darling Downs and other southern Queensland irrigation areas. Continued dry conditions could restrict summer planting and increase competition for available irrigation water.
- Significant change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +120 ($350 to $550/t). Prices increase 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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2.3. North Coast NSW

- Fine weather around Lismore has allowed cutting to begin after a strong season. Silage and haylage quality and yields are expected to be excellent.
- Wet conditions have reduced the region's conventional hay output, with many growers favouring silage and haylage. Some farms are prioritising enough pasture and conserved fodder for their own needs.
- Local hay is selling, although demand remains subdued while pasture feed remains available.
- Valley flats are drying quickly in some districts, while natural springs are keeping parts of the hill country wet and delaying haymaking.
- Above-average rainfall is forecast from October to December across northern New South Wales. Rain around Kyogle and inland northern districts would be welcome after a dry winter, helping pasture recovery and improving the outlook for on-farm fodder production.
- 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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2.4. Central West NSW

- Grain growers in the region expect harvest to begin two weeks earlier than usual. Timing will depend on spring conditions, with a cool finish likely to slow crop maturity and a hot finish potentially bringing harvest forward further.
- Fodder crops are likely to follow a similar seasonal pattern. Earlier curing and cutting may be possible where growers have suitable crops and enough moisture to carry them through spring.
- September rainfall is likely to be below average, with no meaningful rainfall forecast around Parkes, Forbes and nearby districts.
- From October to December, above-average temperatures are likely, with more than an 80% chance of warmer-than-normal conditions. With the district already dry, pasture growth and fodder crop prospects could decline without useful rainfall.
- Demand for dry feed may increase as producers prepare for warmer months and assess feed reserves. This could draw surplus fodder from southern production areas into the Central West.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -10 ($285 to $375/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($410 to $540/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: -5 ($135 to $195/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Pasture hay: -5 ($210 to $310/t). Prices decrease this week.

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2.5. Bega Valley

- The season is tracking ahead of normal in the far western parts of the region, reflecting the warm, dry conditions seen across southern New South Wales. Grain growers expect headers could roll a fortnight earlier than usual, although a cooler finish and retained soil moisture may slow maturity.
- Fodder crops are likely to follow a similar pattern. Earlier-than-usual cutting may be possible where crops have held on, but dry conditions will limit yield potential and leave little room for a late-season recovery.
- Root-zone soil moisture is likely to remain below average across much of eastern Australia during October and November. This is a concern for pasture growth and spring fodder crops, particularly in already dry areas of the valley.
- September rainfall is likely to be below average. Demand for dry feed may increase as producers review feed reserves ahead of warmer conditions. Fodder from stronger southern growing areas may be sought where freight and price allow.
- Bemboka is forecast to reach 28°C on Monday, followed by around 5mm of rainfall on Tuesday. Cobargo further north has a similar outlook. These light falls may freshen paddocks briefly, but they are unlikely to replenish depleted soil moisture or materially change fodder prospects.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 ($345 to $465/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($485 to $625/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: -5 ($235 to $285/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Pasture hay: -5 ($260 to $390/t). Prices decrease this week.

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2.6. Goulburn/Murray Valley

- The season is running ahead of normal, with cereal harvest in northern Victoria potentially starting one to two weeks early if warm, dry weather continues. Hay and silage cutting is also beginning, with mostly sunny conditions and temperatures in the mid-20s creating a useful drying window around Elmore, Shepparton and Echuca.
- Strong winds last weekend flattened some oaten crops. Wet ground and declining crop quality have also led some growers to cut crops for silage rather than wait for hay. This may reduce the volume of well-made oaten hay available later in the season.
- Vetch is among the first crops being cut. Dairy farmers are actively looking at standing vetch crops for hay or silage, but wet paddocks have left some crops decimated, or with rot. Buyers will need to check crops closely for mould, spoilage and feed-quality risks before purchase. Some standing vetch crops in northern Victoria have reportedly sold for around $220 per tonne on a dry-matter basis.

- A mild winter and early spring feed have prompted cattle restocking, with liveweight prices rising sharply in recent weeks. If the expected drier, warmer conditions limit pasture growth later in spring, producers may seek additional fodder.
- Below-average root-zone soil moisture is likely across much of eastern Australia through October and November. With only light falls forecast in Victoria, moisture reserves will be important for pasture growth, hay yields and the timing of further cuts.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 ($210 to $330/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($390 to $550/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: -5 ($105 to $125/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Pasture hay: -5 ($160 to $320/t). Prices decrease this week.

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2.7. Gippsland

- Scant rainfall through the year has left parts of east Gippsland dry. Further rainfall will be important to maintain pasture growth and spring fodder yield potential.
- Conditions vary across the region. Warragul and Yarram are forecast to receive light showers after temperatures reach about 24°C this weekend. Bairnsdale is expected to reach 26°C, with only very light showers forecast next week. These falls are unlikely to materially improve soil moisture in eastern areas.
- If rainfall remains limited, pasture growth and spring fodder yield may come under pressure. This could increase the need for conserved feed later in spring and into summer.
- A mild winter and early spring pasture growth have encouraged cattle restocking across Victoria. Higher cattle numbers may add to fodder demand if pasture growth slows under drier conditions.
- Large spring hay crops and limited storage space may see lower-quality cereal hay discounted as new-season hay becomes available.
- Older uncovered hay from last spring is attracting limited buyer interest, with some sellers reducing prices to clear stock. Buyers should assess weather exposure and feed quality before purchasing.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 ($240 to $390). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($470 to $580/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 ($130 to $190/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 ($150 to $320/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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2.8. Southwest Victoria

- Mild winter conditions and above-average temperatures have pushed crops and pastures ahead of their usual growth stage. In the Wimmera and nearby south-east South Australia, grain harvest and fodder cutting could begin up to two weeks earlier than normal if warm, dry conditions continue.
- Light rainfall is forecast across the region, but falls are unlikely to materially lift soil moisture, with below-average root-zone soil moisture likely across the region during October and November.
- Hamilton is forecast to reach 28°C on Monday before light showers develop on Tuesday, while coastal areas like Heywood are expected to remain cooler and receive more rainfall.
- Earlier fodder harvest may bring new-season hay onto the market sooner. However, continued warm and dry conditions could reduce later-cut yield and place pressure on pasture growth.
- A mild winter and early spring pasture growth have seen a surge in cattle restocking across Victoria, lifting cattle prices. These higher livestock numbers may increase demand for conserved fodder later in spring and through summer if pasture growth is limited by predicted lack of rainfall.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 ($200 to $340/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($380 to $540). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 ($115 to $165/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 ($170 to $250/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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2.9. Southeast South Australia

- Ccrops and pastures are in prime condition following above-average rainfall through the first eight months of the year. However, some districts are bordering on too wet. Fodder crops are expected to have good yield potential this year.
- Grain harvest is expected to start earlier than usual, with canola likely from the third week of November. Fodder cutting may also begin earlier, bringing new-season hay to market sooner.
- September rainfall is likely to sit below average, although the October to December outlook gives South Australia a chance of above-average rainfall. Light showers are forecast around Naracoorte, Robe and nearby districts from Sunday. Further rainfall will be important for late spring hay yield and pasture feed.
- Good pasture feed should limit immediate hay buying. If spring rain does not arrive, demand may build later as pasture growth slows.
- Mouse activity is high in several South Australian cropping zones. Growers should check cereal and fodder paddocks regularly, particularly as crops move through key spring growth stages.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 ($210 to $290/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($350 to $510/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 ($125 to $175/t). Prices remain steady this week.

- Pasture hay: +/-0 ($180 to $250/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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2.10. Central South Australia

- Above-average rainfall through the first eight months of the year has delivered strong pasture and crop growth. After two dry years, fodder yield potential is looking promising across the region, although some paddocks are bordering on too wet.
- Crops are ahead of their usual development. Grain harvest is expected to begin in the third week of November, with canola likely first. Earlier cutting may also bring new-season fodder to market sooner than usual.
- The first oaten hay crops around Minlaton are ready for cutting, with new-season hay expected to enter the market shortly. This could prompt sellers with carryover hay from last season to reduce prices to clear shed space.
- September rainfall is likely to be below average, with mild, dry conditions forecast to continue into next week. The October to December outlook gives much of South Australia a chance of above-average rainfall. Timely falls will remain important for later-cut hay yields and pasture feed.
- Mouse activity is high across the Mid North, Lower Yorke, Eyre and SA-Victoria Mallee zones. Growers should check cereal and fodder paddocks regularly and act early to limit crop and hay yield losses.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 ($220 to $280/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($410 to $530/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 ($140 to $230/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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2.11. Southwest Western Australia

- Mild winter temperatures and dry conditions have moved crops ahead of schedule. Early sown canola may begin coming off in early October, while the broader grain harvest remains on track for early November. Fodder crops are also developing early.
- August rainfall improved prospects for early-sown crops, but later-sown crops need more rainfall. In drier districts, early heading is likely to limit hay yields to below average.
- Light falls, including around 5mm forecast for Manjimup on Saturday and less around Katanning, are unlikely to materially improve crop moisture. Below-average root-zone soil moisture is likely across parts of western Australia during October and November.
- September is likely to be drier than average across parts of Southwest Western Australia. The October to December outlook gives much of the state a chance of above-average rainfall, but timely spring rain is needed to protect fodder yield and retain pasture feed.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 ($190 to $280/t). Prices remain steady this week.

- Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($540 to $740/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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2.12. Northwest Tasmania

- A very mild winter has moved crops and pastures ahead of their usual growth stage. Silage making is expected to begin earlier than normal, and fodder crops may also be ready sooner if spring turns warm and dry.
- It is too early to gauge the main grain and fodder harvest timing. Some canola may be ready before Christmas if dry conditions continue, ahead of the usual January and February harvest period. Earlier fodder production could bring new-season hay to market sooner.
- September rainfall is likely to be below average across northern reaches. Mostly sunny conditions before Sunday will favour crop growth and fieldwork around Smithton, with showers expected to provide a light refresh. Waratah is forecast to receive more rainfall, with up to 15mm of rain expected on Tuesday.
- Hay prices remain unchanged. Some dairies are purchasing silage for fresh cows, while straw continues to move to fill feed gaps before spring pasture growth. New-season hay enquiries have begun as dairy farmers prepare for a warm, dry spring.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 ($160 to $200/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($290 to $370/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 ($100 to $120/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 ($240 to $260/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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