

Hay Report

12 December 2025

DELIVERING
for DAIRY

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Summary

Driving Prices Up

- As baling wraps up in most regions, early demand is building for high-quality protein hay, particularly clean cereal and vetch.
- Some oaten hay is returning strong protein test results, drawing unexpected buyer interest. Stand-out lines are moving quickly, though quality remains paddock dependent.
- Straw prices have lifted in New South Wales, up approximately \$5 per tonne ex-farm. Limited new-season volumes and improving demand are behind the movement.
- Southwest WA reports a significant increase in Lucerne prices due to scarcity, reliance on irrigation for cultivation, and an increasingly horse-only market.

Driving Prices Down

- Lucerne hay prices have eased in South Australia, where storm-damaged first cuts and excess lower-grade material have weakened market demand. While chaff mills are chasing clean lines, the bulk of affected hay is selling below expectations.
- Many buyers remain cautious, holding off large orders until hay is baled, tested and stored. Interest is firm but not rushed.
- Low-grade hay and silage are keeping prices steady, with enough supply across many regions.
- Straw remains the lowest-cost fodder despite price rises in NSW.

Local News

- **National weather summary and outlook**
 - National rainfall year-to-date was 4% above average, driven by wetter conditions across the north and east. Drier conditions persist inland through WA, SA and NSW.
 - The national mean temperature for the year to date is 1.25 °C above average, making 2025 one of the warmest years on record.
 - Summer forecasts point to below-average rainfall across southern and inland regions of the country, including WA, SA, Victoria, inland QLD and northwest Tasmania.
 - Hot conditions will persist through summer, with elevated chances of above-average daytime and night-time temperatures through to March.
- October and November rainfall reduced seasonal deficits in Tasmania and Victoria, but southern New South Wales remains dry.
- 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

- Intermittent showers returned across the Tablelands this week, disrupting haymaking efforts. Some paddocks were cut, but rainfall occurred before bales could be placed into sheds, affecting quality. This is expected to impact buyer interest in the coming weeks.
- Soils remain mostly average to above average in moisture. However, consistent showers are reducing opportunity windows for cutting and curing hay, particularly with steamy conditions persisting across the region.
- Supply remains patchy, and quality is mixed. While there is some movement, particularly driven by improved cattle prices, buyers are becoming more selective, especially for fodder suited to conditioning livestock.
- The outlook for December to February shows a 60 to 70 per cent chance of above-average rainfall in far north Queensland, which may prolong cutting delays and continue to challenge hay quality and consistency into early summer.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Pasture (Rhodes Grass) hay: +/-0 (\$220 to \$360/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

- Soil moisture remains average to above average after a season of steady rainfall. These conditions supported strong winter crop growth and have provided a good base for early summer plantings.
- Delays caused by spring storms have eased, and the winter grain harvest is now close to complete across most areas. Some growers are turning their focus to summer cropping opportunities, using available soil moisture while it lasts.
- Haymaking in the region is also finished. Growers and contractors report that all hay has been cut and moved, with nothing held in sheds. As is typical throughout Queensland and New South Wales, most hay is grown under contract and not stored long-term.
- With local work done, many contractors are already heading south to support hay production in the Wimmera. Victorian growers are taking advantage of recent dry spells and using interstate crews to assist with cutting and baling.
- The Bureau of Meteorology's outlook for December to February shows an equal chance of above- or below-average rainfall. This uncertainty is leading to cautious forward planning among growers.
- Recent updates from the BOM suggest the wheat crop could be the third-largest on record, thanks to timely spring rain. While this has reduced near-term demand for cereal hay, upcoming hot weather conditions may shift feed requirements over summer.

- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$300 to \$400/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$450 to \$600/t). Prices remain steady this week.:
- Straw: +/-0 (\$150 to \$200/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$250 to \$300/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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North Coast NSW

- Warm and humid conditions persisted this week, with daily showers helping to maintain soil moisture at average to above-average levels. This continues to support solid pasture growth and is keeping short-term fodder demand subdued.
- Most baling is now complete across the region. However, weather interruptions over recent months are likely to have affected the quality of new-season yields. Some growers are reporting mixed results as they assess the impact of patchy rain around cutting windows.
- Producers are hoping for more consistent dry spells to finalise paddock work and prepare for the months ahead. Recent rainfall has been beneficial, but too much at the wrong time has delayed operations.
- Outlooks in both Lismore and further inland at Tenterfield point to occasional storms and showers continuing into next week. While the conditions are manageable, they will limit extended dry periods needed for new hay production in early summer.
- There has been no indication that southern buyers, facing a continued tight supply of high-grade fodder, are sourcing material from the North Coast, as earlier reports suggested.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$290 to \$390/t). Prices remain steady 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: +/-0 (\$240 to \$300/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Central West NSW

- Hay production has wrapped up across the Central West, with growers reporting a strong season for both cereal hay and straw. Yields were high, and the quality has generally held up well despite earlier challenges.

- Most attention has now shifted to supporting other regions. Some local growers are assisting east in Glen Innes with green cereal hay baling, as conditions allow. There are no new plantings underway, with winter crop sowing expected to commence around May.
- Recent rainfall has been patchy. A 5 millimetre shower moved through parts of the region this week, but broader rainfall has favoured western areas. Despite ongoing rainfall deficiencies and declining soil moisture, local growers remain satisfied with how the season finished.
- Market activity remains quiet, though producers suspect demand is beginning to rebuild.
- Cereal hay prices fell \$10 this week, while straw rose \$5 and pasture hay dropped \$10. These changes reflect cooler buyer interest combined with high supply levels still moving through the market. Pasture hay remains at its lowest point since November 2024.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -10 (\$255 to \$355/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$425 to \$555/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +5 (\$95 to \$155/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: -10 (\$210 to \$310/t). Prices decrease this week.

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Bega Valley

- Wet conditions continue to influence the Bega Valley, with parts of the broader southeast coast recording some of the highest rainfall on record. While immediate flooding risks have eased, inconsistent soil moisture and variability in growing conditions are creating uncertainty for summer crops.
- Outlooks from December to February show no clear guidance, with rainfall equally likely to be above or below average. This low confidence in weather patterns is impacting grower decisions and forward planning.
- Harvest operations remain limited, with cooler, damp weather expected to continue into next week. These conditions are reducing drying windows and slowing any late-season fodder activity.
- Cereal hay prices fell \$10 this week, while straw rose \$5 and pasture hay dropped \$10. Movements in pricing reflect mixed buyer interest combined with patchy harvest conditions. Limited new supply, tighter market activity, and ongoing freight costs also continue to influence these values.
- The Bega Valley continues to hold the highest prices nationally for cereal, straw, and pasture hay.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -10 (\$345 to \$465/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$500 to \$640/t). Prices remain steady this week.

- Straw: +5 (\$205 to \$255/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: -10 (\$320 to \$440/t). Prices decrease this week.

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Goulburn/Murray Valley

- Oaten hay crops near Kerang have performed exceptionally well this season. Benefiting from early autumn rain, some blocks have yielded more than 8 tonnes per hectare while still meeting export-grade standards. Quality tests show 10 per cent protein, high energy, and strong sugar levels.
- Further west near Donald, crops that missed early moisture have still returned just under 5 tonnes per hectare, also achieving top export specs. Dry conditions in August and September appear to have helped concentrate sugars in the stems and leaves.
- Harvest timing has been a challenge due to ongoing wet weather. Growers across the region report cutting delays and slow curing as light rainfall and mild temperatures continue. Conditions remain unsettled with more scattered falls expected later in the week, including the chance of up to 10 mm in parts of central Victoria by Friday.
- Near Glenhope, a local grower described the stop-start nature of this year's hay season. Some paddocks were cut just before rain events, leaving hay exposed for longer than planned. While quality has mostly held, inconsistent curing has lengthened the baling timeline.
- Ryegrass-clover hay mixes are being stored for both on-farm use and future sale. Some producers plan to hold onto surplus hay for now, seeing value in storage as paddocks continue to grow feed.
- There is still concern about water supply in parts of the region. Dam levels are not fully replenished everywhere, even though ground covers have improved.
- In Serpentine and surrounding districts, growers are working between weather events to keep grain and hay harvests moving. Further south, around Lancefield, consistent wet conditions have stalled hay making altogether. Crops that remain unbaled after five weeks on the ground are beginning to run to seed or drop quality.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -10 (\$260 to \$380/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$410 to \$570/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$80 to \$100/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: -10 (\$215 to \$375/t). Prices decrease this week.

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Gippsland

- Gippsland has received above-average rainfall this spring, with the Latrobe Valley recording 296.8 mm, or 132 per cent of its seasonal average. These conditions have lifted dam levels and helped paddocks recover after a very dry winter and autumn.
- In central Gippsland, places like Sale recorded just 3 mm of rainfall in April. By contrast, October and November combined brought 188.4 mm of rainfall. Soil moisture is now mostly above average across the region.
- Growers are working through a heavy silage season. However, wet ground conditions are making it difficult to move machinery and maintain fodder quality
- A Denison grower noted more than 140 mm of November rain, describing a strong spring finish after some of the driest winter conditions seen locally in years.
- Most producers are hoping for several fine days to bring in the rest of the silage. Forecasts suggest showers will continue later this week, limiting harvesting.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -10 (\$290 to \$440). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$490 to \$600/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$105 to \$165/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: -10 (\$245 to \$405/t). Prices decrease this week.

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Southwest Victoria

- Spring rainfall has lifted spirits across the southwest after two dry years. Portland and Warrnambool recorded 126 per cent and 127 per cent of their spring rainfall averages, respectively, with totals of 258.3 mm and 248 mm of rain across September to November.
- Coastal soils are now sitting at above-average moisture levels, according to the Bureau of Meteorology. However, soils elsewhere across the zone remain patchy, averaging or below average.
- Despite these improvements, growers across the region are still playing a waiting game. Crops are not yet mature enough to harvest, and many paddocks cut four weeks ago remain unbaled due to cool, damp conditions.
- Hot temperatures across parts of southeast Australia have not extended into the Western Districts. A Lake Bolac agronomist reports mild daytime conditions, with just one 30-degree day over the past week. Intermittent showers brought another 6 to 8 mm of rain over the weekend.
- Harvest activity is still at least a week away for most. Low overnight temperatures and slow drying time continue to delay any significant progress.
- While frustrating, growers are holding out hope that the wet spring finish will result in stronger yields once cutting and baling begin. The improved conditions in the past month have changed the outlook from poor to potentially promising.

- Despite the yield optimism, there is concern around the marketing prospects for this season's hay. Demand remains uncertain, and growers suggest some hay may not meet premium-grade standards.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$280 to \$420/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$420 to \$580). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$90 to \$140/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: -10 (\$245 to \$355/t). Prices decrease this week.

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Southeast South Australia

- November rainfall was unusually high across the region, with totals well above long-term averages. Keith recorded 48 mm of rain, Millicent reached 63 mm, and Mount Gambier received 85 mm; placing all three locations in the top 15 per cent of historical records for the month.
- These wet conditions have damaged much of the first-cut lucerne hay. Curing was disrupted, making it difficult to bale clean, high-quality fodder.
- Growers remain in a holding pattern, with more light rain expected later this week. While paddocks are holding ground cover, consistent dry weather is still needed to complete harvest.
- Chaff mills in South Australia are actively sourcing high-grade lucerne hay to meet short-term demand. Poor-quality early cuts have limited supply, prompting competition for better product.
- Smaller square bales are becoming more common as lucerne growers shift focus toward niche, high-value markets nearer to Adelaide. This is reducing availability of larger bale formats typically sought after by dairy and beef producers.
- The recent Saudi ban on importing lucerne seed has impacted SA seed growers by cutting off their primary export market. While some stands may be redirected toward hay production, densities are low, so any increase in overall production is expected to be minor.
- Cereal hay: -30 (\$310 to \$410/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: -30 (\$450 to \$590/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$145 to \$195/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: -25 (\$300 to \$380/t). Prices decrease this week.

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Central South Australia

- Wet conditions continue to stall harvest efforts across the region. More rainfall is forecast later this week, adding to the delays already caused by cooler-than-average temperatures.
- A Mallala grower reported that the 8 mm of rain that fell last Friday has them about 40 per cent through harvest. He noted that while a wetter-than-average spring had been forecast, the timing of the rainfall has worked against growers. “There are crops that would have benefited if it had arrived earlier. But really, it was no benefit and for us, it ruined the hay,” he said.
- Daytime temperatures during November were about 3 degrees below normal, contributing to slow, difficult harvest conditions.
- Near Whyte Yarcowie, one grower described the season as mixed. Hay was cut between rain events, which affected visual quality. While yields were fair, feed value is expected to be only average, with washed-out hay likely to test lower than hoped.
- Baling has been completed, and sheds are full. Early sales have included some oaten hay to exporters. With more hay trucks on the road recently, there is some hope that demand may begin to lift in coming weeks. Feed testing is underway, with results expected by February.
- Bunge has reported total grain deliveries in South Australia at more than 1.54 million tonnes so far this season. Of that, 674,863 tonnes were delivered in the past week, showing an uplift in harvest activity despite weather interruptions.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$200 to \$300/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$390 to \$480/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$140 to \$200/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Southwest Western Australia

- Harvest is progressing steadily across the region, with varied results depending on location. Yields have been favourable in some areas. Overall grain production is still expected to be close to the record levels seen in 2022.
- Soil moisture has decreased in recent weeks following a drier period, helping harvest continue without major interruptions. From August to November, rainfall ranged from below average in the southeast to above average in the north. This improved soil moisture and eased earlier rainfall deficiencies.
- CBH reported that growers delivered 3.9 million tonnes over the past week, bringing total receivals to more than 15.2 million tonnes across Western Australia.
- A grower near Wannamal said there is plenty of hay around. Most of it is average quality, with better lines coming from east of the Wheatbelt where storms had less impact. Thunderstorms during cutting affected hay quality in some other parts of the region.
- Local demand remains soft, and the equine market is currently driving higher prices.

- The same grower reported that grain harvest is nearly complete. Plans are underway to seed teff grass, which is expected to begin in several weeks. This timing is typical for the area, where planting usually falls between April and May.
- Lucerne hay is limited in Western Australia due to its high water demand. Most growers do not irrigate, as setup costs remain a barrier. Some producers are making irrigated pasture hay or baling Rhodes grass where possible.
- There is potential for increased demand from the dairy sector. Feedback from local dairy operators is expected to give a clearer picture of buying activity over summer.
- Significant change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +20 (\$175 to \$315/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +190 (\$590 to \$790/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$100 to \$190/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +45 (\$225 to \$275/t). Prices increase this week.

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Northwest Tasmania

- Growers across the northwest are continuing to work through a significant harvest backlog after months of wet, cold conditions. The poor weather from October has left many producers behind schedule and frustrated, but efforts remain focused on salvaging what can be cut and baled.
- Much of the hay now being brought in is expected to be average quality, with growers hoping for improved curing conditions in the weeks ahead.
- According to the Bureau of Meteorology, Tasmania has received slightly below-average rainfall for the year to date. This marks a shift after widespread spring rainfall helped ease longer-term deficiencies in most areas.
- In the northwest, recent rainfall has raised soil moisture levels above average. While this supports remaining pasture growth, it has also kept paddocks heavy, slowing machinery access and hay removal.
- The seasonal outlook indicates a drier trend from December through to February. If this eventuates, it could offer growers the break in weather needed to finish baling and reduce further quality losses.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$200 to \$300/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$300 to \$380/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$100 to \$140/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$200 to \$260/t) Prices remain steady this week.

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