

Hay Report

16 October 2026



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1. Summary

1.1. Driving Prices Up

- Failed cereal crops and low pasture feed in northern NSW and southeast Qld are keeping demand strong. Fresh northern cereal hay is being advertised at higher values, though buyer uptake will determine whether these prices hold.
- Wet conditions in parts of Victoria are delaying haymaking and raising risks of waterlogging, lodging and weather damage. This may reduce the volume of good-quality hay available from large crops.
- Higher fuel, fertiliser and crop-protection costs are increasing costs of production, particularly where hay quality or export demand is weaker.
- Dryland oat failures, pest damage and ongoing rainfall deficiencies in Tasmania may reduce new-season fodder supply. Enquiries from dry grazing areas are also increasing.

1.2. Driving Prices Down

- New-season cereal hay is entering the market across northern and central New South Wales, with harvest activity moving south. Increasing supply may give buyers more choice over coming weeks.
- Strong spring growth and large hay crops across the Goulburn-Murray Valley, southwest Victoria and South Australia are improving the supply outlook, despite quality risks in wetter paddocks.
- Good pasture growth is reducing immediate hay buying in some southern livestock areas. Many growers also hold carryover hay from last season, adding to available feed reserves.
- Lower export hay values and weak cereal prices are reducing returns for hay growers, while recent cereal and lucerne price falls across several southern regions reflect a quieter market.

1.3. National Weather Summary and Outlook

- Recent rainfall across Victoria, southeastern SA, southern and inland NSW, and northern Tasmania has improved crop and pasture prospects. Some eastern Victorian districts received more than 100mm of rain, creating waterlogging and hay quality risks.
- Serious to severe rainfall deficiencies remain across southwest WA, parts of Tasmania, small areas of southern Victoria, and from southeastern Queensland into northeastern NSW. Forecast rainfall in the east may provide short-term relief but is unlikely to rebuild soil moisture reserves.
- From November to January, above-average rainfall is likely across much of central and southern WA, western and northern SA, inland southern Queensland and northern NSW. This could improve pasture and late fodder growth but may disrupt haymaking where frequent falls continue.

Below-average rainfall is likely for most of Tasmania and parts of Victoria. Dry conditions may impact pasture, hay and silage yields in affected areas, particularly where soil moisture and water allocations remain low.

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.

2. Regional commentary

2.1. Atherton Tablelands

- A run of dry days last week let Atherton growers catch up on haymaking after a wet season. Daily showers are now increasing, with heavier rainfall forecast from Sunday, likely interrupting harvest activity again.
- In nearby Mareeba, warmer conditions and lighter falls are forecast, but rainfall may still slow cutting and drying. Growers are concerned humid, unsettled conditions will reduce hay quality and limit opportunities to make dry hay.
- The approaching wet period is adding to seasonal concern as northern Australia moves into its more humid, storm-prone months.
- Average-quality new-season hay is being baled and moving to horse customers in Townsville, as well as buyers in Gatton and Brisbane. Reported values are around \$250 to \$260 per tonne.
- Significant change to pricing this week.
- Pasture (Rhodes Grass) hay: -35 (\$240 to \$280/t). Prices decrease 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

- Drought-affected cereal crops in the north have been cut for hay and are now coming onto the market. Recently baled barley and oaten hay on the Darling Downs is advertised at up to \$540 per tonne, with lower asking prices reported further south.
- Demand for fresh northern cereal hay will determine whether these higher advertised values hold as more new-season supply becomes available. Strong fodder values are also encouraging some grain growers to bale stubble for straw.
- Rainfall and cloudy conditions are slowing grain harvest across the Western Downs. This may delay access to stubbles for baling and hold back some new-season straw supply.
- Up to 50mm of rainfall is forecast across southern Queensland and northern NSW over the coming eight days. Daily rain from Toowoomba to inland Tara may interrupt growers still cutting failed cereal crops for hay and straw.
- Rainfall deficiencies remain a concern across south-east Queensland. The forecast falls may provide short-term relief, but growers using dam or recycled water continue to report concerns about water quality and available supply.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -5 (\$350 to \$540/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$600 to \$700/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +75 (\$200 to \$300/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: +105 (\$300 to \$400/t). Prices increase this week.

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2.3. North Coast NSW

- Daily rainfall is forecast along the coast, with Murwillumbah and Lismore expecting falls of up to 10mm of rain through next week. These conditions are likely to limit haymaking windows and slow drying where hay is ready to bale.
- Inland areas remain much drier. Recent falls were patchy, including 9mm of rain at Gunnedah, 15mm of rain at Narrabri and 16mm of rain at Moree. The Bureau of Meteorology's eight-day outlook indicates up to 50mm of rain across parts of northern NSW.
- In the drier inland north, failed cereal crops have been cut for hay and fresh cereal hay is entering the market. Higher online asking prices have lifted the top end of the reported range and moved the market midpoint. It is too early to know whether these prices reflect completed sales or will hold as more new-season hay becomes available.
- Rainfall would be welcome for late-sown oats and fodder crops, as well as pasture growth. However, root-zone soil moisture remains well below average in inland areas, so one rainfall event is unlikely to significantly change feed availability or hay production prospects.
- Tight pasture feed continues to affect livestock producers in the region's drier interior. Some are destocking or seeking agistment, which may keep local demand firm for hay where freight and available supply allow.
- Northern NSW has a 60% to greater than 80% chance of above-average rainfall from November to January. Consistent follow-up rainfall will be important for pasture recovery, summer fodder crops and confidence in the next round of hay production.
- Significant change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +75 (\$250 to \$450/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$400 to \$500/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$130 to \$170/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

- Recent rainfall has brought a change to parts of the region that have remained dry for much of the year. Weekly falls included 11mm of rain at Condobolin, 16mm of rain at Forbes, 26mm of rain at Grenfell, 35mm of rain at Young and 12mm of rain at West Wyalong.
- Conditions are expected to remain mixed this week. Forbes and West Wyalong are forecast to receive around 1mm of rain daily, with cool nights and daytime temperatures in the mid to high 20s. Condobolin may receive 4–7mm of rain late this week before clearing over the weekend, followed by further light showers next week.

- Silage cutting is continuing, while hay cutting has started in northern areas and is close to commencing elsewhere. Light showers may interrupt cutting and curing, particularly where hay is already on the ground. Some new-season hay is beginning to enter the market.
- Rainfall over the next week will remain important for crops nearing cut. Areas with low moisture reserves will need useful follow-up falls to maintain hay yield potential before cutting.
- Freight costs continue to shape demand from the Darling Downs. Higher diesel prices are increasing the delivered cost of hay into Queensland. Dubbo is being watched as a potential demand point for hay moving north, depending on available supply and freight costs.
- Significant change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -10 (\$245 to \$335/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: -40 (\$370 to \$490/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$115 to \$175/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$175 to \$285/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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2.5. Bega Valley

- Bega is forecast to receive light daily showers this week. These falls are unlikely to add useful moisture for growers moving into hay cutting and harvest and may create short interruptions to curing conditions. Warmer, partly cloudy weather is due from Sunday before light showers on Wednesday.
- Bombala recorded a frost late this week, following a run of cool nights. Frost risk and a lack of meaningful rainfall remain concerns for pasture and late-season crops. No useful rain is forecast, which will continue to limit pasture growth and the rebuilding of on-farm feed reserves.
- Eastern New South Wales has an increased chance of unusually high maximum temperatures in the coming month. Forecast rainfall may provide short-term relief in some areas, but current totals are unlikely to correct underlying rainfall and soil-moisture deficiencies.
- Recent rainfall has generally improved spring grain-fill conditions across southern New South Wales. However, the Bega Valley has not received the same useful falls as many inland cropping districts. While rain elsewhere may increase new-season hay availability over time, local feed conditions in the valley remain tight.
- Hay demand in the Bega Valley is expected to strengthen this season as dry conditions and low pasture growth place pressure on on-farm feed reserves. Some buyers have delayed purchases while waiting for more new-season hay to enter the market and prices to ease. As selected hay types become more available and asking prices soften, these buyers may begin securing supply.
- Significant change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -10 (\$315 to \$435/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: -40 (\$440 to \$580/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$215 to \$265/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$230 to \$360/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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2.6. Goulburn/Murray Valley

- A strong spring across the region is lifting confidence, with pasture and crop conditions encouraging producers to restock sheep and cattle. This may bolster demand for quality hay later in the season, particularly from buyers rebuilding feed reserves. However, good pasture growth and abundant stored hay from last harvest may reduce immediate reliance on purchased hay for some local livestock operations.
- Oaten hay and cereal crops are shaping up for a high-volume season. At Elmore, 441mm of rain has been recorded so far this year, close to the area's annual average. Early sown oats have produced heavy crops, with much of the oaten hay already contracted for export.
- Large crops bring handling and quality risks. Bulkier oaten hay crops can be harder to cure, bale and store, and may not achieve the same test results as more moderate crops. Hay grade will remain uncertain until cutting and testing are underway.
- Recent rainfall has maintained strong crop yield prospects. Falls included 38.6mm of rain at Quambatook and 28.6mm of rain at Kerang, while some local areas received more than 40mm of rain. Most crops have absorbed the moisture well, although paddocks with the highest totals face some risk of waterlogging, lodging and reduced hay quality.
- While more rain would still benefit some crops, many paddocks are carrying substantial moisture after a wet winter and recent rain. Cool conditions remain favourable for fieldwork, while frost risk remains a watch.
- Mostly sunny conditions are forecast around Cohuna, with temperatures expected to reach 30°C by next Wednesday before light showers from Tuesday. Seymour is expecting similar conditions, although slightly cooler temperatures. The warmer, drier period should assist crops moving towards cutting and drying where paddocks are ready.
- Hay supply from the region is likely to increase as new-season crops enter the market. Export hay prices have softened from recent years and cereal prices remain weak, while high fuel, fertiliser and disease-control costs continue to lift the cost of production. Growers will need both yield and acceptable hay quality to protect returns in a softer market.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -10 (\$180 to \$300/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: -30 (\$340 to \$500/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$85 to \$105/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$130 to \$290/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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2.7. Gippsland

- Gippsland has received significant recent rainfall, with some areas recording more than 150mm of rain. These falls have eased soil-moisture deficits, but widespread flooding and waterlogging are now affecting parts of the region.
- The rain has supported crop and pasture growth, but prolonged wet paddocks will restrict access for grazing, fertiliser applications and fodder conservation. Waterlogged dairy pastures may suffer production losses, and the rain arrived too late to fully restore some dryland pasture growth.
- Some crops have been cut for silage to reduce the risk of further quality loss. Where paddocks remain wet, hay cutting and baling will depend on a sustained dry window. Hay that is cut or lying on the ground during further showers faces a higher risk of weather damage and reduced feed quality.
- Far eastern Victoria has an increased likelihood of unusually high maximum temperatures in the coming week. Warmer days may help surface moisture dry, although they may also increase plant stress in areas that miss follow-up rainfall.
- Small areas of southern Victoria remain in serious or severe rainfall deficiency. Forecast rainfall may provide short-term relief but is unlikely to fully address longer-term deficits. Feed reserves remain a key issue for dairy and grazing businesses that entered spring with limited pasture growth.
- Across Gippsland, recent rain has improved late-season fodder growth and hay yield potential. However, paddocks that received the highest totals face greater risks of lodging, waterlogging and delayed cutting, which may limit both hay quality and the volume of marketable hay this season.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -10 (\$210 to \$360). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: -30 (\$420 to \$530/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$115 to \$175/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$125 to \$295/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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2.8. Southwest Victoria

- A strong spring has lifted livestock confidence across parts of south-west Victoria, with restocker demand supporting sheep and cattle prices. Conditions are uneven across the region, however. Areas around Hamilton and north of Hamilton received 50–70mm of rain in recent falls, supporting pasture growth and feed availability.
- While seasonal conditions are currently holding, producers in these areas may be more cautious about restocking until they receive follow-up rainfall. This may maintain demand for hay where pasture growth slows or on-farm reserves remain limited.
- Recent rainfall has favoured late-season pasture and fodder crop growth across much of the region. Where rainfall totals were highest, growers will need to monitor paddocks for waterlogging, lodging and delayed access. These issues can reduce hay quality and make cutting more difficult if crops become over-mature.
- Hamilton is forecast to have warm, sunny conditions through early this week, providing a useful window for haymaking, silage work and other field activity. Rainfall of up to 10mm is forecast from

Tuesday, followed by light showers from Wednesday. Growers with fodder ready to cut may look to use the dry conditions before rain interrupts curing and baling.

- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -10 (\$170 to \$310/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: -30 (\$330 to \$490). Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$90 to \$140/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$150 to \$230/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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2.9. Southeast South Australia

- Strong spring feed conditions have increased livestock confidence across the region. Where pasture is abundant, producers may buy less hay in the short term. Higher livestock numbers could increase demand for stored fodder later in the season.
- Local growers report a mixed season. Late-sown crops will be cut later than usual, while some early-sown crops have produced lower yields. Recent rainfall has improved fodder growth, and silage cutting is expected to begin in the coming weeks.
- High input costs and lower canola prices are prompting some mixed-farming businesses to reassess their crop and livestock mix. Maintaining on-farm hay reserves remains a priority, particularly for growers carrying lambs.
- Many growers still have sheds holding last season's hay. This gives them feed security and allows them to wait for better selling conditions, but storage space will likely be compromised once new-season hay is ready.
- Recent rain has improved late-season pasture and fodder crop growth. Paddocks that received heavier falls may face waterlogging, lodging and delayed access. This could affect hay quality and delay cutting.
- Naracoorte is forecast to remain mostly sunny to partly cloudy this week, with temperatures reaching the high 20s by Monday before light showers arrive. Robe will be cooler, with only light falls forecast next Tuesday. The dry conditions should suit silage preparation and field work.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -5 (\$195 to \$275/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: -60 (\$290 to \$450/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$95 to \$145/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$175 to \$245/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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2.10. Central South Australia

- Strong spring feed across south-eastern Australia has increased confidence in livestock markets. Plenty of pasture may reduce immediate hay buying for some producers, but new stock numbers will need fodder cover as conditions turn warmer and drier.
- Hay harvest is underway, with new-season bales expected to move into drier livestock areas as baling progresses. This will give buyers who came through a dry winter more roughage options and may ease reliance on remaining carryover supplies.
- Recent rainfall has improved late-season pasture and hay crop growth across Central South Australia. Most falls arrived at a useful time for crops still filling out before cutting. In wetter paddocks, growers should watch for lodging, delayed access and quality loss where crops remain exposed to rain.
- Most districts will have clear, warming and mostly sunny conditions this week, offering a useful window for cutting, curing and baling. Light showers are forecast from next Tuesday. These warm, dry days should allow harvest to keep moving, although growers with hay on the ground will need to watch the forecast closely.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -5 (\$180 to \$240/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$410 to \$530/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: -10 (\$130 to \$220/t). Prices decrease this week.

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2.11. Southwest Western Australia

- Manjimup will see intermittent showers through this week and into next week, with temperatures falling from the high 20s to the high teens. Growers will need to use short dry breaks to cut, cure and bale crops that are ready. Katanning will remain warmer but is also forecast to receive intermittent showers, which may slow harvest progress and make hay curing more difficult.
- Recent rain has improved soil moisture in outer reaches. This may add late-season growth where crops are still actively growing. However, repeated rain close to cutting can affect colour, leaf retention and baling timing.
- Heat and a rapid finish remain key risks. Hay crops that mature quickly may have a narrower cutting window, particularly where warm conditions return between showers.
- The November outlook points to a wetter month across much of Western Australia, with above-average rainfall also likely across parts of the state from November to January. This may benefit pasture and late crop growth, but frequent rain could delay haymaking and affect quality if crops are cut without enough drying time.
- Despite the wetter outlook, below-average root-zone soil moisture remains likely in December, and parts of southwest Western Australia have recorded serious to severe rainfall deficiencies during 2026. Rainfall over the next few months will be important for rebuilding soil moisture and maintaining pasture feed into summer.
- 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

- Smithton is set for clear, mostly sunny conditions until Tuesday, giving growers a good window to continue silage harvest and prepare lucerne crops for cutting. Light showers are forecast from Tuesday. Waratah will be slightly cooler and cloudier, with rain also expected from Tuesday. Growers with crops ready to cut should make the most of the dry period before showers arrive.
- Some growers have started making silage, while others expect to begin cutting silage and lucerne within the next 10 days. Dairy areas around Wynyard and Circular Head are generally holding up well, with silage production progressing. This should maintain local fodder availability in the short term.
- Conditions are much drier for graziers in the Southern Midlands, far west and north-east. Dryland oats intended for hay have failed in some areas, reducing potential new-season supply. One reported 120 hectares of failed oats, equivalent to 3,500–4,000 bales of hay.
- Some irrigated barley crops may still be salvaged for hay where water is available. However, water may be directed to higher-value potato and poppy crops, limiting the amount of barley hay that reaches the market.
- Enquiries for fodder have increased from graziers looking for feed for ewes and lambs. Demand has not increased from dairy buyers at this stage. If dry conditions continue through the Southern Midlands, grazing businesses may draw on supplies from the northwest.
- Severe and serious rainfall deficiencies have affected parts of Tasmania during 2026. The November to January outlook suggests below-average rainfall. Very low root-zone soil moisture, warmer conditions and reduced water allocations could reduce hay and silage yields through summer.
- Redheaded cockchafer and corbie grubs are causing damage to pasture and fodder crops in some districts. Crop losses from these pests may further reduce silage and hay availability.
- There has been no reported change in hay pricing. However, lower dryland yields and ongoing demand from dry grazing areas may reduce the volume of fodder available over coming months.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$230 to \$270/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$300 to \$380/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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