

Hay Report

19 December 2025

DELIVERING
for DAIRY

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Summary

Driving Prices Up

- Ongoing demand for high-quality cereal and vetch hay is helping move limited clean lines.
- Oaten hay showing strong protein continues to attract buyers.
- Lower-grade hay may gain interest if dry autumn or wet winter conditions limit paddock access.
- Lucerne remains firm in Southwest WA due to short supply, irrigation input, and strong demand in horse markets.

Driving Prices Down

- Widespread fodder oversupply across southern regions is reducing demand and easing pressure on pricing.
- Strong spring growth and consistent rainfall have resulted in high volumes of pasture, cereal, and silage.
- Many dairy and mixed farmers are well stocked into next year, taking a wait-and-see approach to new purchases.
- Demand is weak for lower-quality cereal hay, where baling was delayed or rain-affected.
- In South-East SA and Northwest Tasmania, lucerne prices have dropped, due to poor-quality early cuts and the clearing of old season or stock rejected from chaff mills.

National weather summary and outlook

- Total water storage sits at 68%, down 4.5% compared to this time last year.
- Root zone soil moisture is mostly average to above average, supporting solid pasture cover across much of the country.
- Southern New South Wales, parts of SA and interior Queensland remain drier, with patchy deficits persisting.
- From January to March, most regions face neutral rainfall odds, though a drier outlook is likely across Tasmania, central Australia and some areas of the south-east.
- Heatwave conditions are ongoing, with higher-than-average daytime and overnight temperatures forecast through summer.
- Producers are advised to monitor weather updates and prepare livestock and paddocks ahead of prolonged heat events.
- 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

- Stormy, humid conditions continue to limit cutting windows, with daily low-to-moderate rainfall chances forecast into next week. Temperatures remain in the low 30s around Mareeba and high 20s around Atherton, keeping paddocks soft underfoot and moisture levels high.
- A short dry window last week allowed some growers and contractors to bale hay, but overall supply remains patchy. Quality is mixed, and buyers are cautious. One grower reported 16 to 18mm of rain this week, which was enough to prepare 55 acres for planting.
- Financial pressure remains high for some growers. With seeding supplies running low and loan approvals pending, autumn cropping decisions are uncertain. Input costs, including fuel, are also adding strain.
- Soil moisture remains mostly average, though some areas are drying out where November rainfall eased. Southern parts of the region may see slightly wetter conditions this summer, but overall climate outlook confidence is low.
- Coastal areas have received significantly higher rainfall, with reports of 120 to 150mm of rain between Innisfail and Townsville this week. This has created further imbalance in growing conditions across the broader region.
- 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

- Conditions across the Downs remain hot and dry, with Chinchilla forecasting consecutive days of 38–39°C from Saturday, and Surat expected to push into the low 40s by Sunday. Isolated showers are forecast early next week, but unlikely to significantly impact soil moisture levels.
- Soil moisture is mostly average to below average across the zone. Rainfall from spring slowed winter grain harvest in the north, but conditions have since improved, and most harvest is now complete. The rain is expected to benefit cotton and sorghum plantings heading into summer.
- The wheat crop is now forecast to be the third largest on record nationally, according to the Department of Agriculture's December report. Good grain availability has kept cereal hay demand soft for now, though extreme heat could increase fodder requirements over summer.
- Haymaking in the Downs is complete. As is typical in this region, most hay is grown under contract and cleared soon after baling. With no local work remaining, many Downs growers are now assisting in southern regions, particularly where Victorian producers are pushing to complete cutting before conditions turn again.
- Rainfall outlooks from January to March suggest neutral conditions overall, though there is a low-confidence chance of wetter-than-average weather in northern parts of the zone. As a result, cropping and fodder planning for early 2026 remains cautious.
- 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

- Conditions have turned hot and dry, with inland and coastal areas experiencing temperatures in the mid to high 30s. Only isolated showers are expected early next week, with light falls around Lismore and relief possible near Tenterfield from Monday.
- The stable spell has helped producers complete their harvest and carry out paddock work. The dry conditions are welcome after a run of disrupted weather earlier in spring.
- Soil moisture is now average to below average across most of the region. New-season hay was affected by storm activity and timing delays, but growers are now taking advantage of better weather to catch up.
- One grower near Tatham reported Rhodes grass hay yielding well despite earlier storms. A small amount of cereal hay has been made, though demand remains slow.
- Most growers plan to take a short break over Christmas and resume in early January.
- 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 is complete across the Central West, with growers reporting strong yields for cereal hay and straw. Quality has generally held up well, despite earlier season challenges.
- Local growers continue to support surrounding regions with cereal hay baling. The next sowing window is expected in May.
- Conditions have turned hot, with severe heatwave warnings in place across the southern part of the region. Cowra is forecast to hit 39°C on Friday, dropping to 29°C by Monday, with low to moderate rainfall chances over the weekend. In Gilgandra, Sunday is forecast to reach 41°C with little significant rain expected. The heat is favourable for curing but increases fire risk.

- Soil moisture remains mostly average across the region. While some patchy spring rainfall provided late-season benefit, rainfall deficiencies continue to expand across southern NSW.
- Market activity remains quiet. Despite earlier expectations, demand is yet to lift. Most producers agree there is still enough stored fodder in sheds across the country to meet supply needs for the next 18 to 24 months.
- Online listings remain strong as growers look to clear sheds. Oaten hay is listed from \$325 to \$430 per tonne (Grenfell, Berrigan), wheaten hay from \$310 (Condobolin), straw from \$140 (Condobolin), and vetch from \$350 (Wagga Wagga). Several listings have pending feed tests.
- Straw and lucerne remain steady again this week, while cereal and pasture drop further due to oversupply.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -10 (\$245 to \$345/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$425 to \$555/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$95 to \$155/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: -10 (\$195 to \$295/t). Prices decrease this week.

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Bega Valley

- Hot, dry conditions have returned to the Bega Valley, with extreme heatwave warnings issued across the South Coast, especially near Eden. While these conditions are favourable for curing, they elevate fire risk across the region. Light showers are possible over the weekend in areas including Bega and Bombala, but rainfall is unlikely to significantly ease the dry conditions.
- Rainfall from September to November around Bega was below average. Soil moisture remains variable. Seasonal outlooks offer low confidence, adding uncertainty to summer crop planning.
- With paddocks drying out, some farmers have resumed limited late-season activity. However, movement remains slow as growers weigh up feed requirements and input costs. Freight continues to influence delivered pricing across local and inbound orders.
- Prices remain mostly steady this week across the region. Lucerne holds firm, while cereal and pasture hay prices have eased slightly again as supply remains available and many buyers continue to work through existing stores.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -10 (\$335 to \$455/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$500 to \$640/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$205 to \$255/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: -15 (\$300 to \$430/t). Prices decrease this week.

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Goulburn/Murray Valley

- Haymaking is near complete across the region, with around 80 to 90 per cent of harvest finished in areas such as Swan Hill. Conditions were favourable, with a dry finish and mild spring delivering better-than-expected yields across oaten and wheaten crops. Many oaten hay paddocks have tested well and meet export specifications.
- Despite solid quality, market demand remains limited. Most growers are not adjusting pricing and are opting to store hay while the current softness in demand continues.
- Online listings reflect this wait-and-see approach. Awned wheaten hay is listed between \$270–\$320 per tonne ex-farm. Round bales of pasture hay in Stanhope are advertised at approx. \$467/t based on a 300kg average bale weight. Local farms are also offering oaten hay at \$255/t, small squares of oaten and wheaten hay \$400–\$680/t, with lucerne at around \$800/t.
- Most buyers are still drawing on carryover or local fodder supply, with freight remaining a price-limiting factor. Growers are not yet baling, and demand from those areas is not expected to lift until later in January.
- Severe weather conditions continue across the north. With temperatures this week exceeding 40°C in parts of Shepparton, Yarrawonga and Echuca, cooler conditions are expected into the weekend. These hot conditions may assist with final drying but also increase fire risk for those still moving or handling hay.
- Once again, straw and lucerne remain steady this week, and cereal and pasture drop further.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -10 (\$250 to \$370/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: -15 (\$200 to \$360/t). Prices decrease this week.

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Gippsland

- Heatwave conditions are affecting much of Gippsland, with temperatures expected to peak late this week before easing from Friday as cooler winds move through. Parts of the West and East are under a severe heatwave warning. The recent hot, dry spell has helped dry out paddocks after a wet spring, allowing growers to finally complete silage and begin haymaking.
- Spring rainfall has turned around earlier seasonal concerns in areas like Orbost, where one farmer recorded 180mm of rain from October to early December. Despite destocking during the October dry period, conditions have since improved, though pastures are still recovering.
- Activity will remain quiet until after Christmas. Most southern graziers are expected to commence hay baling in the new year. As grass hay enters the local market, merchants expect surplus roughage to be priced between \$220–\$250 per tonne. This will present increased buying options but may apply price pressure across the bulk market.
- While demand is subdued for now, long-term growers are holding hay in sheds, expecting that enquiries will lift by autumn.

- Buyer sentiment remains cautious, weighed down by freight, available carryover supply and seasonal variability.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -10 (\$280 to \$430). 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: -15 (\$230 to \$390/t). Prices decrease this week.

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Southwest Victoria

- A strong finish to spring and widespread paddock availability have resulted in what many describe as a record fodder production season in the Western Districts. Some dairy farmers near Koroit are now cutting hay for the third time following silage and earlier fodder cuts, with grass hay yields reaching up to 8 tonnes per hectare.
- Contractors made solid progress last week under dry conditions, and the forecast remains mostly clear until Sunday, when Hamilton may receive up to 9mm of rain. Harvest is still underway in several areas, with some cereal paddocks up to three weeks behind average. Many growers are 10 to 14 days from completing harvest.
- Frost-damaged wheat has been cut for hay, adding to overall supply. Soil moisture across the zone is now mostly average. There is no clear rainfall signal for summer, with forecasts showing equal chances of above or below average rain through March.
- Dairy farmers and graziers have conserved more feed than usual and are not seeking outside supply at scale. Merchants report orders are less than 20 per cent of normal volumes. Many graziers say they have enough feed for two seasons if conditions stay average.
- Online listings have increased as growers begin marketing excess fodder. Prices reported include vetch and oats at \$320 per tonne, canola, oats and grass mixes at \$230/t, oaten at \$240/t, wheaten and rye at \$260/t, barley straw at \$110/t, and wheat and oat straw at \$100/t for 500kg round bales. Wheaten straw from Berrybank is \$120/t, with wheaten hay from Hexham at \$300/t and from Derrinallum at \$250/t. Silage is also widely listed.
- With high volumes on hand and limited buyer activity, growers expect prices to remain under pressure. Lower grade and weather-affected hay may be difficult to sell unless seasonal conditions change.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -10 (\$270 to \$410/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: -15 (\$230 to \$340/t). Prices decrease this week.

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Southeast South Australia

- Lucerne hay has dropped in price for the second week in a row. Lower quality from early cuts and soft buyer demand are the main drivers.
- Cereal and pasture hay prices have also eased slightly. Supply is high across the region, and many buyers are still working through their own on-farm fodder reserves.
- Drier weather has replaced earlier wet conditions, helping growers resume hay production. Soil moisture is sitting at average levels, with recent rainfall providing relief heading into summer.
- The weather this week is favouring fieldwork. Millicent will cool from the low 30s to the low 20s by the weekend, with 15mm of rain forecast on Sunday. After reaching 42°C on Thursday, Keith will drop to the low 20s by Sunday, with dry and mild days to follow.
- Harvest is ongoing, with cooler conditions allowing better hay quality. Demand remains selective, and price pressure is expected to continue while supply outweighs buying interest.
- Cereal and pasture prices continue to decline as buyers still rely on their own supplies.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -10 (\$300 to \$4010/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: -10 (\$440 to \$580/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

- Seasonal conditions have shifted in growers' favour. Mild and dry weather has supported the later stages of grain harvest and allowed for catch-up fieldwork across much of the region.
- Hay baling is complete and sheds are full. Quality varies widely due to a disrupted spring, with many early cuts affected by rainfall. Visual grading has been challenging, and feed testing is underway. Results are expected by February to clarify saleability and quality differences.
- Early movement of oaten hay to export has been reported. More trucks are moving locally, but trader and domestic buyer interest remains slow. Most cereal hay is sitting in storage, with growers taking a 'wait and see' approach. One grower noted holding varying quality grades, estimating prices from \$180 per tonne for lower-grade hay to \$200/t for better cuts.
- Meadow and pasture hay is moving in small volumes at stronger prices, selling at up to \$300 per tonne. Straw baling is nearly complete, with product selling into piggeries, feedlots and mixed farms for \$150/t. Offers of \$110/t have been seen in the region, though some growers are unwilling to accept prices that do not cover input costs.

- Rainfall over the past four weeks has lifted soil moisture, with several regions receiving up to 100mm of rain. This has improved subsoil levels and provided a better base for summer planning. Most areas are now sitting at average soil moisture.
- Outlooks for January through March suggest an equal chance of wetter or drier than average conditions. This uncertainty means growers are holding onto hay stock longer, especially if feed test results can help them target higher-value markets.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -20 (\$180 to \$280/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$390 to \$480/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: -20 (\$110 to \$190/t). Prices decrease this week.

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Southwest Western Australia

- Harvest is wrapping up across much of the region. Growers have reported excellent yields and strong grain quality, especially across wheat, barley and canola crops. For many, this has been one of the best seasons in memory, with total production likely to exceed early estimates.
- Hay quality depends heavily on timing of storms during the cut. Better fodder is coming out of eastern areas of the Wheatbelt where rainfall was lower. Supply remains steady, but demand is patchy. The equine sector continues to support prices for top-end fodder.
- Dairy producers are cautiously buying. One large-scale dairy reported this year's oaten hay as better than last, though yields are down. They are purchasing AA-grade oaten hay at \$255 per tonne, down from \$270. Lower prices reflect strong oat performance and reduced demand. Trust in known suppliers remains a key factor in purchasing decisions.
- Teff grass sowing preparation is now underway. Growers expect to begin planting in the coming fortnight, in line with usual summer schedules.
- A recent heatwave has cleared. Mild and dry conditions across areas such as Katanning and Bunbury are now ideal for completing fieldwork, soil treatments, and machinery maintenance.
- Soil conditions are being closely watched. While harvest conditions were favourable, underlying soil moisture has been uneven. Some areas may struggle with shallow profiles heading into the next phase of summer cropping.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +10 (\$185 to \$325/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$590 to \$790/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$100 to \$190/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$225 to \$275/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Northwest Tasmania

- Growers are continuing to bring in hay following a wet, delayed spring. Progress varies across the region, with some still working through paddocks. Most hay brought in now is of average quality due to repeated wet conditions in October and November.
- Winds have had a strong drying effect, stripping moisture from the soil surface and root zones. This is concerning. While rainfall earlier supported pasture growth, strong winds have reversed some of that benefit. Soil should be replenished by now, but dry ground is already causing issues and may impact summer planting and next season's growth.
- Contractors report an improved outlook since last month. Haymaking is now underway across oaten and grass crops. One contractor reported making 2,500 bales recently, selling at \$300 per tonne, while meadow hay was moving at \$230/t.
- Straw demand is picking up, but supply is delayed. As expected, straw will not be ready until the new year, but this year is later than usual. Lucerne stands around Bracknell are growing, although yields will be low due to poor conditions in spring. Missed silage windows earlier in the season have left many crops maturing too early.
- Hay testing is encouraged, with widespread reports of capeweed, wild radish and thistles entering hay crops. Weeds are expected to be more of an issue this season due to compromised spraying and cutting schedules.
- Rain is forecast on Sunday across parts of the northwest, with up to 30mm of rain. While some moisture is welcome, more delays are possible. Climate outlooks suggest a slightly increased chance of above-average rainfall into March, but BOM confidence remains low.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +50 (\$250 to \$350/t) Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: -20 (\$280 to \$360/t) Prices decrease 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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Acknowledgement

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

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