Dairy Australia

Hay Report

19 June 2026

DELIVERING *for* DAIRY

Contents

AFIA
Australian Fodder Industry Association

Summary

Driving Prices Up

- High water allocation prices and other inputs are lifting production costs, which are flowing through to stronger hay prices.
- These rising costs are also leading producers to hold fodder for the new season, keeping near-term supply constrained.
- Livestock still require roughage, so hay demand is holding despite the availability of cheaper protein options like canola meal.
- Early winter rainfall has kept feeding demand steady, though freight costs are limiting how far hay can move north.
- Strong pricing for quality straw reflects expected winter demand.

Driving Prices Down

- Large volumes of carryover hay, particularly in Victoria, are slowing trade and limiting price growth.
- Strong early season rainfall has improved seasonal outlooks, reducing urgency for buyers to secure hay.
- Demand from key deficit regions is easing as conditions improve.
- In Tasmania and southwest WA, prices are being adjusted to encourage buyer interest, but trade remains slow.

National Weather Summary and Outlook

- Below-average rainfall is likely across much of southern Australia from July to September, due to El Niño.
- Total water storage across Australia is at 66% of capacity, 1% higher than this time last year.
- Root zone soil moisture remains above average across large parts of Australia. Below-average soil moisture persists in parts of the west and in some northern and coastal parts of Qld.
- From July to September, maximum and minimum temperatures are highly likely to be above average across most of Australia, although frost is still possible.

  Despite soil moisture availability and high input costs, the area planted for Australia's 2026–27 crop is expected to remain relatively high at 23.6 million hectares.

  *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

- Rainfall through late May and early June has improved soil moisture and freshened pastures, supporting grazing conditions across the region.
- The recent lift in feed on the ground has taken some pressure off short-term hay demand, with many producers leaning more on pasture where possible.
- Hay is still moving, mainly to support dairy operations and fill feed gaps, but buying has become more selective.
- Limited local production means most hay continues to be brought in from southern regions, keeping freight a key part of the landed price.
- Prices are holding steady for now, though any shift in seasonal conditions could quickly bring demand back into the market.
- Supply pressure from stronger seasons in western regions is weighing on local demand, with reported prices around $300 per tonne for big Rhodes grass squares.
- 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

- Late May rainfall and follow-up falls above 25 mm of rain have helped lift soil moisture and on-farm water, but wet spells are slowing planting and narrowing the winter sowing window.
- Earlier dry conditions have left very little local hay available, so most loads are now coming up from the south at a higher cost, especially once freight is factored in.
- Demand is holding firm, with restocking underway and steady buying interest from southern regions keeping hay moving north.
- High irrigation water prices remain a real constraint, limiting the amount of fodder that can be produced and tightening the outlook for future supply.
- Quality hay is hard to find in the region, with prices steady overall for now, though higher costs and limited supply are likely to keep pressure on the market.
- 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

- Late May rainfall has eased earlier deficiencies, with further falls above 25 mm of rain improving soil moisture but limiting paddock access and delaying operations.
- Heavier falls of around 50 mm of rain have waterlogged paddocks, knocked out some crops and slowed planting, which is starting to tighten nearby hay supply.
- The winter sowing window is closing, creating pressure on production timelines despite improved moisture conditions.
- Demand remains steady, supported by active buying from southern regions and ongoing movement of hay north.
- Supplies are getting tighter, but prices have held steady for a fifth week, with growers expecting upward pressure if availability continues to drop.
- 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

- Above-average temperatures from March to May, combined with recent rainfall, have improved soil moisture and supported a solid seasonal turnaround. Crop establishment has progressed, though timing has been tight as the sowing window closes.
- Recent rain has also improved on-farm water availability and encouraged restocking, contributing to stronger livestock demand and earlier rising cattle prices.
- Conditions across the region remain mixed. While some areas have received 100-125 mm of rain over recent weeks, others remain patchy, and wet paddocks are limiting access for spraying and fertiliser application.
- Hay supply is tight, with many growers having sold out earlier in the season. Limited surplus fodder remains available, and some producers have been sourcing hay from outside the region.
- Demand has softened in recent weeks as pasture growth improves and conditions ease, with producers relying more on paddock feed and holding back on purchases.
- Hay prices are holding steady for a second consecutive week, reflecting balanced conditions between limited supply and easing demand.
- No change to pricing this week.

- Cereal hay: +/-0 ($330 to $420/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($460 to $590/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 ($125 to $185/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 ($235 to $335/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Bega Valley

- Very much above-average temperatures from March to May, followed by timely June rainfall, have driven a strong, early start to the season. Warm conditions and good moisture have supported rapid pasture and crop growth.
- Crops across southern NSW are tracking around two weeks ahead of normal, with strong early establishment and continued development supported by mild conditions and the absence of frost.
- Pasture growth has been a key positive, with paddocks well ahead of typical winter feed availability. This is reducing immediate reliance on hay across the dairy sector.
- While recent rainfall has improved conditions, some farm water storages remain below capacity, which could become a factor if conditions turn drier later in the season.
- Freight continues to influence hay pricing in the region, with delivered costs playing a key role in buyer decisions on the Far South Coast.
- Irrigation remains a limiting factor for fodder production. High water prices are pushing growers to prioritise higher return crops, with some reducing lucerne irrigation after early cuts. This may constrain local hay supply later in the season.
- Hay markets remain quiet, with soft demand and strong pasture growth keeping prices flat for a third consecutive week.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 ($380 to $500/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($535 to $675/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 ($245 to $295/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 ($285 to $415/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Goulburn/Murray Valley

- Scattered June rainfall across northern Victoria and southern NSW has kept soil moisture at good levels, with most crops off to a strong and early start. Many growers have completed top-dressing, and early sown crops are already well advanced for this time of year.

- Mild conditions and steady rainfall have pushed crop growth ahead of schedule, with many paddocks sitting around two weeks earlier than usual. A run of frost would help slow things down and bring crop development back in line.
- Seasonal conditions have been close to ideal so far, supporting strong establishment across cereals, canola and vetch, and setting up good potential for both grain and hay options depending on how the season finishes.
- Hay continues to move north into NSW and Qld, with steady demand from drought-affected areas despite recent rainfall. This is helping keep product moving out of the region.
- On-farm, there is flexibility to cut for hay if conditions turn, particularly for vetch and cereal crops, with solid early growth supporting hay yield potential.
- Irrigation remains a pressure point, with high water prices limiting fodder production decisions. Many growers are weighing up hay against higher return crops when allocating water.
- Hay demand locally is quiet, with good seasonal conditions reducing immediate feed pressure. Supplies remain ample, and prices have held steady for a fifth week.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 ($255 to $375/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($440 to $600/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 ($110 to $130/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 ($175 to $335/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Gippsland

- Timely June rainfall, combined with warm soil and mild conditions, has driven one of the fastest starts to the winter season in years. Crop establishment has been strong, with many paddocks ahead of schedule.
- Crops are tracking two weeks earlier than normal, with early canola development reflecting rapid growth. The absence of widespread frost has allowed the momentum to continue.
- Pasture growth has been exceptional, with feed levels more typical of early spring. This supports strong livestock performance and reduces reliance on supplementary feeding.
- Improved seasonal conditions and rising livestock confidence are seeing producers retain or rebuild stock numbers, thanks to abundant on-farm feed.
- Hay markets remain subdued, with high fodder stocks and strong pasture conditions keeping buying activity low. Prices have held flat for a fifth consecutive week across all hay types.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 ($285 to $435). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-05 ($520 to $630/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 ($130 to $190/t). Prices remain steady this week.

- Pasture hay: +/-0 ($160 to $330/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Southwest Victoria

- Well-above-average rainfall from March to May, followed by timely early winter rainfall of 30 to 60 mm, has delivered one of the strongest seasonal starts in recent years. Soil moisture is high, and conditions favour both crops and pasture.
- Warm soils and consistent rainfall have supported rapid crop establishment, with many crops running about 2 weeks ahead of schedule.
- Pasture growth has been strong, reducing the need for short-term supplementary feeding. This is easing pressure on hay demand.
- The absence of widespread frost through early winter has allowed crops to continue advancing quickly. Some growers expect cooler conditions to help slow growth and balance development.
- Irrigation costs remain a constraint for fodder production. High water prices continue to limit lucerne and irrigated hay programs, with some growers reducing input or cutting programs earlier than usual. This may affect hay availability later in the season.
- Hay markets remain steady but subdued. High fodder stocks and favourable seasonal conditions are keeping demand low, with prices holding for a third consecutive week.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 ($245 to $385/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($445 to $605). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 ($115 to $165/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 ($180 to $260/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Southeast South Australia

- Well above average rainfall from March to May, followed by consistent June rainfall, has delivered a strong seasonal break. Soil moisture is high, and crops are well established.
- Crop establishment has surged, with planting progress sitting well above average. Early growth has been rapid, with some canola crops already advancing quickly.
- The strong start, combined with mild conditions, has supported both cropping and pasture growth. This is reducing immediate demand for hay as livestock producers rely more on paddock feed.
- Changes in crop mix are emerging. Lentil plantings have lifted significantly, while some growers have reduced canola due to fertiliser costs. This shift may limit the availability of cereal hay and canola hay at harvest.

- Hay production remains uncertain, particularly where irrigation is required. High and rising water costs continue to challenge fodder producers, with some reducing irrigation after early cuts or reassessing hay programs altogether.
- Strong seasonal conditions and good pasture growth are keeping hay demand subdued in the short term. However, reduced production intent and input pressures may tighten supply later in the season.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 ($230 to $310/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 ($195 to $265/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Central South Australia

- Above-average rainfall from March through May, followed by steady June rainfall, has set the season up well, with strong soil moisture across the region and crops off to a fast start.
- Most growers have finished sowing, with crop establishment well ahead of average. Early growth has been strong, with some crops advancing quickly under mild conditions.
- The strong seasonal break has encouraged a shift in crop mix, with lentil area increasing and some growers pulling back on canola due to fertiliser costs. This may reduce the volume of oaten and cereal hay available later in the season.
- Good rainfall across both cropping and grazing areas has reduced immediate hay demand, as livestock producers rely more on pasture instead of supplementary feeding.
- Interstate demand has eased, with most hay into NSW now sourced from Victoria and southern NSW, limiting movement out of South Australia.
- Export pressure is building, with softer demand and more hay staying in the domestic market. Some growers are starting to adjust prices to keep product moving.
- Hay supplies remain available, with cereal hay sitting in the mid- to high-$200 per tonne range ex farm. Premium shedded straw is holding in the low to mid $200 per tonne range, reflecting its higher quality and storage protection. Overall demand is steady to softer, with good seasonal conditions keeping a lid on prices for now.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 ($250 to $310/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($430 to $550/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +55 ($160 to $250/t). Prices increase this week

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Southwest Western Australia

- A mixed start to the season, with below-average rainfall from March to May in parts of the wheatbelt, has been followed by strong June rainfall of 40 to 70 mm across the south west. This has improved soil moisture and supported crop recovery.
- Recent rainfall has crops up and moving, with most programs now finished. In some areas, canola is advancing quickly, while others remain behind due to earlier dry conditions.
- Overall, the season is shaping up well, though conditions vary across districts depending on early rainfall. Pasture growth has improved, easing pressure on immediate hay demand.
- Production is expected to be lower this season, with some growers reducing area due to uncertainty about returns and shifting programs toward canola.
- Straw markets are under pressure. Premium shedded straw is still available, but export pricing remains unclear, with buyers and sellers unable to agree on price. Lower use in feed rations and the availability of alternative inputs are reducing demand.
- Hay demand remains steady but not strong, with no widespread feed shortages driving urgency. Domestic and export markets are active but balanced.
- Cereal hay prices are sitting around $280 per tonne ex farm for top quality, with the market well supplied and buyers selective. Overall, supply is adequate, and demand is moderate, keeping pricing relatively stable.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -10 ($190 to $280/t). Prices decrease 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

- Below-average rainfall from March to May, combined with much above-average temperatures, created a dry lead-in to the season and limited early pasture growth.
- Recent rainfall of 60 to 70 mm of rain has improved conditions and eased some soil moisture deficits, though parts of the central north remain below average. Continued caution is needed with a drier outlook forecast for July to September.
- Warmer conditions and a late seasonal break have supported strong grass growth, but wet paddocks are limiting access, and some hay cannot be moved due to boggy conditions.
- Demand has been steady but slower than usual, with many early-season purchases already locked in. Northern Midlands buyers are active, using hay as a backup following a dry summer.
- Demand is expected to lift in the short term as dairy producers dry off cows and increase supplementary feeding. Fodder crops such as kale are underperforming, which may further support hay use.

– Pricing has eased from earlier reported levels, reflecting softer demand and previously contracted volumes.
– Some change to pricing this week.
– Cereal hay: +/-0 ($200 to $260/t). Prices remain steady this week.
– Lucerne hay: -55 ($305 to $385/t). Prices decrease this week.
– Straw: -25 ($100 to $160/t). Prices decrease this week.
– Pasture hay: +/-0 ($240 to $300/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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1800 004 377
enquiries@dairyaustralia.com.au
dairyaustralia.com.au

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