Dairy Australia

Hay Report

21 November 2025

DELIVERING for DAIRY

Contents

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

Summary

Driving Prices Up

- Early-baled hay, cut before the onset of widespread rain, is holding its value as ongoing wet conditions damage later cuts. Buyers looking for quality may act sooner to secure this supply.
- Lucerne activity and prices have stalled since the early October drop, with most growers focused on cereal and straw production. In the Downs, however, Lucerne is now at a premium.
- Some southern buyers may turn to northern growers to improve overall fodder quality. Uptake will depend on how well new-season hay finishes and balances out in the market.
- The longer wet weather continues, the more value is placed on earlier, well-cured hay, especially as quality in paddocks continues to decline.

Driving Prices Down

- Sheds are steadily filling, and oversupply is keeping prices down, particularly for straw, now at its lowest in over 12 months. Six weeks ago, growers reported prices could not fall further, but the market has continued to soften.
- In many regions, cereal and pasture hay have fallen back to May price levels. Earlier peaks caused by drought and panic buying are no longer holding.
- Rain is affecting both the quality and progress of cutting. Most buyers are holding off purchases until baling is complete and the overall market picture is clearer.

Local News

- **National weather summary and outlook**
    - Thunderstorms and showers moved across central and eastern Australia, with patchy falls in northern New South Wales and southern Queensland.
    - Cold fronts brought 5 to 50 mm of rain across parts of Victoria, Tasmania and south-eastern South Australia, helping late baling efforts in some southern paddocks.
    - Heavier rainfall in western Tasmania and Victoria's eastern ranges improved ground conditions for regrowth.
    - October was dry through much of New South Wales, Victoria, and southern Queensland, extending crop stress in key growing zones.
    - Soil moisture deficits continue to expand across the eastern mainland, limiting hay regrowth and follow-up cuts.
    - Water storage levels remain under pressure, with the Murray-Darling Basin now 7 per cent lower than this time last year.
    - 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

- Rainfall totals of 25 mm or more last week, combined with further rain this week, are likely to delay harvesting and curing.
- Graziers will benefit from the moisture, with pasture growth expected to improve across much of the region. Growers continue to take advantage of any dry spells to resume paddock work, but wet conditions continue to pose challenges for producing and storing quality hay.
- Soil moisture remains mostly average to above average, supporting early spring regrowth.
- One producer reports that dry windows are opening up for mowing after 23 mm of rainfall earlier in the week in Atherton. Ground preparation is underway, but planting is on hold. The heat and humidity continue, with producers prioritising harvest while conditions allow.
- Local hay demand remains slow, with only small orders moving at a time. Rising cattle prices and approaching weaning may lift interest soon. High production costs are limiting the viability of small square sales, especially with southern straw pricing drawing attention.
- Southern buyers may begin looking north for higher-quality feed to lift the average of their current supply. One to keep an eye on.

- No change to pricing this week.
  - Pasture (Rhodes Grass) hay: +/-0 ($320 to $460/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

- Harvest and field work were halted over the weekend, with patchy storms bringing more than 100 millimetres of rain in some areas. Wet conditions are set to continue into the week, likely delaying further haymaking and grain harvest.
- Cereal hay yields are solid, as expected. Most grain growers in the region stayed with grain and did not cut for hay, unlike further south. Straw yields have been disappointing, with poor drying weather forcing some to cut early or even burn off crops that would not cure.
- Straw harvest is midway and progressing where possible, though repeated raking, wet paddocks, and muggy conditions have made it very stop-start. Many growers have had to rake up to three times, adding pressure and increasing labour time.
- Storage limitations are adding stress, with much of the region lacking sheds. A lot of hay and straw are now sitting exposed, and quality is dropping daily due to the ongoing wet.
- Lucerne is scarce this season, with poor conditions across the country. Wet spring weather has held it back and pushed growers to focus on other hay crops. Prices remain high.
- Local straw supply is expected to run short, and like in past years, straw will likely be brought in from the Central West once local stock is used up.

- New hay plantings continue where conditions allow, and southern buyers are starting to show interest in high-quality Downs-grown product. One to keep an eye on.Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 ($300 to $400/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +55 ($450 to $600/t). Prices increase this week.:
- Straw: -25 ($150 to $200/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Pasture hay: -50 ($250 to $300/t). Prices decrease this week.

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North Coast NSW

- Heavy rainfall over the weekend brought more than 100 millimetres to some locations in a 24-hour period, further unsettling conditions. This has pushed parts of the region towards record year-to-date totals.
- Silage production is currently at its peak, with favourable conditions allowing producers to move quickly.
- Many growers are trying to make the most of short dry gaps while keeping an eye on weather forecasts and margins; a recurring story throughout spring.
- Without a longer dry run soon, growers note feed quality could begin to drop, particularly for standing grass left too long in wet conditions.
- Southern buyers may soon look north for high-quality fodder to lift their average feed value. This will be one to keep an eye on in the coming weeks.

- 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 $300t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Central West NSW

- Recent rainfall has added some moisture to paddocks, but it is slowing harvest progress and has not been enough to turn the season around.
- Soil moisture levels have declined, with many areas now sitting below average. Without follow-up rain, summer planning could become more challenging.

- The climate outlook for December to February shows a 60-65 per cent chance of above-average rainfall. However, confidence in the forecast remains moderate, so decisions should be made carefully.
- Straw prices are now the lowest seen since June 2024. Pasture hay pricing has also softened, now at its lowest price since February this year. Demand has eased, and market activity remains low.
- Lucerne activity remains paused, with growers shifting focus to finishing off cereal crops and managing workloads across mixed operations.
- Straw harvest is well underway across Central West NSW. Moree has largely finished, while areas further south, including Gilgandra, Condobolin, Dubbo and Parkes, are still actively raking, curing and baling. Prices range from $150 per tonne from Moree to $120 per tonne from Parkes ex-farm, with lower-quality or carryover straw selling from $90 per tonne.

- Some change to pricing this week.
  - Cereal hay: -5 ($265 to $365/t). Prices decrease this week.
  - Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($425 to $555/t). Prices remain steady this week.
  - Straw: -10 ($90 to $150/t). Prices decrease this week.
  - Pasture hay: -10 ($230 to $330/t). Prices decrease this week.

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Bega Valley

- Some areas in the region are tracking towards record-high rainfall totals for the year to date. This continued moisture is helping growth, but complicates harvest timing.
- Silage making is currently at its peak. Dry weather is now critical to maintain quality and ensure access to paddocks and machinery movement.
- Despite holding some of the highest fodder prices in the country, local straw prices have eased. Current rates are the lowest seen since November 2024.
- Lucerne has seen little movement this week, with production and trade focus shifting toward mixed cereal and pasture hay across other regions.

- Some change to pricing this week.
  - Cereal hay: -5 ($355 to $475/t). Prices decrease this week.
  - Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($500 to $640/t). Prices remain steady this week.
  - Straw: -10 ($200 to $250/t). Prices decrease this week.
  - Pasture hay: -10 ($340 to $460/t). Prices decrease this week.

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Goulburn/Murray Valley

- Current warm weather conditions are favourable for setting hay, but ongoing dry weather is limiting growth for later cuts.
- Some southern parts of the region have recorded their lowest rainfall on record, adding pressure to already dry conditions.
- The seasonal forecast for December to February shows an equal chance of above or below-average rainfall. Forecast confidence remains low, so growers are advised to remain cautious.
- Straw prices are now at their lowest point since July 2022, reflecting reduced demand.
- Lucerne activity has paused, as conditions are unfavourable for growth. This is in line with what is being seen across other producing regions this week.

- Some change to pricing this week.

- Cereal hay: -10 ($270 to $390/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($410 to $570/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: -10 ($80 to $100/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Pasture hay: -10 ($230 to $390/t). Prices decrease this week.

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Gippsland

- The BOM reports that recent rainfall has raised soil moisture levels above average, supporting strong pasture and crop growth.
- Silage making is in full swing across the region. Dry weather is now important to hold quality and allow paddock access.
- Like many growing regions, straw prices have dipped to their lowest point in some time. Here, straw is back to April 2024 prices.
- Lucerne has been on hold since the drop in demand back in early October. Most growers are currently focused on cutting cereals and straw.
- The season has improved significantly in parts of Gippsland, with strong regrowth reported around Yarram and in the west. In the east, it is too late for rain to make much difference. It has freshened paddocks, but yield potential will remain limited.
- Wet conditions continue to delay progress in the south-west, with up to 180 millimetres of rain recorded over the past 20 days. Paddocks remain too wet to access, and hay that is ready cannot be cut or dried. It will be a few more weeks before hay work can begin in earnest.
- Many producers are currently chopping grass for silage, planting crops, and managing pest pressure, particularly caterpillars, which are emerging in the current weather. One producer described this as their busiest week of the year, with a range of overlapping activities underway. Hay production is still to come and will require a clear, dry window.

- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -5 ($300 to $450). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($490 to $600/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: -10 ($105 to $165/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Pasture hay: -10 ($270 to $430/t). Prices decrease this week.

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Southwest Victoria

- South of Warrnambool, there have been just three rain-free days so far this month. Wet conditions are making farm work difficult and slowing production.
- Harvest is still going, and hay producers are currently busy in paddocks when dry windows permit. So far, grain and fodder quality have held up, but moisture continues to slow progress.
- Mouse activity is rising in parts of South Australia and Victoria. After a dry spell followed by rain, numbers can spike quickly. High populations are a serious risk to crops, equipment, and stored grain.
- Six weeks ago, growers reported that straw was at its lowest possible price. Since then, prices have fallen further and are now at their lowest level since June 2024. Lucerne activity has stalled, so expect scant supply into next year.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -5 ($290 to $430/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($420 to $580). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: -10 ($90 to $140/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Pasture hay: -10 ($260 to $370/t). Prices decrease this week.

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Southeast South Australia

- The summer outlook (December to February) shows an equal chance of above or below-average rainfall. Forecast confidence is low, so planning ahead will be important.
- Harvest is still progressing. Grain quality remains unaffected so far, but there are warning signs. Mouse numbers are rising across parts of South Australia and Victoria, posing a serious threat to crops, machinery, and stored grain.
- Improved lamb returns in the region, including a national record set last week in Naracoorte, are a welcome sign after a tough season. Good spring growth and strong paddock feed have helped finish stock well, pointing to better seasonal conditions and hinting that fortunes may be

turning for local producers. This lift could support more positive outlooks for hay quality and demand heading into summer.

– Some change to pricing this week.
  – Cereal hay: +/-0 ($340 to $440/t). Prices remain steady this week.
  – Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($480 to $620/t). Prices remain steady this week.
  – Straw: +/-0 ($140 to $190/t). Prices remain steady this week.
  – Pasture hay: +/-0 ($325 to $405/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Central South Australia

– The summer forecast (December to February) remains uncertain, with rainfall equally likely to be above or below average. Forecast confidence is low, so growers need to stay flexible.

– Harvest is progressing, and grain quality is holding steady for now. However, mouse numbers are increasing across parts of South Australia and Victoria. These spikes often follow dry conditions combined with rain. If left unchecked, mice can cause significant damage to crops, machinery, and stored grain.

– One grower near Freeling reports a difficult season. There was drought during planting, followed by poorly timed rain, wind damage to windrows, and further rain during cutting and curing. Each stage presented challenges. Reduced yields and quality have made this a frustrating, tight growing period.

– No change to pricing this week.
  – Cereal hay: +/-0 ($240 to $320/t). Prices remain steady this week.
  – Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($390 to $480/t). Prices remain steady this week.
  – Straw: +/-0 ($180 to $270/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Southwest Western Australia

– Harvest is continuing, with overall yields expected to be favourable across the region.

– Rainfall from August to October was variable. It ranged from below average in the south-east to above average in northern areas. The wetter zones saw improved soil moisture, easing rainfall deficiencies. Waterlogging was reported in some isolated areas.

– Root-zone soil moisture has since declined due to a drier spell. This recent dry period has been helpful, allowing grain and hay harvest to continue without major delays.

– Pasture hay is being raked out despite running four weeks behind schedule, with favourable weather allowing yard work to continue. One Bunbury producer reports a strong season, with all hay already sold, and expects the market to lift soon as demand returns and stored supply begins to move in conjunction with the impending summer.

- Some change to pricing this week.
  - Cereal hay: +/-0 ($150 to $300/t). Prices remain steady this week.
  - Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($400 to $500/t). Prices remain steady this week.
  - Straw: +/-0 ($100 to $190/t). Prices remain steady this week.
  - Pasture hay: -10 ($180 to $230/t). Prices decrease this week.

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Northwest Tasmania

- The aftermath of cold, wet conditions continues to delay both haymaking and silage harvest. Quality is under pressure, and many producers have not been able to start.
- Lucerne, which has been ready for weeks, remains uncut in paddocks. Each additional delay is further impacting quality.
- Despite this, areas are beginning to see milder conditions, including daily high-teens temperatures in Smithton, with only light daily showers and no frost. Many growers and sellers are hopeful the drier, milder conditions will help kick-start cuts shortly.
- Soil moisture is now well above average following persistent rainfall across the north of the state. Dry weather is urgently needed to allow paddock access and maintain hay and silage quality.

- 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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