

Hay Report

23 October 2026



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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

1. Summary

1.1. Driving Prices Up

- Wet, humid conditions in the Atherton Tablelands, northern NSW and parts of southern Australia are disrupting haymaking and increasing weather damage risk, reducing quality hay supply.
- Atherton Tablelands hay is largely committed to contracts, while failed cereal crops are being grazed rather than baled, leaving little uncommitted supply.
- Dry soils, bushfire risk and an estimated 5,000-round-bale cereal hay shortfall in Northwest Tasmania are increasing demand for stored fodder.
- Lower silage yields in drier parts of Southwest Victoria, along with low on-farm water supplies, may leave livestock businesses with smaller feed reserves heading into summer.

1.2. Driving Prices Down

- Recent rainfall across Queensland, northern NSW, Victoria and SA has improved pasture growth, reducing immediate demand for purchased hay where feed is responding.
- Strong new season pasture, silage and hay crops in northern Victoria are increasing fodder availability as harvest progresses.
- New season hay from Central SA is expected to move into drier livestock areas shortly, giving buyers more roughage options and reducing reliance on older product.
- Strong cereal hay yields and lower domestic demand in Southwest WA are reducing cereal hay values, despite some growers reconsidering production at current returns.

1.3. National Weather Summary and Outlook

- Storms across northern and eastern Australia generated widespread moderate falls last week, with further rainfall forecast in the north and east this week
- October to April is the peak time for severe weather in Australia, including thunderstorms, tropical cyclones, flooding, heatwaves and bushfires. Haystack fires are also more likely to occur.
- November to January rainfall is likely to be above average across areas of western and central Australia as well as parts of the east. Below average rainfall is likely in the north and southeast.
- Australia's total water storage is currently 71%. The Murray–Darling Basin is currently at 69% capacity, the same as this time last year.
- Below-average root-zone soil moisture is likely for parts of eastern, southeastern and far southwestern Australia during November, which will be contracted to the southeast in December. Large areas in Tasmania are forecast to have critically low average soil moisture, especially in November.

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

- September rainfall was very much above average across far northern Queensland. Wet conditions have continued through the season, with many growers reporting lower hay yields and fewer opportunities to make hay at the right quality.
- Atherton and Mareeba are forecast to receive rain each day this week and into next week. Minimum temperatures near 17°C and daytime temperatures in the high 20s to low 30s will keep humidity high. Hay growers are unlikely to find enough dry time to cure, bale and store hay safely.
- One local grower and contractor is trying to harvest corn before further storms arrive. They have also decided to graze around 50 acres of short oat and barley crops that will not make suitable hay. Other growers may make similar decisions where wet weather has limited crop growth and prevented haymaking.
- Local farms can use failed hay crops as feed for cattle in the short term. However, this does not add hay to the market. Much of the hay cut in the past fortnight has already gone to contracted buyers, while contractors continue to seek more supply.
- Limited dry weather and strong demand for contracted hay are likely to leave little uncommitted hay available from the Atherton Tablelands in the near term.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Pasture (Rhodes Grass) hay: +/-0 (\$240 to \$280/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.

2.2. Darling Downs

- Recent rainfall of 25mm to 50mm has improved soil moisture across parts of Central and Southeast Queensland, including the Darling Downs. The falls follow a dry September and give summer pasture and fodder crops a better start than many growers expected a few weeks ago.
- Dalby is forecast to receive heavy rainfall late this week and into next week, including up to 45mm of rainfall on Thursday. Further daily rainfall is forecast early next week. Warwick and the Southern Downs are also expecting regular rain over the coming days.
- November to January rainfall is more likely to be above average across inland southern Queensland. If regular rainfall continues, pasture growth and surface water supplies should improve. This may allow cattle producers to retain stock and rely less on purchased hay through early summer.
- Recent storms have delivered patchy rainfall. Some properties have received enough rain to respond quickly, while others still need further falls before pasture growth can replace stored fodder. Hay demand will vary sharply between districts until more consistent rainfall arrives.
- Heavy rain is good news for summer feed prospects, but it will delay hay cutting and baling where crops are ready. Growers with hay on the ground will need dry weather to complete curing and avoid weather damage.
- Some growers report fewer immediate hay enquiries following recent rainfall. Others are cutting hay only against confirmed orders to reduce fuel and handling costs. However, this lower buying activity may be short-lived if pasture growth does not meet expectations or hot weather returns.

- Rain has also increased competition for cattle across eastern Australia, as buyers look to secure stock for improving pasture conditions. If more cattle remain on farm, demand for hay may ease in the short term as producers use fresh pasture. A sustained run of dry weather later in summer would quickly bring those buyers back into the hay market.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$350 to \$540/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$600 to \$700/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$200 to \$300/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$300 to \$400/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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2.3. North Coast NSW

- Recent rainfall of 25mm to 50mm across northeastern and eastern New South Wales has improved conditions for pasture growth. These falls follow useful rain last week in previously dry parts of northern New South Wales and should support the start of the summer growing season.
- Lismore is forecast to receive up to 50mm of rainfall on Thursday, followed by showers and around 10mm of rain daily into next week. Temperatures are expected to reach the high 20s, which will keep humidity elevated. Clearfield is forecast to follow a similar pattern.
- Rain will help replenish soil moisture and support pasture recovery. This could reduce immediate hay demand from livestock producers if enough follow-up rainfall allows feed to carry through summer.
- However, wet and humid conditions are challenging for growers in the middle of harvest. Hay needs a reliable dry window to cure properly. Frequent showers and high humidity may delay baling, reduce colour and quality, and increase the risk of weather damage in cut crops.
- The November to January outlook favours above-average rainfall for northern New South Wales. This is positive for summer pasture production, but growers will need a balance of rainfall and drying days to make quality hay.
- Conditions remain variable across the wider northern New South Wales region. Low root-zone soil moisture has prompted some producers to destock or seek agistment. These areas may continue to require bought-in fodder until pasture responds to meaningful rainfall.
- Rain has lifted confidence in cattle markets across northern New South Wales and Queensland, with restockers competing for cattle to put onto green feed. If rainfall continues and pastures establish, northern demand for hay may soften. If the rain misses key grazing districts or pasture growth stalls, demand could return quickly.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$250 to \$450/t). Prices remain steady 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 mainly benefited north-eastern and eastern New South Wales, while the Central West has only started to dry out following rain over the past fortnight. Warm temperatures near 30°C have supported hay curing and harvest activity where paddocks are ready.
- Rain is forecast to return from the weekend. Condobolin, Forbes and West Wyalong may receive around 6mm of rain on Saturday and up to 25mm on Sunday. Parkes is expected to be cooler, with up to 30mm of rainfall forecast on Sunday.
- These falls would be welcome for soil moisture and summer pasture prospects. However, one event alone may not be enough to rebuild moisture reserves after a dry growing season. Further rainfall will be needed to give growers confidence going into the next season.
- The forecast creates a narrow harvest window. Growers with hay ready to cut or bale may be able to use the current dry conditions, but rain over the weekend could delay curing and increase the risk of weather damage to hay already on the ground.
- Further rain may delay grain harvest, particularly if thunderstorms develop. Delays to cereal harvest can also postpone access to straw supplies, limiting the amount of new-season cereal hay and straw entering the market in the short term.
- Rain in northern New South Wales and Queensland has lifted cattle buyer confidence. If these regions receive enough follow-up rain to establish summer pasture, northern demand for southern hay may ease. If pasture growth does not hold, hay demand could rise quickly.
- 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.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$245 to \$335/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$370 to \$490/t). Prices remain steady 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

- The November to January outlook shows roughly equal chances of above- or below-average rainfall across Southeast New South Wales. Growers will need regular follow-up rain to rebuild soil moisture and carry pasture growth into summer.
- Bega has had warm, sunny weather this week, providing a useful drying window for cut hay. Showers are forecast to increase from Saturday, with up to 25mm of rain expected on Sunday. Wyndham is likely to follow a similar pattern.

- The forecast rain may replenish very dry soil moisture and improve prospects for new-season pasture and fodder growth. However, it may interrupt curing and baling for hay already cut. Growers will need to make the most of dry conditions before the weekend and check hay is fully cured before storage.
- Recent rain has improved spring conditions across parts of southern New South Wales, but the Bega Valley has missed many of the more useful falls received inland. Local pasture growth remains limited, and many livestock businesses have small on-farm feed reserves.
- Hay prices remain largely unchanged this week while harvest continues across southern hay-growing regions. Some local buyers have delayed purchases in expectation of greater new-season supply and lower prices. Demand may increase if rainfall does not produce enough pasture growth or if buyers decide to rebuild feed reserves ahead of summer.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$315 to \$435/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$440 to \$580/t). Prices remain steady 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 dry, very warm week has kept hay cutting and baling moving across the Goulburn–Murray Valley. Growers are working to make the most of the window before rain arrives from Saturday. Around Shepparton, up to 15mm of rain is forecast for Sunday, which may interrupt harvest activity and create quality risks for crops already cut.
- Spring rainfall has produced strong pasture, silage and hay crops across much of northern Victoria. Timely moisture has improved yield prospects, and some growers are reporting above-average silage yields. This points to a solid volume of new-season hay entering the market as harvest progresses.
- Conditions vary across the region. Growers on the Mallee fringe are expecting lighter showers from Saturday, which should freshen topsoil moisture in what has been an exceptional season. Further east, some farms have received more rainfall than expected, with one area recording more rain to date than across all of 2025. Ryegrass and clover hay cutting is expected to begin there during November.
- A mild finish has slowed crop maturity, while strong crops are costing more to grow. Some northern Victorian growers report fertiliser and fungicide costs have increased total input expenses by up to 30 per cent on last year. With cereal prices weak and hay values holding steady, growers will need both yield and sound quality to recover higher production costs.
- Prices have stalled this week as new season production builds. Good pasture growth and existing feed reserves mean many livestock producers have less need to purchase hay in the short term.
- The November to January outlook gives parts of Victoria a 60–80% chance of below-average rainfall. A dry period after harvest would help growers finish baling and move hay into storage, but it may also reduce pasture growth later in the season and bring more livestock buyers back into the market.
- No change to pricing this week.

- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$180 to \$300/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$340 to \$500/t). Prices remain steady 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

- Recent rain has improved pasture growth across Gippsland and helped ease supplementary feeding needs for livestock producers. This reduces immediate demand for purchased hay, although many producers will still aim to conserve feed while conditions allow and build reserves ahead of summer.
- Warm, dry conditions this week have allowed growers across Gippsland to cut, bale and store hay before forecast rain arrives from Saturday. Yarram could receive around 36mm of rain across three days, Warragul up to 48mm and Bairnsdale about 43mm. The falls would replenish soil moisture, particularly in the drier eastern districts around Bairnsdale, but may interrupt haymaking and affect crops that remain on the ground.
- In the south and west of Gippsland, the forecast rain may improve moisture reserves ahead of next season's hay crops. In eastern Gippsland, where rainfall totals have remained low, the rain will be particularly welcome for dryland pasture and fodder crops. Better pasture growth may further delay local hay buying, provided follow-up rain arrives.
- Some dairy producers are producing more silage volume at the expense of quality after late winter rain delayed first cuts. Later-cut crops are taller and coarser, with higher fibre and lower feed value. This may increase the volume of silage available on farm but leave some dairy businesses seeking better-quality fodder later in the season.
- Below-average rainfall remains likely for parts of Victoria from November to January, with a 60 to 80 per cent chance of below-average rainfall. A dry finish could bring livestock buyers back into the hay market once pasture growth slows.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$210 to \$360). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$420 to \$530/t). Prices remain steady 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

- Recent rainfall has improved pasture and crop growth across parts of South West Victoria. In paddocks that received the heaviest falls, growers have reported waterlogging, lodged crops and hay quality concerns. These paddocks may produce less hay that meets higher-grade specifications.

- The region is expecting rain from Friday and through the weekend. Hamilton may receive up to 25mm of rainfall across Saturday and Sunday, while coastal districts could receive more. The rain may improve soil moisture and maintain pasture growth, but it may also delay baling where cereal or vetch hay is ready to collect.
- In the drier Camperdown and Cobden districts, hay and silage yields sit well below last year. Contractors report some long-term pastures are producing about five round bales per acre, compared with eight or nine bales per acre and two cuts last season. Lower silage volumes will leave some livestock businesses with smaller feed reserves heading into summer.
- Water supplies remain a serious concern in the driest areas, including around Paschendale. Some dams hold only 5 to 10 per cent of capacity. Producers may sell stock earlier or spend heavily on alternative water supplies. Earlier sales may reduce local hay buying in the short term, although producers who retain breeding stock may need to purchase fodder if summer pasture growth stalls.
- Parts of Victoria have a 60 to 80 per cent chance of below-average rainfall from November to January. Growers need a dry break after this weekend's rain to bale and store hay safely. If summer rainfall falls short, low silage reserves and slow pasture growth may increase demand for key hay types.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$170 to \$310/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$330 to \$490). Prices remain steady 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

- Recent rain has improved crop and pasture conditions across much of Southeast South Australia. However, paddocks that received the highest totals have reported waterlogging, lodging and hay quality issues. Lodged or weather-affected crops may yield less hay that meets higher-grade specifications.
- Naracoorte has had warm, clear conditions this week, giving growers time to cut and bale hay. Rain is forecast from Friday, with up to 20mm of rainfall expected on Saturday. Robe is also likely to receive rain from Friday, although cooler conditions and lighter daily totals are forecast.
- The forecast rain may maintain pasture growth and provide moisture for crops that can still produce another cut. More locally grown fodder would give livestock producers greater feed options next year and may reduce their need to buy cereal or vetch hay.
- The same rain creates a risk for cereal and vetch hay already cut and lying in windrows. A follow-up rain event can quickly reduce hay colour and feed value, particularly where crops have not fully cured. Growers will need to use the dry windows before and after rain to finish curing, bale hay at a safe moisture level and move it under cover.
- Recent warm days have dried pastures quickly after the early October rain. If forecast rainfall misses key districts or summer turns dry, producers with limited silage or hay reserves may need to enter the fodder market earlier.
- Some change to pricing this week.

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- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$195 to \$275/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$290 to \$450/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$95 to \$145/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: -5 (\$170 to \$240/t). Prices decrease this week.

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2.10. Central South Australia

- Strong spring feed across south-eastern Australia has lifted confidence in livestock markets. Where pastures are actively growing, some producers may delay hay purchases.
- Hay harvest is underway, with new-season bales expected to move into drier livestock areas as baling progresses. This should improve roughage options for buyers who relied on carryover supplies through winter and may ease pressure on older hay stocks.
- Recent rainfall has supported late-season pasture and hay crop growth across Central South Australia. Timely moisture has helped crops through a key yield stage, although the wettest paddocks have reported some waterlogging, lodging and concerns around hay quality.
- Jamestown has had warm, dry conditions that have suited cutting, raking and curing hay. Around 15mm of rainfall is forecast from Saturday, followed by lighter daily showers into next week. Overnight temperatures of 3°C to 4°C are cool but are not expected to create a widespread frost risk.
- Freeling has also experienced hot, dry haymaking weather this week. Up to 20mm of rainfall is forecast on Saturday, followed by cooler days and nights next week. The forecast will interrupt haymaking activity and may delay baling where crops are cut but not yet cured.
- Growers have a short window to complete hay operations before the wet change. Rain will support pasture and crop growth, but hay already cut will need careful management to protect colour, feed value and bale quality.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$180 to \$240/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$410 to \$530/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$130 to \$220/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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2.11. Southwest Western Australia

- Soil moisture remains below average across parts of the far south-west. Recent rain has improved conditions in parts of the Central Wheat Belt and Great Southern, while the November to January outlook favours above-average rainfall across much of southern and central Western Australia.
- Light, frequent rainfall around Manjimup and Katanning is unlikely to add much useful soil moisture in the short term. It may, however, slow hay cutting, raking and drying. A clearer, warmer window is expected from Tuesday around Manjimup.

- Hay harvest is well underway. One mixed grain and hay grower has completed oaten and wheaten hay baling and reported strong yields, producing 1,220 large square bales from 80 hectares. Irrigated Rhodes grass hay is the next crop scheduled for cutting.
- Hay production decisions remain closely tied to market returns. Some growers are making hay only for known contracts or their own processing requirements, rather than committing large areas to the open cereal hay market.
- Reported cereal hay prices of around \$180 to \$240 per tonne are not providing enough return for some growers once inputs, baling, handling and freight are considered. This may limit cereal hay supply from parts of the Wheatbelt.
- Domestic hay demand in WA is more limited than in the eastern states due to fewer dairy and feedlot buyers. Export remains important for quality hay, but freight costs continue to restrict opportunities for cereal hay grown further inland. This may reduce the amount of cereal hay produced in parts of the Wheatbelt, while niche markets such as low-sugar Rhodes grass hay may attract more interest.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -25 (\$180 to \$240/t). Prices decrease 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

- Dry soils and warm, windy conditions have increased fire risk across northern Tasmania, with recent bushfires placing properties under threat. Dry seasonal conditions are limiting pasture growth and increasing the need for stored fodder in affected areas.
- The November to January outlook favours below-average rainfall for most of Tasmania. This adds to concerns about fodder availability, particularly where soil moisture is already low and irrigation water is under pressure in other parts of the state.
- Smithton has been dry and warm, but rainfall is forecast from Friday, including up to 15mm on Saturday and 10mm on Sunday. Waratah is also expecting rain and much cooler conditions, with a possible frost risk. These falls will be welcome, but sustained follow-up rainfall will be needed to rebuild soil moisture and support next season's feed.
- Hay is moving into Circular Head as producers continue baling. Local feedback suggests cereal hay supply could be tight, with an estimated shortfall of around 5,000 round bales for the coming season. Some cereal growers are being encouraged to bale barley and wheat crops for sale, rather than retain all feed on farm, to bring more product into the local market.
- Cereal hay is being quoted at around \$280 to \$300 per tonne, while lucerne silage demand is slightly stronger at about \$380 per tonne. Irrigated lucerne crops are looking more reliable than cereal hay crops, although insect pressure is affecting quality and growth in some paddocks. Dairy demand for silage remains steady.
- Some change to pricing this week.

- Cereal hay: +30 (\$260 to \$300/t). Prices increase 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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