

Hay Report

24 April 2026

DELIVERING
for **DAIRY**



Contents

Summary.....	3
Driving Prices Up.....	3
Driving Prices Down.....	3
National Weather Summary and Outlook.....	3
Regional commentary.....	4
Atherton Tablelands.....	4
Darling Downs.....	4
North Coast NSW.....	5
Central West NSW.....	5
Bega Valley.....	6
Goulburn/Murray Valley.....	6
Gippsland.....	7
Southwest Victoria.....	7
Southeast South Australia.....	8
Central South Australia.....	8
Southwest Western Australia.....	9
Northwest Tasmania.....	9



Summary

Driving Prices Up

- Urea and fuel uncertainty continues to influence planting decisions, buyer activity and forward pricing expectations.
- Rising input costs to fertilise and bale hay, along with higher freight rates, are expected to push per-tonne prices higher, although this is not yet reflected in current market pricing.
- Many regions are anticipating increased feed demand as cooler conditions and frost arrive, expecting prices to firm in the coming weeks.
- Central West NSW continues to see steady price uplift across cereal and pasture hay amid ongoing dry conditions.

Driving Prices Down

- Buyers remain cautious, monitoring urea and fuel markets while utilising green pasture and stored feed. Early season preparation and continued destocking are limiting immediate hay demand.
- Increased early silage purchases, particularly in Northwest Tasmania, are reducing demand for fertilised hay crops and easing short-term buying pressure.
- Abundant late-season southern supply, including unshedded hay exposed to February rainfall, is leading to quality variation. Prime hay is holding value, while weather-affected or outside-stored hay is being discounted, keeping overall pricing subdued.

National Weather Summary and Outlook

- From May to July, maximum and minimum temperatures are likely to be above average.
- For May to July, below-average rainfall is likely across large parts of eastern Australia and in the southwest. Above-average rainfall is likely across Western Australia's western and central regions. Elsewhere, there is roughly an equal chance of above- or below-average rainfall.
- There is an increased chance of unusually low rainfall from May to July in key agricultural districts of north-eastern Tasmania, Victoria, New South Wales, southeast Queensland and southwest Western Australia.
- Root zone soil moisture has declined in north-east New South Wales, with some areas now in the lowest 1% of all records. Elsewhere, soil moisture is above average, with parts of eastern South Australia recording its highest levels following high rainfall during February and March.
- Australia is set for a 'super El Niño' in 2026, swapping floods for drought and bushfires.

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

- Above-average rainfall from January to March caused flooding across several events. Root zone soil moisture remains average to above average, supporting current growth but slowing paddock access.
- The May to July outlook shows a low chance of exceeding average rainfall, particularly inland. Producers will need dry windows to cut hay and silage over the next month.
- Slow-drying conditions and wet late mornings are limiting cutting opportunities, which is holding back short-term hay supply.
- Fertiliser demand is firm following heavy rainfall during the wet season and nutrient leaching. Input affordability remains a concern, although lower diesel prices are easing costs slightly.
- Hay movement has picked up, including big square bales moving toward coastal export channels. Local feedlot demand appears softer due to high freight costs, which may influence pricing direction in the coming weeks.
- 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

- Rainfall from January to March was below average. Root zone soil moisture is well below average. The May to July outlook shows a low chance of exceeding average rainfall. Conditions are drying, and some producers are reconsidering winter cropping plans. In parts of the southern interior, up to 100 mm of rain is needed to give confidence for crop establishment.
- Fire risk is increasing across the southern Downs due to ongoing dry conditions. Any fire activity could place stored feed at risk and lift buying urgency.
- Cereal hay and vetch are moving into the region from Victoria in response to the dry outlook. Rising fuel costs are increasing freight rates, placing upward pressure on delivered hay prices.
- Demand remains steady from regular dairy and beef buyers, with many farms still holding reasonable stocks. Some producers are destocking to manage uncertainty around feed supply, urea, and fuel costs, which is keeping short-term hay demand measured.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$300 to \$400/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

- Rainfall from January to March was below or well below average. Root zone soil moisture is below average. The May to July outlook indicates a low chance of exceeding average rainfall, which will keep pressure on local pasture growth and feed availability.
- Hay continues to move into the region from Victoria, mainly lesser-quality cereal hay and vetch. Exporters facing higher ocean freight costs are considering diverting more lines into domestic drought markets, which could support supply into northern New South Wales.
- Northern New South Wales and southern Queensland are reducing stock due to dry conditions. This is easing short-term feed demand and allowing some producers to hold fodder in reserve ahead of winter.
- Early sowing has largely been completed ahead of Anzac Day. Crop establishment will depend on follow-up rainfall, key for both grain and hay supply potential later in the season.
- 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 (\$250 to \$300/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Central West NSW

- Hot, dry conditions continue to shrink feed reserves, pushing steady demand for cereal and pasture hay. Cereal prices have lifted for a third straight week, with pasture hay starting to firm as stocks tighten.
- Rapid increases in ocean freight and weaker export conditions are prompting some exporters to redirect hay into drought markets across northern NSW, adding supply options but also competition for local buyers.
- A ban on water harvesting from rivers in the Gwydir, Lower Namoi and Border Rivers regions until September will limit irrigation flexibility, potentially tightening future fodder production.
- Large cattle yardings and stock movements to agistment west of Broken Hill may reduce short-term hay demand locally as producers manage feed reserves ahead of winter. Rising rabbit and mouse numbers are also placing added pressure on standing fodder and stored feed.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +5 (\$315 to \$415/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$440 to \$570/t). Prices remain steady this week.

- Straw: +/-0 (\$125 to \$200/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +10 (\$235 to \$335/t). Prices increase this week.

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Bega Valley

- Rainfall from January to March was above average across the south-eastern coast. Root zone soil moisture is currently average, providing a stable base for autumn growth.
- The May to July outlook shows a low chance of exceeding average rainfall. A run of sunny, warm days in the mid-20s with no rainfall in Bega is supporting timely sowing, with activity on track in favourable conditions.
- Cereal hay prices have lifted again this week, while other hay categories remain steady. Buying activity is reported as relatively flat, indicating balanced short-term supply and demand.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +5 (\$370 to \$490/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$515 to \$655/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$225 to \$275/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

- Surplus local fodder and generous autumn rain has softened the rapid demand many sellers expected. This has slowed turnover of stored hay.
- Limited shed space has led to large volumes of cereal hay left stacked uncovered in paddocks. Late February rainfall has led to nutrient leaching and some combustion in outdoor stacks, creating feed quality risks.
- Discounting of weather-affected hay is likely to temper further price rises once larger volumes begin moving.
- Record-high prices last winter drove strong production, contributing to the current surplus and storage pressure across the region.
- Some growers are increasing vetch plantings for nitrogen benefits, alongside established programs of canola, oaten hay for export, barley and canola. Crop mix decisions this autumn will shape hay supply later in the season.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$245 to \$365/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$425 to \$585/t). Prices remain steady this week.

- Straw: +/-0 (\$100 to \$120/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$175 to \$335/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Gippsland

- Rainfall from January to March was above average across the coast. Root zone soil moisture is average. The May to July outlook shows a low chance of exceeding average rainfall.
- The autumn break delivered one of the best seasonal starts in years. Paddocks are green, spraying has been completed, and most pasture sowing will finish before the traditional Anzac Day timeframe.
- Surplus Victorian fodder and opening rainfall have slowed the strong demand many sellers expected. Buyers are not rushing, given the plentiful supply.
- Outdoor hay stacks, stored without sufficient shed cover, have experienced nutrient leaching following late February rainfall. This is reducing feed quality and increasing discounting.
- Dairy farmers are benefiting from lower fodder prices and are favouring higher-quality hay stored undercover. Discounted outdoor hay is likely to slow price rises if demand picks up.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$275 to \$425). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$505 to \$615/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$120 to \$180/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$160 to \$330/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Southwest Victoria

- Rainfall from January to March was below or well below average. Root zone soil moisture is currently average. The May to July outlook shows a low chance of exceeding average rainfall.
- Pasture growth has improved following the autumn break. Paddocks have been sprayed, and many growers have sown winter crops ahead of the Anzac Day weekend.
- Plentiful fodder supplies continue to limit expected buying demand. Local hay movement remains minimal, with improved pasture growth and lower prices reducing urgency to purchase.
- Limited shed space has led to pasture hay being stored outside in paddocks, increasing the risk of nutrient leaching and combustion, especially towards the Wimmera.
- Discounting this hay due to declining feed quality is likely to halt further price rises once volumes begin to move. However, buyers are favouring premium hay stored undercover.
- No change to pricing this week.

- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$245 to \$385/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$435 to \$595). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$105 to \$155/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$185 to \$265/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Southeast South Australia

- Rainfall from January to March was above average across much of the zone, driven by a slow-moving trough linked to a tropical low in late February. Prior to this, rainfall and soil moisture were below or well below average. Root zone soil moisture is now above average.
- The May to July outlook shows a low chance of exceeding average rainfall. Sowing activity is underway, with some growers planting winter crops earlier than usual to capitalise on strong opening conditions.
- Many producers report one of the best seasonal starts in years across key cropping and grazing areas. Favourable autumn conditions have lifted confidence.
- Increasing mouse activity across the Yorke and Eyre Peninsulas is raising concern. Populations may threaten emerging crops, potentially affecting grain and hay supply.
- Local fodder demand is currently stagnant. Improved pasture growth has eased short-term reliance on purchased hay, particularly among graziers managing higher production costs.
- 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 (\$205 to \$275/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Central South Australia

- Rainfall from January to March was above average, where prior to this, rainfall and soil moisture were below or very much below average. Root zone soil moisture is now above average. The May to July outlook indicates a low chance of exceeding average rainfall.
- Sowing is underway, with some growers planting earlier than usual to use stored soil moisture. Canola has been sown several weeks ahead of the traditional window in parts of the Central Districts and Mid North. Earlier sowing may lift yield potential if follow-up rainfall occurs, but it increases frost risk.
- Mouse numbers are increasing in the Central Districts and Mid North. Damage to emerging crops could reduce grain and hay yield potential if populations escalate.

- Input costs, particularly diesel and fertiliser, are tightening margins and shaping expectations for hay and grain prices.
- Hay demand is currently flat. Improved pasture growth and strong soil moisture have reduced short-term buying pressure from mixed farmers and livestock producers.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/- (\$250 to \$310/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/- (\$430 to \$550/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/- (\$110 to \$190/t). Prices remain steady this week

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Southwest Western Australia

- Rainfall from January to March was mostly average, influenced by ex-Tropical Cyclones Mitchell and Narelle. Root zone soil moisture is average. The May to July outlook indicates a low chance of exceeding average rainfall.
- The season has started well, but mouse numbers are building towards the wheatbelt, putting emerging crops, stored feed and machinery at risk. If crop losses increase, grain and hay yields may be reduced, tightening feed supply and supporting hay demand.
- Fuel and fertiliser costs remain a major concern. Although much of the fertiliser requirement has been secured, margins are tightening. Higher input costs are flowing through to wholesale hay pricing, though this has not yet fully reached the domestic market.
- Some growers are completing final cuts of irrigated hay. Final cut volume will depend on upcoming weather conditions. Warm mornings have supported baling and processing, however cooler temperatures and showers forecast from Monday may slow production.
- Hay supply will hinge on final cut yields and any crop damage from mice. Reduced production could firm demand as the region moves toward winter.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/- (\$195 to \$295/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/- (\$590 to \$790/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/- (\$110 to \$170/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/- (\$220 to \$270/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Northwest Tasmania

- Rainfall from January to March was below, or very much below average, across Tasmania. Root zone soil moisture is average to below average. The May to July outlook shows a low chance of exceeding average rainfall.

- Seasonal conditions are declining, particularly in the Midlands. Frosts are setting in, and temperatures are falling. Rain is urgently needed to support pasture and crop growth.
- Some movement in fodder is being reported, although prices remain steady for now. As winter approaches, tighter on-farm feed supply may increase demand and push prices upward.
- Dairy farmers targeting fat scores are turning to silage earlier than usual. However, quality is a concern, with reports of mould in clover-based bales due to seasonal conditions.
- There is a noticeable shift towards silage, reflecting last season's unreliable hay availability and uncertainty around urea supply. Production costs remain high, influencing feed budgeting and future hay demand.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$200 to \$260/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$300 to \$380/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$130 to \$190/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$240 to \$300/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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