

Hay Report

27 March 2026

DELIVERING
for DAIRY



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Summary

Driving Prices Up

- Ongoing wet conditions in the Atherton Tablelands are delaying planting and cutting, likely reducing later-season hay and silage supply.
- Subsoil moisture remains uncertain across parts of NSW and northern VIC. Without follow-up rainfall, crop bulk and hay supply may be limited.
- River flow constraints in the Goulburn-Murray Valley may restrict irrigation access at key growth periods, tightening supply if allocations are rationed.
- High urea prices nationally are prompting cautious application rates, which may reduce winter growth and lower hay yields.
- Rising fuel and freight costs continue to lift delivered hay prices, particularly on interstate loads into QLD, northern NSW and WA.
- Lucerne prices continue to firm in VIC, supporting overall market strength.

Driving Prices Down

- Strong pasture growth and solid on-farm reserves in SW VIC and Central SA are limiting immediate buying activity.
- Hay demand remains slow in North Coast NSW, and in NW TAS, where fresh pasture is meeting feed requirements.
- Straw and pasture hay in SE SA remain at their lowest levels since late 2024 to early 2025, reflecting adequate supply.
- Many farms are holding reserves after recent tight seasons, leading to measured, needs-based purchasing rather than aggressive restocking.

National weather summary and outlook

- April–June rainfall is likely to be below average across NSW, VIC, SA and WA hay regions, with an increased risk of unusually low rainfall across the Murray-Darling Basin and TAS.
- Coastal NSW and QLD hay regions have roughly equal chances of above or below average rainfall, while far north QLD is likely to receive above-average rainfall.
- The northern dry season begins in May, with minimal rainfall expected across northern WA and QLD pastoral areas, maintaining fodder pressure in drought-affected zones.
- Below-average autumn rainfall risk across southern regions may tighten winter pasture growth and increase reliance on stored hay if follow-up rainfall does not occur.
- Recent rainfall followed by warm conditions in the Goulburn-Murray Valley region has increased haystack fire risk. Producers and farmers are advised to monitor stored hay closely to avoid losses that would tighten local supply.

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

- December to February rainfall was above average to very much above average across the north of the region, with several flooding events. Soil moisture remains above average to very much above average.
- Continued rainfall has kept flood watches and warnings in place, restricting paddock access and delaying autumn sowing and hay program preparation. Falls of up to 35mm of rain in Atherton this week will further delay fieldwork and compress planting windows.
- The April to June outlook shows a roughly equal chance of above- or below-average rainfall, with low forecast confidence. This is adding uncertainty to planning.
- Local growers report that persistent rainfall over the past two months has disrupted corn planting, with some reducing their intended area after missing key planting windows. This may limit silage supply and reduce later-season fodder availability.
- High urea and fuel costs are tightening margins. Some growers are conserving fertiliser stocks rather than applying in saturated conditions. Lower fertiliser use may affect crop performance and hay yields.
- Rhodes grass growers are behind schedule, and paddocks remain too wet to access. Concerns around a potential cyclone are also limiting the opportunity to cut early. If high winds and heavy rainfall occur, both standing corn and Rhodes crops could be flattened, reducing yield and affecting hay quality. Wet-harvesting conditions would also increase the risk of contamination and production losses.
- Ongoing delays and weather risk may reduce final production volumes, potentially leading to a tightening of the later-season hay supply rather than immediate price movement.
- 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

- December to February rainfall was very much above average across the northern part of the zone, while southern areas received below average rainfall. Soil moisture is above average in the north and below average in the south, creating a split seasonal profile across the region.
- The April to June forecast indicates a low chance of exceeding average rainfall, with low to moderate confidence. In the far north, there is roughly equal chance of above- or below-average rainfall during the period, with low confidence.
- Recent wet weather and flooding in the north have significantly impacted crops such as cotton, causing infrastructure damage, harvest delays and potential reductions in crop quality. A drier spell is now welcome, helping paddocks dry out and supporting a smoother lead into the main harvest window during April.

- Oakey continues to experience warm, sunny days in the high 20s with no rainfall forecast, allowing producers to build momentum on winter cropping plans. Further east in Toowoomba, temperatures are slightly cooler, but conditions remain dry into next week, supporting field activity across the zone.
- Rising fuel and urea prices remain a concern. After the tight supply and record prices seen last year when hay was scarce, many farms have maintained hay reserves following harvest. Producers and farms appear to be taking a conservative approach, holding stocks to carry them into winter should seasonal conditions turn dry. Freight accounts for around 25 per cent of delivered hay cost, so fuel price increases will continue to influence delivered hay pricing.
- 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

- December to February rainfall was mostly below average along the North Coast. Soil moisture remains below average north of Sydney, reflecting the dry summer pattern.
- The April to June outlook indicates a low chance of exceeding average rainfall, with low to moderate confidence. In coastal areas, there is an equal chance of above- or below-average rainfall during the period, with low confidence overall.
- Cattle producers in northern New South Wales are reducing stocking rates in response to ongoing dry seasonal conditions. This is influencing short-term feed demand as some operations adjust numbers to match available pasture and fodder reserves.
- Into next week, Lismore is forecast to remain warm and mostly sunny, with only light showers. Inland at Tenterfield, conditions remain dry with no rainfall forecast. These conditions are supporting winter cropping progress, but continue to limit pasture recovery in drier areas.
- A local family producer reports a hot, dry window allowing silage baling to progress following earlier wet conditions. Hay sales remain slow, as strong grass cover is keeping livestock producers in feed. Demand is expected to lift as conditions turn drier and cooler into winter and pasture growth slows.
- 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

- Rainfall from December to February improved soil moisture, especially in the east. Central west NSW is sitting around average. Northern areas are still drier. Subsoil moisture is not fully secure, which limits confidence around strong hay yields.
- Recent rain has freshened topsoil, and growers are spraying weeds and preparing for April planting. Urea supply is tightening, and scarcity is causing unease. Some growers are cautious with fertiliser rates. This will affect crop bulk and the amount of hay that may be available later.
- A dry forecast for Parkes and Ungarie will allow planting to move ahead. However, without follow-up rainfall, crops may not grow enough to justify cutting for hay. This would limit hay availability from the region.
- There is little interest in growing hay as a standalone cash crop due to nutrient removal and soil compaction. Most hay is cut from crops that do not make grain grade, so supply is seasonal and inconsistent.
- Cattle are moving west, including toward Broken Hill. If pasture growth does not improve, this may lift hay demand in receiving areas. Saleyard numbers have increased. Over the next month, seasonal conditions will determine whether producers sell stock or feed through autumn, which will directly influence hay demand.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$280 to \$380/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +10 (\$440 to \$570/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$110 to \$175/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +10 (\$215 to \$315/t). Prices increase this week.

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Bega Valley

- Soil moisture is mostly average across the valley. The April to June outlook shows a low chance of exceeding average rainfall, with low to moderate confidence. On the coast, there is an equal chance of above- or below-average rainfall. This points to steady, not surplus, pasture growth, which keeps hay demand steady rather than easing.
- Forecast cold and wet conditions later this week increase the risk of livestock chill. This may prompt short-term hay feeding, particularly for young or lighter stock.
- Bemboka is expected to receive up to 40mm of rain on Friday, followed by cooler temperatures. Conditions are forecast to clear into next week, allowing producers to resume fieldwork and stay on track with winter cropping. Timely planting supports future winter forage supply.

- At Tathra, wind warnings are in place alongside heavy late-week rainfall. Conditions are expected to ease into sunnier and clearer weather next week. Short-term rainfall may lift pasture growth, but livestock stress through the cold snap could increase immediate hay use.
- Lucerne prices rise again this week, while key hay types remain stagnant.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$345 to \$465/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +10 (\$515 to \$655/t). Prices increase 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

- December to February rainfall was above average across much of the region, driven by a slow-moving trough in late February, when rainfall and soil moisture were below or very much below average. Soil moisture is now above average in the east, but northern areas are still drier.
- Growers who received recent rain are spraying weeds and preparing paddocks. The April to June outlook shows a low chance of exceeding average rainfall, with low to moderate confidence. Further rainfall is still needed ahead of April planting, particularly in the north. Without it, crop bulk and potential hay supply may be limited.
- Kerang and Elmore are forecast to see warm, mostly sunny conditions next week, with temperatures in the mid to high 20s following late rain and cooler weather. These conditions support planting but will quickly dry the topsoil without follow-up rainfall.
- Delays to dredging at the Barmah Choke have reduced river delivery capacity. Water managers are reportedly close to rationing during peak demand. This adds uncertainty for irrigators relying on Murray River allocations.
- For hay producers, any restriction on river flows during hot periods may limit irrigation at key growth and cutting times. This could reduce production and place upward pressure on hay supply and pricing if water access tightens.
- There has been an increase in haystack fires in Lockington, Kyabram and south of Echuca. Heavy rainfall in late February, combined with high sugar content in cereal hay and warm temperatures between 25 °C and 30 °C, may be lifting the risk of bale heating.
- Producers should monitor stacks closely, especially those exposed to rainfall. Losses from fire or spoilage would tighten local hay supply and support firmer prices if incidents continue.
- After a period of flat pricing, lucerne has continued to lift each week in March. Other hay types remain steady.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$245 to \$365/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +10 (\$425 to \$585/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$95 to \$115/t). Prices remain steady this week.

- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$170 to \$330/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Gippsland

- December to February rainfall was mostly below average along the southeastern coast. Soil moisture across Gippsland is mostly average.
- The April to June outlook shows a low chance of exceeding average rainfall, with low to moderate confidence. This suggests steady pasture growth and less reliance on stored feed.
- Cold, wet conditions later this week increase the risk of livestock chill. Sheep graziers have been warned about cool overnight temperatures and showers through to Saturday. This may lift short-term hay feeding.
- In Yarram, conditions are expected to clear from Sunday, allowing autumn sowing to resume. Warragul will receive heavier late-week showers before clearing. Bairnsdale is forecast to receive up to 30mm of rain on Friday, with conditions easing next week. Follow-up rainfall will be important to support early winter pasture growth.
- Rising urea prices are adding pressure. Some farms are trialling low-nitrogen, soil-health-focused systems to reduce reliance on synthetic fertiliser while maintaining pasture growth.
- If more producers reduce nitrogen use over time, pasture growth rates may become more variable in tighter seasons. This could lift reliance on purchased hay during feed gaps, particularly if autumn and winter rainfall underperform.
- After a month of flat pricing, lucerne has continued to lift each week in March.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$275 to \$425). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +10 (\$505 to \$615/t). Prices increase 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

- The south west Victorian hay market remains softer for sellers this autumn. Late and generous rainfall has left most farms with solid hay and silage reserves. There are few feed gaps and limited local buying activity.
- Sheep graziers' warnings are in place due to cool overnight temperatures, with 7 °C forecast in Hamilton on Friday. Cold and showery conditions may lift short-term feeding, but with on-farm reserves strong, this is unlikely to materially shift local demand.

- Light rainfall late week will top up soil moisture before conditions clear from Sunday. In Heywood, temperatures are forecast to rise into the high 20s to low 30s by Tuesday. Warm conditions will dry surface moisture, but current reserves reduce immediate pressure on hay.
- December to February rainfall was mostly below average across the region, though later rainfall improved conditions. Soil moisture is mostly average. The April to June outlook shows a low chance of exceeding average rainfall. The timing of the autumn break will still shape winter pasture growth, but at present, there are no widespread feed gaps.
- Producers note that autumn and winter rainfall timing will have more impact on profitability than urea or diesel prices. If the break is late, demand for nitrogen and supplementary hay may increase. For now, strong carryover stocks are keeping buying activity subdued.
- Enquiries from northern New South Wales are targeting southwest Victoria for supply. Rising freight costs may limit movement north. This may help clear some surplus locally, but delivered prices into northern markets are likely to remain firm due to freight pressure.
- Like other Victorian regions, lucerne has lifted each week in March after a summer of steady pricing. Pasture hay is flat this week, keeping it at its lowest price for two years.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$265 to \$405/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +10 (\$435 to \$595). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$105 to \$155/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

- Major flood warnings for Adelaide earlier this week have lifted. While outside the main production zone, this highlights how mixed seasonal conditions are across the state.
- In Naracoorte, conditions are favourable for fieldwork. Cool temperatures and only light sprinkles are forecast late week, followed by warming conditions into the mid-20s and up to 30 °C on Tuesday. Millicent is seeing similar conditions.
- Across the wider eastern wheat-sheep zone, December to February rainfall was above average for much of the region due to a slow-moving trough in late February. Prior to this, rainfall and soil moisture had been below to very much below average. Soil moisture is now above average in many southern areas, improving early-season confidence.
- The April to June outlook shows a low chance of exceeding average rainfall, with low to moderate confidence. Additional rainfall will still be needed ahead of the main April planting window, particularly in northern areas where soils remain drier.
- Concerns around urea and fuel pricing, as well as supply security linked to the Middle East conflict, are influencing decision-making. Higher input costs are prompting some producers to reassess nitrogen strategies and planting intentions. If urea application is reduced and winter growth underperforms, reliance on supplementary hay may increase.
- Some producers are considering securing additional cattle while feed conditions look favourable. If follow-up rainfall does not continue, higher stocking rates will increase feeding

pressure. This would likely lift hay enquiry into winter, particularly if input constraints limit pasture response.

- Prices remain flat this week after slight downward adjustments to straw and pasture hays, which are the lowest they have been since early 2025 and late 2024, respectively.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$255 to \$335/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$430 to \$570/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$125 to \$175/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$225 to \$295/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Central South Australia

- Major flood warnings for the Adelaide area earlier in the week have lifted. While localised, it highlights recent rainfall intensity and proximity to key freight routes and storage infrastructure.
- Most parts of the region are experiencing mild and partly cloudy conditions, warming into Tuesday. These stable conditions are supporting paddock access and field operations.
- Conditions continue to improve across the wider eastern wheat-sheep zone, which Central South Australia forms part of. December to February rainfall was above average for much of the zone, driven by a slow-moving trough associated with a tropical low that tracked through central Australia in late February. Prior to this event, both rainfall and soil moisture were below average. Soil moisture is now above average across much of the zone.
- Many cropping producers who received rainfall in recent weeks are busy maintaining paddocks and spraying weeds ahead of planting. The April to June rainfall forecast indicates a low chance of exceeding average rainfall for the period, with low to moderate confidence. Despite recent rainfall, further falls are needed ahead of the main April planting window, particularly in northern parts of the region where soils remain drier, and totals have been lower.
- Ground cover is currently good, and many farms are feeding off pasture following recent rainfall. This is limiting demand for fodder in the short term.
- Sentiment across the region is more positive following some of the worst drought conditions seen over the past 12 months. However, rising urea and fuel prices remain a concern. Higher input and freight costs may limit movement of hay into northern New South Wales and southern Queensland, as noted in last week's report, particularly where delivered margins are tight.
- No 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: +/-0 (\$110 to \$190/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Southwest Western Australia

- From later Thursday, Tropical Cyclone Narelle is expected to turn south and may impact western parts of WA. This system is shaping as a key rainfall event for the south west.
- Katanning is forecast to receive showers from Friday, building to around 50 mm of rainfall on Saturday, with lighter falls into next week. For many producers who have seen little rainfall in recent weeks, this will be welcome. If totals hold, it may signal the start of the autumn break.
- Further south, Pemberton and coastal areas are forecast to receive similar rainfall, along with severe wind warnings. Any tall standing crops are at risk of wind damage.
- December to February rainfall was mostly below to very much below average across much of the zone, although some areas benefited from rainfall linked to ex-tropical cyclone Mitchell. Soil moisture remains variable, below average in the far south west and mostly average elsewhere. The April to June outlook indicates a low chance of exceeding average rainfall. Some growers have started planting winter crops ahead of this forecast rainfall.
- Northern pastoral regions are entering a third year of drought, with some areas recording only 60 mm of rainfall last year. Emergency fodder demand remains strong. Thousands of donated bales are stored in Esperance, but high diesel costs are limiting northbound freight.
- Fuel supply remains tight, with reports that metropolitan areas are being prioritised. Road train rule changes may help, but diesel availability remains uncertain heading into seeding. This creates risk around planting scale and may also influence hay programs.
- If fuel access improves and freight becomes viable, more hay is likely to move north to drought-affected regions. This would tighten supply in the south west and support local pricing. At present, high diesel costs are lifting freight rates and delivered hay values, particularly into deficit pastoral areas.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$195 to \$295/t). Prices remain steady 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

- December to February rainfall was mostly below average. Soil moisture is mostly average across the region. The April to June outlook shows a low chance of exceeding average rainfall, with low to moderate confidence. Forecast cold and wet conditions across southeast Australia later this week may increase the risk to livestock, particularly where pasture cover is short.
- At Smithton, a marine wind warning is in place. Severe winds with light showers late week may cause some crop damage, particularly in exposed paddocks. Into next week, little to no rainfall is forecast. Overnight temperatures are expected to drop to around 6 °C on Friday, which will slow pasture growth.

- Locally, results are mixed. Some producers report strong ground growth and are feeding livestock without hay. Others remain light on and are watching conditions closely. Silage is well stocked, but buying activity has been limited as many farms are utilising fresh pasture growth.
- In two to three months, as cows move into the dry period, demand for hay and straw is expected to lift sharply. Until then, pricing remains steady, with limited upward pressure, as current feed needs are largely met by pasture rather than conserved fodder.
- A recent mini break of rainfall has improved confidence. Fresh pasture growth is the main reason fodder is not moving in volume. However, there is ongoing discussion around rising fuel prices. Contractors are flagging higher freight costs to buyers, and the market has so far shown understanding. If diesel prices continue to rise, delivered hay values are likely to firm, even if paddock demand remains steady.
- 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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