Dairy Australia

Hay Report

31 July 2026

DELIVERING for DAIRY

Contents

AFIA
Australian Fodder Industry Association

Summary

Driving Prices Up

- Any production shortfall in Western Australia this season will likely redirect export demand to eastern states. This will see increasing competition for quality hay in domestic and export markets and a lift in prices. One to watch.

Driving Prices Down

- Hay prices are easing, with more sellers than buyers in the market.
- Demand from northern NSW has fallen, reducing a key outlet for surplus hay.
- Buyers are well covered and holding off purchases.
- Strong crop and pasture growth means more on-farm fodder, reducing demand for bought hay.
- Frosts are continuing to pose a risk in Central West NSW and southern areas and may push more crops into hay and silage. This will lift supply

National Weather Summary and Outlook

- August to October rainfall is likely to be below average across most southern and eastern cropping regions, including southwest WA, southeast Australia, and parts of Queensland.
- There is an increased chance of unusually low rainfall across far southeast and southwest mainland Australia, and southeast Queensland.
- Above average rainfall is expected across parts of northwest Australia, extending into the interior.
- Daytime temperatures are likely to be above average across most of Australia south of the tropics, with a higher chance of unusually hot conditions in the southeast and southwest.
- Overnight temperatures are also expected to be above average across most regions, especially across WA, SA and southeast Australia.
- Frost risk remains present despite the warmer outlook.

  *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

- Persistent wet conditions throughout the year continue, with more rain forecast from Saturday and up to 10mm of rain expected, limiting drying opportunities for hay.
- Short dry windows have allowed some progress, but ongoing showers and a wet spring outlook are likely to further delay paddock activity and restrict hay availability.
- Strong pasture growth from consistent rainfall has kept on-farm feed supply high, reducing immediate hay demand.
- High livestock prices are driving restocking from further afield, which may increase fodder demand if wet paddocks limit grazing access.
- 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

- Dry conditions continue with little to no rainfall forecast and frost risk emerging, which is limiting pasture growth and tightening on-farm feed availability.
- Soil moisture is declining across the region, and caution remains around irrigated crops as water storages drop.
- Winter crops are progressing under mild conditions but remain behind due to the late seasonal break.
- Earlier rainfall boosted pasture growth, but current dry conditions are shifting focus back to fodder requirements, particularly further west.
- Local untested barley hay is being advertised at $230 per tonne, indicating lower-end pricing and excess supply, while lucerne prices remain high with limited local supply until new season production.
- Significant change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -50 ($230 to $430/t). Prices decrease 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

- Wet weather along the coast continues, with daily showers from Friday in areas like Lismore, limiting any chance to cut and cure hay and delaying paddock work.
- Inland areas remain drier, with only light showers forecast, doing little to improve deeper soil moisture levels.
- Soil moisture is declining further inland, and while winter crops are progressing under mild conditions, they remain behind due to the late start.
- Irrigation outlook remains cautious as water availability tightens.
- Hay supply remains limited, keeping prices firm, with little relief expected until new season production.
- 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

- Cold conditions continue, with overnight temperatures below 0°C across Condobolin, Forbes and Parkes, increasing frost risk to winter crops and raising concern around potential damage.
- No rainfall is forecast, and declining soil moisture at the root zone is adding pressure on crop development and overall seasonal outlook.
- A drier outlook through August to October increases the risk of reduced production if conditions do not improve.
- Hay and straw are being actively listed across multiple sales channels, indicating sellers are working to move stock. Current listings include clover hay around $500 per tonne and barley and wheaten straw around $160 per tonne, all shedded and untested.
- Significant change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -15 ($300 to $390/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: -40 ($410 to $540/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: +/-0 ($140 to $200/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: -15 ($215 to $315/t). Prices decrease this week.

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Bega Valley

- Coastal conditions remain challenging, with marine gales creating risk for livestock, ground cover and early-stage crops. No rainfall is forecast, despite it being needed to bolster current root zone moisture levels.
- Frost risk continues inland around areas like Candelo, with sub-zero overnight temperatures expected and ongoing concern following persistent frosts through July.
- Soil moisture is declining across the region, increasing pressure on crop establishment and pasture growth.
- Pressure is building on hay sheds, with growers looking to clear old-crop hay ahead of new season yields, which are currently tracking around six to nine tonnes per hectare.
- Hay exporters are receiving increased selling enquiries but remain cautious buyers, carrying over stock across seasons and managing supply across states. This may support demand for southern NSW hay if production tightens in other regions.
- Significant change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -15 ($350 to $470/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: -40 ($485 to $625/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: +/-0 ($240 to $290/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: -15 ($265 to $395/t). Prices decrease this week.

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Goulburn/Murray Valley

- Seasonal conditions remain strong, with above average soil moisture supporting crop and pasture growth across much of the region.
- Recent rainfall, including up to 140mm over two months in some areas, has boosted production potential, though waterlogging is emerging in pockets and may impact yield if it continues.
- Soil moisture is uneven through the profile, with good surface moisture but limited depth in some paddocks, raising concern if spring rainfall does not arrive.
- Mild frosts have been recorded but, so far, have caused minimal damage to crops.
- Hay crops are performing well, with strong growth in ryegrass and clover and a positive outlook for spring cutting, pointing toward solid hay production.
- Increased online listings suggest some growers are actively trying to move stock, contributing to easing prices as buyer demand softens.
- Pressure remains on growers to clear old-crop hay ahead of a potentially strong new season, while exporter demand stays cautious.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -15 ($225 to $345/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: -20 ($410 to $570/t). Prices decrease this week.

- Straw: +/-0 ($115 to $135/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 ($170 to $330/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Gippsland

- Paddocks appear green across parts of the region, but underlying soil moisture is very low, limiting pasture growth and reducing hay production potential.
- Light rainfall events are doing little to replenish soil profiles, with no meaningful runoff for several years and dam levels continuing to decline.
- Frost conditions have added further pressure, slowing growth and compounding already dry conditions.
- Some producers are already supplementary feeding or destocking, bringing forward demand for hay earlier than usual.
- Root zone soil moisture remains below average in key areas, and a forecast for below average rainfall into spring adds further risk to fodder production.
- Growers are looking for a strong rainfall event through August and September to support pasture and hay crops, but current conditions point to tight local supply and steady demand.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -15 ($255 to $405). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: -20 ($490 to $600/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: +/-0 ($135 to $195/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 ($155 to $325/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Southwest Victoria

- Seasonal conditions remain favourable, with above average soil moisture helping strong crop and pasture growth across the region.
- Crops are well advanced in areas north, toward the Wimmera and Mallee, pointing to an earlier-than-usual hay season if conditions hold.
- Mild weather has driven growth, though recent frosts in some areas have slowed progress. Other parts of the region have avoided frost so far, which has helped maintain momentum.
- Soil profiles are close to full in some districts, with early signs of run-off. Follow-up rainfall will still be needed to carry crops through to finish.
- The production outlook remains strong, with good hay yields likely heading into spring.

- Large volumes of hay are being listed online, showing growers are actively trying to move stock. This may weigh on prices if buyer demand does not improve.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -15 ($215 to $355/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: -20 ($415 to $575). Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: +/-0 ($120 to $170/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 ($175 to $255/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Southeast South Australia

- Seasonal conditions are steady, with above average soil moisture helping crops and pastures remain in good shape across the region.
- Strong rainfall through the first half of the year has driven good pasture growth, with high livestock prices reflecting confidence and competition for available feed.
- Most growers are in a holding pattern, with crops established and fertiliser applied. Focus has shifted to maintenance work while waiting for spring growth.
- Warmer minimum temperatures are expected, but recent rainfall of rain has been light and patchy, offering little follow-up moisture in areas like Naracoorte.
- Hay movement remains slow, with limited buying activity through winter. This is keeping the market quiet for now, though activity is expected to lift into spring.
- Growers are working to clear out old-crop hay ahead of harvest, with sheds needing to be emptied before new season supply comes in.
- Yields are shaping up well, with expectations around 6 to 9 tonne per hectare, pointing to a solid upcoming hay season.
- Exporters remain cautious buyers and are already carrying over stock, which is limiting movement despite growers looking to sell. Any production shortfall in Western Australia could shift demand east, which may influence pricing for this region.
- Online listings are increasing, including barley hay around $250 per tonne, giving a clear read on current price levels.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -15 ($210 to $290/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($390 to $530/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 ($125 to $175/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 ($190 to $260/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Central South Australia

- Seasonal conditions remain favourable, with above average soil moisture keeping crops and pastures in good shape across the region.
- Strong rainfall through the first half of the year has set up solid feed availability, with high livestock prices reflecting competition for stock.
- Many growers are in a quiet period, with crops established and fertiliser applied. Focus has shifted to general farm work while waiting for spring growth.
- Cooler conditions are setting in around areas like Jamestown, with overnight temperatures near 0°C increasing frost risk and slowing early crop development. This may also lead to some hand feeding of livestock.
- Hay movement remains very slow, with little buying activity and limited change in current holdings. Seasonal demand is expected to lift as conditions warm into spring.
- Growers are working to clear sheds ahead of harvest, with new-crop yields expected in the range of 6 to 9 tonne per hectare.
- Exporters remain cautious and are carrying significant stock across grades, limiting buying interest despite growers looking to sell. Any shortfall in Western Australia production could shift demand east, which may influence pricing in this region.
- Prices are starting to ease as buying activity remains low and sellers look to make room for hay this coming season.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: -10 ($245 to $305/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Lucerne hay: -10 ($430 to $550/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: -10 ($160 to $250/t). Prices decrease this week

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Southwest Western Australia

- The outlook for August to October points to below average rainfall, with a higher chance of unusually dry conditions across parts of the far south-west. Warmer than average temperatures are also expected.
- After a solid start to the season, rainfall has dropped away in key hay districts. Soil moisture is declining, increasing reliance on timely rainfall to carry crops through grain fill and maintain yield potential. This creates some uncertainty around hay production later in the season.
- Light rainfall around Katanning has provided a short-term boost, offering some relief to dryland crops. No frost has been reported, which is a positive sign for current crop conditions.
- Growers are looking to clear old-crop hay ahead of harvest, with new-crop yields currently estimated around 6 to 9 tonne per hectare, though this will depend heavily on follow-up rainfall.
- Exporters remain cautious and are carrying stock across grades, which is limiting new buying despite growers looking to sell. If production falls short in Western Australia, demand may shift to eastern states, which could influence price direction.

- Significant change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 ($190 to $280/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: -50 ($540 to $740/t). Prices decrease 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

- The seasonal outlook points to below average rainfall across much of south-east Australia, though this is less likely to affect this region. Warmer than average temperatures are expected.
- Regular rainfall is keeping soil moisture in check across the region, with both coastal and inland areas tracking well for crop and pasture growth.
- Waratah is seeing consistent showers, while Smithton is receiving follow-up rainfall along with coastal winds. Conditions are favourable for growing across most parts of the region.
- Daytime temperatures are sitting below 10°C in some areas, slowing growth rates but not raising major concerns at this stage.
- Hay demand is starting to improve, with enquiries now translating into sales. Several pasture hay transactions in the past week show early movement in the market.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 ($160 to $200/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($290 to $370/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 ($90 to $130/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: -20 ($240 to $300/t). Prices decrease this week.

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Acknowledgement
Dairy Australia acknowledges the funding from levy payers and contribution by Commonwealth Government.