Dairy Australia

Hay Report

5 June 2026

DELIVERING for DAIRY

Contents

AFIA
Australian Fodder Industry Association

Summary

Driving Prices Up

- Fertiliser and baling costs are keeping a floor under hay prices, despite surplus stock in southern regions.
- Frosts across multiple regions are lifting feed demand, with sellers hoping this will drive renewed buyer activity.
- Forecast rainfall across all major hay-growing regions is supporting germination and crop establishment, strengthening production confidence.
- Rainfall is also helping ease drought conditions in southern QLD and central to northern NSW, improving the seasonal outlook and supporting grower sentiment.

Driving Prices Down

- The Victorian market remains slow, with ample stored fodder limiting buyer urgency.
- Improved rainfall in southern QLD and northern NSW is reducing demand for imported feed, with some previously secured southern hay returning to market.
- Almond hulls from Vic and SE SA, used as a straw substitute in dry areas, will clear early at a discount following rainfall in northern NSW and southern QLD. This is likely to leave straw stocks in surplus and place downward pressure on straw prices.
- Late planting across the Darling Downs and northern NSW is expected to extend reliance on existing southern supply, keeping storage levels high. One to watch.
- Strong planting conditions are improving the outlook for cereal hay production, which may increase supply and place downward pressure on prices if conditions hold.

National Weather Summary and Outlook

- Winter rainfall is likely to be below average across SE QLD, most of NSW, VIC, TAS, SA, and SW WA.
- Much of southern Australia has a greater than 50 per cent chance of very low rainfall during this period.
- The Australian wheatbelt and key hay regions are likely to see below-average rainfall.
- Day and night temperatures are likely to be above average across most southern regions.
- There is a high chance of unusually warm days across NSW, VIC, TAS, SA, and southern QLD.
- Frost remains possible in colder districts and may slow winter pasture growth.

  *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

- Dry conditions have followed light rainfall earlier in the week across Mareeba and Atherton, giving producers a much-needed window to access paddocks. Warm days, particularly in Mareeba, with temperatures in the high 20s, are helping dry out after a very wet 2026.
- Sowing is continuing where possible, though overall planting has been reduced due to earlier wet conditions. Many growers are relying on existing crops rather than putting in new ones.
- The current dry spell, now around two weeks, has allowed growers to catch up on paddock work and push ahead with cutting. The activity is focused on removing grass before forecast rainfall returns next week.
- Some crops, including Rhodes grass, are being mulched rather than baled due to quality decline caused by prolonged wet conditions. This is limiting the volume of hay suitable for higher-grade markets.
- Hay is being cut and baled across the region during this dry window, but movement remains slow. If conditions hold long enough to get bales into sheds, usable stock will be available, though quality is expected to be mixed due to the season.
- 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

- Late May rainfall has shifted what was a poor outlook. Growers who had held off are now planting, supported by improved soil moisture. Late-sown oats around Chinchilla and Dalby are already establishing, lifting expectations for both grain and hay yield compared to a month ago.
- Reliance on Victorian fodder has largely eased following recent rainfall across the region, including previously dry areas. This is reducing immediate pressure on imported hay supply.
- The region is still expected to draw straw from southern New South Wales, though demand may slow as alternative feed sources, including almond hulls from Victoria and South Australia and new local plantings, begin to supplement feed availability.
- Increased hay production in western and central Queensland, alongside destocking, is improving self-sufficiency and reducing the expected draw on fodder reserves.
- Heavy rainfall forecast for Toowoomba and further west around Roma will boost soil moisture and support crop prospects, with a clear window to return to field work once conditions dry.
- Despite rainfall, growers are likely to hold hay stocks while winter crop prospects remain uncertain, potentially limiting supply to the market in the short term.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 ($330 to $430/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.

Please note: Unless stated otherwise, prices are per tonne, sourced, and delivered locally. The price range indicated is for feeds of varying quality. We recommend testing and inspecting the fodder before purchase to ensure its quality.

North Coast NSW

- May rainfall has made a clear impact on winter feed, lifting soil moisture and shifting growers from holding off to getting crops in, though later than planned.
- Recent rainfall of 25 to 50mm across the Northern Rivers and Mid North Coast disrupted planting, but conditions are expected to clear by the weekend, providing a window to resume seeding. This will support germination and may allow more wheat and barley to be planted, some of which will be cut for cereal hay.
- Late May rainfall has reduced reliance on Victorian fodder, with local feed availability improving across the region, including previously dry inland areas.
- Livestock remaining on farm will now be fed through winter, supported by improved feed conditions.
- The seasonal outlook has shifted quickly. Growers who had written off the season are now planting, including late oats that are already establishing well. This is likely to lift hay production potential compared to expectations a month ago, increasing local supply.
- 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

- Rainfall from June to August is expected to be below average. Ongoing light showers and mild conditions are supporting late planting, with some crops going in on the back of recent falls.
- Soil moisture had been declining, limiting early planting decisions, though rainfall in May has improved conditions and allowed more wheat and barley to be sown, some of which will be cut for cereal hay.
- Livestock numbers retained on farm will be fed through winter, with limited reliance on pasture alone.

- Improved rainfall has eased earlier concerns around poor pasture growth and reduced hay crop area. This is likely to support livestock condition and bring additional hay volumes into the market that were not previously expected, increasing potential supply.
- Straw has adjusted after increasing last week.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 ($330 to $420/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($460 to $590/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +20 ($125 to $185/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 ($235 to $335/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Bega Valley

- May rainfall has improved soil moisture levels, lifting crop growth and strengthening livestock feed availability across the region.
- Recent showers have topped up moisture, with more light rainfall expected next week to maintain conditions for establishment.
- Most winter cropping programs are complete, with wheat and barley finishing up; of which, some will be cut for cereal hay.
- Hay demand remains slow, with plenty of stored fodder on hand, although some hay continues to move north. Northern NSW and southern QLD will still draw straw from the Bega Valley and surrounding regions, but it is expected to slow as last-minute crops have gone in off the back of substantial May falls.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 ($380 to $500/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($535 to $675/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 ($245 to $295/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

- May rainfall has improved soil moisture levels, driving steady winter crop and pasture growth and lifting feed availability across the region.
- More rainfall is forecast from Saturday across both the east, around Shepparton, and the western areas near Kerang, aiding germination and crop establishment.

- Most winter cropping programs are complete or nearing completion, with wheat and barley established in good conditions, some of which will be cut for cereal hay.
- Hay demand remains slow across Victoria, with plenty of stored fodder in sheds meeting winter needs and limiting buying activity.
- Straw remains competitively priced in this region compared to other major hay areas, reflecting strong available supply.
- Prices have held steady for the third consecutive week, indicating a balanced market with low demand.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 ($255 to $375/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($440 to $600/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 ($110 to $130/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 ($175 to $335/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Gippsland

- May rainfall has lifted soil moisture levels, driving steady winter crop and pasture growth and improving livestock feed availability.
- Following recent extreme weather across West, South and East Gippsland—including high tides, heavy rain, strong winds and cold overnight temperatures—conditions are expected to ease into the weekend. Frost remains a risk for fresh plantings in the near term.Most winter cropping programs are complete, with wheat and barley established in good conditions, some of which will be cut for cereal hay.
- Hay demand remains slow across Victoria, with ample stored fodder in sheds covering winter needs and limiting buying activity.
- Prices remain flat for the third consecutive week.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 ($285 to $435). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-05 ($520 to $630/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 ($130 to $190/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 ($160 to $330/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Southwest Victoria

- May rainfall has improved soil moisture levels, driving strong winter crop and pasture growth and lifting overall feed availability.
- Further rainfall is forecast across Hamilton and coastal areas, providing continued moisture for germination and crop establishment.
- Most winter cropping programs are complete, with wheat and barley established in favourable conditions, some of which will be cut for cereal hay.
- Pasture and hay paddocks across the Wimmera and Western Districts are off to a solid start, pointing to good hay production potential.
- Catchment inflows remain variable, though early signs of runoff are improving water availability across the region.
- The recent cold snap has arrived at the right time for lambing, with existing hay reserves helping maintain ewe condition and easing near-term demand for hay.
- Hay demand remains slow, with ample stored fodder in sheds limiting market activity.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 ($245 to $385/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($445 to $605). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 ($115 to $165/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

- Well above average rainfall from February to April, followed by solid May rainfall, has supported planting, with more rain forecast in the coming week to aid germination and crop establishment.
- Soil moisture levels have improved across the region, supporting strong crop and pasture growth and lifting livestock feed availability.
- Winter crop seeding is largely complete, with wheat and barley established in good conditions, some of which will be cut for cereal hay.
- Isolated reseeding has occurred on the Eyre Peninsula due to earlier heavy rainfall, though overall conditions remain favourable for establishment.
- The strong seasonal start is building confidence for hay production and potential supply later in the season.
- Hay demand remains slow, with ample carryover fodder in sheds reducing the need for immediate purchases.
- 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 ($195 to $265/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Central South Australia

- Well above average rainfall from February to April, followed by solid May rainfall, has supported planting, with further rain forecast to improve germination and crop establishment.
- Soil moisture levels have increased, supporting strong crop and pasture growth and improving overall feed availability.
- Winter crop seeding is largely complete, with wheat and barley established in ideal conditions, some of which is destined for cereal hay production.
- Early crop growth is strong, with advanced emergence and consistent green coverage across the region, pointing to a positive outlook for hay supply.
- Demand remains slow, with ample fodder in sheds, reducing immediate buying pressure.
- Limited hay movement over recent months reflects strong on-farm reserves, with growers expecting supply to be more than adequate this season.
- 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

- May rainfall has supported planting and improved crop emergence, setting up a solid start for hay production across dryland areas.
- Soil moisture is average to above average across much of the region, though conditions are starting to tighten toward the wheatbelt.
- Strong early crop establishment is building confidence for hay supply, with good germination following recent rainfall.
- A drier outlook from June to August may limit production potential later in the season, particularly in wheatbelt areas if follow-up rain is limited.
- Mouse activity is causing ongoing damage to emerging crops in the drier north, potentially reducing hay yields and tightening supply in affected areas.

- Demand remains steady, with production outlook currently favourable but dependent on rainfall through winter.
- 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

- Ongoing rainfall since May is improving conditions, with more rain forecast to support soil moisture recovery and help establish recently planted crops.
- Soil moisture remains below average across Tasmania, but the northwest is now sitting at average and improving with continued wet weather.
- Strong autumn rainfall has lifted cropping outcomes and feed availability, setting up pastures and supporting livestock across the region.
- Grower confidence has improved, with mild days and regular rainfall driving steady pasture growth and a positive start to the season.
- Hay demand remains slow, with silage widely used in rations, reducing the need for hay in the short term.
- Some growers are exploring lower prices to move stock from areas becoming difficult to access due to wet paddocks, though prices are holding steady.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 ($200 to $260/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 ($360 to $440/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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