

# Hay Report

8 May 2026

DELIVERING  
*for* DAIRY



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# Summary

## Driving Prices Up

- Urea and fuel uncertainty continues to influence planting decisions, buyer activity and forward pricing expectations.
- Central West NSW remains dry, with steady uplift in cereal and pasture hay as local stocks tighten.
- Demand from Northern NSW and southern Queensland for higher-quality hays is firming prices in Victoria and Bega Valley.
- Conversely, cooler weather, frosts and limited rain are beginning to increase feed demand across the south.
- Price rises for pasture hay on the North Coast of NSW, cereal hay in the Darling Downs, and lucerne in NW Tasmania reflect tightening availability in specific lines.

## Driving Prices Down

- Increased silage production and enquiry, particularly in the Atherton Tablelands, Gippsland and NW Tasmania, is easing immediate hay demand.
- Continued destocking in dry parts of northern NSW and Queensland is reducing short-term purchasing pressure.
- Some growers are favouring silage over fertilising hay crops to limit risk following winter 2025 supply uncertainty.

## National Weather Summary and Outlook

- April rainfall was the lowest nationally since 2018, with NSW recording its second-lowest April on record. Rainfall deficiencies across NSW and southern Queensland are limiting autumn growth and tightening hay supply.
- From May to July, below-average rainfall is likely across much of eastern Australia, including Tasmania, with a strong dry signal for May. This raises the risk of reduced winter pasture growth and lower hay production.
- Maximum and minimum temperatures are likely to be above average from May to July. Warmer conditions may boost growth where moisture is adequate, but increase reliance on fodder in dry regions. Frosts remain a risk.
- Murray Darling Basin water storages are around 48 per cent of capacity, which may restrict irrigated hay production if dry conditions continue.

*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, including flooding, has left root-zone soil moisture mostly average to above average. Ground cover remains strong across the region.
- Conditions are still too wet to begin cutting. Growers are waiting another two to three weeks for further drying so hay is less rain-affected and can achieve better quality and returns.
- Yield potential is reasonable, though early cuts will reflect wet-season conditions and sit in the mid-quality range. Lower quality stock may be sold for mulch, while better lines are likely to suit dairy rations if a dry winter pattern develops.
- Hay is beginning to move into holding yards around Charters Towers, indicating seasonal supply is starting to build.
- Expected pricing sits between \$200 and \$240 per tonne, depending on how well crops dry before cutting. Growers are holding on price while monitoring conditions and quality.
- 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 poor, with some areas in the lowest 1%. The May to July outlook shows a low chance of above-average rainfall.
- Many growers need up to 100mm of rainfall before committing to winter crops. Some are scaling back planting due to dry soil and high input costs. This will reduce potential hay supply later in the season.
- Recent rainfall in some pockets has freshened paddocks, but it is not enough to shift the season. With no follow-up rain forecast, supplementary feeding continues.
- Fodder for drought feeding is being sourced from northern Victoria. Those with short-term supply secured are likely to re-enter the market in July and August.
- Destocking is increasing across the driest areas from Coomera to Dalby and Texas. Dalby saleyards have seen high yardings, reflecting limited feed on hand.
- Irrigated growers expect stable production, and are about to plant oats and barley.
- Limited supplies of hay cut at New Year remain available. Oaten hay is trading at \$380 to \$400 per tonne, depending on quality, with barley hay typically \$10 to \$20 per tonne lower. Transport and fuel costs are adding to delivered prices.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +30 (\$330 to \$430/t). Prices increase 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 very much below average. Root zone soil moisture remains well below average, and the May to July outlook indicates a low chance of above-average rainfall. Feed availability is tightening in drier pockets.
- Record beef cattle yardings reflect ongoing destocking due to dry conditions. This is increasing short-term livestock supply and easing cattle prices, while feed is moving out of the region.
- Conditions vary across the region. Some areas have received recent rainfall and are planting cereal and vetch for hay, while the northwest remains in need of rainfall.
- Hay is moving north and south out of the region. New season Rhodes pasture hay is trading around \$350 per tonne, depending on quality. Plantings of cereal hay and ryegrass are underway for on-farm use, with some growers watching the market before deciding to sell.
- Dairy farmers are buying higher protein vetch and lucerne hay from northern Victoria. This northern demand is helping push Victorian hay prices higher.
- Some 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: +75 (\$320 to \$380/t). Prices increase this week.

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## Central West NSW

- Root zone soil moisture is below average across the region. The May to July outlook indicates a low chance of above-average rainfall, with moderate to high confidence. Follow-up rainfall is needed to support winter crop establishment and pasture growth. Without it, reliance on hay will remain high. Producers are continuing to sow winter crops.
- No rainfall is forecast over the coming week. Overnight temperatures under 5°C, typical of the season, are putting early growth at risk. Pasture growth is slowing, and most of the bulk will not occur until spring. Supplementary feeding will continue through winter.
- Fodder for drought feeding is being sourced from the Riverina and Victoria and is moving into Nyngan, Bourke and Dubbo. Freight costs and diesel prices are adding to buyer pressure, increasing the delivered price of hay.
- Local hay stocks have declined after heading north to the New England region. This reduced availability is now driving prices higher.

- Some producers are covered for the next few months but are expected to re-enter the market in July and August, which may support continued demand.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +15 (\$335 to \$425/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +10 (\$450 to \$580/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +10 (\$140 to \$200/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$235 to \$335/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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## **Bega Valley**

- Root zone soil moisture is average to below average across the region. The May to July outlook shows a low chance of above-average rainfall, with moderate to high confidence. Only light rainfall is forecast next week, so not enough to improve soil moisture. Limited winter growth will maintain demand for hay.
- Overnight temperatures under 5°C are now typical of the season. Pasture growth is slowing, with most bulk not expected until spring. Supplementary feeding will continue through winter.
- Hay prices have lifted. Local supplies are moving north to dry regions, reducing availability locally and increasing prices.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +10 (\$380 to \$500/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +10 (\$525 to \$665/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +10 (\$235 to \$285/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$285 to \$415/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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## **Goulburn/Murray Valley**

- Summer rainfall improved soil moisture across much of the region, allowing winter sowing to get underway. However, the May to July outlook indicates a low chance of above-average rainfall. Follow-up rainfall is needed to support crop establishment and pasture growth. Without it, reliance on hay is likely to continue.
- Producers are progressing with winter crop planting.
- Few paddocks currently have enough bulk to sustain grazing, so supplementary feeding remains necessary. This is keeping hay demand steady.
- There is little to no rainfall forecast for Shepparton, Kerang and Elmore over the coming week. If dry conditions persist, pasture growth may slow, and hay demand could lift further.

- Hay from the region is in strong demand and is being trucked to dry parts of northern NSW and southern Queensland. This is driving prices up locally.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +10 (\$255 to \$375/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +10 (\$435 to \$595/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +10 (\$110 to \$130/t). Prices increase 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, and soil moisture is now at average levels. The May to July outlook shows a low chance of above-average rainfall, with timely follow-up rainfall needed to maintain growth.
- Early pasture germination has occurred across much of Gippsland. However, most paddocks do not yet carry enough bulk to sustain grazing. Supplementary feeding continues, maintaining steady hay demand.
- In the south, Yarram is forecast to receive light showers late week into the weekend, offering only limited reprieve. In the east, Bairnsdale is also expecting light rainfall. In the west, around Longwarry, forecast rainfall of up to 20mm will assist pasture and crop establishment.
- In an interesting trend, irrigators and dryland producers have grown larger areas of maize for silage this season. The growing popularity of this feed type may reduce future reliance on hay in dairy rations if seasonal conditions remain stable.
- Hay continues to move from Gippsland to the dry regions of northern NSW and southern Queensland, driving up hay prices across the region.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +10 (\$285 to \$435). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +10 (\$515 to \$625/t). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +10 (\$130 to \$190/t). Prices increase 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 to very much below average. Soil moisture is only at average levels, and dam storage remains low following poor run-off last year, tightening on-farm water reserves.

- Hamilton received 25mm of rain over the weekend, supporting early pasture germination after a dry April. However, northern parts of the region remain dry, and follow-up rainfall is needed to maintain growth. The May to July outlook shows a low chance of above-average rainfall.
- Limited pasture growth means most producers continue supplementary feeding. This is sustaining local hay demand while pasture establishment remains fragile.
- Late week showers will freshen paddocks but will not materially improve dam levels or rebuild soil moisture, keeping seasonal risk in play.
- Hay from the region continues to move into dry areas of northern NSW and southern Queensland. This external demand is leading to price increases.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +10 (\$255 to \$395/t). Prices increase this week.
- Lucerne hay: +10 (\$445 to \$605). Prices increase this week.
- Straw: +10 (\$115 to \$165/t). Prices increase this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$185 to \$265/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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## **Southeast South Australia**

- January to March rainfall lifted soil moisture to above average, supporting winter crop sowing. However, parts of the region began the season dry, where root-zone moisture remains uneven.
- Despite recent rainfall, more is needed during the current sowing window to ensure even establishment and crop success. The May to July outlook shows a low chance of above-average rainfall, which adds seasonal risk.
- Cooler conditions and light showers forecast around Naracoorte may slow germination and early crop growth, potentially delaying hay availability later in the season.
- Producers continue planting winter crops but face rising input pressure from locust activity and increasing mouse numbers, which may affect production costs and future pricing.
- Hay prices are steady. Pasture growth and existing on-farm stocks are meeting current feed demand. Victorian hay continues moving into drought-affected northern NSW and southern Queensland, easing demand pressure on local supplies.
- 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. Before this event, rainfall and soil moisture were below to very much below average. Root zone soil moisture is now above average.
- The May to July outlook shows a low chance of above-average rainfall. Further rainfall is needed to support crop establishment through the main sowing window. Winter crop planting is continuing across the region.
- Light showers forecast into next week will bring colder overnight temperatures, putting germination of early-sown crops at risk. This may limit hay yield potential later in the season.
- Locust activity is increasing as plague movements from western NSW into South Australia intensify. Growers are also baiting at sowing as mouse numbers build. Both pests pose a risk to emerging crops and could affect hay supply if damage occurs.
- 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

- January to March rainfall was mostly average, supported by ex-Tropical Cyclones Mitchell and Narelle. Root-zone soil moisture is average to above average; however, the May to July outlook shows only a low chance of above-average rainfall, suggesting levels may decline.
- Widespread rainfall last week provided timely support across parts of the region. Winter crop planting and emergence are progressing well under warm conditions and stored soil moisture.
- A York grower reports soil moisture is mixed across their property. An unexpected 20mm of rain this week has supported seeding, with canola and lucerne in, and wheat and barley to follow. Dams are dry, leaving crops to rely on rainfall. Field conditions are currently favourable.
- Input costs remain high. Growers in some areas are applying bait at sowing as mouse numbers increase, posing a risk to emerging crops.
- There are early concerns about fuel availability for the 2026 to 2027 harvest, which may influence forward planning.
- 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

- Rainfall from January to March was below, or very much below average. Root zone soil moisture remains well below average. The May to July outlook shows a low chance of above-average rainfall.
- Smithton received 10mm and 15mm of rain mid-week, with only light showers forecast ahead. Conditions are mild for this time of year, though strong winds are further drying soil. Marine wind warnings remain in place.
- A contractor reports that a dry three-week stretch has slowed momentum after what felt like a reasonable autumn break. Spraying has been delayed due to cold, wet and windy conditions in parts of the region.
- Enquiries are steady, but buyers remain cautious due to freight and fuel costs. Some are choosing lower-quality local fodder to reduce transport costs, which may affect livestock performance, particularly in dairy herds.
- Silage continues to move, with many producers hesitant to lift prices. Lucerne is selling well.
- Some change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$200 to \$260/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +60 (\$360 to \$440/t). Prices increase 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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