

Hay Report

9 May 2025

DELIVERING
for DAIRY

Contents

Summary.....	3
Driving Prices Up.....	3
Driving Prices Down	3
Local News.....	3
Regional commentary	4
Atherton Tablelands	4
Darling Downs.....	4
North Coast NSW	5
Central West NSW	6
Bega Valley	6
Goulburn/Murray Valley	7
Gippsland	8
Southwest Victoria.....	8
Southeast South Australia	9
Central South Australia.....	10
Southwest Western Australia.....	11
Northwest Tasmania	11

Summary

Driving Prices Up

- **A remarkably stagnant week in hay and fodder pricing.** The lack of rain continues across all haymaking regions and puts pressure on farmers who need to purchase more hay for feed. The alternative is to sell their livestock, with agistment sites in Queensland's central west experiencing considerable uptake from parched regions of southern NSW, Victoria and South Australia.
- Despite this plateau, hay prices in the southeastern part of Australia have been at their highest for two months.
- **The federal election** may have put a hold on market variability as farmers awaited the outcome and possible change of seats in their electorates. While the national results were a "clean sweep", many rural regions await the outcome of tight contests between candidates.
- Last week, it was reported that straw, a **cheaper alternative to hay** in certain regions, was increasing slowly, but this week, it has stalled. Reports suggest that recently chopped maize, also deemed a palatable alternative to scarce fodder, will enter the market shortly as an alternative feed source.

Driving Prices Down

- **Nothing is driving prices down**, but the market continues to hold steady in many regions as growers in drought remain hopeful for rain. At the same time, those in flood-affected areas still need their pastures to dry out to prevent rot and continue cropping.
- **The slight increase in Lucerne** reported last week has stalled, with it decreasing only in South East South Australia, an area severely affected by continued drought.

Local News

- **Calling Time on Winter Feed:** Pasture experts indicate Southern Australian drought regions are rapidly running out of time to grow winter feed. With the autumn break all but missed in southwest Victoria and South Australia, combined with the lowest rainfall levels in over two years, the vital seed bank that allows permanent pastures to regrow is diminishing due to insufficient rains and depleted water stocks. Selling core breeders is now on the cards for many farmers.
- **BoM Update:** The BOM reports severe rainfall deficiencies across most of SA, southwest Victoria, and parts of the Southern Mornington Peninsula over the past 24 months. The Wimmera and parts of Gippsland have also faced serious shortfalls in the past year. Since February 2024, rainfall in southern SA and western Victoria has been in the lowest 5 – 10% of historical records. Soil moisture is well below average, leading to poor crop and pasture conditions, tree deaths in SA plantations, and limited water for livestock.
- Additional rainfall along the NSW north coast and south-east Queensland coast is interrupting harvest and planting for horticultural crops. This is happening in areas that already have high soil moisture levels, exacerbating waterlogging.
- In northern NSW and Queensland, winter crop planting is progressing, except for areas that recorded rain over the ANZAC Day long weekend.

- **Updated biosecurity requirements for hay imports into South Australia:** Under the *Plant Health Act 2009*, hay is now subject to stricter import controls due to pests such as Green Snail and Red Imported Fire Ant risk.

All commercial hay consignments entering South Australia must comply with specific entry requirements, including importer registration with PIRSA, approved documentation (Plant Health Certificate or General Biosecurity Declaration), and submission of a consignment manifest prior to arrival.

Certain consignments may also be subject to inspection or quarantine on entry. These requirements also apply to donated fodder transported as part of drought assistance efforts. Read more on the sa.gov.au website [HERE](#).

- Buyers are encouraged to feed test and view fodder before purchase to ensure the quality of feed.

Regional commentary

Atherton Tablelands

- A high chance of showers is expected across much of the region this week, with rain on the radar most days. While many parts of the Tablelands may only see light totals, coastal areas like Tully, Innisfail, and South Johnstone stand out, expecting up to 20mm of rainfall heading into the weekend.
- Above-average soil moisture in most of the region is set to extend the period of pasture growth into the early dry season.
- There is not a lot of hay moving, and the market remains very slow.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Pasture (Rhodes Grass) hay: +/-0 (\$280 to \$380/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, with the price range generally indicative of the quality of the feed. We recommend testing and viewing fodder before purchase to ensure the quality of feed.

Darling Downs

- Morning fog, followed by sunny conditions, seems to be the standard for the week across Darling Downs. Conditions remain dry until the weekend, where chances of showers increase in Oakey, Stanthorpe, Toowoomba, and Warwick, but it brings with it little to no rain.
- Recent rain has topped up soil moisture across the region, supporting final summer crop harvest, early winter planting, and likely extending pasture growth into the early dry season.
- Sorghum harvest and cotton picking are wrapping up, with planting of winter crops now underway in parts of the region. Sorghum remains the dominant grain for export, while wheat movement from the Brisbane port zone has slowed.

- Grower grain sales have picked up slightly, helped by recent rainfall, though most are expected to hold off making larger sales until the new financial year in July.
- Hay and feed markets remain stable, with steady local demand but limited market movement at this stage.
- No change to pricing again this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$360 to \$460/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$465 to \$515/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$230 to \$290/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$250 to \$300/t) Prices remain steady this week.

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North Coast NSW

- Mild and mostly sunny across the region, with temperatures reaching the low to mid-20s. Light winds and dry conditions are making for good working weather. Inland areas might see a bit of morning fog.
- A shift will lead into the weekend, as a cold front moves across NSW. Expect cloud cover to build, with a medium chance of showers later in the day. Winds will swing to the south and could climb to 20–30 km/h, especially near the coast. The chance of showers is high across the region into next week, where the following inland areas can expect a maximum of 10mm of rain daily: Bellingen, Bowraville, Comboyne, Dorrigo, and Wauchope.
- Watch for weed activity after the rain. Warmer soil and a few showers can kick things off, especially in fallow paddocks and around pasture edges. Pushing out spraying and fertilising timings is also recommended if paddocks are wet underfoot.
- The market remains quiet and stable with little currently on offer locally or via online trading sites.
- No change to pricing again this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$280 to \$400/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$400 to \$460/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$150 to \$250/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

- A cold front moved across southern NSW earlier this week, bringing a southerly wind change and cooler air through the Central West. Ahead of the change, warm and dry conditions held, with maximum temperatures reaching the mid to high 20s. Winds began easing into the evening.
- Since Thursday, temperatures have dropped slightly, in the low to mid-20s. Sunny and settled conditions are expected to continue across the region into the weekend. However, the outlook remains dry, with little to no rainfall forecast over the next week.
- Cooler nights follow the change, with overnight minimums dropping between 4–9°C from Friday. With clear skies and dry air in place, there's a chance of patchy frost in more exposed areas.
- Lucerne producers have completed their last cut for the season, with Lucerne for sale in the Forbes area being offered at \$322/t and Oaten hay between \$350/t and \$290/t ex farm. Online trading sites show Lucerne has sold for \$400/t in Dubbo, and Wheaten hay for \$305/t in Coonamble.
- Cotton harvest continues to track well, with dry weather allowing steady progress across most areas. Activity remains focused on picking and transport, with completion expected in the coming weeks.
- Hay remains limited, and grain is still moving, especially for stock feed, as growers and livestock producers work with what's available in a dry landscape.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$270 to \$320/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$390 to \$480/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$120 to \$170/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$270 to \$320/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Bega Valley

- Dry and mostly sunny weather has persisted this week and is expected to hold through Saturday. There was a slight chance of a shower in the north on Thursday, but conditions overall have remained stable. Producers have experienced cool nights with patchy fog or frost inland, and daytime temperatures sitting between the mid-teens and low 20s.
- Gale-force winds impacted the Eden and Batemans coasts earlier in the week, with rough offshore conditions on Thursday as the gale warning extended across both zones. Those working along the coast or moving livestock and equipment need to monitor conditions closely and adjust plans where necessary.

- A strong high has now moved in, helping to settle conditions across the region. This system is bringing lighter winds, clearer skies, and cooler overnight temperatures heading into the weekend. Only Ulladulla can expect a top-up, with 10mm of rain predicted next week.
- Hay pricing has held steady this week, with minimal local movement. Most growers are holding onto feed, and not a lot is changing hands at present. Demand remains quiet, with many waiting to see how the next rain event plays out.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$355 to \$415/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$450 to \$560/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$220 to \$260/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$360 to \$430/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Goulburn/Murray Valley

- Daytime temperatures are sitting in the high teens to low 20s for the next week, with sunny, dry conditions to continue, and zero rainfall.
- Unlike western Victoria and parts of South Australia, the Goulburn and Murray Valleys have received useful rainfall during autumn to date, particularly through April. This has provided much-needed moisture for sowing and great working conditions while the current weather is dry with plenty of sun.
- Winter crop and pasture sowing is well underway, with most growers starting on schedule or only slightly delayed in drier pockets.
- Soil moisture has improved, but follow-up rainfall in May will still be important to support crop establishment and early pasture growth.
- The seasonal forecast for May indicates below median rainfall is likely, so it will be important to monitor conditions closely and remain flexible with inputs and grazing plans.
- Over the past two months, hay prices in this region have grown significantly, with Kyabram experiencing a rise of 14% for Pasture hay. Some Lucerne in the northern parts have sold at \$420/t ex-farm on online marketplaces.
- Hay prices have held steady this week after increasing across the board last week, mirroring the trend seen nationally.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$310 to \$350/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$400 to \$480/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$140 to \$170/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$280 to \$340/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Gippsland

- A cold front moved across Gippsland earlier in the week, bringing cooler temperatures and light, patchy rain, mainly in the West and Central districts. A high-pressure system has since pushed in, setting up several days of settled, dry weather from Wednesday night onward. Conditions are now mostly fine, with cooler mornings and light winds expected through the weekend.
- While there was an increased chance of showers across the West, East, and Central areas on Thursday, little to no rainfall is forecast heading into next week.
- Demand for hay remains strong, especially for cereal hay, which continues to be in short supply. Prices lifted across all hay types last week and have held steady this week. With recent rain in parts of West and South Gippsland, hay and silage are still being carted west to support drier areas.
- Reports suggest many producers are still trying to secure more cereal hay, with concerns that supplies may run short before winter sets in. With cooler, drier weather ahead, now's a key time for organising feed while transport and access remain steady.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$350 to \$400/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$460 to \$530/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$170 to \$230/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$280 to \$340/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Southwest Victoria

- Over the past 14 months, rainfall in southwest Victoria has been among the lowest 5–10% on record, leading to very dry soils and poor conditions for both crops and pastures. No rain appears to be on the horizon for the upcoming week. Minimum daily temperatures remain unusually high for this time of year, around 5°C warmer than average across the region.
- Conditions remain unfavourable in western Victoria. Soil moisture is well below average, leading to poor conditions for crops and pastures, and water shortages for livestock. Due to limited pasture growth, graziers will likely need to continue feeding stock into winter.
- The CFA has extended the fire danger period into May for four local shires: Moyne, Southern Grampians & Warrnambool, Glenelg, and Towong. This is in response to the ongoing drought and reported vegetation susceptible to fire ignition. Residents in affected areas are reminded that burning off remains prohibited unless a valid permit is obtained.

- Hay prices lifted across the board last week and have held steady this week, despite continued local demand from producers in drier areas who are still supplementary feeding. Over the past two months, prices across southeastern Australia have climbed noticeably, with Pasture hay in Koroit seeing a 21% increase.
- Farmers in the region are paying up to \$300/t for poor-quality round pasture hay bales, and \$200/t for straw. Oaten hay is being delivered at a minimum of \$380/t.
- Reports suggest that some beef and dairy farmers in the region have ample stocks of hay and silage on hand while they wait for the now overdue autumn break. While this is not the norm, producers are concerned, even those with generous fodder stocks.
- Chopped maize originating from a high-yield harvest in Mt Gambier may also begin to enter the market shortly as an alternative to scarce fodder.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$350 to \$390/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$410 to \$490). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$140 to \$220/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$285 to \$345/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Southeast South Australia

- Clearing showers midweek delivered little to no rain, with mostly sunny conditions forecast over the weekend. Temperatures remain in the high teens and are expected to reach the low 20s early next week. Minimum daily temperatures continue to sit around 5°C above the seasonal average.
- The autumn break is now overdue. While some beef and dairy producers store ample hay and silage, it's not the norm. Concern about feed supplies is growing, even among those with strong reserves, if rain continues to hold off.
- Dairy producers in SA are now eligible for support under the state's Donated Fodder Transport Drought Assistance Scheme. Through a new partnership with the South Australian Dairyfarmers Association (SADA), the scheme will support transport costs for the high-quality feed required by dairy cattle.
- A tight fodder supply is already being felt, with few hay inquiries reported. Most growers have already sold their stock or are holding on to what remains. Pasture hay prices in Mt Gambier have risen 14% in the past two months. Local Lucerne hay has recently sold for \$425/t ex-farm via online trading sites.
- Barley may be in strong demand through to year's end if dry conditions persist across South Australia and western Victoria. Chopped maize from Mt Gambier could also offer a local alternative, helping fill the gap left by limited fodder availability.
- Some change to pricing this week.

- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$390 to \$440/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: -5 (\$455 to \$485/t). Prices decrease this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$165 to \$215/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$305 to \$395/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Central South Australia

- Rainfall across central South Australia has been among the lowest 5–10% on record over the past 14 months. Soils remain dry, with limited pasture and crop growth heading into winter.
- Minimum daily temperatures remain higher than average for this time of year, with daytime temperatures sitting in the mid to high teens. Dry conditions persist, and no significant rainfall is forecast. The continued lack of moisture is placing further pressure on feed and water availability.
- The outlook indicates a high chance of below median rainfall for May, with no clear signs of improvement in June. This raises the risk of a prolonged rainfall deficiency across the region.
- Crop and pasture establishment is slow. Many producers are adjusting sowing plans to suit conditions, though success will depend heavily on meaningful May rainfall. Without it, establishing reliable winter feed will remain a major challenge.
- Graziers continue to give supplementary feed to livestock. Some areas are also facing stock water shortages and signs of tree stress due to ongoing soil moisture deficits.
- Fodder supplies in the Mid North remain critically low. Demand for hay continues, but availability is scarce. Straw is being used as a substitute, though those supplies are also running low.
- Local Lucerne hay has recently sold for \$405/t ex-farm via online trading sites but remains largely scarce. A bumper maize harvest out of Mt Gambier is expected to enter the region in the coming weeks. This may offer a much-needed alternative fodder source for livestock.
- Dairy producers in SA are now eligible for support under the state's Donated Fodder Transport Drought Assistance Scheme. Through a new partnership with the South Australian Dairyfarmers Association (SADA), the scheme will help cover transport costs for high-quality fodder suited to dairy herds; feed that is often not met by general fodder donations. This reflects ongoing recognition of the specific feed requirements of dairy cattle and rising pressure on producers in drought-affected areas.
- No change to pricing this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$300 to \$400/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$410 to \$470/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$180 to \$260/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Southwest Western Australia

- Mostly sunny conditions with early fog throughout the region this week, with the chance of showers increasing into the weekend. Despite this, little to no rainfall is predicted. Temperatures climb from the low 20s to the high 20s in some parts on Sunday before dropping into next week.
- Winter crop sowing is ongoing. Conditions have been favourable in central and southern parts of the region, but the north remains too dry.
- There's a low (20–30%) chance of above median rainfall in May, with high confidence, posing some risk to crops if soils stay dry. The June–August outlook is uncertain.
- Northern growers are dry sowing, but conditions aren't ideal. Without any necessary rain forecast over the coming week, growers are preparing to adjust their cropping plans.
- Messaging in local hay trading groups across Southwest WA reflects high stress and pressure in the community. Discussions show strong demand, tight supply, and growing sensitivity around pricing and availability, reinforcing reports of limited hay movement in the region.
- No change to pricing again this week.
- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$220 to \$300/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$400 to \$500/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$100 to \$160/t). Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$300 to \$350/t). Prices remain steady this week.

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Northwest Tasmania

- A strong cold front pushed across Tasmania on Thursday, bringing snow down to 400 metres, unusually low for this time of year.
- Gusty conditions were felt across the Far North West and Central North coasts, with exposed areas recording winds up to 70 km/h.
- While the chance of rain picked up midweek, conditions remain largely dry. Luncheon Hill received up to 10 mm of rain on Wednesday, while Low Head, Burnie, and Cape Grim saw only light falls of up to 5 mm of rain.
- Tasmania just endured its driest start to a year on record as a lack of early autumn rain worsened drought conditions. Northwest Tasmania continues to track rainfall below average, particularly between January and April. March and April brought little relief, so soil moisture remains low, limiting early pasture and crop growth.
- Looking ahead, the May to August seasonal forecast remains uncertain, with equal chances of wetter or drier than average conditions. Confidence in the long-term outlook is low.
- The market continues moving slowly, with little for sale or selling.
- No change to pricing again this week.

- Cereal hay: +/-0 (\$220 to \$280/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Lucerne hay: +/-0 (\$390 to \$440/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Straw: +/-0 (\$110 to \$160/t) Prices remain steady this week.
- Pasture hay: +/-0 (\$235 to \$265/t) Prices remain steady this week.

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