

The Cieran Maxwell Award for Excellence

Recognising an outstanding and consistent commitment to hay quality, relationships and standards.

Feed Central and Feed Standards Australia is proud to announce the establishment of the Cieran Maxwell Award for Excellence.

Cieran joined Feed Central in 2013 and became a highly respected and influential team member. He rose to the position of General Manager, a role he held for several years before leaving the business suddenly in 2022 following a bowel cancer diagnosis.

Throughout his time with Feed Central, Cieran had a major influence on the business, our team and our customers. He had a genuine commitment to customer service, built strong relationships across the fodder industry and was closely involved with the Hay Quality Awards.

Above all, Cieran believed in setting a standard and not allowing that standard to be compromised. He expected hay to be accurately represented, customers to be treated well and commitments to be honoured. He was respected by team members and customers alike for the consistency with which he upheld those expectations.

The Cieran Maxwell Award for Excellence will recognise a client who, over time, has demonstrated these same qualities.

The recipient will consistently produce or supply high-quality hay, communicate clearly and regularly, keep their listings and information current, and ensure that the hay that is loaded meets the quality represented in their listing.



They will be straightforward and reliable to deal with, maintain strong relationships and support the standards, culture and processes that help build confidence across the fodder industry.

While our existing Hay Quality Awards recognise outstanding individual lots through visual assessment and feed analysis, this new award goes further. It recognises not only the quality of the hay, but also the standard of the person behind it.

Through this award, we hope to honour Cieran's contribution and encourage the values he championed to continue across our business and the wider hay and fodder industry.



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Profitable Hay
Season 2026/27**

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A busy two months for Feed Standards Australia

New Names, Same Trusted Team.

You may have noticed some new names across our group. While our branding has changed, the people, services and support you know remain the same. The new names simply give each part of the business a clearer identity:

Feed Standards Australia provides independent feed testing, quality assurance, inspection and technical support.

LocalAg Marketplace connects growers and sellers directly with buyers.

Feed Central Trading supports feed sales with personalised account management, freight coordination and payment services.

The three businesses continue to work closely together, supporting the Australian hay and fodder industry from testing and quality assessment through to marketing, purchasing and transport.

Whats New in Memberships

Feed Standards Australia memberships are expanding beyond our existing grower and contractor membership options, including a **new membership designed for transport operators**.

The membership will include a range of benefits and incentives, along with **access to a dedicated shopfront connecting transporters with growers and buyers looking for freight services**.

See page 8 for more information

A Note From Tim

On the front page of this edition, we announced the establishment of the **Cieran Maxwell Award for Excellence**. This is a very special announcement for me.

When Cieran arrived in 2013, I was struggling in my role. Leadership can be lonely, and I needed someone who could step up, share the responsibility, help carry the load and walk alongside me. Cieran became that person.

There were long road trips, late nights away, lots of flights and a few beers in many bars. We spent countless hours talking through problems and trying to find better ways forward for Feed Central and the wider industry. To say that we spent more time together than with our wives and our young children would be an understatement. But that was Cieran's commitment. He gave it all and his wife Carolyn and the kids supported him every step of the way.

Through all of that, we developed enormous respect for one another and became close friends. Cieran was someone I trusted deeply and relied upon. He understood what we were building and helped shape the standards we wanted our industry and business to represent. Cieran did not simply work at Feed Central. He was respected across the industry and he became an integral part of the fabric of the business, and he remains so today.

Naming this award in his honour is deeply personal to me and to our team. We wish Cieran and his family the very best on his continuing health journey. We love him deeply, and our thoughts and prayers are with him every day of the week.



Tim Ford
Founder &
Managing Director

Industry First: Fuel Levy Calculator

Fuel price movements can have a significant impact on freight costs, yet the Australian hay and fodder industry has never had a dedicated tool for calculating these adjustments consistently.

Feed Standards Australia is leading the way with the development of a new Fuel Levy Calculator, created specifically for Australia's hay and fodder industry.

Using an independently published Australian fuel price, the calculator will provide a practical and transparent way to account for changing fuel costs when calculating freight.

The calculator will help remove some of the uncertainty around fuel levies and support clearer conversations between growers, buyers and transport operators.

The new tool is available exclusively to Feed Standards Australia members.

[FIND IT HERE](#)

IN THIS EDITION

- | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1 The Cieran Maxwell Award for Excellence | 3 Hay Season Update | 8 Memberships |
| 2 A Note From Tim | 5 Tips for Picking a Contractor | 9 Feed Central Trading Market Update |
| New Names Same Trusted Team | 6 Biosecurity Update | Upcoming Events |
| What's New in Memberships | Selenium Supplementation | Local Ag Marketplace Latest Listings |
| Fuel Levy Calculator | 6 Victrato Seed Treatment: Know the Livestock Withholding Requirements | |

HAY SEASON UPDATE

A Season of Big Differences from Southern Queensland to Central NSW

In the first couple of weeks September I have been travelling through Southern Queensland and Northern and Central NSW. The 2026 winter hay season through these regions has been one of contrasts, with crop potential varying considerably.

For hay growers, the next few weeks will be critical. Crops are moving rapidly as temperatures increase, and the combination of crop maturity, available soil moisture and the weather during curing will have a major influence on both yield and quality.

Southern QLD - a season of big differences

Across Southern Queensland, the season has been generally difficult. Limited stored soil moisture at planting, below-average rainfall through the growing season and increasing spring temperatures have restricted crop growth in many areas.

For hay producers, this means that some crops are likely to produce considerably less dry matter than initially expected. However, crops that have established well and have been able to access stored moisture may still provide good hay-making opportunities. Some irrigators in this area are taking advantage of low hay production with strong local demand and/or filling sheds for the forecasted El Nino.

The major challenge now is not allowing crops to go too far before cutting. With temperatures rising, cereal crops can move from a useful hay-making stage to maturity surprisingly quickly. Waiting for extra bulk can result in a significant loss of feed quality if the crop becomes too mature.

The current weather pattern also means curing conditions need to be watched closely.

Central NSW – a more positive picture

Further south, I saw big variations in crops over short distances due to soil type, planting date, planting moisture, variety, and in crop rainfall. Some crops at the stage of being ready to cut with other neighbouring paddocks planted in July still very early in their growth and needing a soft spring to get them through.

For hay growers with early crops the potential for large, heavy crops that can become difficult to manage as spring temperatures increase, opportunities for good-quality cereal and vetch hay also creates a different challenge.

Well-grown cereal crops can rapidly accumulate dry matter and become prone to lodging as they approach maturity.



Once a crop starts to lodge, cutting becomes more difficult and losses can increase through machinery pickup, uneven drying and greater risk of weather damage.

Growers should therefore be regularly checking crop maturity, stem strength and lodging risk rather than relying solely on a calendar date.



Curing conditions could be favourable – but don't become complacent

The current weather outlook could provide useful hay-making conditions in many areas.

Warm temperatures and generally lower rainfall can shorten curing times. However, rapid drying also means that growers need to monitor windrows closely.

The objective remains the same: **Cut at the right maturity, cure quickly and minimise unnecessary handling.**



Vetch and mixed crops

Vetch crops and cereal/vetch mixtures require particular attention as spring temperatures increase.

Where vetch is a significant component of the crop, delaying cutting can alter the balance between yield and quality. The crop should be assessed according to its intended market rather than simply waiting for maximum dry matter.

Mixed cereal/vetch crops can also behave differently from pure cereal crops during curing, so windrow structure and drying conditions need to be watched carefully.

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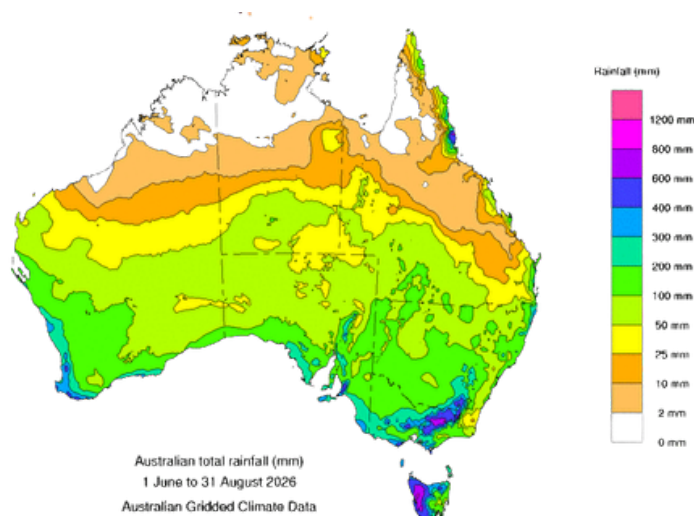
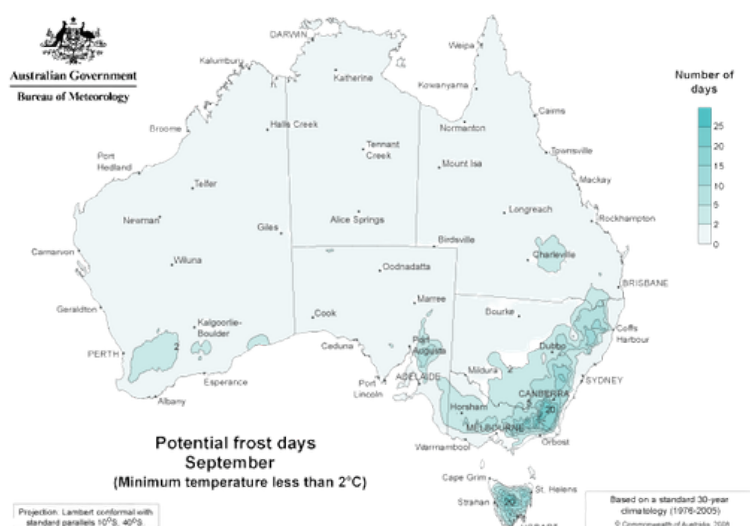
What should growers be doing now?

With the season entering its critical phase, growers should be walking crops regularly rather than waiting for the contractor or cutting date.

Five questions to ask in every paddock:

- 1 What is the crop's current maturity?
- 2 How much additional dry matter is realistically available?
- 3 Is the crop beginning to lodge?
- 4 What is the soil moisture situation?
- 5 What does the weather window look like for cutting, curing and baling?

The answers may be different from one paddock to the next.



BOM maps show June–August rainfall and forecast September frost days, highlighting widespread low rainfall across south-eastern Australia.

The bigger hay-market picture

The variation in seasonal conditions is likely to produce significant differences in hay supply and quality across the region.

Some growers in Southern Queensland and Northern NSW may have less hay available because of lower crop growth, while better crops in Central NSW and other more favourable areas may produce larger quantities.

For buyers, this means quality and consistency will remain important.

For growers, it reinforces the value of producing the best-quality hay possible from the crop available. Good colour, appropriate maturity, good leaf retention, effective curing and sound storage can all contribute to maintaining market value.



The bottom line

The 2026 season from Southern Queensland through Central NSW is a season of contrasts.

Stephen Page
Grower Services Manager
Feed Standards Australia



Tips for Picking a Contractor

- ✓ **Check their availability lines up with your paddock's readiness** — a contractor booked solid across multiple properties may not get to you when you need them.
- ✓ **Ask about equipment condition and backup options** — breakdowns during a tight weather window can cost you the whole cut. Find out what happens if equipment breaks down.
- ✓ **Get feedback from other growers** — ask about cutting quality, baling consistency, and how they handle weather calls.
- ✓ **Clarify pricing upfront** — per bale, per hour, or per hectare? Make sure you know what's included (raking, baling, wrapping) and what costs extra.
- ✓ **Talk about quality expectations** — moisture testing, bale density, and shape all affect how well your hay stores and sells. Make sure you're both on the same page before they start.
- ✓ **Confirm insurance and safety practices** — especially important if they're operating machinery on your property

A good contractor relationship is built over multiple seasons, so it's worth the time upfront to find the right contractor for your operation.



BIOSECURITY UPDATE

Spring is a critical biosecurity period, with hay and fodder movement increasing as weed seeds develop and pest activity rises. Hay can spread regulated pests such as fire ants and green snails, as well as contaminant weeds including parthenium and barley grass.

FIRE ANTS: probably the biggest movement risk this Spring

Hay can carry fire ants, making movement controls especially important as Queensland's biosecurity zones continue to change. During 2026, zones expanded across parts of South East Queensland, with outlying detections near Toowoomba and on the Sunshine Coast.

Why spring matters

Warm, humid conditions after rain increase fire ant activity and the risk of spread in contaminated material.

For fodder businesses

Before moving hay from Queensland, check the property address on the current fire ant zone map—zones change regularly. Hay from regulated areas may require treatment, certification or other movement conditions.

[View the Fire Ant Map](#)



OTHER HIGH SPRING BIOSECURITY RISKS

Parthenium Weed

- Found mostly in SE Qld, expanding into other Qld areas and small areas in NSW
- **Very High Spring Risk**
- Prolific spread. Movement restrictions apply.

Green Snail

- Found mostly in WA
- **High Spring Risk**
- Interstate certifications may apply

Barley Grass

- Concerns in SA cropping/pasture regions
- **High September-November Risk**
- Seeds spread in hay & can injure livestock

Annual Ryegrass Toxicity (ARGT)

- Risk areas: WA, SA, NSW, TAS
- High risk around hay production
- Livestock poisoning risk from toxic seed-heads

Serrated Tussock

- Particularly concerning in VIC, NSW, Tas
- High risk during Spring seed development
- Seed spreads via fodder, vehicles, stock & wind

**** Also of concern: Chilean needle grass & other snails/slugs**

SELENIUM SUPPLEMENTATION: Test Before You Supplement

While Selenium is an essential trace mineral, it is needed in very small quantities. It is necessary for supporting:

- normal muscle function,
- immunity,
- growth,
- fertility and
- the healthy development of young animals.

However, the margin between deficiency, adequacy and excessive supplementation is relatively narrow—and selenium levels in feed cannot be determined by appearance alone.

Australian livestock producers can access selenium through vaccines, drenches, injections, slow-release pellets, mineral supplements and feed premixes.

Feed testing identifies how much selenium is being supplied by hay or silage, while animal testing determines an animal's selenium status. Together, these results can help producers and their advisers make informed supplementation decisions and avoid the risk of providing too little or too much.

Feed Standards Australia offers selenium testing for an additional fee with any feed test submitted. Consider requesting it when hay or silage forms an important part of the ration, particularly for young, growing, pregnant or lactating livestock, or when sourcing fodder from an unfamiliar or selenium-deficient region.



Test to determine Se content of feed

Young growing animals are most at risk

Read the full article [here](#) or scan the QR code.

SCAN ME



VICTRATO® Seed Treatment: Know the Livestock Withholding Requirements

VICTRATO® is a seed treatment registered for use in wheat and barley to help manage Fusarium crown rot and root lesion nematodes. Research has shown yield benefits across both wet and dry seasons, particularly where disease pressure is present; however, it should be used as part of an integrated disease-management program.

Growers using VICTRATO® need to be aware of the livestock withholding requirements—particularly when crops may be grazed, cut for fodder or supplied as hay, silage or straw.

The product requirements include:

- **Grazing withholding period:** Do not graze treated crops or cut them for stockfeed for six weeks after sowing.
- **Export Slaughter Interval (ESI):** Livestock that have grazed treated crops or been fed hay, silage or stubble from treated crops must be placed on clean feed for 14 days before slaughter if destined for export.
- **Harvested grain:** No harvest withholding period is required when VICTRATO® is used as directed, and harvested grain does not attract the additional ESI restriction.
- **Treated seed:** Seed treated for planting must never be fed to livestock or used for human consumption.

* Sources: [Syngenta Australia](#), [GRDC](#)

Growers should keep accurate seed-treatment records and clearly advise buyers if wheat or barley crops were established using VICTRATO®. Commodity Vendor Declarations must also be completed accurately when supplying hay, silage, straw or other fodder. **Our partners Feed Central Trading and LocalAg Marketplace have Commodity Vendor Declarations available when buying hay.**

Always follow the current product label and speak with your agronomist or Syngenta representative if you are unsure.



More information can be found [here](#).



HAY TOOLS

Available Here

Delmhorst Moisture Meter

- **Delmhorst Navigator FX-20**
- 45cm Probe used for testing large bales
- Electrode Probe Handle for ease of testing
- Short Pin Windrow Testing Probe
- Moisture Meter Calibrator
- Bright, clear digital display
- Exclusive PVC Travel Tube

Hay Corer

Developed by the Feed Central Hay Inspectors.

- Samples flow easily, directly from the tube into the collection bag
- High quality, 100% stainless steel construction
- Stainless steel tip which can be sharpened easily
- Attaches to a cordless drill for ease of use
- Includes cleanout rod with non-slip safety handle to ensure complete cleanout between lots



**HAY
TESTING
PACK**



**Stainless Steel
Hay Corer**




**Delmhorst Navigator
FX-20 Moisture Meter**




**Makita 18V
Hammer Drill**




**High Quality
Kit Bag**

MEMBERSHIPS

Choose the membership's that are right for you

Benefit	General	Grower	Accredited Grower	Accredited Contractor	Freight	Specialist
Annual Membership	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
NIR Feed Test discount	10%	10%	10%	10%	-	10%
Merchandise discount	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%
Early member news & resources	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Membership badge / recognition	YES	YES	ACCREDITED	ACCREDITED	YES	VERIFIED
Accredited Inspection Program	-	-	OWN HAY	CLIENT HAY	-	OPTION
LocalAg & Feed Central Trading sales rebate access	-	-	1%	1%	-	WITH ACCRED.
Professional registry listing	-	-	-	YES	YES	-
Fuel Levy Calculator	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Ability to set own freight rate	-	YES	YES	-	-	-
Shopfront discount / marketplace support	-	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%
Specialist forums & referral profile	-	-	-	-	-	YES

More details on our memberships can be found [here](#).



FEEDcentral Market Update

The hay market remains well supplied, with large volumes still available and buyer activity quieter than expected. High freight costs, softer livestock numbers and ex-farm prices are all influencing which parcels are moving.

Conditions vary considerably across the country. Southern Queensland is already showing the effects of a drying season, while Northern Victoria, Southern New South Wales and South Australia are carrying promising crops and the potential for another sizeable hay season.

The longer-term outlook remains the key consideration. If dry conditions strengthen across the east coast, current hay stocks could be drawn down quickly. Buyers should consider their likely feed requirements early, while growers are encouraged to focus on quality, bale weights and efficient truck loading to give their hay the best chance of travelling.

With plenty of hay available now but seasonal uncertainty ahead, staying close to the market will be important for both buyers and sellers.

Upcoming Events

22-24 September

Henty Machinery Field Days

Henty NSW - [Click here for more](#)

22-24 September

BeefEx 2026

Gold Coast - [Click here for more](#)

6-8 October, 2026

Elmore Field Days

Elmore VIC - [Click here for more](#)

13-15 October, 2026

Ruminant Animal Nutrition Conference

Attwood VIC - [Click here for more](#)

25 October, 2026

Hay Safety Day

Feed Standards Australia - [Click here for more](#)

Catch Up on the Latest from Feed Standards Australia

From webinars and market updates to practical feeding and fodder insights, there's always something happening at Feed Standards Australia. Catch up on all the latest below.



WATCH: Webinar
Top of the Stack



LISTEN: Hay Matters Podcast
Steve Page & Josh Lanyon discuss managing heavy crops, raking and protecting hay quality.



READ: Articles
Managing High-Biomass Cereal Crops



READ: Articles
Selenium Supplementation: Test Before You Supplement



LEARN: Tips Magazine
[Tips for a Profitable Hay Season 2026/27](#)



TRACK: Market Report
[Hay Market Report 11/9/26](#)



Latest Listings on LocalAg



#93699

Wheaten (no beard/awn) hay

📍 Freeling, SA

📦 260 tonnes

CP 12.30 %

ME 10.21 MJ/kg

[Find it here](#)



#91743

Vetch Hay

📍 Lascelles, VIC

📦 140 tonnes

CP 22.8 %

ME 9.97 MJ/kg

[Find it here](#)



#92951

Oaten Hay

📍 Sutherland, VIC

📦 1885 tonnes

CP 10.3 %

ME 10.82 MJ/kg

[Find it here](#)



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sample when you're ready.**

QUALITY CERTIFICATE	
Date Reported: 24/12/2025 Lot #: 92896	
ON-FARM INSPECTION	
DETAILED VISUAL ANALYSIS	
CROP	Lucerne Cut
Type / Species	Q1 Special
Variety	Yes
Ingrained	2nd
What cut is it?	
VOLUME	
Quantity	0
Bale / Package Weight	640 kg
Volume in Tonne	0
PACKAGING	
Broken Straps	<5%
Bale / Package Size	Light Sq Bx43
Wire Type	6 - string
Material Consistency	Very even <5% variation in material
ORGANIC/GMO	
Organic?	No
STORAGE	
Storage Comment	Hay stacked in shed three high, no shrink moisture before restocking in shed
Storage Status / Stage	Shedded / Shuman
Storage Surface	Concrete / Shuman
RODENT	
Signs/Rats	None Observed
MOISTURE	
Moisture Average (%)	12.6
Moisture High (%)	14.3
Moisture Low (%)	10
Number of Tests	40
# Tests >18%	0
WEEDS	
Weed Amount	Nil - 1%
Weeds Comments	Wet weed
FOREIGN MATERIAL	
Summertime Storage material in core sample or bale?	No
MATURITY	2nd
Lucerne Cut	
CUTTING & CURING	
Recent damage	Down leaf & stems
How Long Cured (days)	5
Weather while Curing	Ideal curing conditions, light rain
How Cut	Stem Conditioner
Maturity When Cut	Early flowering <25% flower
Baled Status	1
Showered at baling?	Ideal curing period
HARVESTING	
Harvest Date	13 Dec 2025
Baling to Storage Time	Same day
STEM	
Stem Length Comment	Fin stems with good leaf attachment
Stem Length (cm)	25
Agave	Lucerne 2-3cm
Stem Thickness	No
Was the product chopped?	
COLOUR	
Colour of Core Sample	LVI - Perfect fresh green hay
Colour Comment	>95% leached colour
LEAF	
Leaf Retention	Excellent leaf and stem colour
Leaf Retention comment	
AROMA	
Aroma	Sub to normal in texture. Leaf mostly connected, 100% moisture and 95% in bale. Good texture
INSPECTION	
Inspector	Accredited Inspector
Inspection Date	13/12/2025
Inspection Manager	Grower Services

**SAVE
10%**

Single test

\$95.70

10-pack

\$861.30



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