

# FALL 2023 FORAGE MARKET PRICING DISCOVERY SASKATCHEWAN



September 2023

Prepared by  
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Photo credits: Mark and Laura Hoimyr

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This document details the current market prices and general trends for forage products in Saskatchewan and nearby jurisdictions as of September 30, 2023. Information was obtained through a variety of methods including telephone and in-person interviews, electronic correspondence and social media communication, as well as advertisements found on-line. The goal of this report is to provide an accurate assessment of forage prices across Saskatchewan at this current point in time.

All data collected is as current and credible as possible, and was carefully analyzed to determine its relevancy. The Saskatchewan Forage Council, including the author of this report, has made every effort to ensure the accuracy of the data reported, however it does not guarantee and accepts no legal liability arising from or connected to the accuracy, reliability or completeness of any material contained in this document.

## SASKATCHEWAN FORAGE COUNCIL

### Executive Summary

The September 2023 Saskatchewan Forage Market Price Discovery Report is a general industry overview of price and market trends through the compilation of data and information collected from a diverse group of forage industry stakeholders in Saskatchewan and in neighbouring jurisdictions.

Conditions across many regions of the province were generally favourable this year, although concern about moisture levels continue, or are growing, across much of the province. The south-west and west-central regions are still caught in the challenge of a multi-year severe drought. Grasshoppers were a problem across much of the province this year, but a combination of both grasshopper and gopher infestations were devastating in the south west and much of the west central regions.

While the outlook for grazing, feed stocks and water continue to be critical in some large areas, there does appear to be adequate supply of quality feed across much the province. There haven't been a lot of feed-testing results reported as yet, but informal feedback to date indicates higher quality across all categories than seen in 2022. While yields may not have increased in some areas, increased quality should allow stocks to go further. Feed prices across all categories remain close to 2022 levels, much more aligned to traditional levels than those seen in 2021.

At time of publication, harvest progress across the province was at 82 per cent complete; ahead of the five-year average of 64 per cent and the ten-year average of 62 per cent. After a good start to grain crops, hay crops and pasture land in many regions, the growing concern across most of the province is once again the lack of summer rainfall. Pasture conditions are ranked as 12 per cent good, 31 per cent fair, 35 per cent poor and 22 per cent in very poor condition. Producers will need multiple significant rain events to improve soil moisture, in order for pasture quality to improve. Water quality and supply also continues to be an issue in many areas.

Current strong cattle prices are once again driving slightly higher-than-normal full and partial dispersal plans, as in 2022 at this time. These decisions, heavily influenced by continued concern about drought and quality water issues, may also be guided by government crisis response at both Federal and Provincial levels. This response has provided options for producers that include livestock sales tax deferral. The provision allows livestock producers who are forced to sell all or part of their breeding herd due to drought or excess moisture to defer a portion of their income from sales until the following year.

## 1. Saskatchewan Forage Production Trends for 2023

**Table 1. Estimated Provincial Hay Yields (in tons/acre) as of July 17, 2023.**

2023 Provincial Forage Yields (tons/acre)		
	Dry Land	Irrigated Land
Alfalfa	1.1	2.5
Brome/Alfalfa	1.1	2.6
Other Tame Hay	1.0	1.7
Wild Hay	0.87	1.5
Greenfeed	1.36	1.3

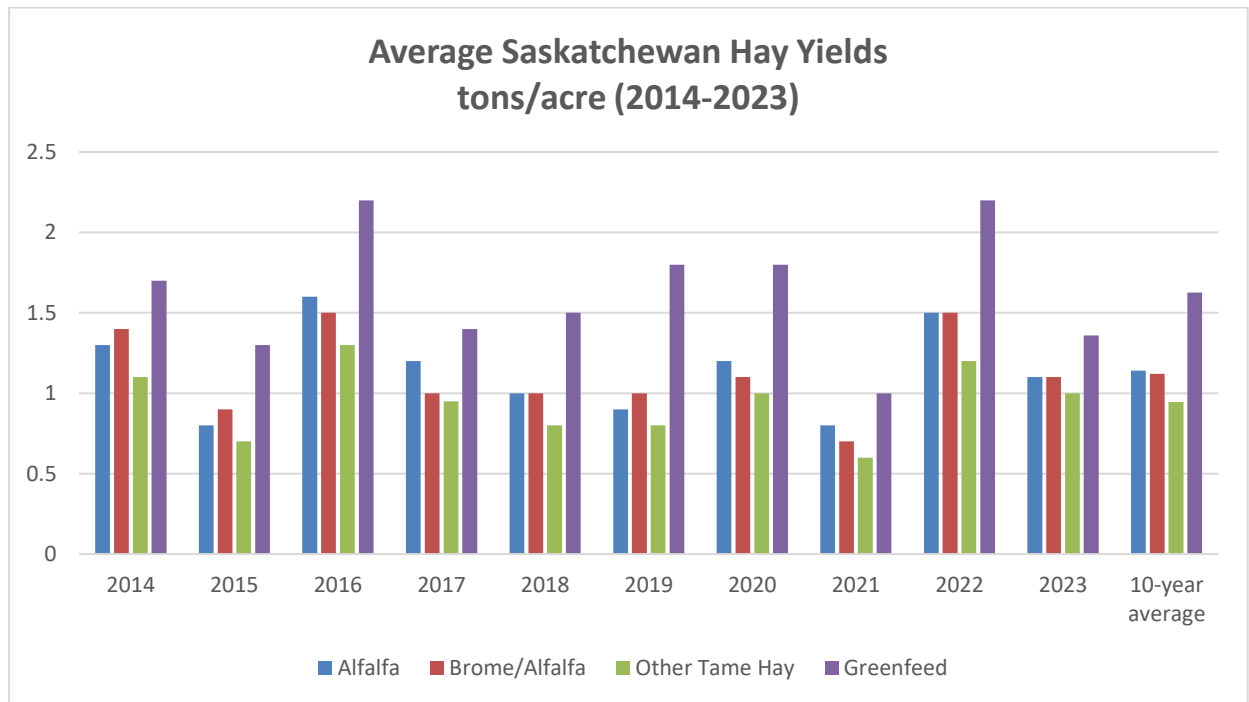
Data source: Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture 2023 Hay Yields Report.

Regional reports continue to highlight persistent drought across south-west and south-central regions. Slightly higher snow levels and a bit of early spring rain raised hopes that were dashed by another record-dry late spring and summer. The lowest yields in the province were recorded in those areas. Highest yield estimates were recorded in the north-east region for both hay and green feed. Provincial averages across four categories (alfalfa, brome/alfalfa, other tame hay and greenfeed) are close to, or slightly below (greenfeed) below the 10-year average (Figure 1.)

Last Year's Provincial Yield Estimates as at August 8, 2022 date source: Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture		
Crop	Dry Land	Irrigated Land
Alfalfa	0.8	1.3
Brome/Alfalfa	0.7	1.8
Other Tame Hay	0.6	2.0
Wild Hay	0.6	1.8
Greenfeed	1.0	2.2

The forage harvest ranged from excellent in some select areas of good to adequate rainfall, to poor in the drought-stricken areas, where grasshoppers, persistent heat and gophers all contributed to overall stress. At time of reporting, very few feed tests had been conducted, but overall, quality doesn't seem to be a major concern excepting in the driest areas. Informal reporting to date indicates higher quality than was realized last year, across all categories, which should help to extend supplies.

**Figure 1. Long-term Saskatchewan Average Hay Yields (in tons/acre) from 2014-2023 as reported annually, in July.**



Data sources: Ministry of Agriculture Crop Report, 2023; Saskatchewan Forage Council 2022 Forage Market Price Survey Beginning in 2019, forage yield data for this report was collected from first full week in August instead of July (2011-2018 data).

2014-2023 Long-term Average Dryland Forage Yields in Saskatchewan	
Crop	(tons/acre)
Alfalfa	1.14
Brome/Alfalfa	1.12
Other Tame Hay	0.95
Greenfeed	1.63

### **The Growing Season Snapshot**

*excerpts from selected Saskatchewan Ministry of Agricultural Provincial Crop Reports*

#### **May 2<sup>nd</sup> to May 8<sup>th</sup>: Report 1**

Seeding was delayed in the month of April due to cool weather and spring snowstorms. Seeding is furthest advanced in the southwest, west central and northwest regions. Seeding progress is slower in the eastern regions where snowfall was heavier and water in fields is taking longer to disappear. The southeast and east central regions have wetter fields than the rest of the province and both sit at three per cent seeded. Producers in the southwest and west central regions are already raising concerns about how dry their fields are and are hoping for a good soaking rain once the majority of seeding is finished. Hay and pasture land is rated as two per cent surplus, 66 per cent adequate, 28 per cent short and four per cent very short. While these conditions show improvement over last fall, producers are hoping for more rain in June and July.

#### **May 30<sup>th</sup> to June 5<sup>th</sup>: Report 5**

Rainfall was received throughout the province last week. While welcomed by producers in the drier areas of the province, it also caused flooding and delays for many. Much of the rain was localized, with some areas receiving trace amounts and others receiving more. Hay and pasture land topsoil moisture is rated as five per cent surplus, 75 per cent adequate, 17 per cent short and three per cent very short.

#### **June 27<sup>th</sup> to July 3<sup>rd</sup>: Report 9**

Generally, this week, the north received more rain than the south. Although rain was received, warm temperatures meant it didn't stay long and soil moisture began to diminish quickly. Hay and pasture topsoil moisture was rated as 36 per cent adequate, 42 per cent short and 21 per cent very short. Topsoil moisture levels in the southwest and west central are the lowest for the province. Haying is well underway in the province. Forty-eight per cent of the hay crop has been cut for the first time this year, and 23 per cent has also been baled or silaged. The quality of hay from the first cut is good to fair. Most producers are hoping for a good quality second cut. Producers are closely monitoring pasture conditions, with 36 per cent rated as good, 32 per cent as fair and 20 per cent poor. Crop damage this week comes from scattered hailstorms, heat stress and wind damage. Plow winds were a concern in the north.

#### **July 25<sup>th</sup> to July 31<sup>st</sup>: Report 13**

Harvest is beginning with combines becoming a frequent site in the west-central and southwest regions of Saskatchewan. Many other areas of the province are preparing for harvest operations as the hot and dry conditions continue and the crops ripen. Producers are hoping for rain once the crops are off to help replenish soil moisture for next year. Rain was received in the north this past week, as pockets of moisture moved through the region. Reports of hail were also received in some areas. The most rain recorded was in the Prince Albert area with 53 mm and the Shellbrook region also recorded significant moisture with 47 mm reported this week. Other areas of the province received some precipitation, with many reporting only trace amounts. Hot temperatures persisted this week, which, coupled with the lack of rain, caused a decrease in soil moisture. Provincially, cropland topsoil moisture is rated as 13 per cent adequate, 49 per cent short and 38 per cent very short. Hay and pasture land is very similar, where 11 per cent has adequate moisture, 42 per cent is short and 47 per cent is very short. Pastures have also been impacted by the lack of rainfall. Currently, five per cent of pastures are in good condition, 28 per cent are fair, 42 per cent are poor and 25 per cent are in very poor condition. Drought stress, heat, grasshoppers and gophers took their toll on some crops this past week.

**August 1<sup>st</sup> through 7<sup>th</sup>:** Report 14

Many haying and silage operations are finishing their last fields. Provincially, dryland alfalfa yields are estimated to be 1.2 tons per acre, while greenfeed is estimated to be 1.4 tons per acre. Irrigated alfalfa is estimated to yield 2.9 tons per acre, while green feed is estimated to yield 1.2 tons per acre. Silage yields are estimated to be 4.4 tons per acre. Water quality is a concern this year given the dry conditions. Water quality testing for livestock is available to producers through their local regional offices. Scattered and varying rain showers moved through the province this week. Provincially, 12 per cent of cropland has adequate moisture, 45 per cent is short and 43 per cent is very short. Ten per cent of hay and pasture land has adequate topsoil moisture, 43 per cent is short, and 48 per cent is very short. Crop damage this past week was mostly due to drought and heat stress, as well as grasshopper and flea beetle damage. Producers are busy harvesting and preparing bins and machinery for harvest. Producers are also busy selling cattle, hauling water, and preparing for fall operations.

**September 5<sup>th</sup> to September 11<sup>th</sup>:** Report 19

Twenty-nine per cent of hay and pasture land has adequate moisture, 42 per cent are short and 29 per cent are very short. Producers are also moving cattle onto stubble fields, hauling water and preparing for winter.

**September 12<sup>th</sup> to September 18<sup>th</sup>:** Report 20

Pasture conditions remain relatively unchanged. Twelve per cent of pastures are in good condition across the province, while 31 per cent are fair, 35 per cent are in poor condition and 22 per cent are in very poor condition. Producers will need multiple significant rain events to improve soil moisture for pasture quality to improve.

As outlined in these 2023 crop reports, severe drought conditions continue to prevail across most of south-west and large areas of west-central, where producers report having utilized every available option for winter feed supply. This will include the purchase of hay and greenfeed from other areas of the province. Many are waiting to see what prices do after harvest. Concerns about the ability to source quality feed and the availability of good water sources and pastures for 2024 are very high in many areas. In response to this crisis, the Government of Saskatchewan announced in August that the province would make up to \$70 million available to help offset extraordinary costs of feeding livestock to maintain the breeding herd in this province. Saskatchewan's funding will provide eligible producers with up to \$80 per head to maintain breeding stock for beef cattle, bison, horse, elk, deer, sheep and goats. The Government of Saskatchewan is committed to providing assistance as soon as possible to producers.

Other supports have implemented to help mitigate the situation. The Governments of Saskatchewan and Canada agreed to increase the 2023 AgriStability interim benefit payment percentage from 50 per cent to 75 per cent, so producers can access a larger portion of their final AgriStability benefit early. The AgriStability compensation rate also recently increased from 70 to 80 per cent. In July, the federal and provincial governments announced SCIC was doubling the low yield appraisal threshold values to allow additional acres of cereal, pulse, canola and flax crops to be diverted to feed. Saskatchewan has also frozen the 2023 rate charged to producers who lease Crown grazing land. Additionally, through the 2023 Crown Grazing Lease Rental Reduction Program, lessees may be eligible for a rent reduction due to the impact of drought.



## 2023 Saskatchewan Regional Forage Updates

### Northwest

- 2023 Dryland Brome-alfalfa hay yield **0.8 tons/acre** (1.63 in 2022)
- Soil moisture adequate in **36%** of region (August 28/23)
- Pasture condition is fair-poor on average

### Northeast

- 2023 Dryland Brome-alfalfa hay yield **1.6 tons/acre** (1.86 in 2022)
- Soil moisture adequate in **67%** of region (August 28/23)
- Pasture condition is fair on average

*Trend*  
Some producers are culling cattle to match forage supply or selling cows due to higher market prices

### West-Central

- 2023 Dryland Brome-alfalfa hay yield **0.7 tons/acre** (0.84 in 2022)
- Soil moisture adequate in **18%** of region (August 28/23)
- Pasture condition is poor-very poor on average

### East-Central

- 2023 Dryland Brome-alfalfa hay yield **1.4 tons/acre** (2.05 in 2022)
- Soil moisture adequate in **54%** of region (August 28/23)
- Pasture condition is fair-good on average

*Trend*  
Some acres planned for grain are being diverted to greenfeed due to growing conditions

### Southwest

- 2023 Dryland Brome-alfalfa hay yield **0.8 tons/acre** (0.75 in 2022)
- Soil moisture adequate in **0%** of region (August 28/23)
- Pasture condition is poor-very poor on average

### Southeast

- 2023 Dryland Brome-alfalfa hay yield **1.2 tons/acre** (2.06 in 2022)
- Soil moisture adequate in **16%** of region (August 28/23)
- Pasture condition is fair-very poor on average

Source: Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture Crop Reports, Aug-Sept 2023 and Ministry of Agriculture Regional Specialists

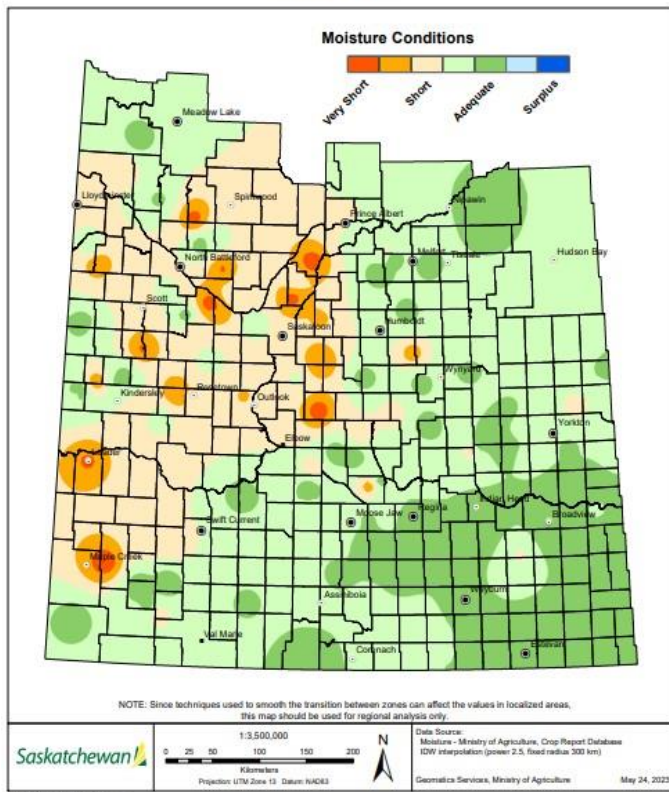


**Figure 2. Hay and Pasture Topsoil Moisture Conditions in May and August of 2023**

A clear illustration of the progression from early spring hay and pasture land moisture conditions through the end of August, as areas of adequate moisture succumbed to lack of late summer moisture, while areas of short to very short moisture conditions expanded.

Data source: Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture: May 22, 2023 and August 28, 2023

**Hay and Pasture Topsoil Moisture Conditions**  
May 22, 2023



**Hay and Pasture Topsoil Moisture Conditions**  
August 28, 2023

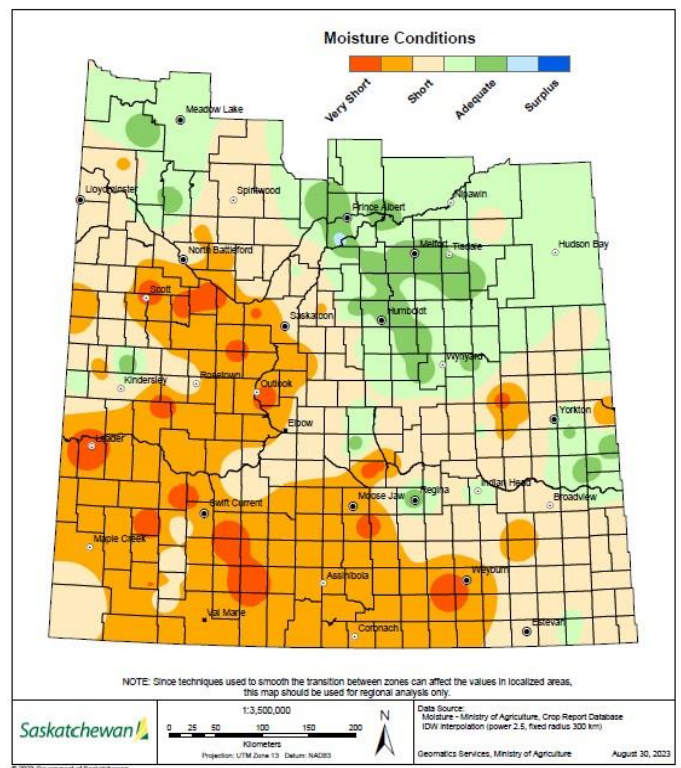
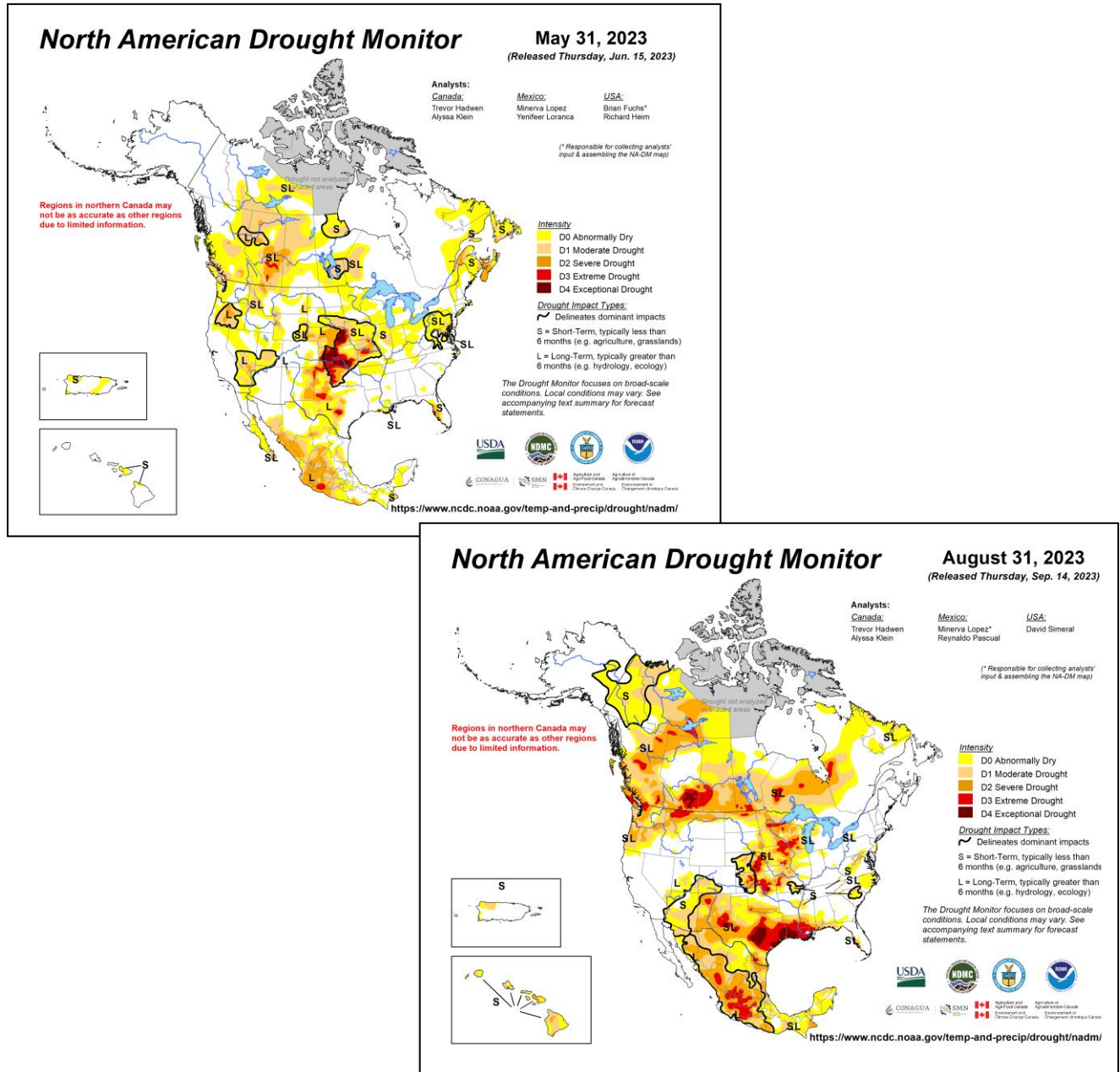


Figure 3. North American Drought Conditions at May 31, 2023 and August 31, 2023.

Dry and moderate drought conditions continue across North America, as illustrated in Figure 3.



**Production Trend Influences: non-weather related**

As of September 18, 2023 harvest was 82 per cent completed, ahead of the five-year average of 64 per cent and the 10-year average of 62 per cent. It's estimated that nine per cent of forage acres did not get cut or baled this year, due to drought conditions. Producers in most areas are hoping for timely fall rains. While pasture conditions varied a bit throughout the summer, depending on timing and location of rainfall, as of September 18<sup>th</sup>, twelve per cent of pastures were considered to be in good condition across the province, while 31 per cent ranked as fair, 35 per cent were in poor condition and 22 per cent in very poor condition. Producers will need multiple significant rain events to improve soil moisture for pasture quality to improve.

As stated in previous reports, planned annual greenfeed continues to be one of the most important and well-utilized forages in Saskatchewan. Yields of greenfeed were on a par with last year, with many acres of unplanned green feed salvaged from poor cereal crops in the south-west and west-central. This will help to support many feeding programs in areas of lesser hay yields. Silage continues to be popular for its resistance to weather risk and usefulness in mixtures with many types of feed stuffs. At the time of this survey, many silage crops were still being harvested, so very little yield information was available.

The age of current perennial forage stands continues to factor into overall lower production. Older stand production levels are impacting overall forage production and more producers are expressing interest in rejuvenating existing stands, instead of reseeding. However, provincially quantifiable data is not available.





**Cattle Movement**

Canada’s cattle herd saw a 1.5% decrease as of July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, to 12.16 million head (Table 32-10-0130-01 Statistics Canada, 2023). The Saskatchewan total cattle herd declined a slight 1% to 2.50 million head. The beef cow inventory declined 2.6% to 1.02 million head. This is down 27,600 head from 2022. Heifer inventories increased 1.3% or 3,800 head to 286,000 head. Heifers on beef operations rose by 4,200 head but heifers for beef replacement fell by 5,500 head. Record high prices have pulled considerable numbers of heifers away from the breeding herd and into beef production. Note, historical data from Statistics Canada was revised in July 2023.

Saskatchewan 550 lb steers averaged \$327/cwt in the first half of 2023, up a substantial 41% from 2022 and up a staggering 46% from the five-year average. Using Alberta statistics, cow-calf profitability for 2022 is projected to be higher than 2021 supported by considerably stronger prices. The beef cow culling rate is projected to be 15% for 2023, up from 13% in 2022 and up from the 10-year average of 12.6%. Canadian cow marketings for the first six months of 2023 were down 9% from the same period of 2022. Western Canadian cow marketings for the first six months were also down 9% from the same period last year. Saskatchewan 550 lb steers averaged \$366/cwt in August, a \$2/cwt premium to Ontario 550 lb steers, but an \$8/cwt discount to Alberta 550 lb steers. (CANFAX, 2023).

**Figure 4. Weekly Cattle Market Update for the week ending September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023.**

All prices are quoted in Canadian dollars per hundredweight (\$/cwt) unless otherwise stated.

Saskatchewan Feeder Steer and Feeder Heifer Prices (\$/cwt)								
Feeder Steers		300-400	400-500	500-600	600-700	700-800	800-900	900+ lb.
Sept 15/2023	Average	\$486.81	\$445.90	\$400.50	\$366.20	\$343.80	\$326.71	\$311.38
Sept 15/2023	Range	471-516	434-476	385-420	352-377	332-360	318-336	304-319
week/week	Change	\$4.14	-\$1.10	\$20.83	\$8.37	\$5.30	\$6.04	-\$3.12
Sept 8/2023	Average	\$482.67	\$447.00	\$379.67	\$357.83	\$338.50	\$320.67	\$314.50
Feeder Heifers		300-400	400-500	500-600	600-700	700-800	800+ lb.	
Sept 15/2023	Average	\$437.83	\$386.80	\$354.50	\$330.25	\$314.69	\$298.88	
Sept 15/2023	Range	419-458	369-419	345-369	322-339	305-323	291-309	
week/week	Change	\$56.33	\$15.80	\$15.50	\$15.58	\$4.69	\$2.38	
Sept 8/2023	Average	\$381.50	\$371.00	\$339.00	\$314.67	\$310.00	\$296.50	

Source: Canadian data is provided by CanFax and cannot be redistributed without Canfax consent (www.canfax.ca).

Note: Prices are determined from Saskatchewan auction marts’ reports of sale results from Thursday of the previous week to Wednesday of the current week. n/a. means not available due to lack of sufficient data.

The volume of Saskatchewan feeder cattle sold at auction increased week-over-week, with Canfax reporting 11,292 head sold over the week ending September 15, compared to the 4,655 head marketed the previous week. Market volume was similar to the 11,600 head marketed during the same week last year. Year-to-date, Saskatchewan feeder cattle marketing’s are two per cent above 2022, at 282,730 head.

**Saskatchewan Hay and Forage Freight Rates**

A sharp increase in operating costs over the past eighteen months continues to impact freight rates significantly. Fuel and maintenance costs, in everything from tires to minor repair parts, increased greatly in 2022 and while supplies are now generally easier to access, prices haven't softened noticeably. Many transporters continue to add a fuel surcharge in an effort to offset fuel prices and increased taxation on that fuel. In general, steady bookings were reported and many of the truckers polled in this survey expected to be busier following harvest.

Rates and haul options can vary greatly, with most truckers charging a flat hourly rate or flat rate per bale for short hauls, and a different rate for longer-distance hauls. Many now apply a fuel surcharge, or a minimum base charge of 400.00 to 550.00, depending on the equipment used. Classification of short-haul versus long-long also varies considerably, with some truckers using 300 km or less as a short-haul basis while others consider 200 km or less as short-haul.

Truckers continue to adapt to provide value and manageable rates to customers, even as they cope with fluctuating fuel prices, increased taxation on that fuel, and higher maintenance costs.

**Table 2. Hay Transportation Costs in Saskatchewan**

Condition of Measurement	Rate average
Hourly rate (shorter distances)	\$188.12/ hr
Short haul, 34-37 bales/load	\$11.96/loaded mile
Long haul, 34-37 bales/load	\$8.36/loaded mile
Long haul, 38-44 bales/load	\$8.12/loaded mile

\* a mobilization fee or empty travel fee may be added to these rates.

~ a fuel surcharge may be added to these rates.



## 2. Current Saskatchewan Forage Prices by Crop and Sector

Electronic listing services such as Kijiji and Facebook feed sales groups continue to be the most popular sales tool on Saskatchewan farms. Print and radio ads are still used, but are much less popular than electronic trading posts and social media. It’s important to note that in recent years there has been a decrease in the number of publications offering classified ads for forage, and several electronic trading post forums have either ceased to exist, or are not well used. This summer the number of listings was about on par with 2022, up sharply from 2021, when supplies were very limited across the province.

In general, pasture conditions were reported as fair to good in many regions. Concern in the south-west and west-central regions, however, continues to escalate as pasture conditions deteriorate after years of insufficient moisture.

At this time of year there are seldom a lot of reported feed testing results, but projections are for fair to good quality on forage in many regions. With a projected sufficient supply of traditional forages available, prices (majority asking prices) are expected to settle slightly below asking, on average. Price information was collected late July through September and is reported in Table 3 (below).

**Table 3. Average 2023 Forage Prices in Saskatchewan**

Forage Type	Weighted Average Price (\$/tonne)	High (\$/tonne)	Low (\$/tonne)
Grass Hay	\$222.36	\$330.69	\$121.63
First Cut Alfalfa	\$231.39	\$330.69	\$157.47
Second Cut Alfalfa	\$297.40	\$330.69	\$199.21
Alfalfa/Grass mix	\$192.24	\$382.13	\$97.00
Greenfeed	\$183.65	\$264.55	\$124.93
Clover	\$120.71	\$183.72	\$97.98
Cereal Straw	\$114.45	\$165.35	\$66.14
Pulse Straw	n/a	\$143.30	\$77.16

*For comparison purposes: prices at this time, one year ago (September 2022). Data source: Fall Forage Market Discovery Survey 2022.*

Forage Type	Weighted Average Price (\$/tonne)	High (\$/tonne)	Low (\$/tonne)
Grass Hay	\$200.14	\$286.60	\$101.75
First Cut Alfalfa	\$204.42	\$264.55	\$138.81
Second Cut Alfalfa	\$178.46	\$286.60	\$169.59
Alfalfa/Grass mix	\$175.14	\$330.69	\$110.23
Greenfeed	\$171.61	\$240.50	\$125.98
Clover	\$152.07	\$191.70	\$115.02
Cereal Straw	\$84.12	\$183.72	\$66.14
Pulse Straw	\$81.57	\$81.57	\$55.12

fall forage market discovery 2023

A comparison of forage prices from 2017-2023 can be viewed below in Table 4. with a graphical analysis for 2017 - 2023 provided in Figure 4.

**Table 4. Average Fall Forage Prices in Saskatchewan from 2017-2023 (weighted)**

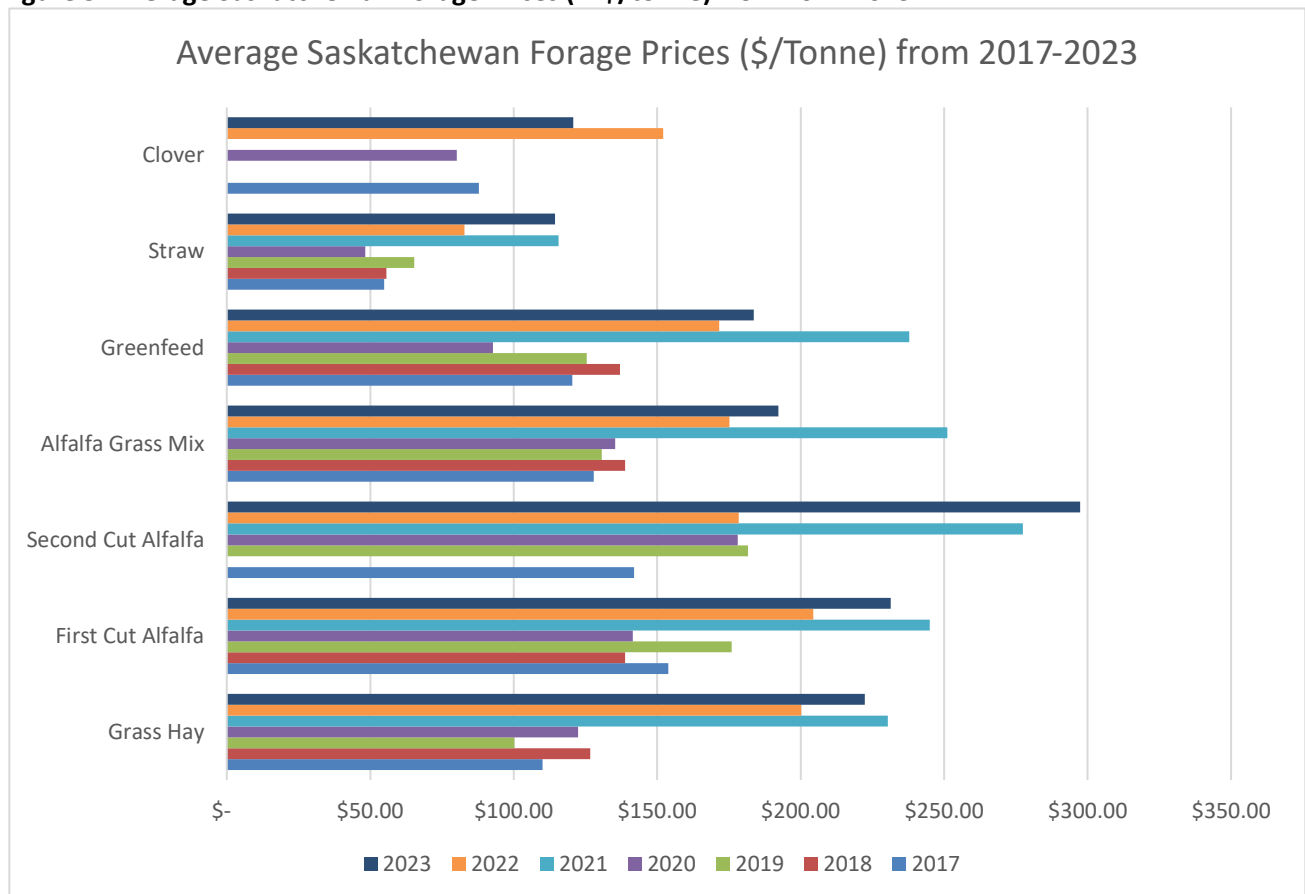
	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Forage Type	Average *asking Price (\$/Tonne)	Average *asking Price (\$/tonne)	Average *asking Price (\$/tonne)	Average *asking Price (\$/Tonne)	Average Price (\$/Tonne)	Average Price (\$/Tonne)	Average Price (\$/Tonne)
Grass Hay	\$222.36	\$200.14	\$230.38~	\$122.48	\$100.21	\$126.63	\$110.013
First Cut Alfalfa	\$231.39	\$204.42	\$244.97~	\$141.45	\$175.98	\$138.82	\$153.89
Second Cut Alfalfa	\$297.40	\$178.46	\$277.48~	\$178.10	\$181.66	\$183.72*	\$141.92
Alfalfa/Grass Mix	\$192.24	\$175.14	\$251.15	\$135.35	\$130.74	\$138.80	\$127.93
Greenfeed	\$183.65	\$171.61	\$237.88	\$92.74	\$125.40	\$137.01	\$120.37
Straw*	\$114.45	\$82.84	\$115.60~	\$48.28	65.36	\$55.63	\$54.80
Yellow Sweet Clover	\$120.71	\$152.07	-	80.17	-	-	\$87.87

Data Sources: Saskatchewan Forage Council, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023. Prices to September 22, 2023.

\*Straw is an average of cereal straw and pulse straw.

~ Simple Average

**Figure 5. Average Saskatchewan Forage Prices (in \$/tonne) from 2017-2023**





**Notes to Saskatchewan forage prices:**

There is not much 100 percent alfalfa for sale, and in particular it is difficult to find second cut alfalfa on offer. Consequently, there are not many listings for alfalfa included in the average calculations and this may be the cause of the higher prices this year as compared to past years.

It appears that asking prices are higher than last year, but not as high as in 2022 on average. This is likely to be because there are many parts of the province with lower yields due to drier conditions this production season, but compared to 2022, there is more hay available for sale as some areas did receive timely rains to help with hay production.

The number of publications with forage classified ads has declined in recent years, as have the number of web-based trading sites for hay on government sites, both in Canada and the US. Several websites that once provided current and relevant forage trading information are now shut down, or are no longer being well utilized (ex: Montana Hay Hotline, Internet Hay Exchange, governments of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba agriculture sites).

***Standing Hay***

Standing hay agreements are often on a mutual, long-term basis, between neighbours. Organizations with a habitat conservation focus such as Environment Canada, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, and Nature Conservancy of Canada often control large tracts of land that are tendered for hay yearly, bi-yearly or on an as-needed basis. Important to note that there were very few listings to survey for standing hay; most deals are struck privately and are often long-standing agreements.

There are three common agreements for standing hay:

1. Buyer takes responsibility for cutting, baling and hauling the hay and then takes a previously agreed-upon share of the inventory. One-third share seems to be the most common.
2. Price per acre: buyer is responsible to match their per-acre offer in accordance to estimated production.
3. Sold on a per-weight basis (15 per cent of dry matter, for example) after hay is cut, baled and weighed.



### ***Small Square Bales***

Small square bales are most often sold on a per bale basis. Small square hay bales typically weigh 50-70 lbs and straw bales weigh approximately 40 lbs. These bales may be purchased by small-scale farmers, acreage owners feeding small numbers of livestock; highest quality hay is sought by dairies.

**Table 5. 2023 Small Square Bale Asking Prices Across Saskatchewan**

Forage Type	2019 Average Price (\$/bale)	2020 Average Price (\$/bale)	2021 Average Price (\$/bale)	2022 Average Price (\$/bale)	2023 Average Price (\$/bale)
Alfalfa	NA	\$8.03	\$11.35	\$8.43	\$9.60
Alfalfa/Grass	\$7.07	\$5.93	\$8.72	\$7.33	\$7.73
Grass	\$8.40	\$5.06	\$7.63	\$7.67	\$7.50
Unspecified Hay	NA	NA	\$6.00	NA	\$5.57
Straw	\$3.20	\$3.10	\$3.82	\$4.99	\$4.75
Organic Hay	NA	\$4.50	\$6.50	\$16.00 (2 listings)	\$5.63
Greenfeed	\$7.50	\$4.25	\$10.50	\$7.75	\$7.00

Small square bale asking prices are variable and can be high as they often target buyers who require the convenience of small squares due to lack of equipment to handle large bales. Alfalfa-grass hay was the most commonly offered type of small square hay in 2023 and prices ranged from \$4-\$12/bale. Some sellers offer discounts when bales are picked up in the field by the buyer. Where bale weights were listed, they ranged from 40-65 lbs (18-27 Kg).

### ***Silage***

A lot of the silage crops in the province were still coming off at time of survey. Estimates for both cereal and corn silage was slightly higher than last year's numbers, in most areas, with few final numbers yet reported. There are a limited number of listings of wrapped silage bales, or baleage for sale in the province. Prices are variable and depend on the crop baled and the feed quality and moisture percentage.

Silage values are reported as priced in the pit, on a wet metric tonne basis (60-65% moisture). The cost of growing a crop for silage, including inputs such as seed, fertilizer, and crop protection products, as well as the cost to harvest, haul, pack and cover silage, all need to be factored in when developing a current valuation of silage in the pit or pile.

Two other methods of silage valuation used by producers:

- 1) Multiply bushel price of feed barley by 12
- 2) Work silage value back from greenfeed price:
  - hay to silage conversion =  $(100-15\% \text{ moisture in hay}) / (100-65\% \text{ moisture in silage}) = 2.48$
  - current greenfeed price/tonne/2.228 conversion to silage factor
  - however, it's yet to be determined if this method should take additional cost of chopping and hauling in consideration and add to this value

### 3. Forage Price Trends in Neighbouring Jurisdictions

The following table demonstrates price averages for various forage types across Western Canada and Montana and North Dakota. The table is based on data collected from a variety of online sources, including the respective government forage listing services, kijiji.ca, Facebook online sales groups, Craigslist, bizmanonline.com and others.

**Table 6. 2023 Forage Prices in Adjacent Provinces and States reported in CDN\$/tonne**

Forage Type	Alberta		Manitoba		Montana		North Dakota	
	Price Range	Avg Price (\$/tonne)	Price Range	Avg Price (\$/tonne)	Price Range	Avg Price (\$/tonne)	Price Range	Avg Price (\$/tonne)
Alfalfa 1st cut	\$242-424	\$339.77	\$136-265	\$207.86	\$203-459	\$281.81	\$115-321	\$213.57
Alfalfa 2nd cut	\$224-397	\$298.06	1 listing	\$211.27	\$350-373	\$357.58	\$114-298	\$244.85
Alfalfa/Grass	\$126-472	\$315.26	\$86-262	\$147.12	\$186-497	\$315.64	\$104-311	\$183.43
Grass	\$127-424	\$297.63	\$62-175	\$113.70	\$186-373	\$252.53	\$106-246	\$149.20
Straw	\$55-176	\$98.60	\$47-115	\$71.18	\$75-227	\$133.94	\$75-164	\$108.58
Greenfeed	\$157-375	\$276.71	\$73-157	\$117.41	\$162-353	\$246.35	\$106-252	\$173.97
Pulse straw	\$143-154	\$148.81	-	-	-	-	-	-

*\*American prices have been converted to CDN currency values average for Sept 22, 2023 (\$1USD = \$1.3526 CDN), per Bank of Canada rates*

The September 19, 2023 Manitoba Crop Report indicates that precipitation has been variable in Manitoba in the 2023 growing season, with some areas receiving less-than-average precipitation and some areas receiving more than 100% of normal since May 1. Some Manitoba producers are still working on second hay cutting, while others are baling straw and producing corn silage. Pasture conditions are reported to be poor in some areas, with some producers already supplementing cattle with hay on pasture, while others have seen new green growth with fall precipitation.

In Alberta, pasture conditions (5-year average in brackets) are rated as 42 (32) per cent poor, 36 (35) per cent fair, 21 (31) per cent good and 1 (3) per cent excellent (See Table 3). Tame hay (5-year average in brackets) is rated as 32 (28) per cent poor, 38 (32) per cent fair, 28 (36) per cent good and 2 (5) per cent excellent (September 12, 2023 Crop Report). Late season rains have made second cut hay yields better than first cut on average. As of the September 5<sup>th</sup> report, 32 percent of the second cut hay acres were still left to cut and bale. Dry areas are showing a decline in forage quality.

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