Australian Oaten Hay

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Rainfed forage grown for global dairy diets

A clean, safe forage to optimise rumen function, and improve cattle health and performance.

AEXCO

AgriFutures® Australia

A Research and Development Corporation of the Australian Government

Proven Benefits

"Microbial protein production is a key to profitable cattle production. A stable productive rumen is essential. Oaten hay can help provide that."

Adjunct Professor Ian Lean BVSc, PhD (Calif), DVSc (Syd), MANZCVS

Managing Director, Scibus and author of a report titled "Nutritional Benefits of Australian Cereal Forages" – data of which has been used in this guide.

Download the Nutritional Assessment of Australian oaten hay →

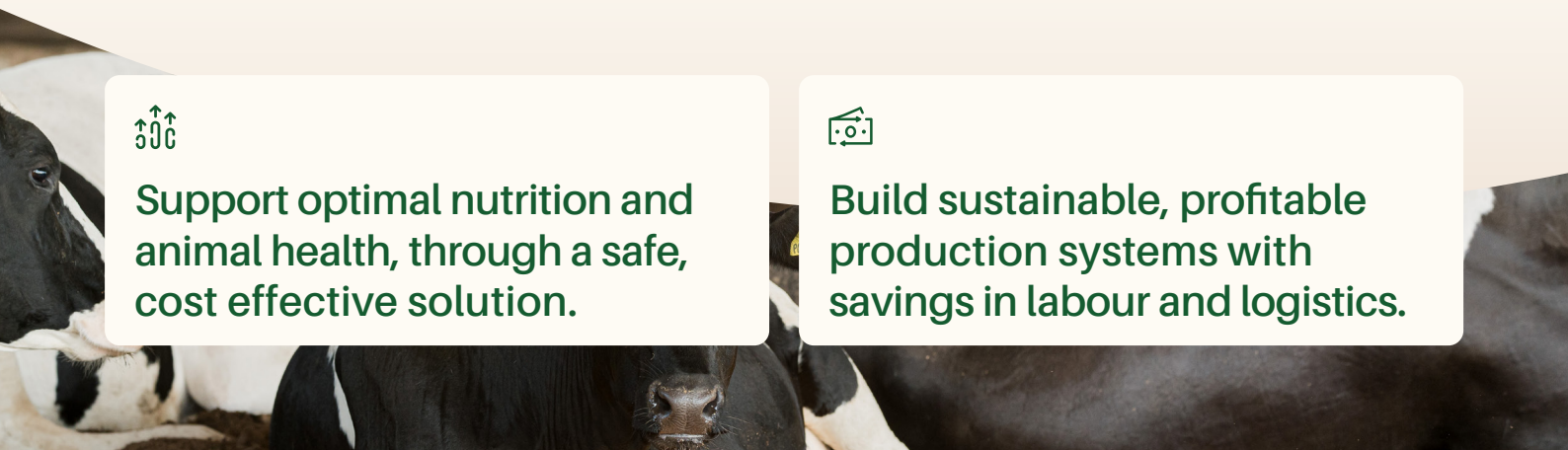
Key benefits of rainfed Australian oaten hay

An ideal complement to balance diets high in byproducts, starch or sugars.

Reliably boosts milk and beef production, as well as animal health.

Contains sugars, protein and soluble fibre that increases microbial protein production.

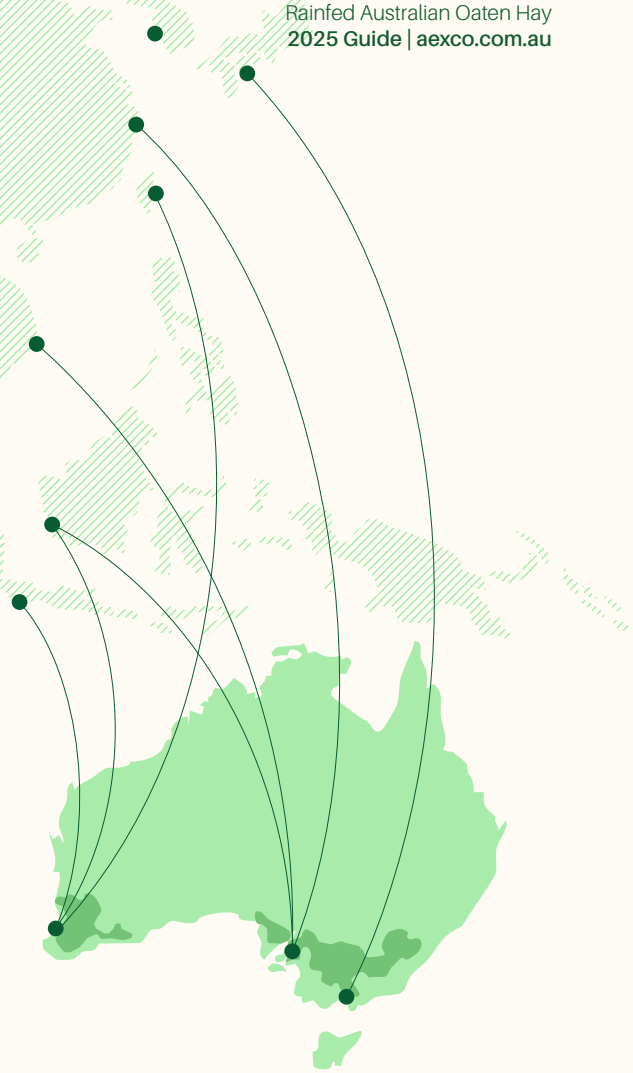
Consistent quality assurance through Australia's dependable supply chain.



Support optimal nutrition and animal health, through a safe, cost effective solution.

Build sustainable, profitable production systems with savings in labour and logistics.

Production & Export



Australian hay exporters provide complete traceability from paddock to port.

1 Grown in ideal conditions

Oaten hay is grown in the major cropping zones of Southern Australia and harvested in spring. Naturally rainfed and cultivated in drier climates without irrigation, crops receive only moderate fertilizer inputs. As a result, they produce shorter plants with finer stems, yielding a lower-fibre hay that is highly digestible for cattle.

2 Harvested for optimal nutrition

Oaten hay is harvested at the optimal stage in its growing cycle, to ensure optimum digestibility and nutritional value. Careful timing preserves soluble fibre and sugar content, improving productivity benefits.

3 Precision-dried for safe storage

Australian oaten hay is baled and carefully monitored to maintain consistent moisture content under 12%. Tests have shown that it has extremely low presence of deoxynivalenol and zearalenone. Low moisture levels reduce the risk of mycotoxin contamination making oaten hay well suited to long-term, safe storage in various climates.

4 Compressed for efficient transport

To reduce shipping costs and maximise storage efficiency, oaten hay is pressed into high-density small and large bales. This processing allows for consistent quality, ease of handling and delivery to farms worldwide.

5 Sustainably produced

Through AEXCO, the Australian export industry has benchmarked supply chain emissions and is working to minimise them under the Australian Agricultural Sustainability Framework. Australia's hay production benefits from rainfed farming, lower fertilizer inputs, and cultivation on land that has remained uncleared for over 70 years. Combined with its proximity to key markets, these factors contribute to Australia's strong sustainability credentials.

Australia exports between 1.0 and 1.25 million tonnes of hay and straw each year.

With additional processing capacity and current cereal hay production more than is exported, exports can continue to grow.

Animal Health Benefits

Rainfed oaten hay contains slowly fermenting fibre that balances rumination. This reduces the risk of acidosis related health complications, improves milk quality and promotes rapid growth.

Mycotoxin Risk Mitigation

Tropical forages have low dry matter content and carry a high risk of mycotoxin contamination.

Australian oaten hay is high in dry matter and has extremely low presence of deoxynivalenol and zearalenone, making it much safer and suitable for storage.

>88%

Dry matter content (compared to <20% in tropical forages)

Diet Integration

Well-integrated diets allow cows, heifers and steers to perform well.

Feeds that complement oaten hay:

Protein-based diets → e.g. grains, tapioca, cassava, molasses, corn silage.

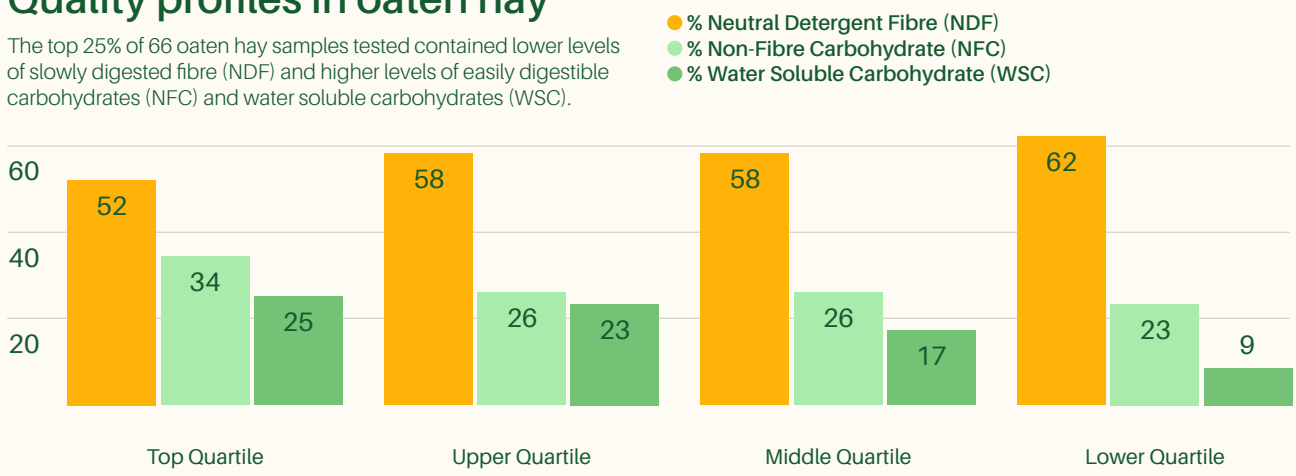
Carbohydrate-based diets → e.g. urea, lupins, canola meal, Australian wheat distiller's grains, soya bean meal, whole cottonseed.

Benefits of diet integration

- Increase feed intake and digestive efficiency.
- Improve milk quality in dairy cows.
- Improve beef quality and flavour.
- Ensure animal health and contentment.

Quality profiles in oaten hay

The top 25% of 66 oaten hay samples tested contained lower levels of slowly digested fibre (NDF) and higher levels of easily digestible carbohydrates (NFC) and water soluble carbohydrates (WSC).



Nutrition

Rainfed oaten hay has valuable nutritional attributes that integrate well in energy-dense diets to support healthy, high-performance cows, heifers and steers.

1 Superior fibre characteristics

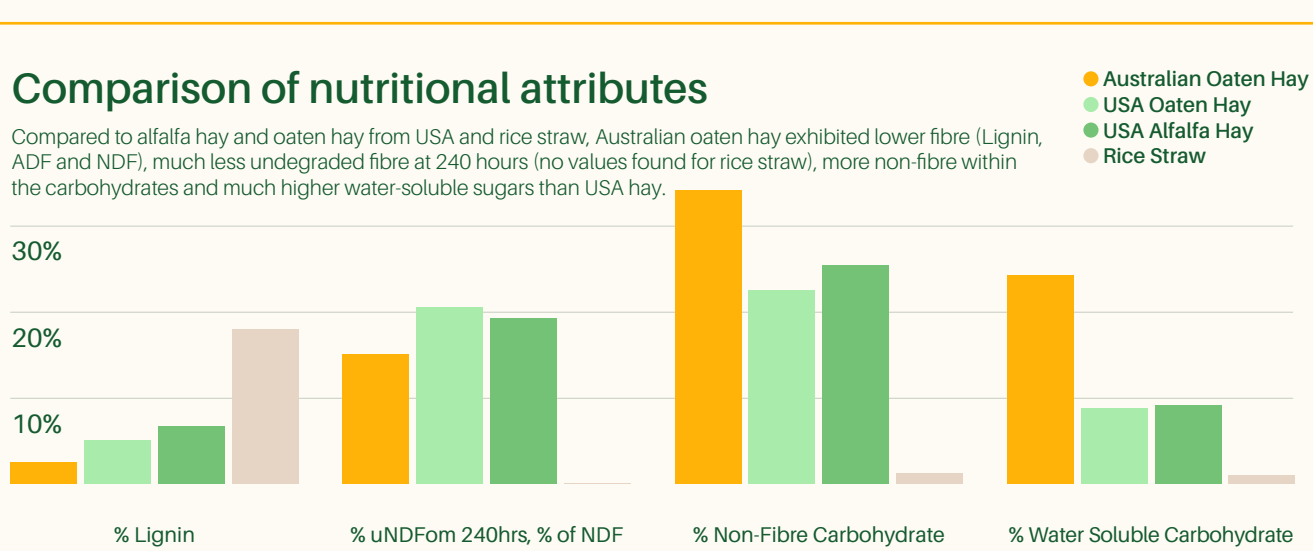
High in digestible fibre low in indigestible lignin content → Provides rumen stability when balancing with grains, cassava, tapioca and molasses.

2 High levels of soluble sugars

High levels of both ethanol and water-soluble sugars → Provides the right substrates for microbial protein production in the rumen.

Comparison of nutritional attributes

Compared to alfalfa hay and oaten hay from USA and rice straw, Australian oaten hay exhibited lower fibre (Lignin, ADF and NDF), much less undegraded fibre at 240 hours (no values found for rice straw), more non-fibre within the carbohydrates and much higher water-soluble sugars than USA hay.



Oaten Hay for Indonesian Diets

Commercial Indonesian dairy diets were modelled to provide estimates of the comparative nutritional values of oaten hay, based on the AEXCO database. For further details refer to the full report →

Nutritional Assessment

- Oaten hay provides a way to reduce the need for wet tropical forages that are difficult to harvest and store
- Oaten hay reduces the sole reliance on maize crops – smaller storage areas, less mycotoxin risk, less crop losses and less need for land to grow a crop

Highlighted values show how feeding oaten hay lowered feed costs or improved milk/weight gain.

Indonesian diet modelled	Performance measure	Oaten hay rations	No oaten hay	Difference
Heifer 4 month old	Feed cost Rupee/cow/day	**419**	**644**	**-225**
	Weight gain (kg)	0.8	0.9	-0.1
Heifer 13 month old	Feed cost Rupee/cow/day	369	359	10
	Weight gain (kg)	**0.82**	**0.75**	**0.07**
Dry cow Far off	Feed cost Rupee/cow/day	**726**	**835**	**-109**
	Weight gain (kg)	0	0	0
Dry cow Close up	Feed cost Rupee/cow/day	**871**	**889**	**-18**
	Weight gain (kg)	0	0	0
Lactating High Producing 30-55 L/day	Feed cost Rupee/cow/day	**2535**	**2571**	**-36**
	Milk yield (L/cow/day)	**40.02**	**39.49**	**0.53**
Lactating Low Producing 15-35 L/day	Feed cost Rupee/cow/day	2104	2043	61
	Milk yield (L/cow/day)	**30.5**	**30.1**	**0.4**
Backgrounder Beef	Feed cost Rupee/cow/day	767.4	587	180.4
	Weight gain (kg)	0.98	0.94	0.04
Finisher Beef	Feed cost Rupee/cow/day	1108	1104	4
	Weight gain (kg)	1.76	2.2	-0.44

Watch our video →

Contact us for further information about how AOH can help you with a free diet assessment.

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