

## **Leahcim continues to lead**

For the Michael family it was the 28<sup>th</sup> time they have gone through the lead up to an annual ram sale, but despite the rain, none of those previous experiences could dampen their enthusiasm and excitement for this one, and even more so with the result that followed.

Clearly being recognised as a national leading stud in the adoption of scientific developments and full performance measurement, buyers from every state of Australia and overseas flocked to this sale to compete for the strength of proven genetics in the rams on offer.

The end result was again outstanding, with a total and rapid fire clearance of all 228 rams on offer for a fantastic average of \$2733. That was \$18 up on last year, despite 28 more being offered and a significantly lower top price.

That top price was \$10,000, with only nine rams exceeding \$5000, so there was no extremely high price to boost the average. Rather it was the evenness of the offering, combined with the belief the many repeat clients have in the productive advantages they get, that drove the demand and the consistently good prices achieved throughout. 65% of the offering sold between \$2000 and \$4000.

It was the late decision by the Michael family to add an extra 28 rams from their originally catalogued 200 that achieved their desired wish of bringing value and sufficient supply to their loyal local regular clients. The average of \$3816 for the first 50 rams altered little as the sale went on, being \$3550 at 100 rams and still \$3276 at 150. The first ram to sell under \$2000 was not until lot 139 and the first one that sold for less than \$1000 was lot 179. However, 19 sold for \$1000 or less by the end of the sale and this catered for those with lower budgets.

There were 66 registered bidders with 56 successful in purchasing rams of their choice. Leading the way was the one international buyer present. Pepe Marin, Ganadera Marin, Punta Arenas, Chile included the Adelaide Royal judging in his pre-sale schedule before attending this sale. He paid the \$10,000 top price for lot 2, L152719, a 15 month old youngster with great structure and type, backed up by an outstanding set of performance figures. These were a catalogue leading +28.8 for yearling clean fleece weight, the third best +18.2 for staple length, plus a very high +8.8 for yearling weight. He then backed up that purchase with two more at \$5800 and \$6000, both also at the very top end for performance figures. The Marin flock has been using Leahcim genetics since 1997 and has an influence on 50% of Chile's sheep flock.

Including the Chilean purchases, 29 rams sold to 12 stud ram breeding flocks and averaged \$4459. Paul and Jen Goerling, Lukin Springs stud, Boyup Brook paid the sale's second top of \$7000 in their two purchases, averaging \$6300. L153071 had wonderful balanced figures across the range including +22.4 for clean fleece weight, +6.6 for yearling weight and +0.9 for eye muscle depth.

Also kicking in from Western Australia was the Welke family's Westwood stud, Cascade. Bidding through Classings Bill Walker they paid \$5200 for L152316 with outstanding balanced figures across the board, including +22.5 for yearling clean fleece weight. The Pengilly family, Penrose Pastoral, Esperence was another ram breeding flock to bid up strongly. They paid the top price at the 2014 sale, but this year purchased volume with five rams to \$3400 and at a \$2700 average. Commercial WA producers and long term Leahcim supporters, the Foss family, Bruce Rock and represented by

Phil Foss purchased nine rams, paying to \$3000 and averaging \$2256 average. Phil is adamant that rams of this quality simply aren't available elsewhere and is more than happy to travel over to purchase these rams that suit their requirements.

Bruce Michael, outlaid \$5600 for the first ram offered, L152108 for the 'Murrayfield' flock on Bruny Island to put Tasmania on the buyers map from the beginning. The Hooke family, Willera Merino stud, Serpentine was the most prominent of top end Victorian buyer with three rams to \$5000 and at a \$4333 average.

Highlighting value gained through patience, Roger Wheaton purchased 12 rams, all at \$800 for R & C Martin, Swan Hill, Victoria, all these coming in the last 40 lots.

Queensland was represented on the buyers' list by Moonjaree Pastoral Co, Moonjaree with two purchases at \$3400 and \$3200.

However, by far the most prominent buying support from interstate came from New South Wales. Tony and Joel Smith, 'Tara', Walgett run approximately 5000 Merino ewes in their self-replacing flock and were back again to top up their sire needs with the purchase of nine top rams, paying to \$3800 and averaging \$3020.

Again, the biggest impact on the sale came from a group of 12 Australian Wool Network (AWN) clients. Purchasing through their AWN agents Mark Hedley, Denis Hewitt and Pat Mc Neill, they collectively accumulated 77 rams in strong bidding from the sale's beginning to the end. These included five of the top eight volume purchasers on the day.

Paspaley Rural, Coolah led the way with 18 rams to \$3000 and averaging \$1917. RA & SF McLean, Breadalbane were originally sceptical on the measured benefits of these Leahcim genetics, but after trialling them they are now strong advocates and purchased 14, paying to \$3200 and averaging \$2007. FJ Kelly Trust, Bowning operated on the top end, chasing the higher performers, their 10 rams averaging \$3140 and topping at \$4200. Averaging exactly the same and topping at \$4000 was Hollywood Pastoral Co, Crookwell, while the Collins family, K & A Grazing, also from Crookwell picked up seven to \$3600 and at a \$2600 average.

Buying through WISS agency in Melbourne, Ardenside Angus, Tooma, NSW was another prominent and repeat NSW purchaser with seven rams to \$4000 and at a \$3371 average, while Mumblebone Merino stud, Mumblebone, NSW with one ram at \$4000 was the only seedstock buyer from that state.

Local South Australian buyers were not blown away by the competition from other states and the successful buyers included a group from Orroroo and surrounding areas who have supported Leahcim from the very beginning. These included HT Harslett Rural, Gladstone with six rams to \$4600 and averaging \$3560, PJ & KL Ebsary, Barunga Gap, also six rams to \$3000 and averaging \$2517, and the Kuerschner family, Black Rock Ag, Orroroo with five rams at a \$2360 average.

Ray and Brad Schroeder, Gunallo stud, Pinaroo were fresh from topping the Classing Classic sale the week before and invested some of their earnings into purchasing two top rams, including L153052 for the sale's third top price of \$6200.

Bert and Dion Woolford, Karawatha Park, Kimba were particularly prominent buyers, investing significantly with the purchase of six rams to \$5200 and at a \$3800 average for their Eyre Peninsula based ram breeding flock.

Chris Prime, Nantoura stud, Wharminda was another active Eyre Peninsula stud, purchasing three rams to \$4200 and at a \$3733 average.

The Schwarz family, Pindari stud, Waterloo outlaid \$4800 for a top ram, and then combined with Hans Graetz, Pepper Well stud, Keyneton to pick up L153180, a ram with outstanding figures for \$5000.

Other prominent SA buyers included AC & H Michael, Quorn (five rams ave \$1560), P & V Molo, Roseworthy (five rams ave \$1700), Atkinson Livestock, Crafers and KI (five rams ave \$2580), Rundle Farming, Kulpara, (four rams ave \$3050), the Mitchell family, Chelwood Farming, Mintaro, (four rams ave \$2750), Arapunya Investments P/L (four rams ave \$2200), and ND & AM Jaeschke, Clare (four rams ave \$2300).

A delighted senior principal Andrew Michael said post sale, "This was a complete family effort with all members playing key roles in the success of our program, but most of all I am just blown away by the depth of quality people amongst our loyal commercial clients. Their commitment and enthusiasm is outstanding and they deserve every bit of success they are getting. We are humbled that so many continue to travel so far to purchase our genetics and we can't thank them enough."

Sale summary	2016	2015
Offered	228	200
Sold	228	200
Top	\$10,000	\$17,000
Average	\$2733	\$2715

Sale Agents: Landmark Clare

Auctioneers: Gordon Wood and Richard Miller



Pictured with the \$10,000 top priced ram at the Leahcim Poll Merino ram sale are Landmark auctioneers Richard Miller & Gordon Wood (at back), Alistair and Andrew Michael, Leahcim, Snowtown, and purchasers, Ada & Pepe Marin, Punta Arenas, Chile.



Pictured with the \$7000 second top price at the Leahcim Poll Merino ram sale are Andrew & Alistair Michael, Leahcim, Snowtown, purchasers Paul & Jen Goering, Lukin Springs, Boyup Brook, WA, and Rosemary Michael.



Leahcim's Alistair Michael, Snowtown holds the \$7000 second top priced ram at the Leahcim Poll Merino ram sale for purchaser, Paul Goering, Lukin Springs, Boyup Brook, WA.



Prominent NSW buyers at Leahcim were Tony and Joel Smith, 'Tara', Walgett NSW. They purchased nine rams to \$3800 and are discussing their buying decisions with Leahcim senior principal Andrew Michael (centre).



Leahcim's Alistair Michael (3<sup>rd</sup> left) is pictured post sale with this group of seedstock buyers who collectively purchased 12 rams to \$6200 at the sale. They are Bert & Dion Woolford, Karawatha Park, Kimba (6 rams); Chris Prime, Nantoura, Wharminda (3 rams); Bill Walker, Classings Ltd, Murray Bridge (1 ram for Westwood stud, WA); and Ray & Brad Schroeder, Gunallo, Pinnaroo (2 rams).



The sale topping \$10,000 ram is pictured in the sale ring being auctioned during the Leahcim Poll Merino ram sale.