

BOOMING LEHCIM POLL MERINO RECORD

With stands packed three quarters of an hour before the sale and as many standing in the aisles the Michael family's Leahcim Poll Merino sale was set up to be a 'cracker'. There were 104 registered bidders and they were active from the very first lot to the end at lot 200, producing a booming result. The first ram started low, but finished high at \$17,000, then followed rams at \$12,000, \$22,500, which was the sale's top and then \$22,000; these first four rams grossing \$73,500 and adding \$367 to the overall sale average on their own.

After a 3½ hour marathon effort by auctioneers Gordon Wood (Landmark) and Craig Shearer (Elders) the 200 industry relevant Poll Merinos had all cleared for an amazing \$2988.50 average and a sale gross of \$597,700.

This is possibly an Australian record gross for an on-property Merino ram sale, but is yet to be verified. Buyers came from five mainland states and most regions of SA.

The top priced ram, Leahcim 1009 and sired by L1084 was structurally outstanding, with superb Merino Select figures that included +6.4 for yearling weight, +27% for yearling clean fleece weight, +14 for yearling staple length of 18.7 micron and 99.4% comfort factor wool. He was purchased by Robert, Karl and Will Hooke, Willera Poll Merinos, Serpentine, Vic for \$22,500. This was just \$2000 short of the individual Leahcim on-property record high set in 2009.

Karl Hooke said they see this ram as an industry leader, being a big and plain bodied ram with exceptional wool cutting ability.

"We have been using Leahcim genetics for approximately ten years and we think 1009 will continue to help us push the Merino breed boundaries, as indicated by our most recent shearing with an average cut of 4kg at 6 months, plus our 10 month old ewe lambs having conception rates as high as 85%," Karl said.

Underbidder was Mark Hull, Minta stud, Mt Cooper, SA who compensated with two rams at \$9400 and \$3000 later in the catalogue.

Nigel Kerin, Kerin Poll Merino stud, Yoevil, NSW paid the \$17,000 for lot 1, Leahcim 946 and sired by L445. An outstanding ram in every respect, Nigel said he purchased the ram for his great balance of wool and growth figures. Being positive for eye muscle, +8.1% for yearling weight, +23% for yearling clean fleece weight and +12 for yearling staple length of 18.6 micron wool, the ram certainly was the complete package.

"We have the flock with the highest Leahcim genetic influence in eastern Australia and it is great to be part of such a record breaking sale," Nigel said.

"Leahcim is probably the only other Poll Merino stud that concentrates on a balance of objectively measured meat and wool traits and it is that balance of traits that attracted us to this ram. He is without doubt one of the heaviest wool cutting sheep in the sale team and we think he will continue to enhance our fleece and growth rate gains," Nigel, whose own sale comes up soon, added.

A really rapid improver has been Leahcim 858, sired by L445, also the sire of Nigel Kerin's purchase. This ram was originally catalogued at lot 193 but was brought forward to be offered fourth. Bill Walker, Classings Ltd, Murray Bridge was the winning bidder at \$22,000 on behalf of three clients. Niel and Brenton Smith, 'Calcookera', Cowell purchased a 55% and possession share, while Richard Harkness, Superior Wool Merino, Tintinara and Les Hamence, Wurrulla took \$5000 semen shares each.

A huge part of the sale's success was that 25 ram breeding flocks were successful in buying rams indicating Leahcim is now having a large impact on the breeding direction of the Australian flock.

Bert Woolford, Karawatha Park stud, Kimba went to \$14,000 for Leahcim 663, while Taranak Partners, Wurrulla and buying through Spence Dix & Co paid \$12,000 for L1108 at lot 2. Ray Schroeder, Gunallo stud, via Pinnaroo paid \$10,000 for L1514 after being an earlier underbidder, while the Flairdale and Canowie studs combined to purchase L627 for \$8500. Keller Partners, Ramsgate, Tintinara purchased two rams at \$6200 and \$2400, KA & L Leo, Lake Grace, WA paid \$4800 and \$5200 for two top rams and Erroll Hay, 'Kamarooka' and buying through Elders Bendigo paid \$3000, \$3200 and \$3400 for three high quality rams to be the most significant of these seedstock buyers other than the three top prices.

John Sutherland, Paraway Partners and buying through Landmark Mills at Finley purchased five rams from \$3000 to \$4600 to be very prominent for the second year in a row, especially early in the catalogue.

While seedstock producers were major contributors, commercial producers more than held their own with Rob Germein from AP & DJ Germein & Sons, Pt Vincent again competing strongly to purchase six top rams to \$4400 and at a \$3667 average.

The biggest volume buyer by far was FA Kelly Trust, buying through Australian Wool Network's Yass office. They purchased 24 rams paying from \$1200 to \$2800 to make a real impact on the sale result.

The Atkinson family, Atkinson Livestock, Crafers was successful in purchasing 13 rams from \$1800 to \$3400, while WR & EM Jackson and buying through Spence Dix & Co, Keith purchased 12 from \$1200 to \$2200.

A group from Orroroo have been loyal Leahcim buyers from the stud's foundation and this year was no exception. TB & JG Laskey purchased three to \$3400; Aramaa Props purchased three to \$2600; JF & GM Kuerschner, three to \$3000; and HT Harslett two to \$2200. Combined, 11 rams went to that area.

Andrew Jaescke, ML Jaescke & Co through Elders Clare and Scott and Emily Davidson, Kalandra Pastoral, through Elders Keith both purchased five rams to also be significant buyers.

There were several buyers who contributed to the result but did not get the numbers they needed including some from NSW. Principal Andrew Michael reported that a further 120 rams were sold the next day in private selections as these and other buyers who missed out on their total requirements topped up their sire purchases.

Sale Summary	2011	2010
Offered	200	176
Sold	200	176
Top	\$22,500	\$11,500
Average	\$2988.50	\$2065

Agents: Landmark & Elders

Auctioneers: Gordon Wood (Landmark) & Craig Shearer (Elders)



Luke Michael, Leahcim, Snowtown, SA holds the \$22,500 top priced ram at the Leahcim Poll Merino sale bought by the Hooke family, Willera Merinos, Serpentine, Vic. Also pictured are Andrew Michael and auctioneers Gordon Wood and Craig Shearer.



Nigel Kerin (right), Kerin Merinos, Yoevil paid \$17,000 for this impressive lot 1 ram to kick the Leahcim sale off on a very high note. Also pictured are Leahcim's Rosemary & Andrew Michael.



Niel (2nd left) and Brenton Smith (right), Calcookara stud, Cowell, SA are with the \$22,000 Poll Merino ram they will take possession of after the record breaking Leahcim sale at Snowtown. Bill Walker (2nd right), Classings Ltd, Murray Bridge bought the ram for the Smiths and 2 other semen share partners, while Leahcim principal Andrew Michael is on the left.



Leahcim's Luke Michael talks with Tarlee Collins, Chris, Peter and Sue Atkinson, Atkinson Livestock, Harrogate, who bought a total of 13 rams in the record breaking Leahcim Poll Merino ram sale at Snowtown.



Lot 1, that made \$17,000 being offered at the start of the record breaking Poll Merino ram sale where 200 rams averaged just under \$3000.



The \$17,000 lot one ram was very keen to get back in the ring for post-sale photographs! It is with buyer, Nigel Kerin, Yoevil, NSW and landmark auctioneer, Gordon Wood.