

Best just gets better

Last Tuesday's Leahcim Poll Merino ram sale was extraordinarily successful with a large crowd of around 200 people witnessing a new Leahcim on-property individual record ram price, plus an on-property auction sale record.

After last year's amazing result that saw 80 rams clear to \$22,000 and average \$3,130 it was anticipated that rates could fall back a little this year. However that did not take into consideration just how 'in tune' the Michael family are with industry trends and commercial producer needs.

Consequently buyers attended and bought from all mainland states and at the end of the main auction of 79 rams, a new record of \$24,500 had been set; 5 rams sold for more than \$10,000 and last year's national on-property sale average record was exceeded by \$137, with the 79 rams averaging an amazing \$3,267.09.

Last year some of the commercial breeders missed out on rams with only 40 mini auction rams available. Leahcim principal Andrew Michael was very conscious of this and to cater for all buyer needs he ensured this would not be repeated by offering 120 rams by mini auction. The quality of these was still very high, with one selling to \$6,500, but with 53 clearing and half of these selling at \$500 or \$600 he certainly reintroduced value for commercial clients into the sale.

The new Leahcim on-property record of \$24,500 was paid by the Daniell family, White River stud, Poochera in partnership with Cliff Phelps, Allala stud, Pt Lincoln. They were successful in outbidding the Wallaloo Park stud, Marnoo, Vic bidding by phone through Bill Walker, Classings Ltd, Murray Bridge.

The ram, Leahcim 609 Twin had a wonderful combination of carcase and wool ASBVs on Merino Select highlighted by a +28% figure for clean fleece weight of typical bright, well defined and long stapled 18.3 micron wool. White River has successfully used Leahcim genetics in their Poll flock program via semen and John Daniell said the ram should ideally match the Commonwealth 34 daughters in their flock.

Wallaloo Park didn't miss out altogether as they got the sale off to a cracking start by successfully bidding \$12,500 for lot 1, Leahcim 348, one of the highest growth rams in the catalogue with a terrific 12.3 micron wool.

Robert Hooke, Willera Merinos, Serpentine, Vic followed, picking up lot 2 for \$4,500 and then adding lot 7 at \$7,500 and lot 28 at \$6,000 to put some real top end heat in the sale.

Ray Schroeder, Gunallo stud, Pinnaroo picked up lot 16 for \$6,000 while Ross and Wally Miller, Coreena stud sheep, Barcaldina, Qld went to \$8,000 in purchasing lot 5 and the added 2 more at \$6,000 and \$2,400 to be significant contributors to the sale's success. Bill Walker also went to \$6,500 in purchasing lot 9 for repeat clients, Welke Brothers, Cascades, WA. He later added rams for \$2,200 for Matt Cook and \$5,500 for Glenlea Park stud, Pinnaroo.

The strength of the top end buying was best indicated by the first 20 rams averaging over \$5,000. While the prices tapered back as the sale went on, the quality didn't and some seedstock breeders found elite sheep later in the catalogue.

The Mallee based Kamora Park and Ridgway studs bid to \$10,500 through Landmark Karoonda's Murray Greenfield before securing lot 26, Leahcim 295; touted pre-sale as one of the top rams in the catalogue.

The Graetz Family Trust, Bordertown dug in and paid \$11,000 for lot 39 Leahcim 203, a top son of Leahcim 154. L154 has proven to be the leading sire nationally under sheep CRC testing for the elimination of breech wrinkle.

Richard Harkness, Superior Wool, Tintinara paid \$10,500 for lot 51, another outstanding young sire with a Clean Fleece weight ASBV of +31%, to round out the 5 figure rams.

Don Mudford, Dubbo, NSW underbid several of the top priced lots, but found a top young ram in the mini auction, going to \$6,500 before being successful. He also purchased another in the main auction at \$1,600.

Volume buying in such a strong sale with a large number of competing buyers was harder to achieve, but several regulars and new buyers achieved their required numbers, topping up with mini auction rams if necessary.

WJ Farming Trust, Birregurra, Victoria were strong bidders throughout the sale. Buying through Elders Geelong, they purchased 10 rams on the day to be the biggest volume buyers. They bought 6 in the mini auction from \$1,000 to \$2,200 and added 4 mini auction rams from \$600 to \$1,600, demonstrating there was value to be had in the sale.

Gary Armour, 'Tekoot', Yass, NSW was another volume interstate buyer, purchasing 7 rams from \$600 to \$4,000 and at an average of \$2,057.

South Australians were not left out with Peter Phillips, Penola purchasing 8 rams from \$500 to \$2,500 in great value buying.

The Orroroo area has always provided good buying competition in this sale, this year being no exception with MA & BJ Kuerschner being the strongest in purchasing 6 rams from \$1,000 to \$1,800.

Rob Germein, Pt Vincent is a long time Leahcim supporter and also purchased 6 rams from \$600 to \$2,800 and at an \$1,883 average. Local Snowtown Landmark agency operator Jon Reincke purchased 6, A/c Hayes, while long time regulars Roger and Ros Wheaton, Crystal Brook and Chelwood Farming, Mintaro purchased 5 rams each.

Other key ram buyers included: HT Haslett, Orroroo (4 rams to \$2,250), JF & GM Kuerschner, Orroroo (4 rams to \$2,600), A & M Jaeschke, Clare (4 rams to \$2,800), Aramaa Props, Orroroo (3 to \$3,000), Prime Family Trust, Wharminda (3 to \$3,500), Maro Creek & Wilkinson, Snowtown (2 @ \$3,500 and \$4,000), EW Hoepner & Co, Balaklava (4 to \$900), Brian Kay, Pt Lincoln (2 to \$4,600), and Paul Rundle, Kulpara (4 to \$600).

The limited offering of stud and commercial ewes did not match the ram demand, but Karawatha stud, Kimba made the most of the opportunity and purchased 48 young stud ewes at an average of \$198 and also picked up the 67 commercial ewes at \$80 each.

The sale concluded with an offering of White Suffolk rams. The Leahcim White Suffolk sale is scheduled 3 days later, but this smaller offering has been included to cater for the needs of their Poll Merino clients.

18 of these sold to \$750 and averaged \$644.

Robert Hooke, Willera Merinos, Serpentine was the main buyer, picking up 8 of the 18 on the day.

Sale Summary

Poll Merino rams	Main Auction	2009	2008
Offered		79	80
Sold		79	80
Top		\$24,500	\$22,000
Average		\$3,267	\$3,130
	Mini Auction	2009	2008
Offered		120	40
Sold		53	40
Top		\$6,500	\$1,900
Average		\$866	\$1,155

Ewes

Sold 115
Top \$250
Ave \$129.22

White Suffolk Rams

Sold 18
Top \$750
Ave \$644

Sale Agents: Landmark & Elders

Auctioneers: Gordon Wood & Craig Shearer



The Leahcim on-property record priced ram @ \$24,500 is pictured with John Harris, Landmark Cummins Ag Services, Cliff Phelps, Allala Poll Merino stud, Cummins, Wes Daniell, White River, Minnipa; Jeff Becker Elders Wudinna; Luke Michael, Leahcim, Snowtown holding the ram, John Daniell, White River, Poochera, Gordon Wood, Landmark auctioneer and Leahcim principal Andrew Michael.



Pictured after the stunning Leahcim Poll Merino sale are Robert Hooke, Willera Merinos, Serpentine (3 Merinos to \$7,500 and 8 White Suffolks). Rob Germein, Pt Vincent (6 rams to \$2,800). Ross & Wally Miller, 'Coreena', Barculdine, Qld (3 rams to \$8,000).



Stewart Michael, Leahcim, Snowtown is with Bill Walker, Classings Ltd, Murray Bridge and the ram Bill bought for \$12,500 for Wallaloo Park, Marnoo, Vic



Key buyers at the Leahcim Poll Merino ram sale are Richard Harkness, Tintinara (1 ram @ \$10,500), Tim & David Graetz Graetz, Bordertown (1ram @ \$11,000). They are discussing their purchases with Elders area wool manager Craig Eckert.