

RAINING BIDS AT LEAHCIM

In a stunning total clearance sale result, the Michael family, Leahcim Poll Merinos, Snowtown sold 176 rams to a top of \$11,500 and at a \$2,065 average last Tuesday.

While the average was back on last year's extraordinary figure of \$3,267, it is brought into perspective when you consider there were only 79 rams in last year's main auction. The evenness of this year's offering of 11 to 14 month old rams was exceptional, giving bidders many choices to fill the buying needs.

Over 300 people were in attendance from all mainland states of Australia, plus Chilean visitors; a wonderful vote of confidence in the Leahcim breeding program. Amongst this crowd were 78 registered bidders, with 58 being successful in purchasing rams.

The \$11,500 top price was paid by David and Karen Ridgway, Ridgway Advance stud, Bordertown for lot 20, Leahcim 090491, a 14 month old son of Leahcim 060004. He had a great balance of carcase and wool ASBVs in the 13 measured breeding traits supplied in the sale catalogue. The Ridgways later added a younger average breaker ram for only \$2,000.

While this top price was \$13,000 less than last year's record \$24,500 top, the strength of rapid fire bidding throughout the sale was exceptional, especially in the \$2,000 to \$4,000 range in the first half of the sale, with the first ram to sell under \$2,000 being at lot 65. The first ram under \$1,000 did not occur until lot 98. This ensured such a solid sale average and made the auctioneering duties relatively easy for Craig Shearer (Elders) and Gordon Wood (Landmark).

In his pre-sale welcome and while showing genuine passion and enthusiasm for the future of the sheep industry, Andrew Michael said, "The Merino breed is at a very exciting point in its history and now has identified superior genetics that will enable breeders to go in any direction they want; whether that is producing elite wools, superior carcasses, or a combination of both."

He explained there were rams with growth ASBVs up to 9.7, which is not far behind the top sheep in terminal sire breeds. He also displayed 3 of the stud's sires that had wools with the industry preferred staple length of 92mm at only 4 months wool growth, demonstrating that it was now possible to get 3 premium wool cuts per year.

"With measurement and these types of rams, we can take the industry as far as we want to," Andrew said.

The expectant gallery needed little encouragement, with the stands full approximately 30 minutes before the sale started. By greatly increasing supply of high quality rams in the auction, the Michael family were able to keep a lid on extreme prices; making their rams affordable for most producers. A quarter of the offering sold for \$1,000 or less, giving real value for buyers who had a more restricted budget. Despite the solidity of the sale, 63% still sold for \$2,000 or less.

Robert Hooke, representing Willera Merinos, Serpentine and buying through Landmark Bendigo got the sale off on a good note with a successful \$4,200 bid for L090255. He later added two more top rams for \$4,800 and \$3,600 in committed bidding, adding to the 3 he bought last year for a \$6,000 average.

Two lots later, KA & L Leo, Lake Grace, WA bid \$7,200 for L090980, again possessing top figures and highlighted by a clean fleece weight ASBV of +18.

Bill Walker, Classings Ltd, Murray Bridge purchased 3 top rams for regular buyers, Welke Brothers, Cascades, WA, paying \$6,500, \$6,000 and \$3,400 in very selective bidding.

Mark Kerin, Gullen Gamble Merino stud, Yoeval, NSW was back after the Gullen Gamble stud made a significant investment in Leahcim Poll Merino genetics 2 years ago. This year he bid \$7,200 to purchase L090784, a 16.5micron ram with a terrific 7% Dual Purpose index of 149. He outlasted Warren Beattie, Wudinna in a strong bidding duel.

Earlier in the year Mark bid the national record \$261 for commercial Leahcim blood Merino ewe hoggets from Richard & Barbara Turner's 'Rayville' flock dispersal.

NSW Buyers have been very strong Leahcim Poll Merino supporters in recent times with Andrew Michael saying they had sold 180 rams into that state this year. Peter Rolestone, Elders Clare manager had a busy administrative day, with 4 local clients purchasing 10 rams between them, plus 39 rams for 8 NSW buying accounts being booked out through the Elders Clare office.

Bluegate Pastoral Co through Rodwells, Deniliquin, NSW were also significant purchasers with 2 rams @ \$3,800 and \$3,400.

Again the Orroroo region was very strong in its support for Leahcim Poll Merinos. Four buyers from Orroroo purchased 18 rams between them, with HT Harslett paying from \$2,000 to \$3,000 for 6 rams being the most prominent of them.

Landmark's SA Wool Manager Trevor James purchased 8 rams for Picarilli Pastoral Co, through his company's Cunnamulla, Qld, office. He paid from \$1,300 to \$2,000 to put together a very good line of rams.

Victorian buyers were headed by Warrambine Pastoral, buying through Elders Ballarat. They purchased 7 rams from \$600 to \$1,500, being rewarded with value through patience, selecting their rams in the latter part of the sale. WJ Dennis Farming Trust, through Elders Geelong selected 2 rams @ \$1,600 and \$2,200 to round out the successful Victorian bidders.

Rob Germein, representing the family partnership of AP & DJ Germein & Son and buying through Landmark, Minlaton was the equal biggest volume South Australian buyer with 7 rams selected throughout the catalogue and paying from \$1,100 to \$3,000.

He was joined on that number by PPH & S Naracoorte, A/c Erehwon Pastoral Co, whose 7 rams were purchased from \$1,200 to \$3,200.

There were at least 10 studs bidding on the day and besides those already mentioned, the Schroeder family, Gunallo stud through Landmark Pinnaroo went to \$6,500 to purchase L090456, another top son of L06004.

The Pindari stud, buying through Elders Riverton paid \$4,000 and \$3,400 for 2 top rams, while the Keller family, Ramsgate and buying through Elders Tintinara achieved great value with rams at \$1,600 and \$2,400.

Long time Leahcim supporters Roger and Ros Wheaton, Snowtown and the Crawford family, through Elders Peterborough each purchased 4 rams in the \$1,200 to \$2,600 range to again be significant contributors to the overall result.

Sale Summary	2010	2009 (Main auction)	2009 (incl. mini auction)
Offered	176	79	199
Sold	176	79	132
Top	\$11,500	\$24,500	\$24,500
Average	\$2,065	\$3,267	\$2,303
Agents: Elders & Landmark			
Auctioneers: Craig Shearer & Gordon Wood			



Purchasers of the \$11,500 top priced ram at the Leahcim Poll Merino sale, Karen & David Ridgway, Ridgway Advance, Bordertown are with the ram, held by Leahcim's Luke Michael.



The stands were packed and it was standing room only for many of the large crowd of over 300 at Leahcim's Poll Merino ram sale last week.