

## **Leahcim's measured genetics produce 'best ever' result**

In a result described by Leahcim senior principal Andrew Michael as, "Probably our best ever overall result," 243 Poll Merino rams twice topped at \$8400 and averaged \$2419 at the family's 32<sup>nd</sup> annual Poll Merino ram sale at Snowtown on Tuesday (10<sup>th</sup> Sept).

The presentation of the line-up of 11 to 14 month old rams was outstanding, with Landmark co-auctioneer Richard Miller saying, "This sale is chock full of high quality industry leading genetics and is so even from the front to the back end of the catalogue."

There would not be an offering anywhere in the country that presented rams with so much industry relevant data and this was clearly an attraction for sheep producers Australia wide. 53 bidders registered from all states except Queensland. Clearly these buyers wanted, and appreciated the amount of independent industry performance data available, allowing them to make more informed buying decisions rather than relying on guesswork.

Landmark stud stock manager and co-auctioneer Gordon Wood said post sale, "It was an awesome result and clearly showed buyer confidence in measured genetics."

Leahcim senior principal Andrew Michael said in his pre-sale welcome, "We've put in an enormous amount of work in developing genetics and an offering of this standard. We've increased numbers to cater for the demand and to ensure all our commercial clients are able to satisfy their varying buying needs and budgets.

"We are aiming to offer plain bodied sheep with balance and freedom of breech wrinkle, allowing clients to receive wool and skin premiums. Non-mulesed wools are currently attracting a 15% premium, so our objective is to produce rams that will give the highest quality wools and lots of it.

"We are super excited about the follicle density research work that we are involved in and where it can take the industry. It is most the most excited I've ever been in all my years of sheep breeding," he said.

Ray and Brad Schroeder, Gunallo stud, Pinnaroo kicked the sale off on a good note with a \$5500 winning bid on the first ram offered, L182792 that had a Merino Select clean fleece weight breeding value of +23.8. They later added two more rams to average \$3833 for three very good value buys.

Stud producers were active with ten operating from four states, purchasing a combined total of 20 rams at a \$4795 average. Included were the two equal top priced rams at \$8400, a modest top in such a high quality line-up, but it was the depth and evenness of quality that gave producers including seedstock breeders many buying options.

It was lot 9, Leahcim 183564, the first of the younger September/October drops that was the first to sell for \$8400. Sired by L173205 it had outstanding performance figures that included +11 for yearling weight, 0.8 for fat, 1.1 for eye muscle, 25.7 for clean fleece weight and 14.3 for staple length. The successful buyers were long term top end bidders at Leahcim, Paul and Jenny Goerling, Lukin Springs, Boyup Brook, WA.

Like Gunallo, they didn't limit their buying to the one lot. They were successful on four others as well, taking home five top rams at a \$5240 average.

"You can never have too many really top rams," Paul said.

"In particular, we were looking for rams with deep crimp and white nourished wools that will handle our rainfall. We picked out five and while expecting to probably only be able to get three within our budget, we were delighted to get all five.

"The top priced ram has unbelievably good figures across the board and while he cost us the most, we also highly rank all of the other four as well. In fact, lot 41, L182333 is the best son by their identified high follicle density sire L162058, so we were delighted to have got him for just \$3200 in comparison," Paul said.

The second ram to sell at \$8400 came through the ring at lot 13, unlucky for some, but most certainly not for the Hannaton stud, Kaniva. L182249 was sired by L153207 and also had exceptional figures, highlighted by 1.6 for eye muscle, 29.0 for yearling clean fleece weight, 18.7 for staple length and -1.0 for breech wrinkle.

Long term Leahcim client, Murrayfield Station, Bruny Island, Tasmania chimed in to purchase lot 4, L182177, also by L153207 for \$7000, ultimately the second top price. Its top figures were highlighted by a clean fleece weight of 23.6 and staple length of 20.7.

Western Australian support was once again very strong. Besides Lukin Springs, four others made the purchasers' list and collectively 30 rams will be heading west. These averaged \$3617, 50% above the overall sale average.

Phillip and Kelsie Foss, Lake Grace were once again prominent high quality volume buyers, selecting 13 rams, going to a top of \$4600 twice and averaging \$2892.

Michael Whiting, Shepwok Downs, Gibson, via Esperance was a very determined bidder, selecting nine top rams to \$4800 and averaging \$3589. Trudy and Thomas Pengilly, Penrose Pastoral, Esperance purchased four last year including the \$15,000 top priced ram, but were more reserved this year, picking up two more additions for their breeding program at \$3800 and \$3400.

Buying through Landmark Katanning, AM & LJ Leach rounded out the WA buying with one ram at \$3200.

In the volume buying stakes one account stood out well beyond all others. Angus and Sarah Martin, Noorong Pastoral Co, Barham and buying through BR & C Swan Hill have been purchasing Leahcim rams for eight years for their 12,000 head self-replacing flock, this year purchasing 49 rams at auction. They paid to a top of \$1900 and averaged just \$1373 in great value buying.

"Initially the non-mulesing factor was an attraction in looking at Leahcim sheep but the bonus was it came with sheep that still perform. Doing ability and early maturity attributes are real strengths of these genetics," Angus said.

"We're going through tough conditions at present, but our sheep are handling it well," he added.

"To ensure that continues, we've selected for extra muscling and positive fat, while keeping fleece weights up," Angus said.

They had no shortage of rams to select from regarding that criteria, with 92% being positive for muscling and just two in the whole catalogue not being positive for fat.

"We are finding our wether lambs, which we sell off early as forward stores, are getting a real following now and are highly sought," Sarah said.

“Having found the sheep that clearly suit our needs is one thing, but we’d have to add that the after sales service we have received from the Michael family is outstanding; second to none,” Sarah added.

Buerckner & Co P/L, Tuncamah and buying through Landmark Benalla purchased one ram at \$4800, taking the Victorian impact to three buyers and 51 rams.

NSW buying was again very strong, despite the ravages of drought through a lot of that state. Led by AWN Goulburn agents Denis Hewitt, Pat McNeill and Cassie Baile, six regular buyers from that region purchased 32 rams. Leading the way from the group was the Kensit family, Hollywood Pastoral, Crookwell with ten rams to \$4000 and averaging \$2980.

Adam Henniker, representing Paspaley Pearls for their Kurrijong Park property and buying through Elders Dubbo was again strong in buying support. With Elders Yorke Peninsula agent Miles Cockington assisting, he purchased ten rams to \$2000 and at a great value \$1720 average.

While these interstate buyers were prominent, collectively purchasing 51% of the offering, by far the biggest support came from local South Australians, with 34 successful in purchasing from one to 11 rams.

Leading the volume buying in this state was PJ & JM Hayes, Redhill who paid to \$1600 and averaged a high value \$1355 for 11 rams. Not far behind was RG & CA Collins, Corny Point. Also buying through Elders Minlaton’s Miles Cockington, they purchased nine rams to \$2600 and at a \$2122 average.

Long term repeat buyer Rob Germein, AP & DJ Germein, also through Elders Minlaton purchased six rams to \$4400 and at a \$2533 average to again be prominent.

Paul Bott, Landmark Kingscote purchased 12 rams on the day; six account Manor Estates averaging \$1333, plus six for his family’s Billabong Pastoral, averaging \$1900.

Nurunderi Partners, through Landmark Strathalbyn also purchased six rams, going to \$3000 and averaging \$2400, virtually right on the sale average.

Operating in the higher price brackets were four buyers of prominence.

After purchasing 11 top rams last year, Dianne Johnson and her manager Travis Cooper, Arapunya Investments P/L, Mintaro were needing lesser numbers this year, but still impacted the result with four outstanding rams. Buying through Landmark Clare they paid to \$6200 and averaged \$4400.

Emeroo Station, Toolgie on Eyre Peninsula and buying through Elders Cummins also went to a \$6200 high in purchasing five rams at a \$3640 average.

David Harslett, Harslett Rural, Gladstone and buying through Landmark Orroroo was also prominent, picking up four to a top of \$6600 and at a \$4000 average. His top lot was an exceptional ram L182032, deep in the catalogue at lot 217. With a yearling staple length of 21.6 and clean fleece weight of 25.2, it created quite a lot of pre-sale interest.

The O’Brien stud, Kyancutta and trading as Mamblin Pastoral went to \$6800, the third highest price on the day, in picking up L183174, again with impressive figures. From the stud breeders, this was the only other ram to top \$5000 other than those mentioned previously.

PJ & KL Ebsary, Barunga Gap was not a major buyer in this sale, but did purchase two rams at a \$2800 average, making it the 32<sup>nd</sup> year in a row they have purchased from Leahcim.

Andrew Michael summarized by saying, "To have increased our numbers, combined with the current wool market and the very poor season for many clients across the country, things were working against a good sale outcome, so to be able to get that clearance and average, I think made it the best and most pleasing result we've ever had."

In thanking everyone for their support Alistair Michael summed up the Michael family's feelings on the support they'd received by saying, "We have the best clients in the country, and we mean it."

<b>Sale Summary</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>
<b>Offered</b>	247	235
<b>Sold</b>	243	235
<b>Top</b>	\$8400 (x2)	\$15,000
<b>Average</b>	\$2419	\$2761

**Agents:** Landmark

**Auctioneers:** Gordon Wood and Richard Miller



*Pictured with the two \$8400 top priced rams at the Leahcim Poll Merino ram sale are auctioneers Richard Miller and Gordon Wood in the dais, Alistair Michael hold in the ram purchased by Hannaton Merinos, Kaniva, and Paul Goerling, Lukoin Springs, Boyup Brook, WA holding the ram he and his wife Jenny purchased.*





*Leahcim's Alistair Michael (centre) is with prominent volume buyers after the 32<sup>nd</sup> annual Leahcim sale. They are Miles Cockington, Elders Minlaton who assisted Adam Henniker, Kurrijong Park, Gunnedah (10 rams to \$2000), and Angus and Sarah Martin, Noorong Pastoral Co. via Swan Hill (49 rams to \$1900).*



*Western Australian buying support was very strong with 5 buyers purchasing a total of 30 rams. Pictured here are Phillip and Kelsie Foss, Lake Grace (13 rams to \$4600), Paul Goerling, Boyup Brook (5 rams to \$8400), and Michael Whiting, Esperence (9 rams to \$4800).*



*AWN Goulburn agents Pat McNeill, Denis Hewitt and Cassie Baile working on purchasing rams for their clients at the Leahcim sale. They purchased a total of 32 rams for 6 clients.*