

Resilience on display at Kamora Park

The resilience of Mallee farmers can never be questioned, with no better evidence than this year. A season that was turning from bad to atrocious received a reprieve on the night before last Friday morning's Kamora Park Poll Merino ram sale at Sandalwood with approximately 15mm of much needed rain.

While the overall season had an obvious dampening effect on buyer confidence and budgets, the rain certainly brightened prospects and optimism to the point that Colin, Julie, Wade and Katelyn Boughen were well rewarded for their dedicated efforts in penning 240 magnificent rams for competition. The display of modern easy care and dual purpose Poll Merinos was a credit to the vendors.

46 registered bidders from four states actively competed for the rams on offer, resulting in 216 selling to \$5200 and averaging \$1565. Another nine were sold immediately after the sale.

This average was back \$344 on last year's very buoyant result, which had lifted \$364 on the 2016 result, but an extra 25 cleared at auction. As Landmark auctioneer Gordon Wood highlighted pre-sale, the outlook for both sheepmeat and wool markets are at unprecedented levels, but that is only relevant if producers are not financially restrained by the extra costs and supply of feed and water.

Colin Boughen was both very pleased and relieved post sale; firstly, that they had received their biggest rain for the year, and secondly that their loyal clients again gave them great support.

The quality certainly deserved that high level of support, but the middle ground of the sale was the area that most affected the overall average compared with last year. The top end was still strong, but not quite as competitive as last year with just six rams exceeding \$4000.

Long term regular buyer Scott Dinham, Tailern Bend was after his 'usual handful', but was determined to get his choice selections. He was pushed to the sale's \$5200 top price in purchasing five exceptional rams at a \$3560 average.

"We retained all our grain from last year for our sheep, and the current wool and sheep markets certainly warrant the extra spend if necessary to get the rams that we think will keep improving our flock," Scott said.

The top ram offered at lot 5, KP114 and sired by Moorundie 363, was aptly nicknamed "Horse", such was his size and powerful presence. He was +6.6 for yearling weight on Merino Select, +19 for clean fleece weight and had a Dual Purpose Index of 149. He cut an outstanding 8.72kg of wool at seven months growth with the outstanding measurements of 18.7 Micron, 2.3 SD, 12.3 CV and 100% Comfort Factor.

Joseph Murdoch, North Cowie stud, Warooka made the trip over and was delighted to be able to pick up KP50, also sired by Moorundie 363, for the sale's second top of \$4800. With a magnificent long staple of bright well-defined wool, this ram was the second heaviest cutter in the sale with 9.13kg at seven months, having a CFW EBV of +26.

The Blight family, Seymour Park stud, Narrogin, WA bid via phone hook-up with Elders Tony Wetherall, picking up KP 600, an impressive son of the top sire, KP333. This 18.4 micron ram ranked +22 for clean fleece weight on Merino Select.

JP & C Hein, through Landmark Murray Bridge went to \$4400 in purchasing two rams at a \$4100 average; Senior Park through Fox & Lillie, Bordertown paid \$4200 for their one top purchase; and

Andy Beelitz Family Trust, through Landmark Lameroo paid \$4400 for their one select purchase, KP 467 with the highest Dual Purpose Index in the catalogue of 159.

The one other ram to top \$4000 was lot 3, KP1581 by Boonoke 948 with the equal third highest Dual Purpose Index in the catalogue at 154. This ram sold for \$4600 to resolute Kamora Park sale supporters, John and Paul Wegner, buying through Landmark Karoonda. They have been extremely prominent in volume and price sales for many years, this year being no exception. They bid successfully on 25 rams at an average of \$2148. In last year's sale their 23 rams averaged \$2513, topping at \$3600, so while they went \$1000 higher this year for their top purchase, the weaker middle ground meant their average was able to come in at \$365 less.

The biggest volume buyer by far was another extremely long-term and loyal client, Andrew Wall, Langidoon Station, via Broken Hill. Buying through Landmark Warren, Andrew purchased 45 rams in the sale, plus another four immediately after. This is despite the seasonal hardships in his area. He bid to \$1000 and averaged \$669. Last year he was restricted to 14 rams in the sale at a \$750 average but later purchased a further 31 after the sale.

With the heat in the sale down several degrees, but with a much more positive seasonal outlook in the south east than most other areas of the state, Adam Bradley, Platinum Livestock, Keith was able to expand his bidding on behalf of clients. Purchasing for Marcollat Pastoral, he purchased 21 rams to \$2200 and a \$929 average. This was nearly double last year's purchase numbers at nearly half the average (11 at \$1818).

Other prominent buyers of note included Ray Kowald, Kevradale, Taillem Bend, through Landmark Murray Bridge (eight rams to \$3000 ave \$2025, including the heaviest cutter at 9.31kg for seven months growth); Whygee Pastoral through Landmark Karoonda (seven to \$3000 and ave \$2343); and Homevale Farming, Kaniva, through Fox & Lillie (seven rams to \$2000 and ave \$1786.)

Sale Summary	2018	2017
Offered	240	194
Sold	216	191
Top	\$5200	\$7200
Average	\$1569	\$2059

Agents: Landmark Karoonda
Auctioneers: Gordon Wood and Richard Miller

Please see over page – photos from the sale



Katelyn Boughen, Kamora Park, Sandalwood holds KP114 'Horse' that sold for the \$5200 top price at the Kamora Park ram sale to Scott Dinham (centre), Tailem Bend, with conducting sale agent, Landmark Keller Livestock, Karoonda & Lameroo representative, Kevin Keller (left).



Katelyn Boughen, Kamora Park stud, Sandalwood is with Joseph Murdoch, North Cowie stud, Warooka and his buying agent, Alistair Keller, Landmark Minlaton who is holding Joseph's \$4800 purchase, KP50.