White River soars to $18,000 top

Every expectation on quality that would have been built up from 38 previous White River ram sales was met at the Daniell family’s 39th annual Merino and Poll Merino sale at Poochera last Thursday.

A magnificent yarding of 186 big, growthy and heavy cutting rams were penned for buyer competition, with just three failing to attract bids, despite the extreme challenges this season has thrown up to local Eyre Peninsula farmers.

Just like last year at this time, the lack of autumn and winter rains played against the buoyancy of the current wool and sheep meat markets and was compounded by extreme winds causing significant damage just over a week ago. Fortunately, the region’s best rain for the year by far of 65mm followed those winds, with some positivity had returning. While it is difficult to supply the nutritional needs of sheep in tough years, the cash flow and turnover they create can be a Godsend in years when cropping takes such huge hits.

Despite all this, the durability of the White River rams was evident, with only 20 of the offering receiving extra preparation for showing and display purposes, yet as usual the rams have thrived, with bodyweights well above 100kg throughout the catalogue.

The 183 that found new homes amongst the 48 registered buyers from four states, sold to a top of $18,000 and averaged $2436. This average was back $515 on last year’s record White River result, but still extremely good in such a season.

The sale top was up $5000 on last year’s $13,000 top and was again paid for a Merino ram. It was lot 8, the first Merino offered that created the sale topping interest. Sired by the homebred W750, this beautifully balanced ram, carrying a magnificent covering of 19.3 mic, 2.4 SD, 12.4 CV and 99.9 CF medium wool was described by John Daniell as, “Certainly the best woolled ram we’ve ever offered.”

Long-time White River clients and buyer of last year’s sale topper, David Lindner, Wonga Pastoral, Morgan, was keen to invest in the genetic advantages this ram offered, despite the dire conditions they are experiencing at present. However, this year he went home as underbidder, compensating by purchasing the next lot, a 145kg Venus 55 son for $9000.

Paul Cousins, Cousins Merino Services, linked up via phone connection with Scott Crosby, Rossden Partners, St Quentin stud, Nyabing, WA to place the winning bid. St Quentin were possession purchasers with Shane Mackin, Kamballie stud, Tammin, WA as semen share partners. The purchasers saw the ram on display at the recent Bendigo ASBA Show, with Scott Crosby saying post sale, “We are very excited to add him to our pool of genetics.”

The sale’s second top price overall was $9250, paid by Bill Carey, Parla Park, Streaky Bay for another Venus 55 son at lot 10. The first five Merinos were highly sought and averaged $8330.

Through trending demand, the Poll Merinos have come to be the most prominent in number at this sale, but the horned rams still have a strong following with many long-term White River clients. The offering comprised 60% Poll Merinos and 40% Merinos, but the Merinos have averaged higher for the last two years. 19 more were offered this year than last, but demand remained strong.

The seven Poll Merinos that commenced the sale averaged $5179, twice topping at $6000. Bill Ryan, ‘Curragh’, Oakley, via Hay, NSW came over last year and went to $12,000 to purchase his select Poll Merino ram, but paid just half that this year to win the bidding on lot 1, a beautifully balanced 20.9
micron top Moorundie NE8 son. With his ‘savings’ he then purchased another top son 85 lots later for $3600.

Paul Carey, Talieka Pastoral, Streaky Bay also went to $6000 to purchase another huge Moorundie NE8 son, with bright, nourished and heavy cutting 22 micron wool at lot 3.

Nick Lienert, Oak Farms stud, Kimba has fared very well over the years courtesy of White River genetics and was back again this year. He purchased Banavie 333 and Moorundie NE8 sons, both 21 micron Polls for $5000 each, then added a top W750 sired Merino at $4200; his three purchases averaging $4900. This was $433 less than one Poll and two Merinos averaged him last year.

Jim and Jay Fischer, Yanac, Victoria were back once again and made a big impact on the sale. They are one of the clients who prefer horned Merinos and are prepared to travel and invest in these genetics that they know produce the goods in their Wimmera country. They purchased nine Merinos at a $2422 average for themselves, but as advisers they also purchased three Merinos and one Poll Merino for near neighbours and new White River client Roy Dickinson, plus 20 Poll Merinos at a $2170 average for Darren Rethus, West Wimmera Beef. He purchased part of the Fischer’s original holding and flock a few years ago and along with his nephew Luke, accompanied the Fischers to the sale.

The biggest volume buyer was once again Lairg Station, Sheringa. Peter Reynolds bid to $1800 in securing 29 of these bale filling rams at a great value $1383.

While top prices make headlines, value buying was still readily available with 53% of the catalogue being knocked down at $2000 or less.

Les and Josh Williams, Elliston made full use of this value purchasing 10 rams at a $1620 average, while the Docking family, Edge Blue P/L, Pt Lincoln and Medobank P/L, Pt Augusta each purchased seven rams at $1400 and $888 averages respectively.

Buying select top end Poll Merinos were the Olsen family, Kiara P/L, Wirrulla with two at $5000 and $4400, and Jindalee P/L and Kappacoda Park, Wudinna with three to $5250 and averaging $4083.

The strong middle ground of the sale was dominated by several familiar names at this sale. Adam Desmazures, Newton Pastoral, Tintinara and accompanied by his Spence Dix and Co agent, Luke Schreiber purchased 10 rams at a $2450 average, very much in line with their previous year’s buying.

John Michael, JW Michael & Co, Wudinna purchased seven rams at a $2600 average. Having come in under budget on the six he originally wanted, he added the extra one as back up.

WG Fuss & Sons, Cummins and buying through their SAL North West agent Colin McFarlane purchased seven this year at a great value $2505, last year averaging $4600 for eight similar quality rams.

Craig Wright, SE & DJ Wright & Son, P/L, Ceduna is another who prefers horned Merinos rather than Polls, purchasing five at a $2920 average, just $13 less than six averaged him last year.

Mark, John and Nigel Turnbull, Cleve, and Brenton Jones, Eba Vale, Darke Peak purchased six rams each, at $2267 and $2667 averages respectively.

The Daniell family was delighted with the result and were especially thankful for the strong support from their many loyal clients who keep coming back. They also thanked the generosity of those present who donated $900 for the McGrath Foundation as a result of the ‘gold coin’ luncheon so
professionally served by the ladies from the Karcultaby School parents and friends group. White River has now donated $6600 to this great cause from lunches over the last 10 years.

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Agents: Elders and Landmark
Auctioneer: Tony Wetherall (E) and Gordon Wood (L)

White River’s Wes Daniell holds the $18,000 sale topping ram at the White River sale and is with Paul Cousins, Cousins Merino Services who purchased the ram for St Quentin and Kamballie studs in WA, Elders auctioneer Tony Wetherall, Jacqui Daniell and Landmark auctioneer, Gordon Wood.
The super impressive wool on the $18,000 sale topping ram.

The $18,000 sale topping ram at the White River ram sale with members of the Daniell family; Jacqui, Wes, John, Chloe, Freddy and Claire.
Paul Cousins, Cousins Merino Services (centre) is with Wes and John Daniell, White River and the Merino ram Paul purchased on behalf of the St Quentin stud, Nyabing, WA and the Kamballie stud, Tammin, WA in partnership.

White River’s Wes Daniell (3rd right) is with prominent buyers at the family’s annual ram sale; Nick Lienert, Oak Farms stud, Kimba (three top rams ave $4900); Peter Reynolds, Laig Station, Sheringa (29 rams); Peter’s Elders buying agent and EP District Wool Manager, Claire Loveridge; and Les and Josh Williams, Elliston (10 rams).
White River’s Wes (centre) and John Daniell(right) are with prominent Victorian buyers from Yanac at the White River ram sale; Jim Fischer (2nd left – nine rams), Darren Rethus, West Wimmera Beef (20 rams), while Darren’s nephew, Luke (left) accompanied them. Jim also purchased four rams for the neighbouring Dickinson family.

White River’s John Daniell holds the impressive lot 1 Poll Merino ram from the White River ram sale that was purchased by Bill Ryan (left), ‘Curragh’, Oakley, via Hay, NSW for $6000, the equal high price for Poll Merinos at this sale. Bill paid $12,000 for a Poll Merino ram the previous year.
The two equal top priced Poll Merino rams at the White River ram sale at $6000 are held by John and Wes Daniell. The ram on the left was purchased by Bill Ryan (left), ‘Curragh’, Oakley, NSW, while the ram on the right was purchased by Paul Carey (absent), Talieka Pastoral Co, Streaky Bay. Also pictured are sale auctioneers Tony Wetherall (centre – Elders) and Gordon Wood (right – Landmark).