

White River Repeats Hay triumph

The Daniell family, White River Merino and Poll Merino studs based at Poochera and Minnipa, had a major triumph at last weekend's Hay Sheep Show, repeating last year's outstanding success.

They won the main class at this now major Merino show where over 400 sheep entered by major studs and commercial producers from 3 states were lined up for competition.

It was a very good show for several South Australian exhibitors, but

it was White River's Poll Merino ram, WR 546 that came out on top in the most important class, the Riverina Wool Australian Champion Hogget ram class, winning \$5000 for doing so.

Last year the Daniell family won the same award with their superb Merino ram, WR 'Venus' HB55, a ram that later went on to be champion March shorn ram at the 2016 Adelaide Royal Show. This year's again had amazing depth of quality with entries from leading NSW, Victorian and South Australian breeders.

Still with its lamb's teeth, this 127kg ram stood out for its frame, body length, conformation and superb wool covering from top to bottom, described by senior White River principal John Daniell as, "Well-nourished and deep crimped stud breeding wool, and with a skin purity to die for."

Speaking on behalf of judges, Jim Vandeluer, Rices Creek stud, Saddleworth, SA, Ian Michael, Nyowee stud, Balaklava, SA and Steve Phillips, Yarrowonga stud, Harden, NSW, Jim Vandeleur commented, "There were very good sheep from all 3 states with awards well spread around, but South Australian studs again did very well in such strong competition. The White River ram was huge; very long and strong boned and was covered in a very heavy cutting, bold crimping and rich sirey wool; a stand out ram."

Another judge, Ian Michael, Balaklava added, "The White River ram was exemplary for its length and depth of body, carrying bright and soft strong wool. His skin is pure with no pigmentation around the eyes or through his fleece. His structure is fantastic; he is an outstanding young sire."

For the Daniell family it was a moment of great pride, especially considering their White River stud is the only SA based stud to win this prestigious class, having also done so in 2010 as well as last year.

"This ram is bred from the best genetics we have been able to introduce for our Poll Merino program," senior principal John Daniell said.

"He is a combination of top genetic lines we introduced in 2011 when we were expanding our Poll Merino gene pool. His sire is Nyowee L134, a ram that was purchased for \$15,000 at the Adelaide Royal Show's Merino ram sale, while his dam was a maiden ewe sired by Ridgway 'Kulkami', purchased in that same year at the Classings Classic for \$32,000," John said.



Photo courtesy of Stephen Burns, Fairfax Media, NSW.

With outstanding size and growth for a late May drop, and backed up by its superb 19.1 micron, 2.8 SD, 14.7 CV and 99.7% comfort factor wool, WR 546 very much mirrors the ideal dual purpose ram that the South Australian sheep industry has built its market relevance upon.

Being the winner of this major class that was judged first, the ram was then not eligible to enter the other classes on the day. However, White River's second entry, WR 550 that was also very close to the top in this top class, was still eligible to compete in the other classes, going on to be awarded champion medium wool March shorn ram. This 129kg Poll Merino ram is another top son of Collinsville 'Premier 101' that has bred so successfully at White River. WR 550 will head White River's Poll Merino sale team at their on-property ram sale at Poochera on August 15th.

In defining the Riverina Wool champion's future John Daniell said, "There is a stud on upper EP that rates this ram too highly to sell him! So like Venus, last year's winner, this one is for us. We think he has a big future at White River in our ongoing breeding programs, plus we feel there is good potential income to be gained in the short term from semen sales, having already had strong enquiry for him from just this one outing.



Photo courtesy of Stephen Burns, Fairfax Media, NSW.

John & Wes Daniell are pictured with White River 546 after being sashed as the 2017 Riverina Wool Australian Champion Hogget Ram. Also pictured is Mark Bazeley representing the major sponsors, Riverina Wool, Echuca.