

## Ridgway excels in tough season

Due to the seasonal effects on many clients, there was some justifiable vendor and agent apprehension leading up to the Ridgway Poll Merino ram sale at Kulkami on Monday.

In welcoming a good crowd with 38 registered bidders (compared with 48 last year), senior principal Ric Ridgway said, "The season has been tough, but certainly not as tough for us as it is for some of our clients north of here and in NSW."

Buyers of at least 38 rams from last year's sale were missing this year, solely on the back of the drought conditions they are currently suffering from.

However, that apprehension was relieved as the sale swung into action with those more fortunate from the inside country actively competing for the outstanding line-up of 139 rams penned for the main auction.

Wool cut, with exceptional staple length, density and crimp definition, plus good growth and muscling were prominent right through, with the Merino Select figures to back up visual assessments. The entire draft of 180 main and mini auction rams averaged over 100kg bodyweight.

At the completion of the main auction, 127 rams had sold to a top of \$4800 and averaged \$2074. This was one more ram sold than last year, with the average down just \$59; a very credible result in a year like this.

The bigger cut back was felt in the mini auction which followed, where a further 16 rams cleared at a \$678 average, compared with 35 last year. However, because there were 19 less mini auction rams contributing to the overall result, the overall average for the 143 rams sold on the day was \$1918, up \$95 from last year.

"There was certainly a blend of people looking for good figured sheep and being prepared to start at \$1500 to \$1800 and then bid up on those that were heavier cutters and had good muscling in particular," Landmark auctioneer Gordon Wood said.

Prepared to go further than any other bidders were Bill and Nathan Wilson, Pinnaroo when they successfully bid \$4800 for lot 22, Ridgway 14, sired by Poll Boonoke 338. With a 100% comfort factor and 18.5 micron wool, it was in the top 10% nationally on Merino Select for YCFW (+27) and YSL (+7.8), while having a MP+ index of 165.4, the highest in the catalogue. It was a powerful ram described by Gordon Wood as, "A bull with wool."

The Wilsons run a small flock of 350 ewes, and with Nathan being the shearer for the Ridgway rams he was able to have a good close pre-sale look at all the rams on offer. "We had to go a bit further than planned, but the ram is so good we felt stretching the budget was justified in times like the present," Bill Wilson said.

The Graham family, Glencorrie, Maitland was back and provided great buying strength, purchasing seven of the best at a \$3257 average. In chasing the highest and verifiable quality genetics for their sheep program, they went over \$4000 twice, including the sale's second top price of \$4600 for Ridgway 92.

A contingent of six mainly repeat Victorian buyers was also very prominent, especially early in the catalogue. Stephen Allen, Goroke and buying through Rodwells was underbidder on both the two high selling rams, but still managed to go home with five top rams, paying to \$3800 and averaging \$2920.

AWN's Kelvin Shelley, Geelong was back with three clients who all made an impact. Peter, Simon and Thomas Brady, Rhymney, Vic were the most prominent with eight rams to \$3400 and at a \$2300 average, while CC, GM & TG Philip with six at a \$1400 average was also a strong bidder.

Buying through Landmark, Ararat, Ben Nevis Farms also purchased 6 rams averaging \$1500. Collectively the six Victorian buyers purchased 35 rams to make a significantly positive contribution to the overall result.

The biggest volume buyer was Lynton Barrett, Lameroo. He bid strongly and astutely in purchasing 13 rams to a \$2200 top and average of \$1300. Last year he averaged \$1809 for 11 rams, so in effect he was able to pick up more rams at an average of \$500 less.

The strong upper and middle ground of this sale, which saw five rams sell for \$4000 or better and a further 22 sell between \$3000 and \$4000, was achieved through the intense competition amongst buyers, and six in particular.

Two Tintinara based buyers often found themselves in a bidding dual on rams that clearly suited their area. Chris and Andrew Johnson, Mt Boothby Pastoral Co were successful in their bidding on seven rams to \$3200 and at a \$2857 average, while Aaron Freeman and Tom Whittle, Colara Farms also purchased seven to \$4000 and at a \$2371 average.

McPiggery, through Landmark Lameroo pushed the top end with two rams at a \$4100 average while Jeff and Adam Buick, Penneshaw were also strong bidders on the top end, purchasing six rams to \$3400 and averaging \$2667.

Stephen Paech, Callington has been a prominent and regular buyer at Ridgway for a long time. This year he upped the pressure a bit, before securing six to \$2600 and at a \$1900 average.

Rounding out the more prominent buyers was Haydn Weckert, Yumali with five rams to \$2600, averaging \$2200.

"We are pretty fussy with our selection points, especially structure and wool quality, so it was very pleasing to see how well the rams lined up," senior principal Ric Ridgway said.

"The longer stapled wools allow us to shear twice per year, and some early criticism saying we lose density was possibly justified, but I think we have now shown in the draft today that with careful selection you can have both."

"We are certainly thankful for the support and vote of confidence we received from our regular clients who were not drought affected and to see them joined by four new clients was very pleasing," Ric Ridgway said.

Agents: Landmark

Auctioneers: Gordon Wood & Richard Miller



Pictured with the two highest priced rams at the Ridgway sale at \$4800 and \$4600 are (from left) Landmark auctioneer Richard Miller; purchasers of the top ram, Nathan and Bill Wilson, Pinnaroo; Matthew, Gail (holding new grandson, Owen) and Ric Ridgway; purchaser of the second top ram Craig Graham, Glencorrie, Maitland; Simon Aldridge, Landmark Lameroo; Deb Graham (back); Landmark auctioneer Gordon Wood; and Josh Graham and Lilly Buick.



The highest volume buyer was Lynton Barrett, Lameroo with 13 rams. He is discussing the sale result with Ric Ridgway post sale.





Ridgway's Matt Ridgway (right) is with prominent buyers, Andrew Johnson, Mt Boothby, Tintinara (seven rams) and Victorian buyers Stephen Allen, Goroke (five rams) and Peter Brady, Rhymney (eight rams).



Prominent Ridgway buyers after the sale are Bill Walker, Classings Ltd, Murray Bridge (four rams A/c Chalk), Haydn Weckert, Yumali (five rams), Andrew Johnson, Mt Boothby, Tintinara (seven rams), Aaron Freeman, Colara Farms, Tintinara (seven rams), Jeff Buick, Penneshaw (six rams) and Tom Whittle, Colara Farms.