

Bids fly for dual-purpose Ridgway rams

Alisha Fogden – Stock Journal
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THE Ridgway Poll Merino auction started strong at Kulkami on Monday, with top end rams quickly reaching \$7800 - surpassing last year's sale top price.

The big dollars were paid for lot 3 by Brent Farr, operating under DK&DM Farr, Pyap West, via Loxton, who liked the "stand out" ram for its "nice plain body, with good eye muscle and fat".

"The wool is also pretty good," he said.

"We also bought lot 84 (at \$4000) - a half brother (both sired by Ridgway 005), so they will run together.

"We plan to use them over 150 of our top mixed age ewes to breed rams from."

The top price ram, weighing 105 kilograms, had top 20 per cent ASBV figures of 174.1 on the Merino Production Plus Index and 178.2 on the Dual Purpose Plus Index figure, plus a 46-millimetre eye muscle depth and 6.5mm fat depth.

The May 2021-drop ram also had a 18.2-micron fleece, with 2.9 standard deviation, 15.9 coefficient of variation and 99.8pc comfort factor, while its MerinoSelect figures included a yearling clean fleece weight of 23.9 and and 8.6 yearling weight (both top 20pc).

The \$7800 top price ram bought by the Farr family, Pyap West.

Ridgway stud principal Ric Ridgway said if the ram hadn't made good money, it would have been kept for the stud, as it was from the Ridgway 170005 family (a sire that died this year).

"170005 was very good in its growth and meat traits, with still a reasonable wool cut - which is what we're trying to push for these days," he said.

"170005 was our best eye muscle ram - it topped the 2020 SA sire evaluation trial we had here in Lameroo."

Top price ram underbidders, the Hampel family, Meribah, via Loxton, bought the sale's second-highest price ram at \$6200.

Jeff Hampel said the lot 6 ram appealed for its MP+ figure of 179.9 (top 10pc) and yearling staple length of 11.3, as they shore every six months.

The long-time clients bought five rams, averaging \$3480.

Mr Ridgway said the \$6200 ram was from the Ridgway 131 family, which were often heavy cutting and produced their best staple lengths.

The May 2021-drop ram had a 19.3M fleece with 2.9SD, 15CV, 99.6CF and YCFW of 34.8 (top 5pc).

Mr Ridgway was pleased to see a few new names among the 38 registered buyers, of which only seven went home empty-handed.

Other bigger spenders at the sale included Hamilton Harvest, Hamilton, with two rams averaging \$4500; repeat buyers Glencorrie, Maitland, with six averaging \$3833; Borung stud, Waikerie, with one at \$5600; GL&SL Auricht, Pinnaroo, with three averaging \$3333; WD Wilson, Pinnaroo, with one at \$4400; and McPiggery, Lameroo, with one at \$5400.

While the bigger volume buyers included return clients CJ&YM Butcher, Meningie, with 10 rams to \$2400, averaging \$1280, while ND&CM Smith, Alawoona, bought nine averaging \$1067.

Mr Ridgway was a little disappointed the sale overall didn't quite emulate the outstanding clearance of last year's sale, with only 117 rams sold from the 156 offered, averaging \$2222.

But he expected to sell a few privately to clients that couldn't make it on the day.

"It was good to see people getting the rams at the value they were willing to pay, and there was still some good competition right down to the last row," he said.

"The sheep presented really well. They were a little dusty in the tip, due to the dry start to the year, but they have been out in the paddock the past month after good rains in late May."

Seven rams also sold in a mini auction after the sale, ranging from \$800-\$1000.

Nutrien Ag Solutions conducted the sale, which was interfaced with AuctionsPlus, with Gordon Wood and Richard Miller the auctioneers.

Mr Wood said the Ridgways presented a "very even" line-up of "modern Merinos with good ASBVs and a productive, pliable skin".

"And to come out with a \$2200 average is a pretty good result," he said.



The \$7800 top price ram with Nutrien auctioneer Gordon Wood; Ridgway Stud's Ric Ridgway; buyer Brent Farr, DK&DM Farr, Pyap West, Nutrien agent Simon Aldridge; Ridgway stud's Matt Ridgway; and Nutrien auctioneer Richard Miller.