

SE Stud\_Stock  
HD **Confidence flows into Merino ram sales**  
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A POSITIVE outlook for sheepmeat, a steady wool market and a reasonable season across most of the State saw buyers full of confidence at this year's Merino ram sales.

This confidence resulted in buyers digging deep into their pockets.

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This pushed prices to near record levels for Merinos and the sales averaged more than \$1100 for a second year in a row.

The positive outlook for the sheep industry was evident early in the year, on the back of new markets for WA sheepmeat opening up including **China** and live export markets starting to move again.

As a result of this increased live export and processing demand, sheep prices turned a corner in the past 12 months and headed north.

Since the beginning of the year, wether prices have slowly risen to a peak of \$110 in June and have since hovered between \$80 and \$100.

This strengthening market was further reinforced at the Combined Agents Katanning June Special Sheep **Sale** when the wether portion of the yarding averaged \$109.71, which was up on last year's average of \$74.58 and topped at \$160.50.

The positives kept coming at the Katanning **sale** when a line of 1.5-year-old ewes **sold** for \$172.50 to V & V Walsh, which **purchased** in the **sale** for the first time this year.

These strong sheep prices have continued into this year's spring ewe sales.

Prices hit a high of \$132, compared to last year's season high of \$115.50 and many of the other top lines have **sold** for more than \$100.

While sheep prices have improved this year, the same can't be said for the wool market.

It has held steady over the past 12 months and according to agents, when you compare today's prices to the prices over the past six years, they are in 60 per cent decile.

This means prices have been below today's prices 60pc of the time.

After seeing wool prices at near records in 2011, the market has been back over the past two years.

At the start of the selling season the Western Market Indicator was at 1067c/kg, which was up 48c/kg or five per cent for **sale** F07 on August 14, 2014, on the same period last year when the indicator was at 1019c/kg.

The market remained stable in September, before rising to a peak of 1085c/kg in **sale** F15 on October 9, before slipping slightly over the past couple of weeks.

However if we look at what a bale of wool was worth during September/October it shows the market is slightly up on this time last year.

This year a 185kg bale of 21 micron, 68pc yield wool with good length and strength during the September/October period was sitting at \$1445, which was up \$45 a bale on 2013.

So with plenty of positives surrounding the industry and a good season across most of WA, buyers showed they were keen to reinvest in Merino genetics to ensure their flocks continue to improve.

Following the final Merino ram **sale** last week 8963 rams were offered at auction at 81 sales around the State.

This was broken into 66 single vendor sales and 15 multi-vendor sales with 8043 rams **sold** under the hammer during the season.

This compared to the 2013 season which saw 9205 rams offered and 8077 **sold** - in contrast this year there were 242 less rams **sold** and 34 less offered.

This year's clearance rate of 90pc, was up two percentage points on last year's rate of 88pc.

The decrease in the number of rams offered and **sold** this year is the result of a couple of studs dispersing and some studs moving away from hosting an auction **sale** to sell through private selections.

At the end of the season, the sales had grossed \$9,461,015 which was up \$555,240 on last year.

With the rise in the gross figure and a fall in the number of rams **sold**, it resulted in the average across the **board** rising by \$73 on the 2013 result to finish at \$1176.

Making it the second highest average achieved by the breed since 1996 and the fifth time the breed has averaged more than \$1000.

The best average recorded for the breed is \$1186 in 2011, when 8787 rams **sold** from 9517 offered.

Looking back over the results of the past decade against this season's results show the Merino has lost market share due to the introduction of other breeds, but this reduction has stabilised over the past couple of years.

The market share for Merinos for the number of rams **sold** this year was 58pc which was down three points on 2013, while in terms of the gross figure the Merino breed held 62pc of the market share.

The breed's reduction in market share this year was taken up by the British and Australasian breeds, with breeders deciding to mate an extra mob of ewes (most likely Merinos), to these type of rams, due to the positive lamb markets.

This year the number of Merino rams offered ranked the eighth largest in the past 10 years and in terms of the number of rams **sold** it was the seventh biggest.

The gross figure was the third best in the past 10 years and eighth best since 1996.

The 1996 average was \$779 meaning this year's average was up 51pc on that.

During this period the biggest season for the breed was 2003 when 12,484 rams **sold** for a gross of \$14,037,857, and an average of \$1124.

Like the rest of the figures this season, the top end of the market was very strong.

Last season only one ram **sold** for more than \$10,000, this year there were three.

The top Merino price for the season was \$19,000, achieved when the Bolt family's Claypans stud, Corrigin, **sold** a Poll Merino ram at the Rabobank Katanning Stud Merino ram **sale**.

The March shorn, two-tooth ram was **purchased** by the Weealla stud, Balladoran, New South Wales.

The ram, which was a son of Moorundie **Park** B100, carried AWTA wool test figures of 20.8 micron, 3.1 SD, 14.9 CV and 99.9pc comfort factor.

The season's next best price was \$16,250 for a March shorn, four-tooth Merino ram, again achieved at the Rabobank Katanning Stud Merino ram **sale**.

The ram was **sold** by the Hogg family's Navanvale stud, Williams, and **purchased** by the High Valley stud, Tarin Rock, in partnership with three other buyers which took semen shares.

The ram was a grandson of Wallaloo **Park** 13 and had AWTA wool test results of 19.3 micron, 3.0 SD, 15.5 CV and 99.9pc CF.

The third top price and top price for a full wool ram was \$10,000 and this was achieved by the East Mundalla stud, Tarin Rock, at the Rabobank Katanning Stud Merino ram **sale**.

The 170kg, four-tooth Poll sire, which was a son of East Mundalla Jonty and sashed the supreme exhibit at the Rabobank Katanning show, was **purchased** in partnership by the Kolindale stud, Dudinin, and the Woolkabin stud, Woodanilling.

The fourth highest price for the season and the top price at a single vendor **sale** was \$9000.

This was achieved at the last ever Centre Plus WA ram **sale** at Kojonup, when it **sold** a Poll ram, which was ranked second out of 46,000 2013-drop rams on Merino Select, to the Vandenberghe family, Wattle Dale stud, Scaddan.

Rounding out the top five prices for the season at \$8500 was the Westerdale stud, McAlinden, when it **sold** a two-tooth Poll Merino sire to the Angenup stud, Kojonup, at its on-**property sale**.

The top price for a two-tooth Merino ram this season was \$8000 achieved by the Barloo stud at the Rabobank Katanning Stud Merino ram **sale**.

Others to achieve values at the higher end of the scale included: Westerdale on-**property** (\$7700, Poll); East Mundalla on-**property** (\$7200 and \$7000, Polls); Kamballie at Kellerberrin (\$6900, Poll); Rhamily on-**property** (\$6700, Poll); Derella Downs and Pyramid Polls on-**property** (\$6500, Merino); Angenup on-**property** (\$6400, Merino) and Barloo on-**property** (\$6000, Merino).

Notable prices at the Rabobank Katanning Stud Merino ram **sale** included: Kolindale (\$8000, Poll); Barloo (\$6250, Merino); East Mundalla (\$6000, Merino) and Eastville **Park** (\$6000, Poll).

This year 29 rams **sold** for \$5000 or more under the hammer (only 21 in 2013) and of these 18 were Poll Merino sires, while 18 of the 29 rams were **purchased** by studs, showing the Merino stud breeders still have faith in their industry and were prepared to invest in new genetics.

Their investment from past years was noticeable with the auctioneers and buyers commenting repeatedly about the depth and quality of the teams offered.

Some big money also changed hands in private sales.

This included the Kamballie stud, Tammin, selling a two-tooth Poll Merino sire for \$12,000 to the Eastville **Park** stud, Wickepin.

There was also international demand from Argentine buyers which included the East Mundalla stud selling a Merino ram for \$13,000 and the Darijon stud, Narrogin, selling a Merino sire for \$10,000.

#### p Single Vendor

At the 66 single vendor sales there were 7297 rams offered, down 304 head, and 6553 **sold**, which was down 176 head.

At the sales, 51 studs increased their offerings or offered the same numbers as 2013, while 48 **sold** the same number or more rams than last year.

The overall decline in numbers had an effect on the average this year for single vendor sales which was the second best on record at \$1177.

It was up \$68 on last season's result but still down on the 2011 average of \$1181, which is the highest ever recorded.

In the single vendor offerings, Angenup stud, Kojonup, recorded the best average when it achieved an incredible average of \$1646 over 202 rams **sold** from 208 offered, with the majority of rams being secured by **commercial** buyers.

Following on with impressive averages at single vendor sales were the Barloo stud, Gnowangerup (\$1625 average, 169 **sold**, 182 offered); East Mundalla stud (\$1607, 170, 170); Challara, Badgingarra (\$1585, 143, 149) and East Strathglen, Tambellup (\$1540, 154, 157).

Others to record an average of more than \$1400 were Rhamily, Calingiri (\$1485); Westerdale, McAlinden (\$1483); Wiringa **Park**, Nyabing (\$1464); Willemenup, Gnowangerup (\$1447); Manunda, Tammin (\$1435) and Anglesey, Gnowangerup (\$1430).

Another four sales averaged between \$1300 and \$1400.

In addition 17 studs averaged more than \$1000 in single vendor sales, making a total of 32 sales which averaged \$1000 or more, last year there were 31.

Forty-three single vendor sales saw a lift in average this year compared to 36 sales in 2013 and these ranged between \$9 and \$423.

Recording the largest jump in average at a single vendor **sale** was the Challara stud, which recorded an increase of \$423.

Other studs which raised their average at single vendor fixtures by more than \$250 included Ejanding (\$319); Angenup (\$309), Centre Plus (\$305); Hill Padua (\$279) and Rhamily (\$265).

Another 13 sales achieved a rise of more than \$100.

A total clearance is a hard task to achieve in any season and this year a number of studs ticked this box.

Ten sales achieved the feat at single vendor sales and nine of these offered teams of more than 100 head: Billandri (200); Nepowie (172); East Mundalla (170); Woolkabin (160); Cranmore (140); Westerdale (132); Rutherglen (129); Anglesey (112) and Arra-dale (100).

The Kolindale stud, Dudinin, presented the largest offering of rams to buyers this season, cataloguing 440 rams and selling 391 at its on-**property** and Esperance sales.

It **sold** 307 out of 347 on-**property** and 84 out of 93 at Esperance.

The Kolindale stud, which topped the list of single **sale** offerings when it offered the most rams, cataloguing 347 and selling 307 under the hammer at its on-**property sale**.

The next closest studs were the Dewar family's Woodayarrup stud (237 **sold**, 250 offered) at its on-**property sale**; Manunda (240, 231); Angenup (208, 202); Billandri (200, 200) and the Derella Downs and Pyramid Polls (181, 200).

The five largest grossing single vendor sales were the Kolindale on-**property sale** (\$374, 300); Angenup (\$332,500); Manunda (\$331,450); Woodyarrup (\$329,000) and Barloo (\$274,600).

There was another six sales to gross more than \$200,000.

This year 47 single vendor sales, from the 66 held (or 70pc), improved their gross on 2013.

p Multi-vendor

This year 1666 rams were offered under the hammer at 15 multi-vendor ram sales which was up 62 head.

Of these 1490 were **sold**, up 142 head on last season.

There were 11 sales where the offerings increased and 13 sales where the number of rams **sold** was higher, compared to last year.

The overall average for multi-vendor sales this year was the third best ever at \$1173.

It was up \$105 on last year, but down \$33 on the 2011 result of \$1206, which is the best ever result recorded.

It was no surprise the highest overall **sale** average and highest multi-vendor **sale** average was chalked up at the Rabobank Katanning Stud Merino ram **sale** when it realised \$6158 over 19 of 28 rams **sold**, which included both four-tooth and two-tooth rams.

Studs which **sold** more than one ram and achieved an average more than \$4000 at Katanning included Claypans stud, Corrigin (\$9417 for three); East Mundalla (\$6167 for three); and Barloo (\$7125 for two).

In the multi-vendor fixtures eight sales achieved an average of more than \$1000, compared to seven in 2013 and five in 2012.

The next highest average at a multi-vendor **sale** was \$1606 at the Kellerberrin ram **sale** where the Kamballie stud, Tammin, **sold** 125 rams from 130 offered.

This was followed by \$1543 at the Dinninup ram **sale**, where five studs **sold** 110 rams from 118 offered.

The other sales that averaged more than \$1000 were Wyalkatchem \$1294; Narrogin \$1187; Williams \$1047; Wongan Hills \$1036 and Merredin \$1027.

Stud participating in the 2-tooth multi-vendor sales that recorded averages worth noting included Beaufort Vale (40 offered, 40 **sold**, \$1985 average) at Dinninup; Lukin Springs (30, 28, \$1625) at Dinninup; Kamballie (130, 125, \$1606) and Olinda (70, 64, \$1356) at Wyalkatchem).

Another 12 studs averaged more than \$1000 at multi-vendor sales.

Eleven multi-vendor sales posted an increase in average price compared to 2013 and the rises ranged from \$18 to the biggest increase of \$2133 that was recorded at the Rabobank Katanning Stud Merino ram **sale**.

The other sales to record a rise of more than \$200 were Hyden (\$365); Quairading (\$322); Moora (\$235) and Wyalkatchem (\$213).

It is a hard task to achieve a total clearance in any season and this year two sales managed to achieve a 100pc clearance: Merredin and Hyden.

Six sales achieved a clearance of 90pc or better.

Forty studs offered rams at multi-vendor ram sales (excluding Katanning) this year and 13 of them achieved a total clearance.

Those to achieve a total clearance for teams of 30 or more rams were Seven Oaks South (81) and Carriberr (57) at Merredin; Walkindyer (40) at Northampton; Toorackie (38) at Williams; Beaufort Vale (40) and Hiview (30) at Dinninup.

The largest yarding of rams at multi-vendor fixture was at the Wyalkatchem Breeders ram **sale**, where 191 rams were offered and 172 **sold**.

Other sizable offerings at multi-vendor sales where yardings of more than 150 head were listed, were Williams (182 offered, 168 **sold**) and Esperance (158, 139).

The four largest grossing sales were Wyalkatchem (\$222,650); Kellerberrin (\$200,800); Williams (\$175,900) and Dinninup (\$169,700), while another four sales grossed more than \$100,000.

Fourteen out of the 15 multi-vendor sales grew their gross figure.

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