

Willandra tops \$16,000

The 99
rams
averaged
\$3345

BY HELEN DE COSTA

WOOL quality was at the front of mind for buyers at the Wells family's Willandra Merino ram sale, Wednesday, September 24, held on-property, near Jerilderie.

The sale resulted in 99 of 100 rams selling to a top of \$16,000 to average \$3345.

In the breakdown, 79 of 80 Poll Merino rams sold to \$16,000 to average \$3445, while 20 Merino rams sold to \$10,000 to average \$3145.

Willandra 0157 claimed the top-priced ram title and was purchased by long-time clients in the McKinnon family, Yarrawin, Brewarrina.

Under-bidder for 0157 was Warwick Teakle, Walkindyer Merino Stud, Northampton, WA.

The young ram, by Jolly Jumbuck 213004, recorded a fibre diameter of 22 micron, with a standard deviation of 3 micron, a coefficient of variation of 13.7 per cent, and a comfort factor of 99.1pc.

The homozygous polled rams weighed 144kg, with a EMD of 43 millimetres and a fat depth scan of 7.5mm.

Ben McKinnon said he liked the scale of the ram, the depth and spring of rib, and his balance for the size of his body.

Mr McKinnon's operation sells wether lambs over the hooks, while 25,000 Merino ewes are joined back to



The top-priced ram, Willandra 0157, with Angus Heath and Ross Wells, Willandra Merinos, Jerilderie, Peter Godbolt, Nutrien, and Harry Cozens, Elders. Picture by Helen De Costa.



The second top-priced ram with Angus Heath and Ross Wells, Willandra Merinos, Peter Godbolt, Nutrien, Peter Capel, Bungulla Partnership and Harry Cozens, Elders.

Merinos, with the remaining 10,000 Merinos are joined back to terminal rams.

Willandra stud principal Ross Wells said the ram created interest while in the stud's display at the Merino National Sheep Show at Dubbo earlier this year.

"He wasn't even shown, he didn't have him in the show team," he said.

The second top-priced ram, Willandra 0002, was purchased by first-time buyers Peter and Louise

Capel, Bungulla Partnership, Manilla, for \$10,000.

The Merino ram tipped the scales at 94kg, with a fibre diameter of 20.8 micron, SD of 3.1 micron, 15pc CV and 99.5pc CF.

He scanned 38.5mm EMD, with 4mm fat.

Mr Capel said the Willandra sheep were well known for their wool quality and their structure.

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Buyer Peter Capel, Bungulla Partnership

as good as the wool as there was in the offering," he said.

"We'll use him over our stud ewes, we're up in a summer rainfall area, so the quality of the wool is very important and the brightness of the wool.

"We have clients in northern NSW and south-western Queensland, so they have to handle the summer rains."

He said the operation took a lot of pride in their wool quality throughout their 2500-ewe flock.

Sleigh Pastoral, Koorindal, Jerilderie, purchased 10 rams to a top of \$5500 for an average of \$3175, while TW Lord and Sons, Homeview,

June, bought six rams to average \$3375.

Gulargambone purchasers, Merri Merri, secured 16 rams to a top of \$4250 for an average of \$2666.

Chris Bowman, Hay, purchased the line of rams on behalf of the 5000-ewe operation. He said they had been long-term clients of the stud.

"They like animals because they are good-boned animals, quick maturing and very deep-set bodied, they like the barrel in the sheep, and you've got to have a barrel for doing ability and fattening," he said.

"They like to come here

and get a dual purpose sheep, they cut a good amount of wool and have the meat with them."

Interstate buyers included Narada Grazing, Tambo, Qld, who secured Willandra 0041 for \$6500 and Willandra 0239 for \$3750, while Freemantle and Bell, Loddon, Vic, purchased three rams averaging \$3666.

The Brinkworth family's Willoway Farming, Koorinda Park, Keith, SA, took home four rams to a top of \$9250 to average \$6125.

Chris Muenster, Koorinda Park manager, said the property was the 1618-hectare ram breeding operation for the Willoway Group, joining 2000 ewes a year.

He said the operation produced about 700 rams a year to be used through the group's additional properties. He said was after square, upstanding rams with a sirey heads.

"They have to have that masculine head and good bone, and we find the rams from Willandra do have good bone," he said.

"We have to get our wool cut up and these boys do cut wool."

Mr Wells said the results had surpassed his expectations and gave him the same sense of pride as some of the stud's earlier, record-breaking sales.

"In 1988 we sold 610 rams in three hours for a gross of \$525,400," he said.

"This was an Australian record for a Merino on-property sale that remained until 2011.

"But it was a different sale in different times."

The sale was conducted by Nutrien Deniliquin and Elders Jerilderie with Peter Godbolt, Nutrien, and Harry Cozens, Elders, as auctioneers. AuctionPlus provided the interface.

A LONG TRADITION, A MODERN SUCCESS

Willandra Merinos

To the buyers, under-bidders, agents, visitors and workers (especially Peter Jeffs, who has given 10 years of invaluable service and friendship) who all helped make the 2025 sale a successful day —

A very big and sincere thank you from everyone at Willandra

Grade Rams Available: Enquiries: Ross Wells 03 5886 1223 / Angus Heath 0417 365 333 **Classer:** Chris Bowman 0429 935 101

www.willandramerinos.com.au E: willandramerinos@gmail.com 'Willandra', 477 North Coree Road, Jerilderie NSW 2716

