

By CATHERINE MILLER-STOCK
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THE Classings Classic ram sale held at the Murray Bridge Racecourse on Monday was in full gallop after lot one quickly reached highs not seen in the SA Merino industry since the late 1980s.



An opening bid of \$25,000 by Will Lynch, Boorana stud, Woorndoo, Victoria, on the 18.4-micron ram from Peter and Marianne Wallis' Glenlea Park stud, Pinnaroo silenced the crowd.

It was followed by a two-way bidding duel between Mr Lynch, representing a syndicate of six studs, and Les Hamence, Pimbena Poll Merino stud, Wirrulla, who eventually bought the ram for \$51,000.

The ram eclipsed the \$39,000 Classings record set in 2008 – also for a Glenlea Park ram.

This year's 130-kilogram topper had shown his growth potential early, with a weaning weight of 69 kilograms – 20kg more than the average of Glenlea Park's 2012-drops. The ET-bred April 2012-drop was sired by Glenlea Park 004 – a ram sold in 2010 at the Classings sale to the Boorana, Pyramid Poll and Brookdale studs and out of an outstanding woolled ewe. The imposing sire had tremendous wool cut, with 6.7kg of wool from less than six month's growth.



Buyer Mr Hamence was impressed by the phenotype and genotype of the ram whose Australian Sheep Breeding Values included 14.1 yearling clean fleece weight and 7.5 yearling weight.

The sale topper's other wool measurements included a standard deviation of 2.8, 15 per cent coefficient of variation and 99.6pc comfort factor.

"He has excellent wool – nice, bright wool with the conformation you want and great figures," Mr Hamence said. "We have not been mulesing for six years so we wanted bare breech, and both his sire and grand sire have shown these attributes."

Semen interests have been sold to 12 studs from three states including South Australian studs Keyneton Station, Keyneton; Nantoura, Wharminda; O'Brien Enterprises, Wudinna; SWM, Tintinara; Southrose, Tintinara; Karawatha Park, Buckleboo; and Ramsgate,

Tintinara. The others are Boorana stud, Vic; WA studs Barooga, Williams; Penrose, Cascade; and Westwood, Cascade;

A visibly shocked stud principal Peter Wallis said that although the ram had the fibre and frame he was aiming to breed, he did not expect such a big top price.

"We knew that he might go quite well but there is a real difference in going quite well and \$51,000. We didn't see that coming at all," he said.

"Our on-property sale was also beyond what we expected to achieve this year.

"We know it won't always be that way so we are happy to take it this year."

Sale organiser, Bill Walker said it was rich rewards for the hard work of the Wallis family, and described the ram as the stud's best yet offering at Classings.

"He has a back end we need more of in the industry, and great skin and fibre," Mr Walker said.

"He really is a genuine dual-purpose ram – a comment that is too often overused."

The ram continued a dream run for Glenlea Park stud this year which included an equal top price of \$10,000 at the recent Hamilton Sheepvention sale.

Glenlea Park's four rams at the Classings sale averaged a magical \$16,550.

Twenty progressive South Australian and Victorian studs offered 97 of their pick rams at the Murray Bridge Racecourse under the invitation of Bill and Rose Walker, who have developed the sale into a highlight of the SA sale calendar.

In the breakdown 84 of the rams found new homes in four states of Australia for a \$3798 average- up nearly \$700 on last year. The 87 percent clearance was up on last year although it was a smaller offering and further rams were bid on but failed to meet vendors' reserves. There was an air of confidence in seasonal conditions and an upward trending wool market.

The decision to bring the sale forward nearly a month worked in its favour especially coinciding with the Royal Adelaide Show for those travelled long distances.

Vendors were less nervous about reserving rams for the once final sale of the season.



Four rams made \$10,000 or more including the \$15,500 second top price. It was sold by Mark and Jesse Hull, Minta stud, Mount Cooper who made a fantastic debut with their two rams averaging \$11,250. The successful purchasers of the \$15,500 sire were Rodney and Jayden Harris, Brimanna stud, Yeelanna. "He is such a correct animal and has the white, bright wool we are looking for and the style that suits our country," Rodney said.

Glenlea Park sold another impressive son of GP004 for \$11,000 to Evan Downs, Loxton.

Joe, Tracey and Amelia Dahlitz, Roemahkita, Cummins were also among the high prices receiving \$10,500 for an outstanding wool 19.1 micron ram. It was sold to Forest Springs Pastoral Company, St Arnaud, Victoria.

O'Brien Enterprises, Kyancutta -buyers of the 2012 top priced Classings sale ram- invested heavily in their breeding program throughout the catalogue with five rams to a \$6000 high.

Other volume buyers included J&J McClure, Netallie Station via Wilcannia with five rams between \$1000 and \$1500, and Bill Walker himself was a large buyer with 16 rams for a number of clients.

Mr Walker said despite one incredible record price and several higher priced top end sires, the sale still represented affordable buying for commercial growers and studs alike. "Many quality flock rams were sold in the \$1500 to \$2500 range with many stud sires picked up between \$5000 to \$10,000."

Mr Walker said the sale topper represented everything today's Merino industry required. "GP 395 is guilty of pushing out immaculate fibre on a classy 130kg frame with a back end like a tram." He said the new sale date was deemed a success despite coinciding with Murray Bridge's woolly wether lamb sale.

"Estimates of a 300 strong crowd and close to 100 registered buyers ensures the future success of this progressive sale," he said.

Landmark stud stock auctioneer Gordon Wood described it as a very buoyant sale. He said it was evident more and more stud breeders were looking for Australian Sheep Breeding Values. "There is no doubt buyers were chasing frame and a quality fibre but on top of that they are wanting to know the data behind the breeding."

Landmark and Elders were joint selling agents with Gordon Wood, Leo Redden and Tony Wetherall the auctioneers.

SEE SUMMARY BELOW...MORE PHOTOS ON WEBSITE GALLERY



STUD	OFFERED	SOLD	TOP	AVERAGE
GLENLEA PARK	4	4	\$51,000	\$16,550
MINTA	2	2	\$15,500	\$11,250
ROEMAHKITA	3	3	\$10,500	\$7,000
RICE'S CREEK	2	2	\$9,000	\$5,200
MERNOWIE	1	1	\$5,000	\$5,000
DGWAY ADVANCE - AUTUMN DRC	10	9	\$6,000	\$4,200
WALLALOO PARK	8	5	\$5,000	\$4,200
SOUTHROSE	5	5	\$5,000	\$2,800
KAMORA PARK	8	7	\$5,000	\$2,764
GUNALLO	6	6	\$4,000	\$2,725
ELLA MATTA	3	3	\$4,200	\$2,667
IDGWAY ADVANCE - SPRING DRO	9	9	\$6,000	\$2,639
LORELMO KEYNETON	1	1	\$2,250	\$2,250
RAMSGATE	4	3	\$3,500	\$2,083
RIDGWAY	13	11	\$3,200	\$2,018
FLAIRDALE	3	2	\$3,100	\$2,550
LUCERNBRAE	8	8	\$4,000	\$1,975
BRADFIELD	3	2	\$1,800	\$1,500
BORUNG	2	2	\$1,200	\$1,100

