

LIVESTOCK

Classic hits new heights

Studs join forces to purchase \$50k ram

SALE SUMMARY

	2022	2021
Offered	99	95
Sold	99	91
Top	\$50,000	\$20,000
Av	\$7787	\$5896

A 'JACK'-of-all-trades ram, with strong meat and wool figures, has topped the 21st Classings Classic for an impressive \$50,000 at Murray Bridge on Monday.

Sold by Ridgway Advance, Bordertown, the April 2021-drop ET-bred ram weighed 126 kilograms and had a 52.5-millimetre eye muscle depth and 13.5mm fat.

The 20.5-micron, double polled, non-mulesed ram at Lot 16 was bought by Will Lynch, Boorana Merino stud, Woorndoo, Vic, with support from semen shareholders Westwood Poll Merinos, WA, Caroonboon Merino stud, Wanganella, NSW, Ramsgate Poll Merinos, Tintinara, and Burnbrae Poll Merino stud, Inverleigh, Vic.

It rated in the top 25 per cent on Australian Sheep Breeding Values for yearling clean fleece weight at 25.5 and yearling staple length at 14.5, while its fleece had 2.7 standard deviation, 13.2 coefficient of variation and 99.8pc comfort factor.

Mr Lynch said his wool classer Dale Bruns saw the ram at Sheepvention, at Hamilton, Vic, where they decided to buy it.

It was their sole purchase at the sale, with him saying it



Nutrien's Jack Guy, Devon and David Ridgway, Dale Bruns (holding the top ram), buyer Will Lynch, Bill Walker, semen shareholders Scott Welke, John Stephens, Margie Pye, and Heidi, Craig and Jed Keller, with Nutrien's Gordon Wood.



Brad and Ray Schroeder, Gunallo, Panitya, Vic, with their \$30,000 ram and Nutrien auctioneer Gordon Wood and Bill Walker, Classings Ltd. Pictures by Alisha Fogden

was "very correct, had terrific bone, beautiful, long-stapled, crimped soft wool".

"He had a good balance of thickness and length," Mr Bruns said.

Ridgway Advance's David and Karen Ridgway and son Devon said the ram was a trait leader in their stud, so were pleased to receive their highest-ever sale price for it.

"Everything we tested on that ram, he was always in the top three out of our 350 rams, on fleece weight,

staple length, fat, muscle," David said. "On muscle - he was always the leader, from a yearling he was always 2mm above any other ram."

"Its sire (RA 108), we passed in for \$13,000 at Classings previously, as he was worth more to us, so we took him home," Devon said.

"RA 108 is a grandson from our 90 family, which has done really well for us."

David said the \$50,000 ram had three leading

Ridgway Advance sires from the past decade in its breeding, with two also on the dam side.

"We even gave him a nickname 'Jack' - named after our young stock agent (Jack Guy), because he loved him as well," he said. "We have retained a lot of his semen."

Overall, the Ridgways sold all 25 of their non-mulesed rams, including six spring-drops, averaging \$10,340.

David said the result was the best they had ever achieved as a vendor since the sale's inception.

"Through the Auctions-Plus exposure, we are now selling rams across the nation," he said.

"We may have even had up to 10 new clients today."

"We have also travelled everywhere this year displaying these rams - Bendigo, Vic, Hamilton, Keith and even Wudinna - so we knew we had a fair bit of interest, particularly in that top ram - a perfect ram like

that doesn't come around that often."

More than 120 buyers registered for the sale, plus 12 active on AuctionsPlus, with all 99 rams offered by 23 studs selling into five states in the sale's first total clearance.

The sale average of \$7787 also set a new benchmark.

Classings sale host Bill Walker said he was "blown away with the competition and support for the absolute ideal Merino right now and the future".

"We have to address the mulesing issue and I think stud breeders are getting there with their genetics and being rewarded for it," he said.

"The introduction of AuctionsPlus during COVID has also continued to help strongly support the sale."

But Mr Walker noted there were still "realistically-priced animals" in the commercial grower's bracket of \$3000-\$4000.

The Schroeder family from Gunallo stud at Panitya, Vic, also achieved their best-ever sale result, nearly doubling their Classings average for eight rams to \$30,000, averaging \$14,750.

Their rams sold into five states and included multiple new buyers.

Their \$30,000 top ram at Lot 8 - the sale's second-highest price - sold to new client Kylie Poll Merinos, Cuballing, WA, through AuctionsPlus.

The April 2021-drop double polled ram weighed 128kg, was in the top 10pc for YCFW at 30.3 and Merino Production-Plus index figure of 175, and top 25pc for yearling weight at 8.6 and Dual Purpose-Plus figure of 177.

Its 19.6M fleece had 3.2SD, 15.6CV and 99.6CF.

Kylie stud's Adrian Webster liked the top ram for its "big barrel and wool type".

"It was everything we were looking for to breed a lot of ewes with that make and shape," he said. "His free, soft skin also stood out."

Gunallo stud co-principal Brad Schroeder said he was "absolutely pumped" with the result, but had been confident some of the rams would sell well.

"We valued some of them so much we have collected semen from them," he said.

"But to have an average of \$14,750 and for people to have faith and spend big money, is very pleasing."

Mr Schroeder said the top ram was "just a really correct sheep", with "size and structure, purity, fantastic skin, and wool-cutting ability".

"Its sire Gunallo 190464 topped Classings three years ago, bought by the O'Brien stud, but we kept semen from him," he said.

The sale was conducted by Nutrien and Elders.

- ALISHA FOGDEN

Another Classic Classings Classic

Classings P/L appreciate the support of all stud entries, sponsors, underbidders, purchasers, agents, service providers and the patient desk crew in making Classic'22 yet another Classic!

	OFFERED	SOLD	TOP	AVERAGE		OFFERED	SOLD	TOP	AVERAGE
Willera	3	3	\$24,000	\$16,833	Benefield	2	2	\$8000	\$5750
Mernowie	2	2	\$21,000	\$15,000	Flairdale	2	2	\$7000	\$5500
Gunallo	8	8	\$30,000	\$14,750	Morley	1	1	\$5000	\$5000
Ridgway Advance	13	13	\$50,000	\$13,154	Westwood	5	5	\$11,000	\$4700
Wallaloo Park	2	2	\$11,000	\$9250	Ridgway	6	6	\$8000	\$4666
SWM	2	2	\$10,000	\$8750	Hynam, Poll	5	5	\$10,000	\$4600
Ridgway Advance	12	12	\$11,000	\$7292	Coleburra	2	2	\$5500	\$4250
Spring Drop					Lucernbrae	8	8	\$7500	\$4000
Ramsgate	3	3	\$10,000	\$7000	Hamilton Run	3	3	\$4000	\$3667
Caroonboon	2	2	\$10,000	\$7000	Lone Gum	3	3	\$4000	\$3500
Sohnic	4	4	\$10,500	\$6562	Nantoura	3	3	\$3750	\$3083
Forest Springs	5	5	\$9000	\$6350	Pimbenia	2	2	\$3000	\$3000



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