

# Quality rightly rewarded at Woolumbool

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The stands were nearly back to having the sign 'fully occupied' on them at the 26<sup>th</sup> annual Woolumbool Poll Dorset and White Suffolk sale last week. With outstanding early maturity these paddock reared rams fully displayed their great muscling and breed type. Despite the 'October winter' they had endured the day before and on sale day, 41 registered, repeat and new bidders were keen to secure some of these industry leading genetics.

Woolumbool principals Phil and Sharon Clothier have regularly performance tested since the inception of their stud 27 years ago and consequently they not only have some the highest performing rams in the country, but their figures have very high accuracies. That simply means more buyers can buy on the figures with more confidence, and this they did.

Stud buyer demand was very limited, which was in line with most sales this year, but one who made the most of the great opportunity presented was Steve Funke, Bundara Downs, Bordertown. He purchased the second of the 10 elite White Suffolk rams offered, W127658 for \$4100. This powerhouse ram had figures to match, including 16.3 for post weaning weight, -0.4 for fat and +2.0 for eye muscle depth, culminating in a Carcase Plus index of 205 and a Trade\$ index of 113.

Underbidder Ian Carr, buying through Miller, Whan & John's Kingston agent, Mike Newton compensated five lots later when he was successful in purchasing W127789 with only marginally inferior figures, for \$2200. John Keilor, Cashmore Park and buying through Elders Hamilton also paid \$2200 for W127890, with performance to match the sale topper.

The ten elite White Suffolks averaged \$1890, while four Poll Dorset elite rams only topped at \$1300 and averaged \$1250; an opportunity missed by Poll Dorset stud breeders this year.

While most seedstock producers may have overlooked this opportunity, the commercial producers didn't.

The first run of 39 Poll Dorset flock rams met very strong competition, but still operated within a relatively tight budget range, topping at \$1400 and averaging \$1085.

Thirty nine White Suffolk flock rams followed and met even stronger bidding competition, these topping at \$2000 and averaging \$1115.

When the first ram in the second run of 49 Poll Dorsets was passed and three of the first 15 failed to sell, it looked like demand would peter out and last year's disappointing sale end could be repeated, but competition then fired up again. This run saw 46 sell to \$1400 and average \$793.

The final run of 46 White Suffolks also ran out of buyer support last year, but with a successful opening bid of \$1000 each for the first two in the draft, the competition was still strong and continued that way right through to the sale's last lot. This group all sold to a \$1600 top and averaged \$1015.

The 85 White Suffolk flock rams all sold to average \$1063, while 85 of 88 Poll Dorsets averaged \$927 in a wonderful and fitting reward for dedicated performance breeding by the Clothier family.

The buying support came from a group of repeat buyers who appreciate what these rams produce in their paddocks, plus a group of new buyers, mainly from Victorian regions who were seeking verifiable performance that comes from Woolumbool's high accuracy figures.

Brothers of stud principal Phil, Leigh and Graham Clothier, GW Clothier & sons were very strong on the White Suffolk drafts and paid the top of \$2000 for flock rams in their 14 purchases, at a top end

\$1364 average. Competing very strongly with them were Gordon and Peter Last, Garvald Vale, Byaduk, Vic. They paid to \$1400 and averaged \$1221 in also purchasing 14 White Suffolks.

Also strong on the top White Suffolks were repeat supporters II & PE Hocking, Lucindale. They purchased 10 top performance rams from \$1100 to \$1600.

The biggest volume buyer in the overall sale was Andrew Edgar, 'Cuyvac', Nareen. Paying from \$600 to \$1300, he successfully bid on nine Poll Dorsets and eight White Suffolk flock rams to put real backbone in the middle ground of the sale. He bought through Rob Handbury Livestock.

Not far behind them, and the biggest Poll Dorset repeat ram buyers were Patrick and Alec Ross, Lucindale. They paid the \$1400 top for Poll Dorset rams and with strategic bidding on rams that matched their production needs were able to average out their 15 purchases at just \$940.

John Cooper, Struan Research Centre with 11 rams from \$600 to \$1200 and Todd Woodhouse, Peel Pastoral, Naracoorte, with seven from \$800 to \$1300 were also very significant buyers of Poll Dorset rams. Todd also added three White Suffolks to take home 10 rams in total.

### **Sale Summary**

Poll Dorsets: 89 of 92 rams sold to \$1400, averaged \$942

White Suffolks: 95 of 95 rams sold to \$4100, averaged \$1148

Overall Sale: 184 of 187 rams sold to \$4100 and averaged \$1048

Agents: Elders and Landmark

Auctioneers: Rodney Dix (Elders) and Malcolm Scroop (Landmark)



Prominent buyers at the very successful Woolumbool Poll Dorset and White Suffolk ram sale included Geoff & Leigh Clothier, Lucindale, Gordon and Peter Last, Byaduk, Alec Ross, Lucindale and Graham Clothier, Lucindale. Collectively they purchased 43 rams, 23% of the offering.