

National record equalled at Anden bonanza

Despite another poor season that was deteriorating daily, the Donnan family received long overdue reward for the quality rams from three breeds they have been consistently presenting at their annual sale each year at Woomelang.

In this, their 20th annual sale held last Thursday, one of their Anden White Suffolk rams achieved an equal national White Suffolk record price of \$36,000, ensuring that milestone will be long remembered. This price was first achieved in 2005 when the Detpa Grove stud sold a ram for that amount, considered by many as unlikely to be beaten with more top rams being produced in the White Suffolk breed each year.

However, with quiet determination, Anden stud principal Andrew Donnan has been strongly focussed on producing sires that can make outstanding contributions to the breed. \$28,500 at Adelaide Elite Sale in 2008 was getting towards that high mark, but seemingly travel to Woomelang in the Victorian Mallee was considered too far by many, with last year's undervalued \$7500 top being an example.

That was all corrected this year when as many as 25 stud breeders at last recognised the quality on offer, probably sparked by Anden winning both the Interbreed Trade Weight and Export Weight Lamb Production Pair of Rams classes at the recent Adelaide Royal, where assessment for both phenotype and genotype come into play.

It was Anden 140298, one of the winning Trade Weight Pair that caught the eye of many stud breeders, but in particular two bidders who were prepared to go to very high levels to purchase it.

An August drop youngster sired by Burwood 110959, the sire that was purchased in partnership with Detpa Grove in 2012 for \$21,000, A140298 also had outstanding high accuracy performance figures of 17.42 post weaning weight, -0.84 post weaning fat and 1.97 post weaning eye muscle, culminating in a Carcase Plus index of 214.49 and a Lamb 2020 dollar index of 114.96.

While many were in admiration, it quickly became a battle of the two key bidders. Nathan Ditchburn, Golden Hills stud, Kukerin, WA travelled over to the sale with his stud advisor, Mark Edwards and Elders Stud Stock Manager for WA, Tim Spicer, determined to pick up this top stud ram he has been following the progress of for a quite a while.

Likewise, Ian Kyle, Ashley Park stud, Bairnsdale saw the ram in Adelaide and felt it would work really well in topping off his now high standard stud flock. Ian's son Reagan was at the sale and on the phone to his father who had other commitments on the day, and with the pledged support of semen share partners in the Mullinger Park and Seriston studs, dug in for the bidding duel. However it was Nathan Ditchburn who was more determined and won the battle.

"I haven't ever seen a ram that is so well put together, being beautifully balanced, having a great topline and an exceptional hindquarter and leg set. To support that, his combination of performance figures, especially the high growth and good muscling, made him a ram we just had to have to take us to the next level," Nathan said.

Nathan said the ram, which is a new bloodline for the stud run in conjunction with his wife Julie, will be used in an extensive AI program, plus naturally over about 80 ewes. They also hoped to recoup some of their investment in semen sales.

While this was clearly the highlight of the sale, there was also plenty of other bidding action. The line-up of the 21 specially selected Anden White Suffolk rams, 99 White Suffolk flock rams, 27 Viewdale Poll Dorset flock rams and 9 Kerangie Suffolk rams was presented in wonderful order and was commended by Elders auctioneer Ross Milne pre-sale.

The performance levels of the Donnan family's sheep are exceptional as shown by all 21 specially selected White Suffolk rams being over 200 on Carcase Plus index and 81% of the flock rams also at that level.

The second top price of \$9000 was paid by the Hull family's Kattata Well stud, Pt Kenny, SA for Anden 140310, a big powerful ram with a Carcase Plus index of 220.57 and was in the winning Export Production Pair in Adelaide as well as winning his individual class. The Hulls also purchased last year's top priced ram at \$7500. His winning pair mate, A140208 opened the sale proceedings and went for a bargain price of \$3500, the happy purchaser being Max Treweek, Lauridale stud, Wakool, NSW. Max later picked up another great value ram in A140034, the highest C+ index ram in this draft at 221.03 for just \$4000.

Brian and Troy Fisher, Ashmore White Suffolk stud, Wasleys, SA chimed in with two top purchases. They paid \$5000 for A140025, by A120041, and then were pushed to \$8000 for A140219Tri, sired by the extreme performance sire, A130288.

David Pipkorn, Detpa Grove stud, Jeparit and Andrew Frick, Gypsum Hill stud, Padthaway, combined forces to purchase A140293, another A120041 son also for \$8000.

Peter and Rhonda Malseed, Darlot Park stud, Tyrendarra paid \$5500 for A140255, the Adelaide pair mate of the top priced ram, then picked up the last ram in the draft, A140330 for just \$2500, both these being sons of Anden 120041, the sire of two thirds of this draft of specially selected rams.

Robert and Paula Gray, Gray Glen stud, Gooloogong, NSW were the volume buyers in this draft with three purchases at \$3000, \$2500 and \$4000, all Anden 120041 sons.

John and Anna Hayes, Glenfinnan stud, Young, NSW were the other multiple stud buyers with purchases at \$3000 and \$5000, also for sons of A120041.

The equal record ram was not the only one heading to the far west from this sale. Stacey Bush, purchasing for her and husband Robert's Rhos Gwyn stud, Mt Barker, WA paid \$4000 for A140014, a son of DG120657. In the surprise steal of the day, Keith Ladyman, Kantara stud, Dumbleyoung, WA combined forces with Bruce Buswell, Matilda Downs stud, Mt Barker, WA to purchase A140309 for just \$3000. Rated by Andrew Donnan as his best ram of the drop and used in the stud as a ram lamb, it suffered a pre-sale injury but had recovered fully by this sale.

Operating on his own, Keith Ladyman also picked up the full brother of the record priced ram A140301 for \$2000 and A140289 (by A120041) for \$2100 from the flock ram draft in a day of high value purchases for him. AC & PM McDonald, through Rodwells Edenhope paid \$2500 for another ram with the highest C+ index in the entire catalogue at 227.05 out of the flock rams for their stud.

The 21 selected White Suffolk rams averaged a wonderful \$5905, up \$3983 on last year's undervalued result.

Two of the nine Kerangie Suffolk rams were also offered as specially selected stud rams. Steve, Ros, Greg and Selena Funke, Bundara Downs stud, Bordertown, SA purchased K140532 for \$3500 for their relatively new Suffolk stud, while Anthony Hurst, Seriston stud, Avenue Range, SA paid just \$2000 to secure K140530, a ram used in the stud as a ram lamb. Both were sired by homebred sire Kerangie 120003.

In the outstanding White Suffolk flock ram draft, the season affected bidding somewhat with more buyers keeping their bidding in a strict budget range of \$600 to \$1000. However, all but two of the 99 on offer cleared at an average of \$867, up \$9 on last year but with a much better clearance; last year also being a poor year in this Mallee region.

The Schmidt family, through Elders Hamilton know quality when they see it and were prepared to go higher for their pick rams. They paid from \$1000 to \$1200 for their four top purchases.

Kerribee Pastoral Co through Landmark Mildura also went to \$1200 in purchasing four rams at a \$1000 average. Don Pohlner, Don Pohlner Agencies, Ouyen has been a long term Anden supporter and fully appreciates the performance levels he gets. He went to the top price of \$1400 for rams purchased for commercial production, his four rams averaging \$1200.

George Grimwade, Kurkurak Pastoral Co, Glenthompson and buying through Elders Bendigo was the biggest volume buyer, purchasing 15 top performance rams at great value from \$650 to \$850. He made the trip with Gordon Last, Garvald Vale Partnership, Hamilton who topped their combined load up to 20 rams by purchasing five from \$700 to \$1200 and at a \$900 average.

Kelvin Donnan, Landmark Ararat chimed in with very welcome support, purchasing 11 rams from \$650 to \$800, account his client Blairgowrie Partnership. Lee and Peter Bull, Ultimo were first time Anden purchasers and picked up 6 rams, paying from \$800 to \$1000. Elders Birchip's Shane McLoughlan also provided strong support purchasing 7 rams from \$650 to \$1000 for his clients not able to be present on the day.

Nineteen prime lamb producers purchased in this draft, with the balance selecting from two to five rams.

26 of the 27 Viewdale Poll Dorset rams met solid competition, with these clearing from \$600 to \$1200. Elders Mildura, account Lowan Ridge paid the top of \$1200 twice amongst four purchases at a \$1063 average. Brad and Greg Rae, through BR & C Swan Hill were the volume buyers, purchasing 10 from \$600 to \$1000 and at an \$850 average. This was also the average for the draft, which was up \$210 on last year's result and also with a better clearance rate.

The sale concluded with seven Suffolk flock rams and these sold to \$1100 and averaged \$986.

Sale Summary	Anden White Suffolk Stud rams		Anden White Suffolk flock rams		Viewdale Poll Dorsets		Kerangi Suffolks	
	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014
Offered	21	20	99	118	27	39	9	9
Sold	21	16	97	88	26	29	9	7
Top	\$36,000	\$7500	\$2500	\$3500	\$1200	\$900	\$3500	\$3000
Average	\$5905	\$2916	\$867	\$858	\$850	\$640	\$1378	\$1271

Agents: Elders Warracknabeal
Auctioneer: Ross Milne and Aaron Zwar

Photos:



Anden's Joel Donnan holds the \$36,000 sale topping and equal Australian auction record priced White Suffolk ram, Anden 140298. Standing behind the ram are Anden co-principals Denita and Andrew Donnan; purchaser, Nathan Ditchburn, Golden Hills stud, Kukerin, WA; his stud advisor Mark Edwards; and Elders WA Stud Stock Manager, Tim Spicer.



Anden's Andrew (left) and Joel Donnan (right) are with first time buyers at their annual ram sale, Lee and Peter Bull, Ultimo, inspecting the 6 rams the Bulls purchased, paying from \$800 to \$1000.



Pictured after the successful Anden ram sale are Gordon Last, Garvald Vale Partnership, Hamilton, who purchased 5 rams; Andrew and Joel Donnan; and George Grimwade, Kurkurak Pastoral Co, Glenthompson, who purchased 15 rams from the White Suffolk flock ram draft.



Anden's Joel Donnan holds the Kerangie Suffolk ram purchased by the Funke family, Bundara Downs stud, Bordertown for the \$3500 top for that section of the sale.