

Glenlea Dohne sale reaches \$2400

By **LYNETTE CAREW-REID**

SEVERAL big buyers responded to seasonal conditions by sending their apologies for last week's Glenlea Dohne sale at Katanning, but the sale still posted plenty of highlights.

New buyers appeared, the clearance rate jumped, prices peaked at \$2400 and three rams sold to South Australia.

One of the stud's original buyers Wayne Littleton and father Tony, trading as AM Littleton & Son, Williams, gave the sale one of its highlights when they bid the top price then paid \$1400 as they put together a team of seven rams including three from stud principal Alex Leach's special line of Dohne/Poll Merino cross offering.

The men have been unwavering in their support for the breed, saying they were looking for the same type of rams as they usually did but after reducing their ewe numbers to better cope with several consecutive poor seasons, they needed fewer sires and were a little more picky.

The 98-head offering had plenty of rams with the breeding figures they wanted and, as established high price payers, they were able to avoid their normal succession of bidding tussles this year.

The top price ram was by DJ151880 and had a solid set of balanced fleece and carcass



□ Glenlea Dohne stud principal Alex Leach (left), with \$2400 top price buyers Tony and Wayne Littleton, Williams and Nutrien Livestock stud and commercial sheep manager Tom Bowen at last week's ram sale in Katanning.

figures contributing to a 170.1 index.

Wayne Littleton said they initially had sought genetics that gave them fast-growing lambs but in recent years they had shifted their focus from carcass traits to lift wool yield.

Mr Littleton recorded 44 millimetres of rain two days previously and said they now had the best-looking crops in quite a few years, pasture was getting away and the sheep were fat.

He now hoped the season would be reflected at lambing time next year.

The sale offered 98 head and

sold 78 under Nutrien Livestock auctioneer Mark Warren's hammer for a \$839 average.

This was a big drop of \$305 but the clearance was well up on last year when 62 out of 91 rams sold.

Mr Warren was thankful for the rain, saying it was something that gave a bit of confidence in a year that was far from normal and by the end of the day he was more than satisfied with the result.

A telephone call netted the \$2200 second top price ram and others at \$1500 and \$1150 on behalf of another long-term

buyer Robert Holmes and mother Heather, Hillview stud, Streaky Bay, South Australia, who have been consistent Glenlea buyers since 1999.

Their \$2200 ram was by Noorla 140138 and had a 176.7 index with a strong +10 for number of lambs weaned.

While the poor season kept some clients away, the void was filled by two young sheep producers who came armed with the full set of estimated breeding values and bought at the sale for the first time.

James and Alexandra MacFarlane, Kojonup, had bought from Glenlea privately

SALE SUMMARY

(Under the hammer results)
 Offered: 98
 Sold: 78
 Top: \$2400
 Gross: \$65,450
 Average: \$839

but this year opted to support the auction saying they now had figures showing a dramatic improvement in lamb growth rate.

Mr MacFarlane said the bloodline had achieved a significant 28 per cent improvement in lamb marking weight within his flock and the breed's natural good doing ability meant they didn't require the feeding of other Merino lines offering the potential to reduce the feed bill.

He paid \$1200 for the best of three rams and encouraged another young farmer Monty House to follow his lead.

Mr House was a first time

buyer and applied the same science to his selection after being given a free rein by parents Marty and Sheena to buy 12 rams for their sheep enterprise at Tenterden.

He set breeding objectives based on the main profits drivers of high lambing percentage, low birth weight and fast lamb weight gain and had preselected rams based on estimated breeding values.

They did a final visual inspection at the sale then bid to \$1200 and \$1050 for the best of their rams.

Buying fewer rams but influential in the bidding was Geoff Fisher, Warkelup Grazing Co, Kojonup, who was losing bidder on the top price ram and bought others for \$1900 and \$1100.

In addition to the usual turnout of loyal clients, occasional buyer Dohle & Co, Wagin, left a buying order with agents that made a big difference to the bottom line.

Clients had the usual line-up



Buyer James MacFarlane (left), Nutrien Livestock stud and commercial sheep manager Tom Bowen and buyer Monty House, Tenterden, who bought at the Glenlea Dohne sale for the first time last week.

of well-presented, July drop paddock-reared rams, but this year the depth of quality meant no one was pressured even with the extra competition from the Dohle family who, after an absence of a couple of years returned to get 15 rams for an existing Dohne flock – all at the \$600 reserve price.

Other return buyers included Glen and Les Thompson, Wagin, who paid up to \$1400 for the best of seven and Nigel Edgecombe, Merredin, also

put together a team of seven at close to reserve prices.

Commenting after the sale Mr Leach said given the variable season, what had been happening at wool sales and the number of sheep that had left WA, he had been concerned about this year's sale.

He was pleased with how the sheep presented for sale and the unannounced buyers had been a welcome surprise that made all the difference to the clearance rate.