

Mollerin Rock Dohnes sell to \$2300 high

By **MAL GILL**

PAYING top price of \$2300 at last Thursday's Mollerin Rock Dohne ram sale was good insurance against frost damage to crops, according to buyer Reece Boyne, TA & D Boyne & Sons, Koorda.

"I can't think of a better reason to stay with sheep after we got frosted the other night," said Mr Boyne after he won a bidding competition for the 93-kilogram lot-four ram with a stylish crimp to its bright fleece, a straight back line and good proportions to its solid frame.

"I'd say we've lost 30 per cent of our canola – and it was looking really good too – and maybe up to 70pc of our wheat," he said of the previous Friday morning's frost event.

"It was frosted for about seven hours and when I went out about the time the kids left for school I couldn't read the rain gauge, it was still a solid block of ice."

In recent years the family had been cutting back Dohne flock numbers, Mr Boyne said, to increase cropping percentage to take advantage of canola prices, but the frost event may have changed that.

"We mated about 1000 this year and next year we'll probably mate about 1200 – we've got plenty of feed for them at the moment," he said.

"We've been buying Mollerin Rock rams since the stud started (2003) – we started buying from Ian (Longmuir, Mollerin Rock Dohne founder)

and switched across to Mitchell (Applegate, Mollerin Rock Dohne principal at Cadoux for the past three years).

"We're happy with the consistency.

"We're just trying to get a bit more wool on them – they're going alright, but that's the rams we're chasing.

"It's good for Mitch to have a much better sale today than last year – there was good competition today."

With his father Richard watching on, Mr Boyne bought throughout the sale and, apart from the top-priced ram, his selection of six included the lot-35 equal third top-priced ram at \$2100 and the lot-21 fifth top-priced ram at \$2000.

The May-drop twin top-priced ram, tag number MR200133, had Australian Sheep Breeding Values Dohne trait indices of 3.4kg weaner weight (WWT), 4.3kg post weaner weight (PWT) and 6.8kg yearling weight (YWT).

It had index values of 1.1 for eye-muscle depth (EMD), 25.0 for yearling clean fleece weight (YCFW), -0.3 for yearling fibre diameter (YFD), 1.2 for yearling coefficient of variation (YCF) and an overall Dohne index score of 166.0.

The May-shorn ram's actual wool specifications were 18 microns fibre diameter, 21.1 per cent coefficient of variation (CV), 66.7pc yield and 4.6kg greasy fleece weight (GFW).

Its 100-day, 200-day and 365-day body weight measurements were 32kg,



□ Father and son buyers, Reece (left) and Richard Boyne, TA & D Boyne & Sons, Koorda, Mollerin Rock Dohne stud principal Mitchell Applegate, Cadoux and Elders auctioneer Graeme Curry with the \$2300 top-priced ram after the on-farm Mollerin Rock Dohne ram sale.

56.5kg and 70kg respectively.

Two other bidders also took home six rams.

They were WR Hagboom & Co, Dowerin, that purchased the lot-29 equal second top-priced ram at \$2200 and the lot-nine equal fourth top-priced ram at \$2050 – three rams sold at that price – and Russell Burges, NP Burges & Co, Meckering, who bid to a top of \$1800.

The lot-64 other \$2200 equal second top-priced ram went to MO & MY Sims, Beverley, with three generations attending the sale – grandfather Max, 88, son Graeme and wife Angela

and grandson Elliot.

The Sims, who mated about 2500 ewes this year, also took home one of the \$2050 equal fourth top-priced rams in their five.

Graeme Sims said the family had bought rams from Mollerin Rock Dohne for two years "about 10 or 12 years ago" but had then switched to studs closer to home.

"This is our first time with Mitchell, we had a few recommendations (to return to Mollerin Rock) and I'm pretty pleased we came up for the sale," Mr Sims said.

"They (rams) have a huge

SALE SUMMARY

(Under the hammer results)
 Offered: 80
 Sold: 79
 Top: \$2300
 Gross: \$104,500
 Average: \$1323

frame, they're very long sheep, different sheep that we were getting from the Katanning-Narrogin area.

"They're drier and when we take them south the nourishment should come out over the next year."

The Sims-purchased a 98kg, April-drop twin, equal second top-priced ram that had indices of 4.4 WWT, 4.5 PWT, 4.9 YWT, 0.9 EMD, 11.8 YCFW, -0.6 YFD, -0.4 YCV and 166.1 overall Dohne score.

Its wool specifications were 16.6 micron, 20.5pc CV, 70.1pc yield and 4.4kg GFW, with 100, 200 and 365-day body weights of 39kg, 64.5kg and 68kg.

The Hagboom-purchased 96.5kg, April-drop twin, equal second top-priced ram had indices of 5.0 WWT, 6.7 PWT, 8.2 YWT, 0.6 EMD, 16.3 YCFW, 0.7 YFD, -1.0 YCF and 172.9 score.

Its wool specifications were 19.2 micron, 16.1pc CV, 63.8pc yield and 4.1kg GFW, with 100, 200 and 365-day weights of 33kg, 57.5kg and 68kg.

The lot-one equal third top-priced ram at \$2100 was bought by AN & E Tunstill, Kalannie, in a selection of three.

Volume buyer was the O'Driscoll family from Grass Valley, with seven rams to a top of \$1450 knocked down to M & M O'Driscoll.

Jeffries Farms, Bencubbin, M & J Stratford, Koorda and RN & AL Peacock, Northam, each purchased five rams.

Only one of the 23 registered bidders left the sale without at least one ram.

Three new clients were in the 23 who registered and that total was five more than registered

last year and three more than the pre-COVID previous year which was the first sale conducted by the Applegate family after taking over Mollerin Rock Dohne stud from long-time operators Ian and Steph Longmuir, Koorda.

Mr Longmuir attended last Thursday's sale as a spectator and was very pleased with the standard of rams penned.

"They're a credit to Mitchell, they're just starting to bring out that bit of nourishment which is what I like," Mr Longmuir said.

In stark contrast to last year's sale when only 57 of 100 rams offered were sold, last week all 80 rams offered were sold, including 24 July-drop rams which were 15-20kg lighter than their earlier drop siblings.

Sale of a passed-in ram immediately after the auction provided a 100pc clearance.

At auction the sale grossed \$104,500 and averaged \$1323, both up considerably on last year's sale.

Mitchell Applegate said it

was "all smiles around here" and he and his father Anthony were very pleased with the sale result.

"Especially with the wet season this year, the wool has held up really well and kept the dust out and now the sun's out they've got the nourishment in them," Mr Applegate said of the rams.

"We dropped the numbers down a bit this year because more people are cropping bigger areas.

"Our sheep are looking good, you can't fault them on their physical condition traits, but we're trying to get the index numbers up a bit, we're chasing a little bit better eye muscle."

With that in mind a new ram from Terry Blake's Dowell Dohne Merino stud, Katanning, has been introduced to the stud's breeding ewes, Mr Applegate said.

Elders auctioneer Graeme Curry described the sale result as a "well-earned reward for effort" for Mr Applegate.