

Glenlea Dohne Merino peaks at \$1600

By **LYNETTE CAREW-REID**

MOST farmers appreciate a good rain but sometimes it can be too much of a good thing.

The Glenlea Dohne Merino stud was severely affected by the July drenching with studmaster Alex Leach postponing his annual sale so he could present a quality line of 89 rams with better growth and extra sappy wools.

In response, buyers supported last week's sale at Katanning to set a \$1600 top price and keep averages equal with 2020.

This year the sale averaged \$835 compared with \$839 last year and Nutrien Livestock auctioneer Mark Warren cleared 56 of the 89 rams offered.

The sale has always featured interstate buyers and this year was no exception with two New South Wales buyers from Tamworth returning to their original ram source.

Vicki Chaffey, Dongala Pastoral Co, left a buying order with Nutrien Livestock stud and commercial sheep manager Tom Bowen, who bought not only the top price ram on her behalf, but also four others for \$1000 each.

Mr Bowen said he had instructions to buy a son of the sire Double D 140061 with good white, bright wool capable of retaining its deep crimping characteristics.

The ram in pen 66 was from the youngest age group in the sale and had Dohne Plus breeding value figures showing +3.68 for weaning weight; +4.44 post weaning weight; +4.87 yearling weight; +0.92 yearling eye muscle depth; -0.04 yearling fat; +11.47 clean fleece weight; and -0.63 fibre diameter giving a 159.06 Dohne Plus index.

Former South African farmer, Colleen Rattley, trading as L & CV Rattley, was another from Tamworth and her buying instructions set the \$1200 second top price for one of three rams that filled her order.

Mr Leach said the Rattley family had been a buyer at Glenlea's inaugural Dohne ram

SALE SUMMARY

(Under the hammer results)
Offered: 89
Sold: 56
Top: \$1600
Gross: \$46,750
Average: \$835

sale more than 20 years ago and although they had never returned as a client Ms Rattley had always kept in contact.

The family continued to buy Dohne sires from various eastern Australian studs but the WA sheep had left a lasting impression and this year decided to return.

An extra incentive to source rams in WA would have been the high livestock prices being paid on the eastern seaboard.

The line-up included a drop of rams bought as weaned lambs late last year from Katanning breeder Terry Blake's Dowell stud.

They were run as part of Glenlea's overall ram group at the Leach's Pingrup property that received just 131 millimetres of rain last year.

In contrast, they received 132mm of rain in July and for more than six weeks the rams were stranded on a ridge and cut off by flood water that formed a lake around them.

However, in his pre-sale address Mr Warren said given the extra work required to get them to the sale it was a credit they had presented as well as they had.

Despite the wet conditions there was not a sign of the extreme weather in the wool.

Sale values were in buyers' favour and most took advantage by getting a few extra rams than they intended.

Among them was long-term client Nigel Edgecombe, Merredin, who bought 11 for up to \$800 (5) and said sheep were still a good fit in their mixed enterprise and he had no plans to drop them from the system.

"There is good money in sheep and they give us options



□ Glenlea Dohne Merino stud principal Alex Leach (left), with the \$1600 top-priced ram held by Nutrien Livestock stud and commercial sheep manager Tom Bowen at last week's ram sale in Katanning.

in controlling weeds meaning we don't have to push the cropping as hard," Mr Edgecombe said.

Another of the stud's original clients was Tony and Wayne Littleton, Williams, who have bought many of the sale's top price rams over the years.

This year they sought out the younger rams later in the sale carrying the full Glenlea pedigree and found little competition as they put together an eight-ram team spending up to \$1050 but paying \$800 for most.

He bought rams that had positive figures for clean fleece weight and wanted the better nourished wool types.

Marty, Sheena and Monty House, Tenterden were first time buyers last year and this year Marty returned to buy nine rams for up to \$950.

Buying fewer rams but influential in the bidding was Geoff Fisher, Warkelup Grazing Co, Kojonup, who got four rams for \$1000 each and left telling Mr Leach he had

just loaded the best four rams he had ever bought.

Justin Taylor, Moonies Hill, Tambellup, also paid up to \$1000 for one of two rams and Rob Miolini, Naremben, demonstrated the widespread buying register when he left with six rams bought for up to \$800 (3).

Another return buyer was Les Thompson and son Glen, Wagin, who paid up to \$900 for the best five.

The men started buying Glenlea rams in 2016 and had the first drop of F3 lambs this year.

Since switching to Dohnes they had noticed an increase in lambing percentage, greater production from their flock and had been able to sell off their lambs at a younger age.

Mr Leach said he was pleased with how the rams presented for sale and appreciated the extra support of returning buyers who kept the clearance rate at an acceptable level in the light of a still declining State ewe flock.