

FARMING ON THE EYRE PENINSULA

Hillview ‘happy’ after full clearance

By Luca Cetta

HILLVIEW Dohne Merino Stud was thrilled to achieve a full clearance at its on-property sale on Friday 21 August.

The stud, based at Chilpenunda, 40 kilometres north of Streaky Bay, sold all 65 rams on offer at the annual sale, with an average of \$2159 and a top price of \$5200.

The average was well up on last year’s \$1628, while the top-priced ram was \$200 more than in 2025.

Stud principal Robert Holmes said Hillview was very pleased with how the sale went.

“We are extremely happy with the sale results,” he said.

“To achieve a full clearance and a strong average was very rewarding, and we’re incredibly grateful for the continued support from both our returning and new clients.”

The top-priced ram, sold to Wayne Hodge from Everglen Ag, Lock, was a well-balanced, true dual-purpose sire, Mr Holmes said.

“He had good structure, growth and carcass attributes, while still carrying the wool quality we aim to maintain within our breeding program,” he said.

“Overall, he was a very complete ram and a good representation of the type we are striving to breed.”

Mr Hodge has been a regular buyer at Hillview and said he was drawn to the top-priced ram for its outstanding characteristics.

“I liked his overall growth rates, eye muscle and his wool factors,” he said.

Everglen Ag walked away with six rams from the sale.

“Hillview seems to have the quality and style of sheep that I am chasing,” Mr Hodge said.

A number of repeat buyers headed along to check out what Hillview had to offer.

“The majority were repeat buyers, which is always very pleasing and gives us confidence that our rams are performing well for our clients,” Mr Holmes said.



Pictured with the top-priced ram are Hillview Dohne Merino Stud's Heather Holmes, Milla Holmes, Milton Holmes and Robert Holmes, buyer Wayne Hodge and Mat Kerin from Nutrien Ag. (Supplied)

“We also welcomed new and returning buyers to the stud, which was great to see.”

Everglen Ag was among the volume buyers at the sale, alongside TJ Patterson Pty Ltd, PF DM RF Watson, Lee Family Trust and Hope Downs Farming.

“We greatly appreciate their support, along with everyone who purchased rams on the day,” Mr Holmes added.

The stud principal felt buyers were attracted to Hillview’s “very even line of rams” presented.

“They offered a good balance of growth, carcass and wool traits while maintaining the resilience that the Dohne Merino is known for,” Mr Holmes said.

“After the tough conditions these rams were born into, we were particularly proud of how they developed and we think buyers appreciated their ability to perform through challenging conditions.”

Mr Holmes added the season had come at the “perfect time.”

“After the last few tough years, we had been

holding on and hoping for a season like this, so we are extremely grateful for the turnaround,” he said.

“It’s not only the improvement in lamb and wool prices, but also simply seeing feed in the paddocks again that has made such a difference.”

“It has been an exceptional year so far and has brought some much-needed confidence back into the industry. We’re just keeping our fingers crossed that the season finishes as well as it started.”

Producer funds deliver strong investment in livestock industry

SOUTH Australia’s sheep and cattle industries will benefit from almost \$5 million in producer-funded investment during 2026-27.

A total of \$3.76 million has been committed through the Sheep Industry Fund (SIF) and \$598,318 through the Cattle Industry Fund (CIF) for projects and activities in 2026-27, ensuring producer contributions continue to deliver practical outcomes for livestock businesses across South Australia.

The investment is backing projects and activities that strengthen biosecurity and animal health, improve predator and pest management, support future industry leaders, drive innovation, build workforce capability and enhance the long-term competitiveness of the state’s livestock sector.

In addition to project funding, the SIF will contribute \$250,000 towards the rebuilding of the SA Dog Fence and \$390,420 towards its ongoing maintenance, helping protect sheep enterprises across the state’s pastoral regions.

Approved projects are also expected to leverage substantial co-investment from research organisations, universities, government programs and industry partners, increasing the return on every dollar invested



Livestock SA chief executive officer Travis Tobin said the funding demonstrated the value of South Australia’s unique industry funding model. (Supplied)

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funding model, with producer contributions being invested directly into projects that deliver measurable benefits to the sheep and cattle sectors.

“Every dollar invested through the Sheep and Cattle Industry Funds is working to build a stronger, more productive and more profitable future for South Australia’s livestock producers,” he said.

“These investments don’t simply fund projects. They strengthen our biosecurity systems, support innovation, improve productivity, develop future industry leaders and help protect the market access and reputation that underpin the success of South Australian livestock businesses.”

Mr Tobin said this year’s funding round again highlighted the strong demand for industry-led investment.

“The quality of applications continues to demonstrate the innovation, commitment and ambition that exists throughout our livestock industries,” he said.

“While not every project could be funded, the level of interest shows there is no shortage of ideas and opportunities that can help strengthen the industry’s future.”

New At Call Funds have also been established through both the SIF and CIF to pro-

vide greater flexibility to invest in emerging priorities, strategic opportunities and unforeseen challenges outside the traditional annual funding round.

The funds will ensure industry can act quickly when new opportunities arise or when timely intervention is required.

“The livestock sector operates in a dynamic environment, and opportunities can emerge at any time,” Mr Tobin said.

“The At Call Funds will allow industry to respond more quickly when important opportunities arise, whether that involves leveraging external investment, supporting a strategic industry priority or addressing a challenge that cannot wait until the next funding round.”

Small Project Funds have also been retained, recognising the important role smaller initiatives play in supporting industry development, producer capability and regional communities.

These funds provide a practical pathway for local and industry-led projects to access support and deliver benefits back to producers.

For more information about the 2026-27 SIF and CIF approved projects, visit livestocksa.com.au/industry-funds

LIVESTOCK

Top Ulooloo ram catches Hillview's eye

SALE SUMMARY

	2026	2025
Offered	62	60
Sold	51	35
Top	\$4400	\$3400
Av	\$1484	\$1291

A PADDOCK-RUN ram from Ulooloo Dohne Merino stud, Hallett, will make its way to Hillview Dohne Merino stud, Streaky Bay, where it will begin a new bloodline.

Lot 6 sold for a top of \$4400 at Ulooloo's sale last Thursday.

Hillview stud principal Robert Holmes said this particular ram would offer them an opportunity get a fresh bloodline into their flock.

Sired by a Ulooloo ram 220312, lot 6 had a fleece micron of 14.6.

Mr Holmes said the ram had good structure, white nourished wool and lower, softer wool which would help them to "fine up" their wool.

"We buy them on and off, you like to get a new bloodline where you can and they have a different bloodline to us," he said.

"He will be out with the rest of the rams for a little bit and then we will put them out in small mobs.

"The progeny from that will go into our ram sale the year after."

Buyers travelled from Naracoorte to Streaky Bay and Broken Hill to Roseworthy for the sale.

Of the 62 rams offered, 51 sold to an average of \$1484 - up nearly \$200 on last year's sale and with an improved clearance.



The top ram with Rob Hall, Hillview's Robert Holmes, Michael Foster and Milton Holmes, Elders, and Shannon Jaeschke, Nutrien. Picture by Chelsea Ashmeade

Volume buyers included Tigmas Props, Yunta, buying 13 rams, averaging \$1423; Copaga Station, via Broken Hill, NSW, buying nine, averaging \$955; while Merngenia Station, via Peterborough, took home five, averaging \$1780.

Ulooloo stud principal Rob Hall said he was happy with how the sale went, especially the first 40 rams.

"Lot 6 was an outstanding wool type, free-growing, well-nourished, good crimped wool and he stood out with that," he said.

"I had a feeling he would be attracting a bit of attention and it's good to see the top-end rams get the prices they deserve."

Mr Hall was pleased with the line-up and how well the paddock-run rams had come on this year without any supplementary feeding.

"It's been good to see how

they can perform when you put a bit of grass in front of them," he said.

"We are really grateful of the support of the buyers here today and they all took home what they needed and some one or two extra, it was good."

Elders state livestock manager Damien Webb, the day's auctioneer, said the rams "lined up well" considering their tough start to life.

"We saw a few microns back on what they'd normally be when they were tested back in March, but the rams are really starting to respond and have really good wool quality," he said.

"They have good structure, the meat traits and all the figures that go with it.

"They had a really good presentation of rams here."

Elders and Nutrien conducted the sale.

- CHELSEA ASHMEADE

Stronger demand for Dohnes

SALE SUMMARY

	2026	2025
Offered	30	30
Sold	29	25
Top	\$3200	\$2800
Av	\$1335	\$1248

STRONG demand, particularly from pastoral buyers, helped lift results at the Babirra Dohne and Poll Merino ram sale at Stansbury last week.

The Farrow family sold 29 of 30 Dohne rams offered to a top of \$3200, averaging \$1335.

The top-price ram at lot 11 was purchased by long-time client Blackville Trading Trust, Caltowie.

The ram was a triplet sired by Babirra sire 3082 and had a Dohne Index of 174.6, placing him in the top 10 per cent of the breed.

He also recorded a yearling weaning weight breeding value of 9.7 (top 5pc), while his fleece measured 17.1 micron, with 3.3 standard deviation, 19.1 coefficient of variation and 99.9pc comfort factor.

The ram recorded ASBVs of 0.9 for eye muscle depth and a 0.2 for fat, with a 44mm EMD.

Blackville Trading Trust's Colin Black said the ram's combination of figures, growth and fleece quality



Blackville Trading Trust's Tina Black with son Adam, Caltowie, Nutrien's Julian Burke, Elders' Adam Pitt, Colin Black, and Babirra's Lynda Farrow. Picture supplied

made him stand out.

"He had good figures, good weight, early weight growth, and a clean fleece

yield percentage," he said.

Mr Black said the ram would be used over the family's Merino-Dohne ewes,

with some progeny likely to be retained as future sires.

He has been buying from Babirra for about 15 years and also purchased lot 20 for \$2000.

MS&SM Jackson, Broken Hill, NSW, again provided strong support, purchasing 15 rams averaging \$1053.

Stud client Ulooloo Dohnes, Hallett, purchased two rams averaging \$1350, while new client AE Clarke & Sons, Cradock, purchased four during the auction to average \$1700, before buying a further two stock rams after the sale.

Babirra Dohne and Poll Merino stud principal Craig

Farrow said the support from both established and new clients was pleasing.

Seven Poll Merino rams were also sold through a helmsman auction, topping at \$1400 to Pangari's GD Cook, Minlaton.

The sale was conducted by Elders and Nutrien.

Elders studstock auctioneer Tony Wetherall said the Dohnes lined up strongly, with solid competition throughout the sale.

"The Dohne rams had good carcase qualities, and good wools, and really represented the Dohne breed well," he said.

- KIARA STACEY