

Kolindale tops at \$2000 at Esperance

By **CAITLYN BURLING**

WHILE the wild and woolly weather blustered about outside the ram shed, the best kind of wool was inside at the Kolindale Esperance ram sale.

Once again making the annual trip to Esperance from their Dudinin base, the Ledwith family presented 93 outstanding Merino and Poll Merino rams for local clients to fill their quotas.

Almost all of the 18 registered buyers took home two or more rams, with bulk buying the order of the day to ensure 84 of the 93 rams were snapped up to gross \$86,150, resulting in a significant lift from last year's average of \$899 to \$1026.

Most of the nine rams passed in were snapped up at the conclusion of the sale, after buyers reassessed their breeding needs and helped make the Ledwiths' ram trailer a bit lighter for the trip home.

To assist buyers with their selections, stud principal Luke Ledwith provided ASBVs for every ram in the sale team for the first time this year, supporting the visual assessment of the rams with quantitative data.

Even though there were fewer Poll Merino rams in the sale, they were still in demand from buyers to gross \$27,050 and

average \$933, with 29 of the 34 finding new homes including the \$2000 top price ram of the sale.

Many buyers of Poll Merino genetics had this one circled in their catalogues but it was long-time clients Rod and Peter McCrea, RN & IK McCrea, Salmon Gums, who placed the \$2000 winning bid.

The McCreas were keen pursuers of Kolindale wool traits and liked the ram from their initial inspection, displaying figures such as 5.4 GFW, 17.7 micron, 2.7 SD, 15.3 CV and 99.7 per cent comfort factor.

The fact that the ram filled the pen from end to end also bode well for the Kolindale sire, as Peter McCrea said they were looking for the ideal combination of size and wool traits.

"He's quite a big sheep and stands very well," he said.

"We really liked the wool on him and on the whole, all his figures were very good.

"He had a long staple and a stylish wool that is well suited to what we are chasing."

The McCreas breed their own rams, so the top sire will go over their nucleus flock and ideally reproduce progeny that mirrored the ram's traits of -0.1 YEMD, -1.1 YGFW and -0.3 YFD.



□ Kolindale stud principals Luke (left) and Matthew Ledwith hold the \$2000 top-priced Poll Merino ram, along with Elders Esperance livestock agents Graeme Alexander and Michael Forward and buyer Peter McCrea, Salmon Gums.

The McCrea family's sire battery was boosted by another three Kolindale rams, one Poll Merino for \$1400 and two Merinos for \$1500 and \$1600 to finish their bidding.

The Merino portion of the sale accounted for 59 rams, 55 of which were purchased under the experienced hammer of Elders auctioneer Don Morgan to gross \$59,100 and average \$1075.

A larger selection of a very even Merino sale team meant

the \$1700 top price was hit twice by the same buyer, Elders Ravensthorpe agent Peter Bower on behalf of the Belli family, Phillips River Grazing, Ravensthorpe.

Four Merino rams were knocked down to the Phillips River account but it was the two with the bigger size and quality wool traits that were worth the extra coin.

"The Belli family have been using these genetics for over 20 years," Mr Bower said.