

Crushing win for Hyden producers



Chris Squiers with buyers Sue, Brian and Tim Burrow, and auctioneer Adrian Gamble at last year's Shirley Downs and Dongadilling stud sale in Quairading with the top-priced Samm ram. PHOTO: BOB GARNANT

Crushed oaten hay added to a feedlot farm mix of lupins, oats, wheat and barley has combined with Merino and Samm genetics to win WAMMCO's April 2011 Producer of the Month title for Hyden lamb producers Brian, Sue and Tim Burrow.

"Our Samm-Merino cross lambs were not reaching weight after a tough season and even with two months on barley stubbles we were faced with the decision to turn them all off, or to try feedlotting," Tim said.

"We could not believe the kill sheets that later came back from WAMMCO.

"Samm-Merino cross lambs that went into the feedlot between 43 and 48kg, were delivered five weeks later weighing between 50 and 62kg and returned up to nearly \$170 per head.

"Two drafts of slightly lighter lambs sold at Katanning saleyard at the same time for \$140 and \$130 per head.

"We tossed up with our local Elders adviser, Bob Peake, about holding the lambs on feed for another two weeks to gain higher weights and better prices, but we agreed to go for the pre-Easter schedule."

Tim said the family also decided to feedlot a draft of Merino wether lambs and sold them between \$80 and \$120 a head on farm to a live exporter. He said adding crushed oaten hay to the ration appeared to have given the lambs a boost and would be used again in future.

BH Burrow and Co, of Springvale, Hyden, averaged \$152.02 including skin — or \$6.02/kg — for the line of 121 Samm-Merino cross lambs processed at WAMMCO Katanning on April 20.

The lambs weighed an average of 24.10kg with the tops reaching \$167.50 per head and a WAMMCO Select bonus of \$389.16 was paid on 55 bodies or 45.4 per cent of the lambs, representing 13.3 c/kg or an extra \$3.22 per head across the consignment.

The Samm genetics were sourced from Chris, Adrian and Sasha Squiers, of Shirlee Downs Samm stud, Quairading, and their Merinos from Woodyarrup Merino stud, Gnowangerup, after some years of trialling a number of breeds including Texels, Samms, Merinos and Poll Dorsets.

"Our breeding flock now consists of Merino ewes with about 30 per cent currently mated to Woodyarrup rams, and about 70 per cent of our Merinos mated to Samm rams from Shirlee Downs," Tim said.

"We are pregnancy scanning and beginning to identify twins in each breeding flock with Samm cross lambings of up to 168 per cent.

"An experiment with Serradella Cadiz and oats as pasture has already worked well with summer rains and oats have already been seeded on some light country at the end of March."

The family moved from Quairading to Hyden in search of extra land in the mid-1980s and have adapted quickly to a broader scale cropping and sheep enterprise.

A draft of Samm-Merino cross ewe lambs were recently purchased by Chris Squiers for use at Shirlee Downs before they were offered for sale to buyers in the east, and the family is also watching the rise in wool prices with interest with their Woodyarrup flock producing excellent wool.