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Lamb goes gangbusters



As a vendor, Clare's Neville Jaeschke is pretty happy with how lambs are selling at the moment. Last week, he sold the tops of his crossbred lambs at Dublin for \$160 (pictured) € this week however, he said he sold his seconds for \$164.

EXPORT demand for Australian lamb has pushed sales to record prices in the past week, but industry has questioned whether prices are sustainable.

Over-the-hooks rates have risen rapidly, with the Eastern States trade lamb indicator sitting at \$5.66 a kilogram on Monday and heavy lambs at \$5.87/kg.

Following last week's record \$230 price tag at Dublin, prices eased slightly this week on the 19,000 yarding but CIAA auctioneer Peter Pinkerton said it was not back much.

"The sale started a bit cheaper, but it certainly improved," he said.

"Our best lambs made \$201, and there was another pen at \$199; the next best was about \$190-ish.

"Merino lambs were dear too, about \$140-\$150."

Mr Pinkerton attributed the competition for lambs to the lower dollar and strong export demand.

"Having said that, the Woolworths buyer got a call during the sale and was able to buy about 450 lambs; he paid to \$157 for supermarket lambs," he said.

Stronger prices would probably carry through winter, Mr Pinkerton said, but he did not feel they were sustainable for a long period.

"We worked out our lambs today were making about \$6/kg," he said.



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"Last week was an exceptional sale, Tuesday wasn't far from it; if you take out the extremes of last week, it was probably back a little."

Mr Pinkerton said people would probably hold back lambs.

"If we have 10,000 to 12,000 next week I'd be amazed," he said.

He believes good lambs will still make close to \$200, with "run of the mill" lambs in the \$150-\$160 bracket.

Landmark Jamestown's Don Cullen agreed export demand and supply were the main reasons behind bolstered lamb prices.

"I don't know if it's a bit premature, or if this is where prices are going to be," he said.

"For hooks prices to be at \$5.80 in March is a hell of a good crack, especially if you consider this time last year prices were struggling."

It was up to buyers if prices were going to remain where they were, he said.

"We'll put the lambs there, hopefully they'll buy them," he said.

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