

Impressive Suffolk line-up sell to 4, 000 guineas at Ballymena

Renewed confidence and a jam-packed ringside combined with a top class entry meant that the NI Branch of the Suffolk Sheep Society's Premier show and sale at Ballymena on Tuesday evening was by some distance the best in recent years..

And it was certainly an evening to remember for Newtownabbey breeder Alastair Gault whose outstanding ram lamb – the Ulster Bank show champion – attracted huge interest before being knocked down for 4, 000 guineas.

The supremely conformed seven-month-old lamb to the day was sired by Cairness Kanine and found a new home at the Burnview flock of Stephanie and William Tait near Omagh.

Gault's exceptional champion lamb epitomised the quality of the 2010 entry. It was without the doubt the cream of the crop and this was reflected in the ring as the four-figure barrier was exceeded on no fewer than nine occasions. On the night an exceptionally high clearance rate saw 79 impressive rams lambs exchange hands for an average price of 633 guineas while the shearlings recorded an average of 574.

Second highest price of the evening of 2, 000 guineas was paid to Gary Beacom for a son of the 10, 500 guinea Garryhinch Empire, new owner Philip Gurney, Coleraine the last man standing after a plethora of bids.

A Wells Dynamite son bred by Rodney Blair, Ballymoney and a Stockton Sensation bred ram lamb presented by Comber's William Montgomery both fetched 1, 500 guineas before being knocked down to Geoffrey Douglas, Limavady and Gary McAdoo, Cookstown respectively while B McVicker, Bushmills shelved out 1, 250 guineas for a Baileys Headstart lamb from the Burnview flock of S and W Tait.

Gary McAdoo, Cookstown, William Taylor, Coleraine and L and M Liggett, Drumquin were all paid 1, 000 guineas for lambs sired respectively by Baileys Hilton, Lakeview Leeroy and Cairness New Approach. This impressive trio ended up in the camps David McCaughan, Limavady, E and J Gould, Ringsend and Ian Donald, Newtownstewart.

There was also a huge demand for top quality shearlings with Gary Beacom's eye-catching Shannagh Shergar bred ram fetching the big note before being knocked down to William Moore, Ardstraw.

Lakeview flock owner Beacom also achieved 700 guineas for yet another Shergar son, purchased by Matt Workman, Kilwaughter while a Moatfarrell Titan sired ram belonging to Philip Savage exchanged hands for 650 guineas.

Local breeders Campbell and Jason Watson presented three impressive shearlings which sold for 580, 570 and 480 guineas respectively.

The 2010 Premier show and sale was billed as a breeders' paradise and certainly the exceptional overall quality ensured that the occasion lived up to all expectations. The bottom end of the sale also performed impressively, no doubt aided by a greater focus on the Suffolk breed in the commercial sector.

Earlier in the show ring Gault's impressive ram lamb took the top honour with Campbell and Jason Watson claiming the reserve championship.

Fermanagh's Gary Beacom was handed the first rosette of the day, winning the shearling ram class ahead of A and N Robinson and the Campbell camp.

In the Signet recorded ram lamb class Stephanie and William Tait topped the leaderboard with fellow Tyrone breeder Hunter Stewart and Ivan Porter claiming the respective podium places while Rodney Blair, Ballymoney secured a one-two in the Novice Cup class closely followed by NI Branch chairman, Anthony Patton who claimed third and fourth places.

A large crowd of onlookers then got their first glimpse of Gault's supreme lamb which edged out Campbell and Jason Watson and L and M Liggett, who presented the best of the ewe lambs, in the ram lamb class before A and N Robinson scooped the group of three ahead of Mark Priestley and S and W Tait.

The day though belonged to Alastair Gault who repeated his success of 2008 to walk off with the overall championship.

TOP PRICES

Ram lambs

A Gault 4,000; G Beacom, 2, 000; W Blair, 1, 500; W Montgomery, 1, 500; S and W Tait, 1250; G McAdoo, 1, 000; W Taylor, 1,000; S and M Liggett, 1, 000; R McAdoo, 900; M Priestley, 900; Gary McAdoo 850; W Blair, 800; W Taylor, 800; W Taylor, 750; RC and JC Watson, 720; G Beacom, 700.

Shearlings: G Beacom, 1,000; G Beacom, 700; JF and PJ Savage 650; RC and JC Watson 580; RC and JC Watson 570; S and W Tait, 550; G Beacom, 500; RC and JC Watson, 480; C Dickson, 475; S and W Tait, 400; JS Hamilton, 380.

Show results

Shearling ram: 1, G Beacom; 2, A and N Robinson; 3, RC and JC Watson; 4, S and W Tait; 5, G Beacom; 6, D McGarry.

Signet record ram lamb: 1, S and W Tait; 2, SH Stewart; 3, J and I Porter; 4, J and I Porter; 5, S and W Tait.

Novice Cup ram lamb: 1, WR Blair; 2, WR Blair; 3, A Patton; 4, A Patton; 5, J and I Porter; 6, P McVerry.

Ram lamb: 1, AR Gault; 2, RC and JC Watson; 3, L and M Liggett; 4, A and N Robinson; 5, M Priestley.

Pen of three: 1, A and N Robinson; 2, M Priestley; 3, S and W Tait; 4, R McAdoo; 5, G McAdoo; 6, W Taylor.

Ewe lamb: 1, S and M Liggett.

Champion, AR Gault; reserve, RC and JC Watson.



Alistair Gault's 1st prize Ram Lamb and Supreme Champion, held by J Aiken.



2nd prize Ram Lamb and Reserve Champion owned by RC & JC Watson



1st prize Shearling
Ram owned by G
Beacom



1st prize in the
Recorded Lamb
class won by
S & W Tait



Novice Cup
winner
Rodney Blair



1st prize Group of 3 owned by AJ & NJ Robinson



L Liggett with his 1st prize Ewe Lamb.



Gary Beacom's lamb which sold for 2000gns.