



Sheep producers get a break with record prices across the board

Record prices keep rolling in for wool and prime lambs, delivering a long-awaited break for Queensland sheep producers and a bright outlook for an industry battered in recent years by weak markets, seasonal setbacks and wild dog predation.

AgForce Sheep & Wool president and Inglewood producer Richard Pietsch said March has already produced another jump forward in the sheepmeat and wool markets, with prices expected to remain solid over the short term.

“In this week’s market report, merino ewes range from \$140-\$200 and weathers are up from \$90 to \$140 – compared to 2008-09 when ewes ranged from \$50-\$60 and weathers from \$30-\$40,” Mr Pietsch said.

“The wool market is also currently being sustained by strong demand, with prices predicted to remain steady over the next 12 to 18 months. At present there is decreasing supply and diminishing stocks of wool in the wool stores, which will allow for prices to remain steady in the short run.

“The Eastern Market Indicator (the average of northern and southern wool markets) is sitting at a 20-year high of 1350c/kg, buoyed by another surge this week of 30-50c/kg, ranging over 18-22 microns.

“Prime lamb sales also reached new heights with the top end of the market hitting \$200/head.

“AgForce is confident the strong prices available for sheepmeat and wool will encourage producers already in the industry to invest in building numbers to sustain continued growth of the industry.”

Mr Pietsch said these record lamb prices were achieved for the top end of the market and he is confident consumers will continue to support the sheep industry and keep lamb on the menu.

“The good news is that consumers can feel good about tucking into a succulent lamb roast tonight.

“Australians’ love for lamb has secured its place as a premium protein choice and consumers are ensured a great quality product because Australia produces the best lamb in the world.

“Just like our beef producers, Queensland sheep producers lead the way in sustainable production backed by environmental integrity and leading animal welfare. The recent seasonal boost to grazing areas will also translate to a higher quality eating experience for beef and lamb connoisseurs.”

Australian families are not alone in featuring lamb in their menu each week – according to Meat & Livestock Australia, lamb exports are attracting interest from the US, Middle East and China.

AgForce Sheep & Wool director and Cunnamulla producer Jim McKenzie said the strong market and bright outlook has delivered an opportunity for his industry to go forward in leaps and bounds.

“The increase in prices is allowing people who have stayed in the sheep industry in the face of challenges to finally receive the break they deserve,” he said. “It allows producers to invest back in their industry, develop their properties, and give something back to their local community.”

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