

The Societies Northern Ireland Branch Premier Export Show and sale took place on Friday 14th and Saturday 15th July 2023 at Ballymena Livestock Market in County Antrim Northern Ireland.

Ballymena Show Report

The show took place on Friday afternoon with an excellent quality of lambs and showmanship clearly to be seen and the Juge on the day was James Wallace (Claycrop) over for the day from South West Scotland.

Overall Show Champion

The Overall Champion Lot 189 from S O'Keeffe

Overall reserve Champion Lot 171 M Priestley

Male Champion

Male Champion lot 189 S O'Keeffe

Reserve Male Champion lot 171 M Priestley

Pen of three Ram lambs for the Allam Cup

1st M Priestley lots 175, 173 & 172

2nd P Gurney lots 144, 147 & 142

3rd W&S Tait lots 155, 156 & 158

4th D Taylor lots 93, 94 & 95

5th A Barkley lots 74, 75 & 78

6th D Duncan lots 57, 58 & 60

Ram Lamb Class for the Suffolk Sheep Society Cup

1st lot 189 S O'Keeffe

2nd lot 171 M Priestley

3rd lot 140 P Gurney

4th lot 93 D Taylor

5th lot 65 D Ford

6th lot 131 S&J McCloskey

Novice Ram lamb for the Suffolk Novice Cup

1st lot 91 R Wilson

2nd lot 51 K Johnston

3rd lot 167 A O'Keeffe

4th lot 188 S&J Toye

5th lot 127 D&N Fleming

6th lot 80 Grant Brothers

Commercial Gigot Ram lamb for the Robert H Stewart Memorial Cup

1st lot 120 A R Gault

2nd lot 75 RA Barkley

3rd lot 141 P Gurney

4th lot 156 S&W Tait

5th lot 129 C&J Watson

6th lot 132 S&J McCloskey

Shearling Ram Class for the Kinbally Cup

1st lot 46 A&N Robinson

2nd lot 43 AR Gault

3rd lot 45 Mark Priestley

4th lot 40 M&C McNally

Female championship

Champion lot 16 S&J McCloskey

Reserve lot 1 R&J Watson

Shearling Ewe class for the R J Allam Memorial Cup

1st lot 16 S&J McCloskey

2nd lot 17 D Duncan

3rd lot 31 M Butler

4th lot 23 C&J Watson

5th lot 24 P Gurney

6th lot 34 M McNally

Ewe Lamb Class for the Major WEH Workman cup

1st lot 1 C&J Watson

2nd lot 6 J&M Maginnes

3rd lot 4 R Blair

4th lot 5 R Blair

5th lot 13 K Johnston

6th lot 10 I Donald

Young Handlers under 18s

1st Neal Flemming

2nd Joseph Trimble

3rd Lewis Chambers

4th Glen Caldwell

Young handlers under 14s

1st Isabella Taylor

2nd Noah Taylor

3rd Caolam McNally

4th Aimee Ligget

5th Ruth Trimble

6th Riley Gurnay

Ballymena Sale report

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Although there was a reduction in the number of sheep sold for export at the sale this year, this was more than compensated in increased local trade and a very solid commercial trade which aided our healthy clearance rate.

Patrick McVerry, chair of the Northern Irish Branch of the Suffolk Sheep Society commented how pleased he was to see such a high standard of entries forward at the Ballymena Premiers sale, a standard which has been improving year on year.

Ewe lambs

There were 13 lambs offered for sale and the Ewe lambs started with a slow bidding, but 900 gns being reached on three occasions giving a 70% clearance rate and an average of 670.83 guineas.

J&M Maginnes (Seaforde) with a single ET lamb by Howgillfoot Batman, being purchased by MPD Morrow, Mark Priestley (Limestone) with a single ET lamb sired by Castleisle Kingsman being bought by Laura Jane Fergusson and K Johnston (Rossbrook) for a twin lamb sired by Ballynacannon Cannonball hitting the top price of 900 gns.

K Johnston (Rossbrook) followed his top lot with a 700 gns sale to SR Glenn with an ET twin lamb sired again by Ballynacannon Cannonball and at the same sale price I Donald (Donbraid) with a lamb sired by Islandmoyle Amarok.

Shearling Ewes

There were 21 forward for sale and 14 changed hands at an average of 761.25 gns and a 66% clearance rate.

Reaching the top spot was lot 16 from S McCloskey (Glenroe) heading to Martin Brown at 1600 gns for a strong Shearling ewe by Crewelands Dancing Brave, followed by K Johnston's (Rossbrook) Twin ET shearling by Larahirl Ladies Man. This was followed by D Duncan's (Duncans) lot 17 reaching 900 gns by Forkins McCoy and going to Anthony Patton.

Shearling Rams

Five shearling rams were offered for sale leading to 4 going to new homes. Top of the shop was lot 46 consigned by AAJ and NAJ Robinson selling at 1400 gns and heading to M Herron.

Ram Lambs

With 130 ram lambs forward for the sale and 113 changing hands at a sale average of 1527.61 gns, a lift of 70 gns on the previous year with and increased clearance rate of 87%. Ram lambs were in demand and a good sign that the breed is in a good place.

Top of the shop was a Ram Lamb from Mark Priestley (Limestone) lot 171 selling to a syndicate in a 2 way split by Cailin Joyce & David Loftus all from Galway, South of Ireland for 12,500 guineas at the fall of the hammer. The lamb was sired by Castleisle A Kingsman and was a single ET by Blackstown UJL:20:00673 the dam was purchased at 4900 gns and the first daughter had sold at 7500 gns at the Signature Sale.

Jack Smyth (Bessiebell) followed on with his lot number 165, a twin lamb sired by Jalex King Charles from a home bred ewe running to 8000 gns and heading again to Southern Ireland with Evan Hopkins.

Mark Priestly (Limestone) then took the next three top prices for lot numbers 175 at 7000 gns to Ronan McLaughlin & Richard Thompson from Donegal, lot 170 at 5500 gns to James Wilkinson & William Tait and lot 172 again at 5500 gns to John Docherty & Sean McCloskey all sired by Castleisle A Kingsman, ET single lambs and taking the top priced pen title for 2023.

Top prices

Lot No	Flock	Price Gns	Purchaser
171	Limestone	12500	C Joyce & D Loftus
165	Bessiebell	8000	Evan Hopkins
175	Limestone	7000	R McLaughlin
170	Limestone	5500	J Wilkinson
172	Limestone	5500	S McCloskey
51	Rossbrook	5000	Anthony Patton
93	Ballynacannon	5000	K Johnston
140	Oakbridge	4600	A Moses
155	Burnview	4600	M Jennings
173	Limestone	3200	C Storder
189	Clyda	3000	A Bothwell
144	Oakbridge	2400	SR Glenn
177	Castlewood	2200	R Wilson
78	Blackbrae	2100	M Workman
79	Blackbrae	2100	N Christie
75	Blackbrae	2000	J Maybin

Marteye online bidding proved to be prevalent at the sale with many lots sold to SOI, UK & Europe.

Thank you to lead sponsors Danske Bank and also Strabane Mills, Co. Tyrone who sponsored meal for 1st prize winners in each of our classes. Advertisers - NFU Mutual, Jayne Tannahill Livestock Care,

Donbraid Livestock Services, AB Europe, United Feeds, Wilsons of Rathkenny, Clean it Car Care, The Sheep Vet and OMC engineering, we appreciate your continued support.

A word of thanks also to all the staff of Ballymena Livestock Mart, Fraser Tweed Veterinary Inspector, John Hegarty Steward, Ben Lamb for his help at the inspection, Ian Barbour and Andrew Evans for their help at the inspection & Alfie Shaw Agri images and everyone who made the show & sale a success.