Export lamb carcass competition

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A WEST Australian export lamb breeder, Mr. M. K. Reynolds, of Meckering, gained first and fourth places in the West Australian Export Lamb Championship Competition decided after the 1952 killings. Later, his winning entry was awarded the All-Australian Championship when the carcasses were judged at Smithfield by Mr. G. F. Way, a highly qualified and experienced member of the London meat trade.

Western Australia can feel justly proud of its success in this competition. The results must give further impetus to an important industry and also provide an incentive to growers to take part in the competition, quite apart from the high value of the prizes given.

State-wide competitions for export lamb carcasses were first conducted by the Australian Meat Board in this and other States in 1937. The competitions were interrupted by the war but were resumed in 1948 and have been held every year since.
The principal objects of the competitions were to foster the production of high quality lamb suitable for the English market and to keep buyers aware of the high quality of lambs from Australia. After each killing season, all lambs entered and accepted for competition have been shipped to England where they were the subject of a special advertising display made on a State basis at the Smithfield Meat Market.

STATE COMPETITIONS
Since 1948, inclusive, the competition has been for two classes of lamb:

Class 1 for lambs sired by Southdown rams.
Class 2 for lambs sired by rams of any other British breed.

For each class the ewes must not be entirely of British breed blood, in other words they must not be of one British breed nor of a cross between two British breeds but may be cross-breds, comebacks, Corriedales, Polwarts or Merinos. The rams must be flock rams from flocks registered in the recognised flock books. Lambs must be bred by the entrant.

The restriction of Class I to lambs sired by Southdown rams recognises the superiority of this breed in producing the highest quality lambs. The lambs of practically all the entrants are out of half-bred longwool-Merino ewes as these have been found to be the most satisfactory producers of export carcasses.

In order that the lambs should be competing under reasonably similar condition of production, the agricultural districts were divided into zones for Class I as follows:

Zone 1 consisting of the Northern, Eastern and Great Southern Districts.
Zone 2 consisting of the Midlands District.
Zone 3 consisting of the Central Districts.
Zone 4 consisting of the lower Great Southern and South-West Districts.
No zone was made for Class 2.

Entrants in each zone compete for the Zone Competition and the first and second prize-winners then compete for the State Championship which carries a prize of £30 and a trophy valued at £15.

INTERSTATE COMPETITION
The four leading entrants in each State are regarded as the entry for that State in the Interstate Competition for which the prize is a trophy valued at £50 for perpetual competition. This trophy is held by the Department of Agriculture in the winning State for one year.
Prizes, in addition to those won in the State Competition are given and these are £10 for first; £5 for second; £3 for third, and £2 for fourth placings.

This State's entrants showed up to considerable advantage in the first year of the competition (1952). The West Australian entry won the Interstate Competition and this State now holds the trophy until the results of the next competition are announced.

The four entrants comprising the winning team are given below together with their point scores.

First—Mr. M. K. Reynolds, of Meckering (English Leicester-Merino x Southdown), 458 points.
Second—Mr. J. P. Reynolds, of Meckering (English Leicester-Merino x Southdown), 436 points.
Third—Mr. A. N. Rischbeith, of Mt. Barker (Romney Marsh- Merino x Southdown), 401 points.
Fourth—Mr. M. K. Reynolds, of Meckering (English Leicester-Merino x Southdown), 400 points.

This gave a total of 1,695 points for Western Australia which topped the interstate entrants. Victoria followed with 1,659 points and next in order were South Australia with 1,637 points, New South Wales with 1,542 points and Queensland 1,405 points.

ALL AUSTRALIAN CHAMPIONSHIP

The highest scoring entry in the West Australian team—Mr. M. K. Reynolds’s entry which scored 458 points—gained the All-Australian Championship. It was closely followed by the entry of Mr. E. F. Hancock, of Warracknabeal, Victoria, which scored 439 points.

The judge referred to the West Australian exhibits as:

“A grand entry of a uniformity, conformation and quality of flesh which made the exhibit a very pleasing one to the trade, winning for itself first place in the Interstate Competition.”

A report on Mr. M. K. Reynolds’s winning entry said:

“The trade experts generally agreed that the pen placed first in the W.A. competition was of exceptionally high standard and one of the finest ever brought out of Australia. This pen could hold its own for quality against any exporting country.”

To have won the All-Australian Championship is a tribute not only to Mr. M. K. Reynolds but to the Meckering district as well. It is a compliment both to the breeding of the entries and to the practice of pasture improvement with subterranean clover which has been carried out in this district over the past 15 years. These advanced practices have been due in a very great measure to the activities of the Meckering Pasture Improvement Group over many years.

Three out of the four pens comprising the State team for the Interstate Competition were bred in an area with a 15in. annual rainfall average. This confirms our past experience that practically the whole of our early subterranean clover districts are capable of producing high quality lamb that is well suited to the English market and capable of competing favourably with the other exporting countries. The competitions have demonstrated that Western Australia is capable of holding its own with producers of export lambs in other parts of the Commonwealth.
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