

Show Report

The 138th Annual Show & Sale took place, once again in Blessington Mart under the watchful eyes of auctioneers John & Tom Doyle. Trade on sale day was exceptional with a brisk trade for quality lambs in both the Commercial & Pedigree markets.

The judge for 2024 was Mr. Pat Machray of the renowned Middlemuir Flock in Aberdeenshire, Scotland. With inclement weather conditions, judging got underway indoors with the Female Classes where in the Shearling Ewe Class, a super Limestone A Maverick Sired ewe out of a Blackstown Dam bed by Michael Hastings, Western Flock stood out from the crowd to take the red rosette while a Muff Paddy sired ewe from a Kirriemuir Dam from the Loughrynn flock of Coote & Trevor Geelan took the reserve spot. In the ewe lamb class, it was Susan O'Keeffe's smart BT Buddy sired lamb from an Annakisha ewe who claimed the top spot from Gerry Killilea's Limestone Online sired lamb from a Solwaybank Ewe.

In the Female Championship, these excellent females made for a strong line up but in the end, it was Susan O'Keeffe's Ewe lamb who stood out from the rest to claim the top spot of female Champion for 2024.

The male judging got underway with the Ram lamb sired by a SOI bred Ram. Philip Lynch's (Glyde flock) strong, BT Buddy sired lamb by a homebred ewe dominated the lineup in a strong class and he claimed the red rosette while Eamon Duffy's Kells Bacardi sired lamb out of a Finnvale ewe claimed the second spot.

Next up was the recorded class with a superb line-up of sheep presented to the judge. Richard Wilson's exceptional lamb sired by Strathbogie Star Man out of a Castleisle ewe caught the judge's eye in this strong line up and was awarded the top spot in the class. Second place was given to the Malinhead Flock of Martin and John Doherty for their Limestone Aldaniti sired lamb and an AK Magic sired homebred ewe.

The rain cleared just as the Novice Class was to commence so it was judged outside. This was a superb line-up of sheep but it was once again the Western Flock of Michael Hastings who dominated proceedings with his Limestone Bugatti sired lamb from a homebred ewe. This stand-out ram took the red rosette while the Lisakillen lock of John Oakman took second place in the class. This super ram was sired by Errigal Enzo and was from a Finnvale Dam.

These two rams stayed out to compete in the Open Class which was an exceptionally strong class. The judge thought long and hard before making his final selection but in the end, it was Ronan McLoughlin's Ballyboe flock who emerged victorious with a very correct Limestone McLaren sired lamb from a homebred Showstopper ewe. Coming in a very close second in the class was Michael Hastings first prize Novice winner.

In the Gigot Ram Class, Arthur O'Keeffe's BT Buddy sired Lamb from a homebred ewe which emerged at the top of the line while Eamon Duffy's Kells T-Rex sired lamb from a Kirriemuir ewe which took the second place rosette.

The final ram class of the day was the Group of three Ram lambs where it was a very even group from the Annakisha flock of Arthur O'Keeffe which was the winning group followed in second by three from the strong pen of Eamon Duffy's Kells flock.

In the make Championship, it was a stiffly fought competition but it was the Shannagh ram of Richard Wilson who had previously won the Recorded Class who emerged as the judge's favourite while Philip Lynch's 1st prize winning lamb from the SOI Bred lamb class who took the reserve spot.

The line-up for the Supreme Champion of the Show was an exceptional show of superb sheep, both male and female. The judge eventually tapped out Richard Wilson's Male Champion as Supreme Champion of the Show while Susan O'Keeffe's Ewe lamb claimed Reserve Champion of the Show.

Last but not least on Show Day was the Young Handler Class. This class is always eagerly awaited by the enthusiastic up and coming handlers and they did themselves proud once again this year. A class which is always difficult to judge, Pat Machray eventually picked Tadgh Brady of the Milldam Flock as his champion while he awarded send to Ronan Cassidy of Screen Suffolks 2nd place with Cara McLoughlin of Ballyboe Suffolks taking the third spot. Well done to all the young handlers who competed on the day.

The Society would like to extend our thanks to Mr Pat Machray for his superb judging skills on the day. We would also like to thank all our generous sponsors for their support once again.

Sale Report

A strong entry offered excellent choice for both commercial and pedigree buyers at the recent South of Ireland Premier Show & Sale. The sales yard was a hum of interest prior to the sale and this translated into a very solid trade with a clearance rate of almost 85% on the day. The quality of lots on offer reflected the continuous investment and enthusiasm of members to breed the correct types to match buyers' requirements.

Eamon Duffy's Kells flock achieved top price on the day of €7,500. This lamb was the leader in a strong pen and is by Kells T-Rex and a Forkins ewe by Solwaybank King Williams. The winning bid came from Ben Lamb, Richill.

Next highest price on the day was €6,500 for a ram lamb from the Western Flock of Michael Hastings. This ram lamb was the Novice class winner in the previous day's show and is sired by the 6,500gns Limestone Bugatti and a ewe by Solwaybank Rock Solid.

John Hanly's ram lamb by Oakbridge Amigo sold for €4,000 to the Bessiebell flock of Jack Smyth. Going back to Ballinatone Showstopper, the lamb is out of a homebred ewe by Oakbridge Oscar.

The Shannagh flock of Richard Wilson took the Supreme Champion of the Premier Show with a lamb by Strathbogie Starman, selling for €3,800 to Norman Robinson, Benraftern.

Also selling for €3,800 was the pen leader from John Doherty, Malinhead. This lamb sired by Crewelands Dancing Brave was Reserve Male Champion at the National Championships earlier in the year. The lamb was knocked down jointly to the Shannagh & Castleisle, Limestone and Strathbogie Flocks.

Completing the trio of lambs selling for €3,800 was another lamb from the Malinhead flock. This good skinned lamb sold to Micheal Jennings and is sired by Crewelands Dancing Brave and from a homebred ewe by Malinhead Viking.

The Errigal flock of Seamus Browne enjoyed a strong sale, achieving the next two highest prices. A lamb by The Views Unknown Legend made €3,200 selling to Edward Jeffrey. The following lot made €3,000 by Errigal Bahama Breeze.

Reserve Supreme Champion was awarded to Susan O'Keeffe's ewe lamb. She sold for €3,000 to Charlie Boden, Sportsmans. This ewe lamb is by Ballinatone BT Buddy and a ewe by Castleisle Kiltleskin Prince.

As in 2023, the Commercial sector proved to be very positive with SIS rams being in demand. With so many starred, SIS rams available, the Commercial trade averaged at €850 with Scheme rams being purchased from €550. Continued confidence in the Suffolk as a terminal sire helped to drive demand.

The Society wishes to thank Pat Machray, Middlemuir for judging the Premier Show. We would also like to extend our thanks to John and Tom Doyle and all the team at Blessington Mart.