2021 Virtual Sheep Competition

6/10/2021

Competition Report, prepared by Melbourne Royal® Sheep Committee Chair, Gavin Wall

Thanks to Melbourne Royal® Sarah and Catherine for their contributions that enabled this competition to run and succeed, without their input and that of Bron Ellis, Liz Russell, Jill Noble and Jason O'Loghlin, this competition would not have achieved the desired outcome.

Particular thanks to Bron, Liz and Jason for taking the time and effort to video their rams and make them available for the juniors so they (juniors) could demonstrate their abilities to judge sheep. I sincerely thank and commend each of the owners. This demonstrates the dedication and genuine enthusiasm each have for the industry and the younger generation. We, as a committee also greatly appreciate the support and enthusiasm provided by other Melbourne Royal® staff.

There are several layers to the success of this competition, each is dependent on timely actions in order that videos of the rams and performance data for each of the three categories could be uploaded to the Melbourne Royal® platform and juniors given a fair chance to access and respond with their decision video. Finally, the judges, Bron, Liz, Jill and Jason who gave generously of their time to watch each of the contestant's videos and decide unanimously on the eventual winners.

From my perspective, I was delighted to be witness to the thoroughness of the deliberations from each of the judges, each presented their opinions and quickly delivered unanimous decisions in all categories.

Congratulations to all juniors who entered and gained an experience that will further their skills and knowledge in the art of judging sheep. Congratulations to the winners and place getters.

Judging is, in the main, a subjective activity and open for personal interpretation, and to some degree can be influenced by objective data. Judging is as much about having the knowledge and skills to know what to look for but to also remember in mental pictures and be able to recall the intricacies of each animal, then verbalise that information to an audience. It is my opinion that one must always first assess each animal before considering any performance data. Any data will usually reinforce what you have already observed about each animal.

To any junior who didn't win or place, use this and other competitions as a learning process, don't be disheartened. When you can, don't be afraid to ask questions of over judges. Often if you have not placed the competition animals in the same order as the over judge, you may be able to score points based on your emphasis on various attributes – this is especially the case when at the show.

Particular thanks to the teachers/mentors/parents who encouraged juniors to enter this competition; without this support and encouragement, students may not have the motivation or confidence to enter. I compliment all juniors who took the time to dress appropriately and select the ideal background to record their videos. Speaking clearly and confidently not only makes it easier for the judges, but it is also a life skill that is extremely important regardless of any eventual career path.

My **Encouragement award** goes to a young man who persisted and didn't give up – a most admirable quality. **Archer Schultz**, from the Good Shepherd College, wins this award.

"Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent." - Calvin Coolidge

There is no doubt the new junior competition concept – **"Showcase your Sheep"** was well supported and has the potential to be developed further and position the Melbourne Royal® as a leader in enabling juniors to develop their sheep knowledge, presentation skills and marketing abilities whilst utilising social media and possibly other technology. Our objective was to provide an opportunity for juniors to demonstrate their knowledge of their chosen breed, articulate that knowledge and understanding of subjective and any objective information utilising any concept/method to promote their animal to a potential buyer – understanding that the competition was a mock sales promotion.

Some contestants knew their message without prompt cards, moved their animal without assistance and only depended on another person to do the video recording. Naturally, this gained the attention of the judges. I understand reading from prompt cards is acceptable and will help progress juniors to the next level of confidence and abilities.

As you will have heard me mention before, shows are not just about showing sheep/cattle and others. It is about providing myriad opportunities to show, promote, meet new clients, meet and socialise with the many demographics that attend the Melbourne Royal® Show.

Gavin Wall – Chairperson, Melbourne Royal® Sheep Committee

Results

Junior Judging

Under 12: No Winner

12 – 15: Tiffany Maestrale, 13, Flinders Corriedales (Second: Joey Rose, 12, Good Shepherd College; Third: Sophie Crawford, 13, Good Shepherd College)

16 – 19: Charlotte Poker, 18, Urrbrae High School (no further placings)

Encouragement award: Archer Schultz, 13, Good Shepherd College

Showcase your Sheep:

Under 12: Raiven Cole, 9, Ashley Park Stud (no further placings)

12 – 15: Tiffany Maestrale, 13, Flinders Corriedales (Second: Annabelle Brooks, 13, St Mary of the Angels South Suffolks; Third: Alexia Major, 13, Good Shepherd College)

16 – 19: Nerissa James, 16, Flinders Corriedale Stud (no further placings)