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## **AgriLife Research Station's Sonora Ram Sale Sees Strong Demand**

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SONORA - For the second time in as many years, the average price for Rambouillet rams participating in the annual Texas AgriLife Research ram performance test sale was strong for the 21 head sold, said the test's coordinator.

Dr. Dan Waldron, AgriLife Research geneticist at San Angelo, said prices were similar to last year's, and the number sold doubled during the sale after the testing at the Texas AgriLife Research Station at Sonora on March 13.

“Higher costs associated with the test have breeders being more selective now about the quality and quantity of rams they're putting on the test,” Waldron said. “The rams completing the test that do qualify for the sale are truly top individuals.

The high-selling ram, TAES 8501, from AgriLife Research brought \$1,500 and was purchased by the Sawyer Ranch of Sonora. He was a son of TAES 8287, the fifth-highest indexing ram of the 2006-2007 test. Sawyer also bought the second-highest seller, another AgriLife Research-bred animal, for \$1,300.

This year's high indexing ram was T. Jones 545 owned by Texas Sheep Co., Travis Jones of Fredericksburg. He sold for \$1,000 to Bill Karnes of Sonora. The ram was a son of T. Jones 448, the high-indexing animal of the 2006-2007 test.

The 21 rams sold for an average price of \$734, just shy of last year's average of \$764 per head. The Sawyer Ranch was the volume buyer, purchasing 14 head for \$11,075.

“Several of the breeders retained their animals to improve their own flocks, but we still had an excellent offering of top animals that sold,” Waldron said. “This program has a dedicated core of breeders who are improving the genetic merit of their flocks. The recent decrease in the number of Rambouillet breeders in Texas and the increased costs of testing rams are real concerns we hope we can overcome.”

The annual test has been conducted by the AgriLife Research Station at Sonora since 1947. Rambouillet rams from some of the world's top flocks are tested on rate of gain and desirable fleece characteristics during the 140-day test.

For more information on the annual Ram Performance Test, pictures of the top indexing and selling animals, and a complete listing of test and sale results go to:

<http://sanangelo.tamu.edu/genetics/ramtest.htm>