

REPORT OF MELBOURNE SHOW September 17-18 2016

Judith D'Aloisio
Ghin Ghin Boer Goats

The Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria decided late 2015 to not have any goat breeds at the Show in 2016 due to the small numbers of animals in classes. Tim Thompson of Mount Lilydale Mercy College contacted me and, after discussion, he negotiated with the RAS to hold a small "inhouse" show and handler classes with only students from his school participating. The students attended the show in 2015 and Tim felt that the "whole show experience" they gained from Melbourne with "camping out", mixing with students from other schools who were handling sheep and cattle, and learning about farming in general could not be replicated at one day shows.

The school had a few animals which were Parra Boer genetics (Nerida Tull) so I "donated" ten yearling does which were born early and late September 2014. Four were bottle fed, another naturally quiet, the remainder required some 'taming' (Ha!Ha!) several weeks prior to accept being handled and groomed by the students.

I delivered the animals to the showgrounds on the Saturday morning and gave a crash course on show preparation and presenting animals before a Judge. The students (seventeen in total) then worked mainly in pairs to groom the goats and trim. The goats were remarkably well behaved, probably overwhelmed by the new situation and the number of students fussing over them.

On arrival early on Sunday I found all animals extremely well presented with horns oiled, tails trimmed, winter fluff brushed out and faces trimmed to accentuate a "roman nose".

Aldo Cevaal was the informal Judge and turned the showing component into an educational experience by taking two to three different students into the centre of the ring with him for each class and questioning them on how they would place the animals and why. The students had previously been asked to read up on the Breed standards as random questions were to be asked of them for the handler classes. He then explained to all the students the placings in the Championship classes.

The handler classes were a bit pushed for time as we were being "hustled" out of the ring. Overall however I believe all students appreciated the experience and the educational aspect. Unfortunately the school has been told there will not be a repeat and they must "borrow" sheep from Tintern private school if they wish to participate in the Melbourne show in 2017.