



MEDIA RELEASE

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Cherries bought for \$40,000 by Four Wise Men

\$40,000 was paid this morning for a box of the season's first cherries at the 13th annual Cherry Auction held at Sydney Markets, Flemington.

The successful bid came from four well-known Sydney Markets identities that are calling themselves 'The Four Wise Men'. Sydney Markets wholesalers Billy Chalk from Southern Cross Produce Pty Ltd and Billy Cassar from Hydro Produce Australia teamed up to buy the cherries with Lui Cicco from Pony Express Transporters (also Chairman of the NSW Branch of the AUF) and greengrocer Sam Agostino owner of Freshworld stores in Burwood, Castle Hill and Penrith.

The Four Wise Men have grown up together in the fruit and vegetable industry and were delighted to have jointly secured the prized box of cherries.

Spokesman for the group, Billy Chalk said "it's quite an honour for us to have bought the cherries. The Cherry Auction is always such an exciting and vibrant event, and it's great to be a part of it. "

"For our entire working careers we have been involved in the supplying fresh fruit and vegetables to the people of Sydney and NSW, and we have had great support from the market community during that time. We are delighted to be able to give something back. This \$40,000 could not go to a better cause."

"We have all been blessed with healthy kids and healthy grandchildren, and we are proud to be able to help many less fortunate kids and their families.

"The Cherries will be taken to The Children's Hospital at Westmead for the sick kids to enjoy. Sam Agostino also has an extra box or two and he'll be giving tastings to his customers at his Fruitworld stores" said Mr Chalk.

In addition to the \$40,000 paid for the cherries, the huge crowd of fruit and vegetable traders also dug deep to buy a number of other sporting memorabilia items that were also auctioned, raising a grand total of around \$70,000 for the sick kids at the Children's Hospital at Westmead.

Dr Karen McKay from the Department of Respiratory Medicine at The Children's Hospital at Westmead said "\$70,000 is a fantastic result and it will go a long way to helping the kids at the Children's Hospital at Westmead"

For further information, please contact

Kate Evans, Sydney Markets Limited, 02 9325 6295 or 0418 223 579

Who was involved in the Cherry Auction?

Sydney Produce Market

Sydney Produce Market is the largest fresh fruit and vegetable wholesale market in Australia and one of the largest in the world. These markets supply the fresh fruit and vegetables consumed by 1/3 of Australia's population and play a significant role in the horticultural industry and the economy of New South Wales. This market primarily caters to professional buyers from supermarkets, restaurants, greengrocers, exporters and food processors.

The Cherry Growers

For the past 12 years cherry growers across Australia have fought for the privilege to supply the box of cherries that will be auctioned. This year, the annual race to supply the season's first box saw a photo finish! Two growers from the Riverland District of South Australia, John and Carol Goddard of 'Cherry Tree Farms' and cherry growers Leon and Maria Cotsaris, were equal first in the race and were proud to jointly donate the cherries for this year's charity auction. The cherries supplied were of the 'empress' variety. Many growers in the Riverland District jointly market these cherries under the name 'Zest'.

The Children's Hospital at Westmead

The Children's Hospital at Westmead is one of the world's newest centres for paediatric care and also one of the oldest children's hospitals in NSW – established in 1880. The money raised through this auction will be used to purchase a Plethysmograph for the Department of Respiratory Medicine. This machine is used to measure lung volumes in young children with serious conditions such as asthma and cystic fibrosis. This measurement allows medical staff to assess a patient's change in disease status over time and subsequently provide the appropriate treatment and care. Their current Plethysmograph is ten years old and replacement parts are now becoming increasingly difficult to obtain, so a new machine is a much-needed resource for The Children's Hospital at Westmead.

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