

## MEDIA RELEASE

From Doug Laing, media officer, Shearing Sports New Zealand  
January 15, 2018

### Caption:

Former World champion Gavin Mutch, who won the Tauranga Shears Open final on Sunday, pictured during last April's New Zealand Championships final in Te Kuiti. PHOTO/Doug Laing SSNZ

### Mutch travel for big win

It was a bit of a case of the west taking over the east yesterday as four Taranaki and King Country shearers dominated the Open shearing final at the Tauranga A and P Lifestyle Show.

It was won by Whangamomona farmer, Scotland international and former World and Golden Shears champion Gavin Mutch. Te Kuiti shearers James Ruki and 2015 winner Mark Grainger were second and third respectively, while fourth was 2017 Tauranga Senior winner Darren Alexander, also from Whangamomona, although now based in Hawke's Bay.

For 38-year-old Mutch, noictured when 6<sup>th</sup> in the New Zealand Championship final in Te Kuiti last April, it cemented a comeback after an injury which stopped him from heading back to the UK in the winter for the Royal Highland and other shows and to represent Scotland in a test match against New Zealand.

Working with a knife on the farm he received an 18cm (7 inches) bone-exposing cut from over the wrist to the knuckles of his left hand, but was back in action on the competition board by the end of November when he was runner-up at his home Stratford A and P Show.

At least as significant yesterday was the semi-final elimination of defending Tauranga champion, Hawke's Bay shearer reigning Golden Shears and New Zealand champion Rowland Smith, who had gone into the first event of 2018 with a string of 23 consecutive finals wins in New Zealand since the start of last February.

Smith, who had been top qualifier from the heats into the semi-final, did gain some compensation, winning the Open Plate.

Mutch became the sixth individual World champion to win the Tauranga title in the last 25 years, and the sixth different shearer to win the Tauranga title in the last six years. While he had never won the Open title at the show, finishing runner-up last year, he won the Senior final back-to-back as he settled into New Zealand in 2001 and 2002. It was his 15<sup>th</sup> Open-grade win in New Zealand.

Yesterday he shored the 20 lambs in 16 min 36.3 sec to be first off the board and, also carding the best quality in pen judging, won by a comfortable margin of more than three points from Ruki, who had been top qualifier for the final.

The 2017 Golden Shears Intermediate champion, Connor Puha, of Kimbolton, scored his first Senior win, on the eve of his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. There was an international finish to the Intermediate event in which 22-year-old Gwydion Davies, from Machynlleth, Wales, beat runner-up Jeremy Leygonie by almost four points, and Jonathon Painter, 22, of Mangatainoka, won the Junior final, his fourth win in the grade this season.

There was a special moment for Bay of Plenty shearers Andrew Deverall and Scott Gerke who shored against and beat French brother and sister Thimoleon and Eleonore (Leo) Resneau in an invitation international match.

The shears attracted 32 entries, including 13 in the Open class.

Results from the Tauranga Shears at the Tauranga A and P Lifestyle Show on Sunday, January 14, 2018:

Open final (20 sheep): Gavin Mutch (Scotland/Whangamomona) 16min 36.3sec, 59.665pts, 1; James Ruki (Te Kuiti) 16min 51.8sec, 62.99pts, 2; Mark Grainger (Te Kuiti) 17min 49sec, 64.6pts, 3; Darren Alexander (Whangamomona/Hastings) 19min 27.5sec, 69.425pts, 4.

Open plate (10 sheep): Rowland Smith (Maraekakaho) 9min 38.9sec, 36.345pts, 1; Jack Fagan (Te Kuiti) 10min 7.4sec, 39.27pts, 2; Turi Edmons (Raetihi) 10min 35.5sec, 42.475pts, 3; Floyd Neil (Taumarunui) 9min 10.2sec, 43.71pts, 4.

Senior final (8 sheep): Connor Puha (Kimbolton) 10min 41.22sec,

43.311pts, 1; Ross Thomson (England) 10min 35.02sec, 43.626pts, 2; Ricci Stevens (Napier) 10min 34.09sec, 48.83pts, 3; Eleonore Resneau (France) 11min 45sec, 51.125pts, 4.

Intermediate final (5 sheep): Gwydion Davies (Wales) 8min 34.05sec, 37.303pts, 1; Jeremy Leygonie (France) 8min 49.01sec, 41.051pts, 2; Blake Hewes (Tukau) 8min 26.04sec, 43.102pts, 3; Daniel Seed (Woodville) 8min 41sec, 45.85pts, 4.

Junior final (3 sheep): Jonathon Painter (Mangatainoka) 7min 49.06sec, 36.786pts, 1; Liam Pritchard (Pongaroa) 8min 25.66sec, 44.283pts, 2; Samantha Baxter (Pongaroa) 9min 20.02sec, 66.334pts, 3.

Tauranga Invitation v France (8 sheep): Tauranga (Andrew Deverall 9min 21.3sec, 42.69pts; Scott Gerke 9min 38.2sec, 48.035pts) 90.725pts, beat France (Thimoleon Resneau 9min 52.6sec, 43.38pts; Eleonore (Leo) Resneau 11min 12.1sec, 48.855pts) 92.235pts.

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