

MEDIA RELEASE

From Doug Laing,
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New Zealand shearers step-up in Wales

New Zealand shearers have had a big start to the Royal Welsh Show week with two wins, including blade shearer Allan Oldfield's completion of a rare sequence of wins at the UK's four big Royal shows.

Oldfield, from Geraldine, added the coveted Royal Welsh Open blade shearing title to his second wins in Royal Ulster final in Northern Ireland and the Royal Highland final in Scotland earlier in the northern summer, and the Royal Bath and West title which he won in England last year.

He is thought to be only the third shearer to win all four blades titles, and he went within a clip or two of doing it all in the same season, having been runner-up in his defence of the Royal Bath and West title in Somerset seven weeks ago.

The first Kiwi win of the week had been that of machine shearer Jack Fagan, of Te Kuiti, in the Welsh international speedshear on Sunday, in which his 15.95 seconds fastest time is thought to have been the fastest time recorded in a speedshear in the UK.

It was Oldfield's first time at the Royal Welsh Show in Builth Wells and he did it in style, being first to finish the six-man final over six sheep each, his 13min 33sec more than three minutes quicker than next-man-off and Welsh shearer Clive Hamer.

Hamer had the better points in pen judging but Oldfield still managed to win the title by almost five points.

The feature of the shearing at the Royal Welsh Show will be Wednesday's test match in which the CP Wool New Zealand team of Nathan Stratford, of Invercargill, and David Buick, of Pongaroa, will be out to bounce-back from defeats at the weekend in the first two matches of a four-test series against Wales.

Team manager Russell Knight, of Apiti, says the Welsh have had the edge with gear selection and the ability to handle the "little" mountain lambs, which he says haven't been the best amid the struggles of a particularly dry summer.

Both Kiwis have, however, proven records in lambshearing in New Zealand, Buick having won the national lambshearing title in Fairlie in April and been runner-up to World champion John Kirkpatrick in the national crossbred lambs championships at Winton in January, a title also won more than once by Stratford.

Results:

Royal Welsh Show Blades final (6 sheep): Allan Oldfield (New Zealand) 13min 33sec, 88.15pts, 1; Clive Hamer (Wales) 16min 36sec, 93.067pts, 2; Rheinalt Hughes (Wales) 18min, 99.167pts, 3; George Mudge (England) 18min 13sec, 103.317pts, 4; Gareth Owen (Wales) 17min 4sec, 103.533pts, 5; Emlyn Roberts (Wales) 18min 3sec, 107.15pts, 6.

Welsh International Speedshear: Jack Fagan (New Zealand) 15.95sec, 1; Gavin Mutch (Scotland) 17.11sec, 2; Richard Jones (Wales) 18.3sec, 3.

ENDS

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