

## MEDIA RELEASE

From Doug Laing, media officer, Shearing Sports New Zealand  
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### Caption:

Kaeo shearer Marshall Guy, who won the Golden Shears Junior title in 2013 and Intermediate title in 2015. Northland shearing sports officials hope a new competition in the area will produce more like Guy, one of four brothers to win at the Golden Shears.

### Northland shearing banks on big team effort

A new shearing competition stretching from the far North to South Auckland is already showing signs of reversing the decline in competitor numbers, a month before it starts.

Six shows have committed to entering teams in the ANZ Northland Shearing Competition which will span the 280km from Kaikohe to Pukekohe and the seven weeks from the opening round at Kaikohe on January 20 to the finals at Kumeu on March 10.

Each will have four shearers, comprising one from each grade from Open to Junior, and Northland Shearing Circuit convenor Kevin Boyd said that with some shows considering entering more than one team entries at some of the events, all on the A and P shows circuit, could be more than double those of other recent years.

Four of the competitions operate with three-stand shearing boards, and the Kaikohe Pastoral and Horticultural Show, as one example, last year barely needed that many with just two entries in two of the grades and one in another.

“We rarely see enough entries for even two heats in any of the grades here in the north,” Mr Boyd said. “We had a couple of the shows almost folding – no shearing. But now they’re giving it another go.”

Those following the shows said many shearers in the region competed in only one of the competitions each season, mainly closest to home. The competition would encourage them to compete at at least the three minimum required to score points.

The sponsorship from ANZ Bank had been crucial, worth over \$2000 and including prizemoney and a trophy, Mr Boyd said.

ANZ Bank spokesman Stacey Beattie said that given the importance of shearing in the Northland economy and the role of competitions in promoting quality shearing and excellence in the profession, the bank sees its involvement as being in line with its support of farmers and farming.

Shearing great Sir David Fagan, chairman of Shearing Sports New Zealand, which oversees about 60 stand-alone and show circuit competitions each summer, said: “This is a great initiative. It’s good to see people thinking outside the square. We will be watching with interest.”

Northland has produced some of New Zealand’s great shearers, most notably in recent years being 2014 World champion and multiple Golden Shears and New Zealand champion Rowland Smith, from Ruawai, about 30km south of Dargaville, but now living and working in Hawke’s Bay.

He started his Junior career on the circuit at the age of 14. Of his 11 Open-class wins before first winning the New Zealand Open title in 2011, seven were in the northern region.

The 1963 Golden Shears Open champion, Brian Waterson, was from Northland, as was 1974 and 1975 champion Norm Blackwell, while also from the region is the Guy family, which produced four winners of Golden Shears lower grade titles from 2009 to 2015.

The ANZ Northland Shearing Competition events are: January 20, Kaikohe P and H Show; January 27, Warkworth A and P Show; February 3, North Kaipara A and P Show, at Paparoa; February 10, Northern Wairoa A and P Show, at Arapohue, Dargaville; February 18, Counties Shears, Franklin A and P Show, at Pukekohe; March 10, Kumeu Shears, Kumeu A and H Show.

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