

MEDIA RELEASE

From Doug Laing, media officer, Shearing Sports New Zealand

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Kaikoura: The show must go on

Organisers of tomorrow's Kaikoura A and P Show are taking the show-must-go-on approach despite heavy rain and road closures disrupting plans for the 105th event which had to be cancelled last year because of the 2016 earthquake.

Show president Terri Chalmers agreed the closure of the State Highway 1 route from Christchurch to Picton just weeks after opening of a road rebuilt from the devastation of the 2016 earthquake would create problems for some people travelling to the show.

But a meeting yesterday decided "we must have a show" and while the situation would be kept under review it was intended the event, including its annual shearing competition, will go ahead at the South Bay racecourse.

She said at least there are alternatives that hadn't been available last year, and traffic from the south is able to reach Kaikoura via State Highway 7 through Culverden.

The shearing competition has struggled for some years, but was once a regular stop for South Island competitors heading towards Masterton for the Golden Shears, which this year start next Thursday. Invercargill shearer Nathan Stratford, who became a World teams champion last year and has been acclaimed by Shearing Sports New Zealand with appearances in 16 test matches in New Zealand, Australia and the UK, and wins in New Zealand's two major multi-breeds events, had his first Open final win at Kaikoura in 1998, and 2014 World teams title winner Hamish Mitchell, of Scotland, also won a Senior final at Kaikoura.

Mrs Chalmers said the show needs younger people to bolster the show, some hope coming with the recent arrival in the area of ardent shows supporter Nicola McConchie, now the society's administrator, taking some of the weight off the shoulders of the President, who has been at the helm about 10 years.

Meanwhile, the Taumarunui Shears, with woolhandling as well as shearing, are under way after fears it too could suffer because of the deluge earlier.

Organiser Charlie Burton said yesterday that while some of the sheep were wet "we'll wiggle things around a bit" and the competitions would go ahead.

The Taumarunui is the first of four big North Island competitions in six days before the Golden Shears.

The Apiti Sports Shears, also including woolhandling, is on tomorrow, with the highlight of the fourth and final CP Wool Shearung Series test match between New Zealand and Wales.

The shearing-only Pahiatua Shears will be held on Sunday at a woolshed off Mangaone Valley Rd, southeast of Pahiatua, and the Pre Shears Woolhandling Championships will be held at Massey University's Riverside Farm, north of Masterton, on Wednesday.

Shearing at the Kaikoura show is scheduled to start at midday tomorrow, while at Apiti, north of Feilding, competition will be underway at 8am, while the Pahiatua Shears on Sunday also start at 8am, many of the Open and Senior shearers having taken part in the Chelty Speedshear at the Cheltenham Hotel on Saturday night.

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