

Shearing record rookies to tackle five-man tally in January - December 7, 2014

A lambshearing record which was set just a year ago will be challenged by a five-man gang in a remote woolshed southwest of Te Kuiti next month.

The attack on the five-stand record of 2638 strongwool lambs in eight hours will be made on January 6 at Ingleby Corporation's Puketiti Station, between Pio Pio and the coastline of the North Taranaki Bight.

The shearers are George Parker, from Kingston, South Australia, Aidan Copp, from West Melton, near Christchurch, Willie Hewitson, from Woodlands in Southland, Ringa Paewai, from Dannevirke, and the one local, Josh MacDonald, son of former record-breaker and 1994 World champion Alan MacDonald, who manages Landcorp block Te Wharua Station, between Pio Pio and Taumarunui.

One original hopeful, Peter-Lee Ratima, withdrew after suffering a serious neck injury at rugby during the winter, but he is back shearing and is running the crew's gym training, said record manager, Pio Pio contractor and New Zealand Shearing Contractors Association vice-president Mark Barrowcliffe.

Shearing four two-hour runs, with half-hour breaks for smoko and an hour for lunch, the shearers will target a record set by brothers Sam and Richard Welch, former national circuit champion Angus Moore, and Coel L'Huillier and Peter Totorewa, at Cashmore Farms near Kawakawa Bay, east of Auckland, on December 10 last year.

The individual tallies ranged from Moore's 607 to Totorewa's 449, and Barrowcliffe says his team, working together since the start of December, have each done more than the average 528 which will need to be achieved under the watchful eyes of a team of qualified World Sheep Shearing Records Society judges, including at least one from Australia.

None of the hopefuls has previously shorn a record attempt, although Paewai was one of three whose three-stand record attempt in January 2013 was called-off when judges ruled just the night beforehand that the lambs for the event did not meet head-wool requirements.

The shearers have, however, had some success as competition shearers, Paewai having won the Golden Shears junior and intermediate finals, in 2002 and 2003 respectively and Hewitson the Royal Welsh Show senior final in the UK in 2010.

The record bid, which will cost about \$10,000, including fees to the society and feeding shearers, shed crews and judges, is one of five understood to be in the planning over the next three months, including Australia-based Te Kuiti shearer Stacey Te Huia's ultimate challenge - the nine-hour strongwool ewes record of 721, expected to take place at Waitara Station, between Napier and Taupo, on January 22.

Te Huia is also contemplating a fine-wooled merino record attempt in Australia about four weeks later.

The other records being planned a women's 9hr ewes record, also at Waitara Station, by Northland shearer Brya Harrison, while Australian shearers Beau Guelfi and Bob White are planning a February 21 attack on the two-stand merino record for eight hours - 924 shorn by New Zealand brothers Cartwright and Michael James Terry in West Australia in 2003.

The bid will take place at Parkvale, Dubbo, NSW, where Guelfi, currently based in Gisborne, fell just five short of Cartwright Terry's solo merino 8hrs record of 466 during a three-stand record at Parkvale last April.

Stars shine in Stratford - December 5, 2014

Shearing legend David Fagan took his career tally of Open wins to 630 with a narrow victory over fellow former World champion Paul Avery in the last pre-Christmas Show of the season at Stratford on Saturday (November 29).

It was Fagan's second win this season, successfully defending a title he won last year and marking the 30th anniversary of his first win at Stratford, in 1984.

But he did it the hard way, being pipped in the race by Avery who shored the 15 sheep in 13min 36sec and who also had the best points on the board.

But it was the judging in the pens that counted, as Fagan claimed the winning ribbon by 0.383pts, while local Shane Rawlinson was third.

Fagan won the World title in 1988, 1992, 1996, 1998 and 2003, while Avery, runner-up to Fagan in Ireland in 1998, won the title in Norway 10 years later.

New Zealand Intermediate champion Darren Alexander returned home from his university year in Canterbury to win the Senior final by over a point from Rakaia shearer Corey Smith in a repeat of the first and second placings at the Ashburton show four weeks earlier.

The Intermediate and Junior finals were won by Michael Herlihy, of Whangamomona, and Luke Fleming, of Pio Pio, respectively, while Gary Childs, from Wales, won the Novice event.

The show attracted 40 entries, including 12 in the Open. It was the last competition before the Kaikohe show in the Far North and the Duvauchelle show at Akaroa, near Christchurch, on January 10.