

Shears record bid abandoned - December 18 2009, 1pm.

Scottish shearer Gavin Mutch has abandoned a bid for the world eight-hour lambshearing record for a second time after unsuccessfully battling adverse conditions and falling well off the required pace in a woolshed near his Taranaki farm today.

The 30-year-old, who farms at Kohuratahi with wife Pip, had shorn 353 by lunch at the halfway stage in farmers Ken and Donna Lobb's Pohokura Saddle woolshed, chasing the record of 736 set by Christchurch-based Irish shearer Ivan Scott near Rotorua on December 19 last year. His two-hour runs of 180 and 173 had left him needing an average of 192 in each of the afternoon runs, when the highest run-tally in any previous record bid was 191.

The decision to stop was made during the lunch-hour, and Mutch, a popular figure among shearers around the World, and winner of the New Zealand lambshearing title at Raglan two years ago, was reportedly disappointed and dejected.

Observers at the shed said what had started as a fine day had quickly turned cold, and the difficulty keeping the lambs warm acted against Mutch's hopes.

He and supporters had paid \$US1800 to the World Shearing Records Society to make the attempt with three recognised judges, including one from South Africa, and he said before the attempt he keenly wanted to reward the team which had stuck by him, including the Lobbs, fellow farmer Ian Rawlinson, record manager and shearer Shane Rawlinson, and several top shearers who had crutched the lambs on Thursday.

Attempting the old record of 731 six days before Scott's success last year he also had to pull-out, after shearing 542 in six hours.

Originally from Huntly in Aberdeenshire, Mutch is now expected to concentrate on competitions for the rest of the season, and then return to Scotland with the aim of representing the country at the World championships in Wales. He was a finalist at the last championships in Norway last year.

Lunch-break discussions - December 18 2009, 10am.

Lunch-break discussions were expected to determine whether Scottish shearer Gavin Mutch continues with a bid for World eight-hour lambshearing record after falling significantly off the pace in trying cool conditions in a woolshed a few kilometres from his Taranaki farm.

Mutch hit the halfway mark at midday with 353, 15 down on the target in his attempt to break the record of 736 set by Christchurch-based Irish shearer Ivan Scott a year ago.

Needing to average just over 184 for each two-hour run, Mutch shored 180 first-up from 7.30am to 9.30am, and fell further off the pace with just 173 in the two hours to lunch.

It left him needing an average of 192 a run in the afternoon, starting from 1pm. The highest two-hour run tally in any record bid was the 191 with which Napier shearer Dion King opened his successful nine-hour record bid three years ago.

But he had strong support from shearers and other friends both in the remote Pohokura Saddle woolshed and around the country, with Far North shearer Matthew Smith saying, while training for a ewes record bid in Hawke's Bay next month: "I shored for Gavin in Scotland when I first started going

overseas about eight years ago. He had a go last year, had to call it off, and it would be disappointing to do that again. I really do hope he cracks it."

Record bid underway - December 18 2009, 10am.

Scottish shearer and Taranaki farmer Gavin Mutch is about now starting the second run of a World lambshearing record bid with the odds against him after falling five short of the opening two-hour target in a woolshed east of Stratford.

Chasing the eight-hour record of 736 held by Christchurch-based Irishman Ivan Scott, the 30-year-old Mutch shored 180 in the first two hours from 7.30am-9.30am at the Pohokura saddle woolshed of farmers Ken and Donna Lobb.

Scott started with 185 at Rerewkaaitu, near Rotorua, on December 19 last year when he set-out after Justin Bell's 2002 record of 731, Mutch started needing an average over 184 per run, and the early-morning deficit meant he needed to up the average by more than a lamb per run.

The second run was from 10am to midday, the third from 1pm-3pm, and the last from 3.30pm to 5.30pm.

Shearing commentator Koro Mullins reported from the shed that Mutch had, however, had no lambs ejected from the tally in the first two hours, watched closely by three judges appointed by the World Sheep Shearing Records Society, including one from South Africa.

Mr Mullins said the day opened fine, but it had become cold, leaving Mutch's support crew searching for ways to warm the open-faced romney lambs without breaching tightened rules governing sheep preparation.

Second attempt on the World eight-hour lambshearing record - December 17, 2009

Scottish shearer and Taranaki farmer Gavin Mutch was in confident form but not making any predictions on the eve of his second attempt on the World eight-hour lambshearing record, set to start east of Stratford tomorrow (December 18) at 7.30am.

The 30-year-old father-of two, shearing in the woolshed of a Pohokura Daddle farmers Ken and Donna Lobb, is targeting the record of 736 shorn near Rotorua 12 months ago by Irish shearer Ivan Scott, the first overseas shearer to set a solo shearing record in New Zealand.

Christchurch-based Scott set his record on December 19 last year, breaking the previous record of 731 set in December 2002 by Justin Bell, now farming in Southern Hawke's Bay.

Just a few days before Scott's success, Mutch abandoned his first attempt at the record with 542 lambs shorn in six hours, the target moving out of range as his own condition deteriorated.

His crew's encouragement convinced him quickly that he should have another go, and he said from his home today: "Last year was a great learning curve, it wasn't a bad experience."

His determination has been evidenced by his absence from shearing competitions this season, and he said he made the decision to focus only on the record after making a one-day trip to the Poverty Bay Show in Gisborne in October, from the farm he and wife Pip lease from her family at Kohuratahi.

He stepped-up the cycling and running around the hills, but has also had a solid run of shearing to prepare him for the record bid which will be on open-faced romneys from the flocks of the Lobbs and fellow Taranaki farmer Ian Rawlinson.

With his parents Moira and Neil having arrived from Huntly in Aberdeenshire for the record bid, and also Christmas and to see the latest arrival in the family, Mutch's first job will be to keep pace with Scott's tallies of 187, 185, 179 and 180 over the four two-runs into which the day is divided under rules set by the World Sheep Shearing Records Society, which has appointed three judges to oversee the quality of the shearing, including one from South Africa.

The first run is from 7.30am-9.30am, the second 10am-noon, the third 1pm-3pm, and the last 3.30pm-5...30pm, and Mutch said: "As long as I get a decent enough start I'll be happy. I'm not one of those stupid people who say they're going to go for 200 in the first run, and thenm don't do it."

The attempt is the first of three record bids so far registered with the society. Far North shearer Matt Smith has nominated January 15 for an attempt on the world eight-hour ewes record of 560 at Waitara Station, between Napier and Taupo, and Te Kuiti shearer Stacey Te Huia is set to tackle the same record four days later, near Bennydale.

Welshman nudges Fagan in speedshear - December 5, 2009

Welsh shearer Gareth Daniel surprised even himself when he finished runner-up to Kiwi icon David Fagan in the open final at one of New Zealand's top speedshear competitions in Te Kuiti last night.

The 48-year-old Fagan won the Jack Pihama Memorial Challenge at the Riverside Lodge, with a best time of 17.4 seconds for a single romney lamb in the 10-man final, regaining a title won last year by Hawke's Bay shearer Cam Ferguson, and Daniel, 27, from Machynileth was second in 18.58sec.

Local shearer Peter Lee Ratima was third in 20.82sec, and little-known Hawke's Bay shearer Paul Lambert, who has shorn 700 lambs in a day near Raupunga, surprised by finishing fourth in 20.82sec, heading-off a string of the North Island's other top shearers, including Ferguson, who was 7th.

Daniel and Welsh teammate Gareth Evans have been in New Zealand a week, to start preparing for an eight-match, four-test series in February, March and April, but rain in King Country meant they hadn't had even a day's shearing before last night's event, which attracted 29 open-class entries and packed the lodge with hundreds of people in a fundraiser benefiting the town's volunteer fire brigade.

On previous visits, Daniel had won speedshears among senior class shearers, but hadn't given himself a hope of getting close to Fagan or almost any of the other finalists in the top grade.

Asked if it was his best result in an open-class speedshear, he was almost speechless, replying only: "Shit, yeah."

Winning the final, Fagan won \$1250 and a Supershear Viper handpiece, Daniel picked-up \$800 for second, Ratima \$400 for third, and Lambert \$250 for fourth, and Fagan's time was even faster than his former World speedshear record of 17.94sec, set at Raglan's Te Mata Speedshear in 2004. Prizemoney was paid down to 10th place.

Shearers shored one lamb each in the qualifying stage, which was headed by Wanganui's Jerome McCrea and Te Kuiti's Digger Balme, who were 6th and 8th respectively in the final.

Mataura shearer Maaka Rangiwai won the senior class, with a best time of 21.04sec for a prize of \$1000 plus a handpiece, the runner-up was Pio Pio shearer Tom Moorhouse second in 22.6sec, and third went to Masterton teenager Matene Mason, who recently added the Australian crossbred

championships senior title to the New Zealand intermediate championship title he won in Te Kuiti last March.

The Welshman are working for Te Kuiti contractor and leading open-class shearer Dean Ball in the first stage of their preparation for a series which opens with a match against a provincial selection at the Reefton show on Waitangi Day.

The itinerary for the Welsh shearing team tour is: Feb 6 v Provincial Selection, at Reefton; Feb 12-13 v Provincial Selection, at Balclutha; Feb 19-20 v New Zealand (1st test), at Gore; Mar 3-6 v New Zealand (2nd test), at Golden Shears, Masterton; Mar 20 v New Zealand (3rd test), at Raetihi; Mar 28 v Provincial Selection, at Taranaki Shears, Stratford; Apr 2-3, v Provincial Selection, at Royal Easter Show, Auckland; Apr 8-10 v New Zealand (4th test), at New Zealand Championships, Te Kuiti.

Pre-Christmas rankings - December 1, 2009

Following are the unofficial rankings based on finals results from the first 17 shows on the 2009-2010 Shearing Sports New Zealand calendar, up to and including Stratford on November 28. The next competitions are on January 9.

For the purposes of these rankings, points for machine shearing events differ from event depending on the category of the event (A, B, or C), but as a trial points from blade shearing and woolhandling are on the same scale at all events.

The provisional rankings include only competitors who have reached three or more finals in the pre-Christmas events. Any queries to media@shearingsports.co.nz

		Wins	Pts
	Open:		
1	Nathan Stratford	4	58
2	David Fagan	2	56
3	Grant Smith	1	56
4	John Kirkpatrick	2	53
5	Tony Coster	2	46
6	Cam Ferguson	2	37
7	Paul Avery	2	33
8	Jerome McCrea	1	23
9	Eli Cummings	1	22
10	Dave Brooker	-	21

Senior

1	Tipene Te Whata	3	65
2	Ants Frew	4	56
3	Matene Mason	2	39
4	Jason Edwards	-	32
5	Rowan Nesbit	-	26

Intermediate

1	Wi Poutu Ngarangione	5	46
2	Dylan Fowler	1	35
3	Daniel Newall	1	31
4	Cory Palmer	1	30
5	Luke McCarthy	1	27

Junior

1	Brett Langrell	2	35
2	Shannon Taylor	1	25
3	Cushla Gordon	2	24
4	Steve Rowberry	1	24
5	Aaron Bell	-	20

Blades

1	Phil Oldfield	-	22
2	Brian Thompson	2	20
3	Bill Michelle	-	20
4	Allan Gemmell	1	15

Woolhandling

Open:

1	Joel Henare	2	27
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2	Sheree Alabaster	3	22
3	Joanne Kumeroa	2	21
4	Tina Rimene	2	16

Senior

1	Amy-Lee Ruki	3	31
2	Toia Karipa	3	21
3	Fiona Christensen	-	13

Junior

1	Ngahuia Thwaites	3	18
2	Cushla Gordon	2	16
3	Steve Mason Smallman	-	15
4	Kylie Laris	1	14