

MEDIA RELEASE

From Doug Laing, media officer, Shearing Sports New Zealand,
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Tough day ahead for Southland shearer's record blast

Southland shearer Leon Samuels will have to climb more than a mountain tomorrow to break one of the toughest of World shearing records in expected roasting temperatures in a northern Southland woolshed.

As if the eight-hour ewe-shearing record of 644 isn't itself a hard-enough task, the 34-year-old Samuels will have to do it in temperatures expected to soar well over 30deg at Argyle Station, Waikaia, where the record bid is scheduled to start at 7am and finish at 5pm.

As it happens he'll be shearing sheep of some size, with the average clip from a 10-sheep woolweigh today being 3.69kg, comfortably over the minimum requirement set by the World Sheep Shearing Records Society.

Metservice is forecasting a maximum of 29deg in Gore, about 50km away, while the peak for Tuesday is forecast to be 31deg, highlighting the continuing hot summer in the region.

The shearing spans four two-hour runs, a lunch break of one hour and morning and afternoon smoko breaks of 30 minutes each.

Samuels has already held the record, shearing 605 in the same woolshed on February 20 last year, amid huge excitement as he added just two to the previous mark set by King Country shearer Stacey Te Huia in 2010.

Samuel's time at the top was much shorter lived however with Golden Shears and New Zealand champion and 2014 World champion Rowland Smith adding another 39 to set the current mark in England on July 24.

Smith maintained a pace of just over 80 an hour for four successive runs of 161 and no sheep rejected by an international panel of judges appointed by the World Sheep Shearing Records Society.

The record holder won competitions in Taihape on Saturday and Rotorua today, and was then heading south to witness the challenge, saying it was a mark of respect for anyone prepared to give the record a go.

"That's what records are for," he said. "They're there to be broken."

Samuels was reported to be recuperating from recent work and fitness training and building-up the energy, having last been reported saying he had to be confident, or otherwise it isn't worth doing.

The record will be overseen by four judges, convened by Australian official Peter Artridge, with North Island judge Ian Buchanan and South Island officials Paul Harris and Johnny Fraser.

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