

MEDIA RELEASE (with photo and caption)

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

Kaikoura teenager Marohi, who competes in both the Intermediate machine shearing and Open blade shearing at the NZ Corriedale shearing and woolhandling championships at the Canterbury Show today and tomorrow, pictured in his blade shearing competition debut in Waimate less than six weeks ago. PHOTO/Doug Laing SSNZ

Show week's shear excitement

Shearers and woolhandlers are gathering in Christchurch for the New Zealand Corriedale Championships at the Canterbury Show in Christchurch today and tomorrow (Thursday and Friday).

More than 80 competitors have entered, including at least five of the six-strong New Zealand team which dominated the World shearing and woolhandling championships in Invercargill in February, after securing their places as the selection events came to an end at the Canterbury Show last year.

World champion woolhandler Joel Henare, from Gisborne, confirmed last night he will be defending the Canterbury Open title today, trying to emulate the feat of the late Joanne Kumeroa who won the event four times. It was unclear whether World Teams champion partner Maryanne Baty, also from Gisborne, would also compete, but among the entrants is 2006 and 2014 winner Pagan Karauria who finished third in the team selection final last year and just missed a place in the team. The presence of Angelique Miller, from Christchurch, Tina Rimene (Karauria's mother), from Masterton, and Keryn Herbert, from Te Awamutu, means at least five former winners will be vying for the title.

Woolhandling, including Junior and Senior events, dominates the first day today, which will end with the final of the Canterbury Circuit all-breeds shearing competition, for which the top qualifier is Ant Frew, of Pleasant Point.

World champion machine shearers John Kirkpatrick, of Napier, and Nathan Stratford, of Invercargill, will compete in the Open shearing championship on Friday, Kirkpatrick trying to add to his record of three Corriedales title wins in Christchurch in 2004, 2008 and 2010, while Stratford will be defending the title he won last year, and 11 years earlier, in 2015.

The heats constitute the third leg of the PGG Wrightson Wool National Circuit, and also includes two-times Canterbury Open winner and multiple Canterbury and National circuits winner Tony Coster, of Rakaia. Tony Dobbs, of Fairlie, will be defending the Canterbury blades shearing title with tough opposition from Geraldine's Phil Oldfield, with whom he was runner-up in the teams event at the World championships.

But there also will be a fresh challenge to Dobbs' domination in Oldfield's son, Allan Oldfield, who has spent most of the last two years overseas, recently dominating several competitions in Australia after winning Open blades finals at the Royal Bath and West Show in England and the Royal Highland Show in Scotland in June.

Possibly the most competitive field will be the Senior shearing, featuring Taumarunui shearer Lionel Taumata, Canterbury-based Chilean international Luis Pincol, Linton Palmer, of Dipton, and Vahni Stringer, of Ranfurly, each of whom has had at least one Senior final win this season.

Their opposition includes Blenheim shearing contractor Sarah Higgins, who last year won the Intermediate shearing final.

Tomorrow's Intermediate event includes both Allan Oldfield and Kaikoura teenager Marohi Kennedy who will also shear in the blades event. He was pictured in his first blades event, an Intermediate blade shear at Waimate less than six weeks ago.

Competition on both days starts at 7.30am.

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