

Sunday March 2 2008

SCOTTISH shearer Gavin Mutch proved himself one of the worlds greatest in New Zealand's toughest shearing contest last night, Golden Shears 2008.

Mutch not only placed fifth in the Open Shearing Championship, considered the pinnacle of worldwide competitive shearing, but he also shored with the highest quality.

In competitive shearing, competitors are judged on speed and quality, accruing penalty points for cuts to the sheep, damaged fleece or missed wool.

The lowest combined score wins. But in an industry that depends on quality to survive, a careful, as well as fast, shearer is prized.

Mutch, now based in New Zealand, won both the trophy for Best Quality Points in any Shearing Final as well as the trophy for Best Quality Points in the Open Shearing Championship.

The Golden Shears ran from Thursday February 28 to Saturday March 1 and saw competitors from New Zealand, Norway, Australia, the UK, Ireland and South Africa battle for the top titles.

The iconic event celebrates its 50th birthday in 2010 and is very much a fixture of the New Zealand rural calendar and closely linked to the national identity as a farming nation producing some of the world's finest wool.

For a full report on the Open Championship, results and archived video action see www.goldenshears.co.nz.

For free images or further information contact the Golden Shears Media Group at goldenshears@pete or phone 021 488 137 or 027 5788 137. International callers phone 006421 488 137 or 006427 5788 137.