

Thursday February 28 2008

FERMANAGH shearer Stanley Allingham was in full flight at New Zealand's greatest shearing competition today.

It was the third time Allingham, 22, has competed in the Golden Shears in Masterton after his third season shearing in New Zealand.

From Garrison, Co. Fermanagh, Allingham finished 34th out of a field of 65, shearing four competition sheep in just under seven minutes.

"It's a great experience. What you learn is unreal. I've worked with top New Zealand shearers since I've been over here and I wouldn't be what I am today if I hadn't.

They're the best on the world," he said.

"Everyone thinks I'm mad coming down here to shear but there's only one place to learn how to shear sheep... New Zealand."

Allingham now has his own shearing run at home in Fermanagh and recently shored his first 320 sheep in a nine-hour day.

He said Ireland's best shearer, Ivan Scott, who is shearing in the Golden Shears Open Event tomorrow, was a source of inspiration for him.

Scott shored 878 lambs in Rotorua, in New Zealand's North Island, just before Christmas.

"I'd like to congratulate him, he's Ireland's best shearer," Allingham said.

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

The contest 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 programme and live video action see www.goldenshears.co.nz.

For free images or further information contact the Golden Shears Media Group at goldenshears@pete.co.nz or phone 0064 21 488 137 or 0064 27 5788 137.