

Wednesday 3 March, 2010

Veteran Shearers Come Out of the Woodwork

THREE self-titled “old codgers” from Northland are among around eighty competitors in Masterton this week to take part in a one-off veterans shearing contest.

Rusty Campbell was joined by his friends Ken Massey and Rex Salisbury in travelling to Masterton to take part in tomorrow’s over-65 veterans shearing contest. He said while there will be plenty of competitive spirit tomorrow, priorities have changed over the years.

In the peak of his competitive days, which ended for the most part after the 1968 Golden Shears, Rusty said nerves often sabotaged his performance. But he reckons now he’s got that under control.

“I always got nervous but now I forget about all that and concentrate on the job I’m doing. My main focus is trying not to make mistakes,” he said.

“There’s a lot of skill and art in (shearing). You just have to relax and don’t get tense.”

With decades of shearing experience under his belt, Rusty also gets great satisfaction in being able to offer advice to younger shearers. He still shears in the odd competition and said his focus is on quality, something he enjoys seeing in his juniors.

“I took great pleasure in meeting a junior shearer at one show. She must have been in her early twenties and I gave her advice to slow down and do a better job.

“I bet her in a junior event in Kumeu last year. Then she came back at the Royal Easter Show in Auckland and beat me. I was rapt.”

And Rusty isn’t limiting his advice to the novice shearers in this year’s Golden Shears. His tip for the less-young is that it’s all about preparation.

He said personally he’s been “very lazy” but is relying on his own technique in the build-up to tomorrow.

“I do my own home gardening. It’s all about root crops and I must have dug in about a hundred kumara and four- to five hundred potatoes.”

Tomorrow’s veteran events kick off in the morning with the New Image Veterans Woolhandling heats followed by the shearing heats and finals plus woolhandling finals in the afternoon.

For further information and free higher resolution images contact the Golden Shears Media Group at

goldenshears@pete.co.nz or phone 021 488 137 or 027 5788 137.
International callers phone 006421
488 137 or 006427 5788 137.

ENDS