



NEWS RELEASE

Top dog title beckons for world's leading handlers

Dog handlers from around the globe are set to fight it out for the 'top dog' title at the 2011 World Sheep Dog Trials in Cumbria, in September.

A total of 23 nations and 240 handlers and their dogs will compete at the four-day event at the Lowther Estate, near Penrith, from September 15 to 18.

The World Trials, the 'Olympics' for working sheep dogs and their handlers, are staged every three years. This year's trials, the fourth, are the first to be held in England. High profile global qualifiers include:

England: Chloe Cropper, Bacup, Lancashire. 'One Man and His Dog' young handler champion 2008. Aged 19, the youngest World Trials competitor.
Richard Hutchinson, Littledale, Lancashire, seasoned English team member who continues a rich family tradition of top-level sheepdog trialling.

Wales: Aled Owen, Corwen, North Wales. Reigning world champion, who is defending the title with the same dog, Roy.
Nigel Watkins, Llanddeusant, South Wales. 2010 Welsh champion and reserve world champion 2005.
Newly crowned 2011 Welsh National champion Kevin Evans, from Libanus, Powys.

Scotland: Bobby Dalziel, Etrick. Three-times International supreme champion and six-times Scottish National champion.

Ireland: Michael Gallagher, Armoy Co. Antrim. 2010 International Trial supreme champion with Cap. Looking to go one better at the World Trials.

France: Guillaume Josien, Picardy. First and 3rd at the 2010 and 2011 French National Championship, Guillaume has no farming background, works full-time in the pharmaceuticals industry, owns very little land and a handful of sheep.

New Zealand: Jim Wilson, Feilding. First-ever Kiwi finalists in the 2008 World Trials. A Scotsman by birth.

Norway: Karin Mattsson, Alvdal. Top ranked woman at the 2008 World Trials.

Finland: Salomo Näkkäläjärvi, Inar. A member of the 2008 Finnish World Trial team. Uses his dog Tafie to herd reindeer on the frozen tundra, also protecting them from wolves and wolverines.

Japan: Shinjiro Kigawa, Fujinomiya. A country not known for its sheep or sheep dogs. First time Japan has been represented at the World Trials. Shinjiro runs one of the country's few dedicated schools for sheep dogs in the shadow of Mt Fuji.

The 2011 International Sheep Dog Society (ISDS) World Sheep Dog Trials, Food & Country Festival, sees teams from Brazil and Japan making their debut, joining dogs and handlers from England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Austria, Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Faroes, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland and the USA.

Keynote sponsor is CSJ Specialist Canine Feeds, of Bodfari, Denbighshire.

Full details are at www.worldsheepdogtrials.org

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Background info: Qualifying rounds will take place on three separate fields on the first two days of the trials, with the top seven from each field on the opening days going forward to the semi-final on the Saturday. The top 16 of these qualify for the final on the Sunday, from which a world champion will emerge.

Public interest ahead of the four-day spectacle is gathering pace for what will prove one of the highlights in this year's northern events calendar. Supporting the World Trials is a Food & Country Festival showcasing local food and a cookery theatre, rural crafts and skills, with a host of displays, creating all-round family appeal.

Advance two and four-day tickets at a discounted price are available for purchase online via a link on the World Trials website at www.worldsheepdogtrials.org or through the ISDS at www.isds.org.uk One-day tickets can be bought at the gate.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Standalone profiles and pics are available on all competitors listed above – plus contact nos. for the home nations qualifiers if you want to follow up on any - from World Trials PRO Robin Moule, Moule Media, on 01756-794027, mobile 07976-559961, e-mail: robin@moulemedia.com

For interviews, World Trials President Tim Longton can be contacted on 07968 313119 and Chairman Nigel Davis on 01524 784260.