

WORLD SHEEP DOG TRIALS FOOD & COUNTRY FESTIVAL 2011



COUNTDOWN BEGINS TO 2011 WORLD SHEEP DOG TRIALS

The countdown has begun to the fourth World Sheep Dog Trials – to be held in England for the first time at Lowther Estates, near Penrith in Cumbria, on the edge of the Lake District, from September 15-18, 2011.

The World Trials are the pinnacle for working sheep dog enthusiasts around the globe. They take place every three years, with previous trials having been held in Wales, twice, and Ireland.

Visitor numbers have been between 20,000 and 30,000, bringing in an estimated £2m-plus into the local economy.

The public appeal of the debut English World Trials, which will cost around £200,000 to stage, is also being boosted with a Food & Country Festival promoting locally produced food and crafts, along with other displays and trade stands

Organisation of the World Trials, administered by the International Sheep Dog Society (ISDS) and held at Lowther Park Farms Ltd by kind permission of the Lowther Estate Trust, is in the hands of a local committee.

It is headed by ISDS English president and renowned trialist Tim Longton, of Rooten Brook Farm, Quernmore, Lancaster. Tim is the four times English brace champion and three times reserve English national champion.

He said: "It will be a truly international event, with 240 competitors, representing the home nations of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, along with trialists from Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Faroes, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland and the USA."

Qualifying rounds will take place on three separate fields on the first two days of the four-day 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.

World Trials chairman is Burton-in-Kendal agricultural solicitor Nigel Davis, who has been involved in the regional sheep dog trialing world for many years. Nigel was secretary for

the English National Trials held at Dovedale, Derbyshire, in 2008 and legal advisor and general advisor to the International Trials held at Lowther Park last year.

Co-ordinator of the World Trials is English National sheep dog trials stalwart John Palmer, of Higher Higson Farm, Twiston, Clitheroe, with Lowther Estate represented by farm manager Richard Price.

Mr Palmer said: "We can expect around 30,000 people over the four days, which will provide a tremendous boost to the regional economy, in particular accommodation providers and catering establishments.

"The event needs financial help in the form of sponsorship. There is little doubt that the World Trials offer a high profile platform for funding bodies, commercial organisations and others with a product to sell. These include major sponsorship roles, trial field displays, trade stands and programme advertising."

One major sponsor has already signed up, natural dog food company CSJ Specialist Canine Feeds, of Bwlch Isaf Farm, Bodfari, Denbighshire. The company also sponsored the World Sheep Dog Trials when last held in Wales in 2008.

Launched in 1998 by international sheep dog trialist, Ceri Rundle – her father is the famous Welsh handler H. Glyn Jones - CSJ has become one of the fastest growing brands of natural canine feeds, herbal supplements and treats, gaining popularity among many top dog handlers.

"The health and welfare of all working sheep dogs is central to our ethos and we are delighted to continue to support the World Trials on their first foray into England," said Ceri.

While organisers are planning a number of fund-raising events in the countdown to the trials, opportunities remain for event sponsorship – including a frontline sponsor. Those Interested should contact World Trials secretary Clare Savins at Lowther Park Estate on 01931 712516, e-mail clares09@btinternet.com

Full details will also be posted on the English World Trials website at www.worldsheepdogtrials.org

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