

## **SHINJIRO KIGAWA, JAPAN**

**Home:** Fujinomiya, Shizuoka, Japan

**Occupation:** Farmer and Sheep Dog Trainer

**Dog:** Killiebrae Beaut (ISDS 274729)

Japan, a country not known for its sheep or sheepdogs, will be among 23 nations vying for honours at this year's World Sheep Dog Trials. It will compete against some of the strongest nations in the World including Wales, Ireland, Scotland, England, and the Netherlands.

Sheep farming is not common in Japan and is mainly concentrated on the far northern island of Hokkaido. While sheep number fewer than 10,000, making them a fairly rare sight, there has been a rise in popularity of training sheepdogs. Shinjiro Kigawa and his wife, Minori, run one of the country's few dedicated schools for sheepdogs at Deergrove Farm in the shadow of Mt. Fuji. Here they introduce many 'city' dwelling border collies to the art of working sheep.

The Kigawa's have also been instrumental in founding the Japanese Sheep Dog Trial Association to promote the understanding of shepherding and develop the skills of both handlers and dogs to manage flocks of sheep. With the advent of sheepdog trials in Japan and the formation of the Japanese Sheep Dog Trial Association, the International Sheep Dog Society has invited two handlers/dogs from Japan to participate in the World Trial. Shinjiro will be leading this small team with his Cumbrian bred, Killiebrae Beaut, and his Alternate dog, Whisky.

Further information: The 2011 World Trials at Lowther Park Estate, near Penrith, from September 15-18, are expected to attract up to 30,000 people and inject £2m-plus into the local economy. Competitors will include trialists from England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, 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 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.

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