

Breakout – Shearing gives experience in the right wool selection

John Dalla is not only an important person in his family's Orrie Cowie breeding program, but he has also made a big mark in the shearing world.

He is better known for his expertise with blades. Many relate blade shearing to the old days of the 19th century when there was no machine alternative, but there is still a big demand for quality blade shearers, especially in the stud industry. Blades leave a little more wool on the sheep and this provides extra protection for valuable breeding sheep against inclement weather.

John has been the Australian Blade Shearing Champion five times already. His talents have taken him to several countries including New Zealand, Ireland, USA, Norway and all parts of the UK. Competing in World Championships against shearers from 32 countries, he has had placings of 8th, 6th and 7th and he feels if he concentrates harder he can go all the way. He is going to South Africa next April for more practice. Blade shearers rarely shear for eight hours against the clock as usually only smaller numbers are the requirement at sheds. However he has shorn 207 at Orrie Cowie in a normal shearing day.



Caption: John Dalla blade shearing at the World Championships in Ireland in 2010.

While blade shearing is where he has made his name, John has made the National Open finals four times in machine shearing competitions and has a highest day tally of 459!

The spinoff for John in all this shearing is he gets to see a lot of sheep first hand and which wools and types stand up in all weather conditions. From what he has seen he is in full agreement with the family's long term emphasis on the importance of nourishment and crimp white wools.