



Press Release

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Top sheep judges for first class entries at Royal Bath & West Show

Hugely diverse, the sheep classes at the Royal Bath & West Show bring in the entries and the crowds, and with competition set to heat up this year, the very best judges are needed.

With entries reaching over 1,300, it's a challenging job for any judge to weigh out the merits of competing animals, so an experienced eye is needed to ensure the best animals take home the prizes, says head of shows Alan Lyons. "This year competition is set to be fierce, and exhibitors will be working hard at getting the last jobs done before presenting their animals in the show ring."

Judging the Commercial Lamb competition at this year's show is sixth generation farmer Stuart Clatworthy, who is renowned for his experience, successful farm and butchery, and his friendly demeanor. Stuart is based at Court Farm, East Dunstall, Somerset, where he runs 800 ewes – including Texels, Texel crosses and Suffolk Mules. He also has 450 head of cattle of all different breeds - from Aberdeen Angus to Limousins, Devons and Belgian Blues – and he buys in another 800 to finish each year.

Stuart opened his butchers in Puriton, Somerset in 2002 after the foot and mouth crisis, as he felt he was not getting a fair price for his meat from the supermarkets. Having his own butchery has given him valuable knowledge and he has been able to utilise this when judging. "I have been judging for about 20 years and started as a young farmer with stock judging competitions." Since then he has judged lambs at Smithfield and the Winter Fair at Stafford, as well as at local markets and shows.

"I've judged from Aberdeen to Cornwall, across to Wales and over to Peterborough and Norfolk." One of the highlights of his career was to be one of the last judges to judge the carcasses at the Royal Show.

In his own showing endeavors, Stuart has won with his cattle at the English Winter Fair, the Calf Championship at the Bath & West Show, and the reserve Sheep Carcass at the English Winter Fair. "I've had success at loads of local fairs, from Bridgwater to Yeovil, Taunton and Frome, but I do like the big shows," he says. "The enjoyment of doing the showing comes from setting out your shop window, and a bit of social life comes with it too. I've met a lot of good friends through it."

Stuart's passion for showing has rubbed off on both his son, Percy (12), and step-daughter, Megan (24). Percy shows Jacob sheep and Megan Southdown sheep and both will be showing at the Bath & West this year. "I am looking forward to seeing them doing what they want to do and taking pride in it."

Now Stuart finds he enjoys judging more than exhibiting and knows just what he's looking for in the show ring. "I'll be looking for lambs to suit today's trade," he says. "Animals have to have a bit of style and class. As it's the pairs competition I will be trying to find that in a pair."

Aside from all the hard work that goes into competing, Stuart advises competitors to just enjoy the day. "If what you bring in front of the judge catches their eye on the day, then you're in luck."

He also believes that showing is the link between the public and farmers and that small local businesses offer more tailored and personal customer service. "We don't get any other recognition, and this is a shop window. We need to produce what the public want and encourage them to use local butchers and small shops as these will look after them much more than bigger ones."

- The Royal Bath & West Show will be held on 30 May – 2 June. Tickets are available from the website: <http://www.bathandwest.com/royal-bath-and-west-show/visitors/tickets> or by calling 0844 776 6777.

For further information or media enquiries contact Olivia Cooper on 01392 840009 or e-mail olivia@agri-hub.co.uk.

About the Royal Bath & West of England Society

The Society was founded in 1777 in Bath by a group of philanthropists led by Edmund Rack. We are a registered charity organisation (Registered Charity Number 1039397). The Society was formed with the aims of encouraging agriculture, arts, manufacture and commerce.

Our charitable activities provide:

- Agriculture, veterinary, educational and art scholarships
- Technical events and Seminars
- Practical farming advice and conferences
- Countryside Education
- Diversification advice for farmers
- Education for children
- A market place for countryside products

As the Society approaches its 240th year it continues to deliver a wonderful mix of established traditional exhibits through to the latest energy technology and contemporary entertainment.

The entertainment and features around the 242-acre site ensure enjoyment for every member of the family and include attractions that are spectacular to watch, educational, inspirational, "hands on" or just plain fun.

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