

MEDIA RELEASE
Wednesday 4 November 2009

For immediate release



They're off and racing!!

Perennial Show favourite, the Shetland Grand National, is back and celebrating its 11th running at this year's Royal New Zealand Show in Christchurch.

The Shetland Grand National is a steeplechase with a difference, with 11 ponies and riders taking to the field for what has grown in popularity to become one of the major attractions at the Show.

The riders, aged between 7 and 13 years from around the Canterbury area, trained 6 days a week to get fit for raceday. Their training programme builds up gradually over the weeks, in the final preparation the pace builds with mock racing conditions added to their routine.

This year's field includes 9 Geldings and 2 Mares, ranging in age from 5 to 22 years; it will be the first steeplechase experience for two of the ponies.

Raceday Ponies:

Alby - Having his first start, so lacking race day experience. Long-shot of the field.

Archie - He has had more starts than any other runner.

Basil - A very handsome pony of solid build. Lazy but with right rider could surprise.

CJ - Big and laid back with wicked sense of humour. Would need luck in the running.

Foxy - Tall, built like a racehorse. A sound safe bet, worth backing each way.

Horace - The geriatric of the field. In top notch condition and a great stayer despite his age.

Muffin - Mare who loves Foxy and will be right up there at the finish again.

Poppy - Mare, just back from the broodmare paddock. Races well fresh.

Rowan - Gelding having his first start. No form to indicate his ability.

Sam - Great learners pony, surprised everyone by winning the race last year.

Stormy - Muffin's big brother, with excellent form and great sprinting power. A safe bet.

Raceday jockeys:

Chelsea Brown, Molly Buist-Brown, Emma Bunn, Atiya Dein, Elise Dein, Nikita Gallop, Grace O'Sullivan, Kerryn O'Sullivan, Claudia Sullivan, Maia Waratini, Steffi Whitaker.

The Shetland Grand National will be held at 3.10pm on Friday in the StableMate™ Arena.

The Royal New Zealand Show runs from 11-13 November at Canterbury Agricultural Park Christchurch. Attracting 120,000 people, over 7000 livestock and feature competition entries and close to 600 trade exhibitors, plus three full days of entertainment, it is the premier agricultural and pastoral event in the country.

For further information please contact

Nicola Cull

Marketing Manager

Royal New Zealand Show

Telephone 03 365 4203

Mobile 0212 65 1174

Email nicola@theshow.co.nz

