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## MONTGOMERYSHIRE NEWS

## Massive boost for agriculture in Montgomeryshire



THE new Welshpool Livestock market which opens today, Friday.

# New era as new market opens

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## A NEW era dawns in Welshpool today with the opening of the new multi-million pound livestock market.

Welshpool is home to the largest livestock market in Wales and one of the biggest in Europe, and now it will be moving to state of the art premises at Buttington Cross from its former Smithfield home.

The market was officially opened by Chris Dodds, the Executive Secretary of the Livestock Auctioneers Association, after the work which was started in November 2008 was completed this week.

The new premises will provide a new 149,000 sq ft livestock market on a 16 acre site, complying with new bio security and DEFRA legislation.

There will be pens for a 1,044 sheep and 200 cattle with additional penning available for annual one-day sale volumes.

David Jones, Montgomeryshire NFU Cymru chairman, said the new premises will enable the market to stay at the forefront of the agricultural industry in Britain.

He said: "Welshpool market has enjoyed an enviable position as one of the leading centres in the country, and for many years being one of the largest centres for sales of prime lamb and breeding sheep in Europe.

"This substantial investment by the auctioneers has demonstrated their confidence in the agricultural industry in Montgomeryshire – which itself produces some of the finest quality stock in the



FLASH BACK: Jim Evans, of Morris Marshall and Poole, is auctioneer at the old Smithfield site in the early 1990s. Picture: Phil Blagg

UK. These new facilities will enable the market to develop further and in doing so will provide a busy trading arena for all classes of stock."

FUW President Gareth Vaughan said the new market is a massive boost for agricultural industry.

He said: "I think it is a very good day, a positive move forward after 10 or 15 very difficult years for the industry. We had two outbreaks of foot and mouth, BSE and bluetongue.

"I think the new market is a very positive move forward and I am delighted that our local auctioneers have had the vision and the courage to make this very big investment.

"I think it is a very well proportioned market with more than 1,000 sheep pens and 200 cattle pens under cover, which are very well designed. It is a massive boost for the industry."

The closure of the Smithfield will also trigger the start of a major retail development including a Tesco store, petrol station and canal side restaurant. The last market will be held at the old Smithfield on Monday.

The scheme also includes a traffic management system involving a one-way gyratory scheme around Welshpool town centre and will provide more than £300,000 for conservation work and community improvements.

## Number of Powys road deaths falling

THE number of deaths on Powys roads has fallen dramatically in the past three years Powys County Council has revealed.

Council officials say that hard work and a number of specialist initiatives are the reasons behind the decrease.

The announcement comes after MP Roger Williams last week called for action to tackle the number of people killed and injured in road crashes in Powys.

Mr Williams said there were

more fatal and serious accidents in the county in 2008 than anywhere else in Wales and figures showed Powys topping a Welsh road crash league table for six years.

However, PCC says that accident figures and particularly those involving motorcycles have decreased over the last three years.

PCC's board member for road safety, Councillor Gwilym Evans, said: "We continue to work in conjunction with the police and other

emergency services, Road Safety Wales and the recently formed Wales Road Casualty Reduction Partnership on a number of road safety projects and initiatives. We have assessed 84 Powys residents through our motorcycle assessment scheme and we have also trained 223 young drivers through the Pass Plus Cymru course in 2009 alone.

"There has been a significant amount of work carried out by the council's Road Safety Unit to cut the number

of motoring fatalities in the county.

"There is still a lot of work to be done; however, the county has seen an 83 per cent decrease in the number of young people who were killed on our roads from 2007 to 2008.

"Powys is 25 per cent of Wales and has the longest road network. The important message for all motorists is that you will be safe if you travel at an appropriate speed."

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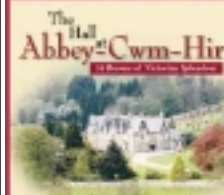
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