

£200,000 improvement scheme for Royal Welsh showground arena



An improvement scheme to make the surface of the main arena of the Royal Welsh showground at Llanelwedd, Builth Wells, more resistant to bad weather is expected to be completed before Christmas.

The effect of the work, costing £200,000, will be to increase drainage rates and improve the durability of the surface of the ring resulting in it being drier and more stable and less prone to grass loss during wet periods.

The improvements will be welcomed by exhibitors and visitors alike who have seen the main ring turned into a quagmire by atrocious weather which left it in a waterlogged and hazardous state at the 2007, 2009 and 2010 Royal Welsh Shows.

The elimination of the problem before next year's show is one of the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society's main projects for 2010-11. The improvement works to the main ring and the adjacent collecting ring which began on October 4 have been designed by GEO Turf Consulting Limited, a South Wales-based specialist sports-turf consultancy. They are being carried out by **White Horse Contractors**, a specialist agricultural and sports-turf drainage contractor.

Jonathan Smith of GEO Turf Consulting Ltd said the design principles involved had been tried and tested in the construction and improvement of racecourses and other sports facilities. The scope of the work includes the installation of a deep pipe drainage system and surface water cut-off drains inside and outside the arena. The top soil is being improved by the addition of 70mm of medium/fine sand with soil-reinforcing synthetic fibres installed into the top soil in front of the main stand and at the arena entrance and exit points. The surface is being seeded with wear-tolerant amenity grass types and there will also be a basic irrigation system.

Following the establishment of the new grass a secondary drainage system will be installed to improve still further the movement of surface water into the new pipe drainage network.

"The improvement works have progressed well," said Mr Smith. "However, if further works are necessary, these will be undertaken once the current improvements have been addressed."