SHEEP THRILLS
City dweller Yvonne Gordon tries being a shepherd | p6

FINE BLEND
Vintage Danish design meets modern family life in Dublin 7 | p9

AS SEEN ON SCREEN
Baz Luhrmann’s star-studded Sydney mansion | p18

KERRY GOLD
Why Dingle is officially the country’s top foodie town | p23
The ultimate hipster holiday of an example of woolly thinking? The Feeneys’ farm in Co Sligo offers tourists a crash course in shepherding over a day.

When I stand on one side of the pen, Bella the sheepdog herds the sheep into the corner nearest me. If I move to another side of the pen, the dog moves on to the diagonal opposite side, heading the sheep onto my side.

The sheep, Fouhey says, see the dog as a producer of their food, something new every time they see you. The sheep knows, although fools try a couple of times through the pen, thinking the flies are sticking things to the sheep, that the sheep is being particularly troublesome. Rollo, the sheepdog, is trained to make moves to direct the sheep towards whatever direction you’re in.

If being a shepherd doesn’t sound like your thing, then there’s the competitive side, says Fouhey. The Sheepdog Trials in Lockerbie, Scotland, are a great event not to be missed.

The farm is open seven days a week, but advance booking is essential. Adults €15 and children are free. Visit Atlantic Sheepdogs on Facebook for more information.

Farm favourites
If you’re interested in seeing the dogs at work, try arranging a trip to see the dogs at work at a sheepdog trials event. You will also learn about breeds of heritage sheep.

The most popular breed in the west of Ireland is the Border Collie, which is further away. There are commands or whistle sounds for orders such as “left”, “right”, “stop” and “come back.”

If you don’t do anything with sheep without the dogs, they do everything. Fouhey has 50 sheep, including lambs, in different breeds and sizes. “It’s competition time,” she says. “There are commands and sounds for orders such as “stop” and “come back.”

Sheep farmers all over the world need dogs to move their woolly charges. Fouhey is part of the team that represents Ireland at the International Sheepdog Trials in Lockerbie, Scotland. Their best sheep is a father and son team.

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