

## **Answers to Questions not reached in Plenary 8 March 2000**

[R] states that the Member has declared an interest.

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### **Questions to the Secretary for Education and Children**

#### **Local Government Act 1986 (Section 28)**

**Q5 Mick Bates:** What assessment has been made of the possible effects of the proposed repeal of section 28 of the Local Government Act 1986 on education in Wales? (OAQ3976)

**The Secretary for Education and Children (Rosemary Butler):** The UK Government is continuing to consider its response to the defeat in the House of Lords on Monday 7 February on the repeal of section 28 of the Local Government Act 1986.

It is important to appreciate that the provisions of section 28 have never applied to the activities of schools. However, irrespective of that fact and whether or not section 28 is eventually repealed, I have already decided to commission a review of Welsh Office circular 45/94, which provides guidance on how sex education should be taught in schools.

#### **Welsh Education (City and County of Swansea)**

**Q6 Alun Cairns:** What discussions has Rosemary Butler had with officials of the City and County of Swansea about the provision of Welsh primary school education? (OAQ3996)

**Rosemary Butler:** None.

#### **Education Policies**

**Q7 David Lloyd:** How will Rosemary Butler ensure that we develop distinctive education policies to suit the needs of Wales? (OAQ3934)

**Rosemary Butler:** Applying education and training policy in ways that reflect the distinctive needs and circumstances of Wales is one of the seven key policy principles contained in the 'Building Excellent Schools Together' White Paper, which was published by the Welsh Office in 1997 and fully supported by the Assembly. We will continue to deliver on this commitment by basing our policies on the best available evidence of successful practice in Welsh schools; by consulting with teachers and listening to their views; by evaluating those policies through Estyn inspection and surveys as well as by other means so as to ensure that they are being implemented successfully.

#### **External Assessors and Advisors (Performance Management Framework)**

**Q8 Jonathan Morgan:** Will Rosemary Butler explain the difference between external assessors and external advisors in the new performance management framework for teachers? (OAQ3918)

**Rosemary Butler:** As part of my announcement last week, I said that local education authorities will be asked to extend their present advisory role in schools to provide advice on performance management. This will include advice to schools on establishing school performance management policies, and advice to governors on setting performance objectives for headteachers.

No external assessors are intended under the performance management arrangements, but external assessors are proposed as part of the revised teachers' pay system. Their role will be to moderate the interpretation of the pay threshold standards. The Department for Education and Employment has agreed in principle to arrange for Welsh local education authorities to act as assessors for the threshold in Wales.

### **School Terms**

**Q9 Jane Davidson:** What discussions has Rosemary Butler had with the Welsh Local Government Association and teaching unions about making dates for school terms uniform in Wales? (OAQ3998)

**Rosemary Butler:** I have had no discussions with the WLGA or teaching unions on this matter. Section 41 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 states that responsibility for fixing dates of terms and holidays for community, voluntary controlled or community special schools rests with the local education authority and for foundation, voluntary aided or foundation special schools with the relevant governing body.

I understand, however, that the WLGA is considering a report submitted by one of its members on possible changes to the school year and, as part of this consideration, these aspects will, no doubt, have been covered. I look forward to hearing from the Association once it has reached its conclusions.

### **Computer Grants**

**Q10 Kirsty Williams:** Does Rosemary Butler have any plans to provide teachers in Wales with grants for computers similar to those available in England? (OAQ3973)

**Rosemary Butler:** The computers for teachers scheme is part of a package of measures being taken forward by the Department for Education and Employment in order to increase public access to computers and the internet. It is financed from the capital modernisation fund announced by the Chancellor last March. The other measures include the establishment of ICT learning centres and the provision of recycled computers to low income households.

The National Assembly for Wales has been allocated resources from the capital modernisation fund and has committed £18 million to support a three-year strategy to widen access to ICT in support of school and community-based learning. I announced in December that the initial tranche of funding for 1999-2000 would be used to provide laptops and software bundles for around 330 primary school teachers participating in a new numeracy project; laptops for secondary school heads; and ICT infrastructure enhancements for the National Library of Wales and National Museums and Galleries of Wales, which will enable them to contribute digital content to the National Grid for Learning.

Proposals for the next two years will be announced shortly.

### **Performance Management Pay (Crude Pupil Results)**

**Q11 Jenny Randerson:** In the light of the Department for Education and Employment's criteria for England and Wales on the threshold for performance management pay, how does Rosemary Butler intend to introduce a system for Wales which adheres to the frequently declared wishes of the Pre-16 Education Committee in not taking account of crude pupil results? (OAQ3967)

**Rosemary Butler:** The statutory responsibility for the pay and conditions of teachers in Wales and England rests with the Secretary of State for Education and Employment. This means that implementation of the pay and conditions proposals in Wales, including the setting of the pay threshold standards, is not a matter for the Assembly.

The proposed pay threshold standards put forward by the Department for Education and Employment are not based solely or crudely on pupil results. The pay threshold standards cover five key areas of classroom teaching, of which pupil progress is only one. For this particular area, teachers will need to demonstrate that their pupils achieve well, but relative to their prior attainment.

### **Educating Children with Physical Disabilities**

**Q12 Jane Davidson:** What guidance will Rosemary Butler give local authorities to ensure that children who suffer physical disabilities are educated in suitable accommodation? (OAQ3999)

**Rosemary Butler:** It is for local education authorities to determine what measures need to be taken in individual schools. In addition to their normal general capital funding allocations, they are also able to call upon measures under New Deal: Additional Capital Funding for Schools.

### **General Teaching Council**

**Q13 Jenny Randerson:** Will Rosemary Butler reconsider arrangements for the establishment of the General Teaching Council? (OAQ3969)

**Rosemary Butler:** I have no plans to re-arrange the timetable for establishing the General Teaching Council for Wales. The elections are under way and some 28,500 ballot papers have been sent to teachers on the electoral roll. Delays to the election process would adversely affect the formal establishment of the Council, which is planned for September this year.

### **Food Poverty (School Curriculum)**

**Q14 Richard Edwards:** What plans does Rosemary Butler have to highlight food poverty issues in the school curriculum? (OAQ3923)

**Rosemary Butler:** Food is a very important issue and this is fully reflected in the new curriculum. Food, including nutrition and other health related issues, figure prominently in the programmes of study for Science, PE and Design and Technology. It also features in the new framework for personal and social education.

As food is such an important element of what pupils should learn, I have asked ACCAC, the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales, to provide guidance for schools that will draw together the elements of food in the curriculum. This will be sent to schools as soon as possible.

We also want to ensure that school meals will help to contribute to a healthy diet for pupils. I, therefore, plan to consult on draft regulations prescribing minimum nutritional standards for school meals later this year.

### **Performance Management System**

**Q15 David Melding:** Will Rosemary Butler give a progress report on her plans to institute a performance management system for teachers in Wales? (OAQ3908)

**Rosemary Butler:** I announced a performance management package on 1 March which responds to the major concerns raised during consultation. It is sensitive to the needs of the education system in Wales and takes account of the different settings in which teachers work. It includes a significant involvement for enhanced local authority support and will help to minimise bureaucracy and costs. It offers more transition time for teachers and others to prepare for the revisions to the performance management arrangements. It will provide targeted training to meet the specific needs of all concerned and will take account of the needs of both Welsh and English medium schools.

### Local Government Act (Repeal of Section 28)

**Q16 Christine Humphreys:** What assessment has been made of the possible effects of the repeal of section 28 of the Local Government Act 1986 on education in Wales? (OAQ3974)

**Rosemary Butler:** I refer to the answer I gave to Mick Bates earlier this afternoon (OAQ3976).

### Estyn

**Q17 Jonathan Morgan:** Why has Estyn not been selected to administer the assessment of the performance management framework for teachers in Wales? (OAQ3919)

**Rosemary Butler:** No external assessors are intended under the performance management arrangements. As part of the performance management package I announced last week, I said that local education authorities will be asked to extend their present advisory role in schools to provide performance management advice.

### Laptop Computers

**Q18 Michael German:** Does Rosemary Butler plan to extend the scheme to provide laptop computers for all secondary heads to include primary heads as well? (OAQ3972)

**Rosemary Butler:** We have no current plans to extend this initiative to primary school headteachers.

The provision of computers, internet services and ICT training for primary schools has been the first priority for the development of the National Grid for Learning in Wales, along with related training. About £20 million has been made available for this purpose in the period 1998-99 to 2000-01. The new ICT initiatives which I announced in December also included the provision of laptops and software bundles for 330 primary school teachers as part of a new numeracy initiative. This will build on the lessons learnt from last year's multimedia portables for key stage 2 literacy scheme under which 110 primary school teachers were given laptops.

### Section 28 (Proposed Repeal)

**Q19 Peter Black:** Will Rosemary Butler make a statement on the effect of the proposed repeal of section 28 on education in Wales? (OAQ3965) [R]

**Rosemary Butler:** I refer to the answer I gave to Mick Bates earlier this afternoon in OAQ3976.

### Additional Funding for Sixth Forms

**Q20 Peter Black:** Does Rosemary Butler plan to provide secondary schools' sixth forms with specific additional funding to assist with the introduction of the curriculum? (OAQ3966)

**Rosemary Butler:** In my answers on 2 February to Elin Jones and Michael German, I made clear that additional resources have been made available for the implementation of the important revisions to post-16 qualifications this September.

The revisions will encourage breadth in post-16 studies and help to establish parity between vocational and academic qualifications. Discussions with local authorities about their spending needs for the year 2000-01 took account of their assessment of additional funding needed to implement these changes. Following those discussions an additional £91 million for education spending has been included in local authorities' spending for the year 2000-01. This will more than cover pay and price inflation and allow authorities to meet increased demand and new burdens such as these.

In addition, we have made provision within the grants for educational support and training programme to support training for teachers arising from these reforms.

### **School Building Projects**

**Q21 Owen John Thomas:** How many school building projects have been approved for the year 2000-01 in the south Wales central area which are not being financed by the private finance initiative? (OAQ3965)

**Rosemary Butler:** Local authorities have been advised of their general capital funding allocations for 2000-01. It is for them to determine the level of resources devoted to education and, thereafter, which school projects are to benefit.

I announced on 8 February school building projects to be supported under the voluntary aided schools capital programme for 2000-01. The following are in the south Wales central area:

- St Francis RC Junior School, Ely, Cardiff - New kitchen and classroom. Total estimated cost £78,620.
- Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School, Rhydfelin, Rhondda Cynon Taff - New science block. Total estimated cost £841,370.
- All Saints CIW Primary School, Barry, Vale of Glamorgan – Nursery. Total estimated cost £113,643.

In addition, bids for additional classrooms under the infant class size reduction programme for 2000-01 are currently being considered and bids under the New Deal: Additional Capital Funding for Schools programme for 2000-01 will be invited shortly.

## **Questions to the Secretary for Agriculture and Rural Development**

### **Blocked Footpaths**

**Q1 Jane Davidson:** Can the Secretary for Agriculture and Rural Development give a timescale for the resolution of matters related to blocked footpaths, which have been brought to her department's attention? (OAQ4001)

**The Secretary for Agriculture and Rural Development (Christine Gwyther):** The duty for maintaining rights of way and keeping them open falls to local highway authorities under the Highways Act 1980. Highway authorities must consider their own priorities for rights of way in their areas and decide on the resources needed to keep them free from obstruction. The Assembly has no direct responsibility for dealing with blocked footpaths and, consequently, individual cases are not normally brought to our attention.

### **Genetically Modified Maize**

**Q6 Jocelyn Davies:** Will Christine Gwyther make a short statement on her role of approving adding genetically modified maize to the National Seed List? (OAQ3951)

**Christine Gwyther:** I and the other Agriculture Ministers, have a responsibility for deciding whether any new varieties should be accepted for the UK National Seed List, which includes genetically modified varieties.

In relation to genetically modified maize, and in the light of public concerns, it is important that the decision I reach, is made openly and transparently.

### **Datblygu Gwledig yng Nghymru**

**C7 Dafydd Wigley:** Sut byddai datblygu gwledig yng Nghymru yn elwa o ad-drefnu fformwla Barnett a chytundeb ad-dalu Fontainebleu? (OAQ3981)

**Christine Gwyther:** Nid oes cynlluniau ar y gweill ar gyfer adolygu trenfiadau fformwla Barnett. Hefyd, nid yw cytundeb Fontainebleu yn effeithio ar swm yr adnoddau sydd ar gael i Gymru. Mae'n darparu bod y DU yn derbyn ad-daliad gan Ewrop o ddwy ran o dair o'r gwahaniaeth rhwng ei chyfraniad crynswth i'r Undeb Ewropeaidd a'i derbyniadau gan yr Undeb. Bydd unrhyw dderbyniadau ychwanegol o Ewrop yn lleihau ad-daliad y flwyddyn ganlynol. Yn 1998-99 roedd yr ad-daliad werth tua £2.5 biliwn i'r DU.

### **Rural Development in Wales**

**Q7 Dafydd Wigley:** How would rural development in Wales benefit from the reorganisation of the Barnett formula and the Fontainebleau rebate agreement? (OAQ3981)

**Christine Gwyther:** There are no plans to revise the Barnett formula arrangements. Also, the Fontainebleau agreement does not affect the amount of resources available to Wales. It provides that the UK receives from Europe a rebate of two thirds of the difference between its gross contribution to and its receipts from the European Union. Any extra receipts from Europe will reduce the rebate in the following year. In 1998-99 the rebate was worth some £2.5 billion to the UK.

### **Cynnydd yn y Gyfradd Log**

**C8 David Lloyd:** A wnaiff Christine Gwyther egluro sut mae'r cynnydd diweddaraf yn y gyfradd log am effeithio ar y diwydiant amaeth yn ogystal â diwydiannau eraill cefn gwlad Cymru? (OAQ3986)

**Christine Gwyther:** Amcangyfrifir bod cynnydd o un chwarter y cant mewn cyfraddau llog yn ychwanegu tua phumed ran o un y cant at gyfanswm costau'r diwydiant amaethyddol yng Nghymru. Er nad oes croeso i unrhyw gynnydd mewn costau dan yr amgylchiadau presennol, mae newidiadau prydlon mewn cyfraddau llog yn cyfrannu at sefydlogrwydd economaidd ac yn arwain at gyfraddau sydd ar gyfartaledd yn is yn y tymor hir. Bydd yr effeithiau ar ddiwydiannau eraill yn amrwyio yn dibynnu ar eu lefel benthyca.

### **Increased Interest Rates**

**Q8 David Lloyd:** Will Christine Gwyther explain how the most recent increase in interest rates will affect the agricultural industry as well as other industries in rural Wales? (OAQ3986)

**Christine Gwyther:** It is estimated that a one quarter per cent increase in interest rates adds around one fifth of one per cent to the total costs of the agricultural industry in Wales. While in the present circumstances any increase in costs is unwelcome, prompt changes in interest rates contribute to economic stability and result in rates that are lower on average over the longer term. The effects on other industries will vary depending on their level of borrowing.

### **Adroddiad 'Showing the Nation's Prosperity, Economical, Social Environmental Conditions in the Countryside'**

**C9 Dafydd Wigley:** A fuasai Christine Gwyther yn gwneud datganiad ar ganlyniadau adroddiad 'Showing the Nation's Prosperity, Economical, Social Environmental Conditions in the Countryside' a gomisiynwyd gan y Prif Weinidog yn ddiweddar?

**Christine Gwyther:** Cyhoeddwyd adroddiad ‘Sharing the Nation’s Prosperity’ Swyddfa’r Cabinet i’r Prif Weinidog fis Chwefror. Mae’n amlinellu’r amgylchiadau economaidd, cymdeithasol ac amgylcheddol yng nghefn gwlad y DU a chamau’r Llywodraeth i ateb y problemau sydd yn wynebu cymunedau cefn gwlad.

Tra bod llawer o’r data a gynhwysir yn y ddogfen yn ymwneud â Lloegr, mae’n cydnabod anghenion arbennig cymunedau cefn gwlad Cymru a’r camau y mae’r Cynulliad eisoes yn ei gymryd i sicrhau ymagwedd gynhwysol, integredig a strategol i fynd i’r afael â llawer o’r sialensau amrywiol sydd yn wynebu ein hardaloedd cefn gwlad ar hyn o bryd.

Mae’r Cynulliad wedi cymeradwyo’r Cynllun Datblygu Gwledig a gyflwynwyd i’r Comisiwn Ewropeaidd Ragfyr 1999. Gan dynnu ar waith y Bartneriaeth Wledig, mae’r cynllun yn cyflwyno strategaeth y Cynulliad ei hun er mwyn datblygu cymunedau cefn gwlad Cymru.

Bydd cymorth ar gael trwy raglenni domestig a rhaglenni Ewropeaidd eraill, megis y gronfa adfywio leol, cronfa datblygu’r amgylchedd, dogfennau rhaglennu sengl Amcan 1 a 2, rhaglen weithredol Amcan 3 a mentrau’r gymuned megis LEADER + ac INTERREG, yn rhoi cyfleoedd sylweddol i ddatblygu atebion neilltuol Cymreig sydd yn ateb anghenion a nodweddion penodol cefn gwlad Cymru a’i chymunedau.

### **‘Showing the Nation’s Prosperity, Economical, Social Environmental Conditions in the Countryside’ Report**

**Q9 Dafydd Wigley:** Will Christine Gwyther make a statement on the findings of the ‘Showing the Nation’s Prosperity, Economical, Social Environmental Conditions in the Countryside’ report, recently commissioned by the Prime Minister? (OAQ4004)

**Christine Gwyther:** The Cabinet Office’s report to the Prime Minister ‘Sharing the Nation’s Prosperity’ was published in February. It outlines the economic, social and environmental conditions in the UK countryside and Government action to address the problems facing rural communities.

Whilst much of the data contained in the document relates to England, it recognises the specific needs of Wales’s rural communities and the action which the Assembly is already taking to ensure an inclusive, integrated and strategic approach for tackling the many diverse challenges currently facing our rural areas.

The Assembly has endorsed the Rural Development Plan, which was submitted to the European Commission in December 1999. Drawing on the work of the Rural Partnership, this plan sets out the Assembly’s strategy for the development of Wales’s rural communities.

Assistance available through other domestic and European programmes, such as the new local regeneration fund, the environment development fund, the Objective 1 and 2 single programming documents, the Objective 3 operational programme and new community initiatives such as LEADER + and INTERREG, will provide significant opportunities for developing distinctive Welsh solutions that address the specific needs and characteristics of the Welsh countryside and its communities.

### **Welsh Brand Identity (Food and Agricultural Produce)**

**Q10 Michael German:** Has any timetable been drawn up for launching a Welsh brand identity for all food and agricultural produce from Wales? (OAQ3958)

**Christine Gwyther:** Following identification of the need to review the issue of branding Welsh food, including the use of a logo, as set out in the industry action plans for the lamb and beef and dairy and organic sectors, which were launched in March 1999, the Welsh Development Agency is considering, as part of the Assembly’s agri-food strategy, ways of developing the marketing and promotion of

Welsh food. The Agency's food directorate is about to let a contract for a consultancy study to develop a food strategy for food branding in Wales with the support of the key stakeholders. As a result of this, the Assembly will then consider the wider implications of branding Welsh products in general including a kite mark of excellence.

### GM Research

**Q11 Alison Halford:** How much has been spent on genetic modification research from public funds in Wales over the past two years? (OAQ3920)

**Christine Gwyther:** Agricultural research and development is funded on an England and Wales basis and no public funds have been spent on GM research in Wales by the Assembly or the Welsh Office during the past two years. In 1998-99 and 1999-2000, approximately £4.375 million and £5.045 million respectively was spent on GM research in Wales by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council.

This funding covers two very different types of research. While some research is aimed at the production of genetically modified end products, the above figures also include significant funds for genetic modification where it is used as a basic scientific tool for other purposes, and for genetic modification performed through more classical plant breeding techniques to produce conventional seeds. It is not possible to disaggregate the figures.

None of this work involved releases of genetically modified organisms into the environment. The work was restricted to contained use under the Genetically Modified Organisms (Contained Use) Regulations 1992, as amended. Contained use authorisation is regulated by the Health and Safety Executive.

### T25 Maize

**Q12 Jenny Randerson:** What discussions has Christine Gwyther had regarding the possible addition of T25 maize to the National Seed List in Wales? (OAQ3962)

**Christine Gwyther:** In the light of public concerns, it is important that the decision I make regarding National Listing on whether this GM variety of forage maize is made openly and transparently.

For these reasons, I invited the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee to discuss this issue at its meeting on 1 March. The Committee is due to discuss the issue again, and I will make my decision subsequently.

### Labelu Cynnyrch Cig

**C13 David Lloyd:** Pa ymdrech mae Christine Gwyther yn ei wneud i sicrhau bod cynnyrch cig o anifeiliaid sydd wedi cael eu geni a'u magu yng Nghymru yn cael eu labelu i adnabod eu tras Cymreig? (OAQ3989)

**Christine Gwyther:** Mae'r Cynulliad yn awyddus i gynnyrch a bwydydd amaethyddol gyrraedd achrediad o dan gynllun diogelu enwau bwyd yr Undeb Ewropeaidd. Mae ceisiadau am gael diogelu dangosyddion daearyddol (PGI) wedi eu cyflwyno i'r Comisiwn Ewropeaidd o ran cig oen Cymru a chig eidion Cymru. Hysbysebwyd hysbysiadau sydd yn rhoi manylion am ddau gynllun yng *Nghylchgrawn Swyddogol y Gymuned Ewropeaidd* fis Ionawr 2000 ac mae nawr yn agored i wrthwynebiadau gan aelod-wladwriaethau eraill. Os na cheir gwrthwynebiadau ar ôl chwe mis, caiff yr achrediad ei gytuno'n ffurfiol gan y Comisiwn.

Nodwyd yr angen i adolygu brandio bwydydd Cymru, gan gynnwys defnyddio logo, yn y cynlluniau gweithredu a lanswyd fis Mawrth 1999 ar gyfer y sectorau cig coch, cynnyrch llaeth a chynnyrch



organig. O fewn yr ychydig ddiwrnodau nesaf bydd Awdurdod Datblygu Cymru yn penodi ymgynghorwyr i ddatblygu strategaeth flaengar ar gyfer brandio bwyd yng Nghymru â chefnogaeth cyfranddeiliaid allweddol.

Cyflwynwyd y cynllun labelu cig eidion, sydd yn rhoi Rheoliad CE 820/97 ar waith, fis Tachwedd 1997 i roi gwybodaeth ddibynadwy i gwsmeriaid am y cig eidion y maent yn ei brynu, yn arbennig am darddiad cig eidion, er enghraifft, a gafodd ei eni a'i fagu yng Nghymru, a'r modd y cafodd ei gynhyrchu. Ar hyn o bryd mae'n gynllun gwirfoddol ond o 1 Medi 2000 ymlaen daw rhai elfennau yn orfodol. Mae manylion y cynllun gorfodol yn y broses o gael eu penderfynu. Mae swyddogion y Cynulliad yn sicrhau bod budddiannau Cymru'n cael eu cynrychioli.

### Labelling Meat Products

**Q13 David Lloyd:** What effort is Christine Gwyther making to ensure that meat products from animals born and bred in Wales are labelled to identify their Welsh origins? (OAQ3989)

**Christine Gwyther:** The Assembly is anxious that Welsh agricultural products and foodstuffs achieve accreditation under the EU scheme for protecting food names. Applications for protection of geographical indications (PGI) designation have been submitted to the European Commission in respect of Welsh lamb and Welsh beef. Notices detailing both schemes were advertised in *the Official Journal of the European Communities* in January 2000 and are now open to objections from other member states. If no objections are received after six months the accreditation will be formally agreed by the Commission.

The need to review the branding of Welsh food, including the use of a logo, was set out in the action plans launched in March 1999 for the red meat, dairy and organic sectors. Within the next few days the Welsh Development Agency will appoint consultants to develop a forward strategy for food branding in Wales with the support of the key stakeholders.

The beef labelling scheme, which implements EC Regulation 820/97, was introduced in November 1997 to provide consumers with reliable information about the beef they buy, in particular about the origin of the beef, for instance, if it was born and reared in Wales, and the way it was produced. At present it is a voluntary scheme, but from 1 September 2000 some elements will become compulsory. The details of the compulsory scheme are in the process of being decided. Assembly officials are ensuring that Wales's interests are represented.

### Y Diwydiant Amaethyddol a Chefn Gwlad Cymru

**C14 Helen Mary Jones:** A yw Christine Gwyther yn bwriadu gwneud cynrychiolaethau i'r Weinyddiaeth Amaeth, Pysgodfeydd a Bwyd a'r Trysorlys i egluro'r effeithiau y mae polisi economaidd y llywodraeth yn eu cael ar y diwydiant amaethyddol a chefn gwlad Cymru? (OAQ3987)

**Christine Gwyther:** Rwyf mewn cysylltiad rheolaidd â gweinidogion yn Whitehall, yn dadlau achos Cymru. Maent yn hollol ymwybodol o'm pryderon ynghylch yr anawsterau sydd yn wynebu'r diwydiant ar hyn o bryd ac o'r angen i sicrhau dyfodol tymor-hir iddo.

### The Agricultural Industry and Rural Wales

**Q14 Helen Mary Jones:** Does Christine Gwyther intend to make representations to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the Treasury to explain the effects of the Government's economic policy on the agricultural industry and rural Wales? (OAQ3987)

**Christine Gwyther:** I am in regular contact with ministerial colleagues in Whitehall lobbying on behalf of Wales. They are fully aware of my concerns about the current difficulties facing the industry and the need to secure a long-term future for it.

### Advisory Service for Farmers

**Q15 Christine Humphreys:** What progress has been made in offering farmers an advisory service to help them adapt to current economic conditions? (OAQ3979)

**Christine Gwyther:** Following the publication of the Welsh agri-food action plans in March 1999, a farm development strategy group was set up to help Welsh agriculture adapt and diversify. It is an all-Wales steering group to drive development forward across all farming sectors. The initial priorities of the group are to develop plans for a Wales-wide network of demonstration farms, to strengthen the provision of training for farmers in best practice techniques, business and IT skills, and to consider the need for better sign-posting to the range of consultancy and advisory services available to help farming families adapt. Work is continuing to meet these priorities and discussions are taking place between the group, Assembly officials and a range of other bodies.

### Licensing of T25 Maize in Wales

**Q16 Michael German:** What discussion has Christine Gwyther had regarding the possible licensing of T25 maize in Wales? (OAQ3959)

**Christine Gwyther:** In the light of public concerns, it is important that the decision I make regarding National Listing on whether this GM variety of forage maize is made openly and transparently.

For these reasons, I invited the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee to discuss this issue at its meeting on 1 March. The Committee is due to discuss the issue again, and I will make my decision subsequently.

### Cymhorthdal Uniongyrchol

**C17 Helen Mary Jones:** Ar gyfartaledd, faint o gymhorthdal uniongyrchol mae'r diwydiant amaeth yn ei dderbyn yr hectar yng Nghymru mewn cymhariaeth â'r hyn y mae'r diwydiant yn ei dderbyn yr hectar yn Lloegr? (OAQ3988)

**Christine Gwyther:** Cyfartaledd y cymhorthdal uniongyrchol fesul hectar o dir amaethyddol heb gynnwys tir comin pori bras yng Nghymru oedd £138 yn 1999. Y ffigur cyfatebol ar gyfer Lloegr oedd £189. Fodd bynnag, trwy fynegi cymhorthdal uniongyrchol fesul hectar, nid adlewyrchir yn gywir y ffaith bod nifer o'r cymorthdaliadau a gynhwysir yn y cyfartaledd hwn yn cael eu talu fesul anifail. Nid yw'r swm a dderbynnir o'r fath daliadau'n gymesur â'r arwynebedd. Dangosir isod gymhariaeth sydd yn cymryd i ystyriaeth wahaniaethau mewn maint economaidd ffermydd, yn hytrach nag arwynebedd yn unig.

#### Amcangyfrifiadau cymhorthdal uniongyrchol dros dro ar gyfer pob math o fferm 1998-99

£ y fferm	Bach*	Canolig*	Mawr*
Cymru	12,276	34,000	67,612
Lloegr	9,746	19,484	46,654

\* *Maint safonol ffermydd y DU fel y'i mesurir gan Unedau Maint Ewropeaidd (ESU).*

### Direct Subsidies

**Q17 Helen Mary Jones:** How much is the average direct subsidy received by the agricultural industry per hectare in Wales compared to the amount received per hectare in England? (OAQ3988)

**Christine Gwyther:** The average direct subsidy per hectare of agricultural land excluding common rough grazing in Wales was £138 in 1999. The equivalent figure for England was £189. However, expressing direct subsidy per hectare does not properly reflect the fact that a number of the subsidies included in this average are paid on a headage basis. The amount received from such payments is not proportional to area. A comparison taking account of differences in the economic size of farms, rather than just area, is shown below.

**Provisional Estimates of Direct Subsidy for All Farm Types  
1998-99**

£ per farm	Small*	Medium*	Large*
Wales	12,276	34,000	67,612
England	9,746	19,484	46,654

\* *Standard UK farm sizes as measured by European Size Units (ESUs).*

**‘Gwell Cymru’**

**C18 Elin Jones:** Beth oedd cyfraniad Christine Gwyther i’r broses o ddrafftio dogfen ymgynghorol y Llywodraeth ‘Gwell Cymru’? (OAQ3982)

**Christine Gwyther:** Fel aelod o’r Cabinet, chwaraeais ran amlwg yn natblygiad y ddogfen a’r gwaith drafftio terfynol. Yn ogystal â’r cyd-weithwyr yn y Cabinet a’r Cynulliad drwyddo draw, byddaf yn pwysu a mesur canlyniadau’r broses ymgynghori ar y cynllun drafft ac ystyried pa newidiadau sydd eu hangen cyn cyhoeddi’r fersiwn derfynol yn ddiweddarach y mis hwn.

**‘A Better Wales’**

**Q18 Elin Jones:** What was Christine Gwyther’s contribution to the drafting of the Government’s consultation document ‘A Better Wales’? (OAQ3982)

**Christine Gwyther:** As a member of the Cabinet I had a significant part to play in its development and final drafting. Together with Cabinet colleagues and the Assembly as a whole I will reflect on the outcome of the consultation on the draft plan and consider what changes are necessary to it before the final version issues later this month.

**Rural Development Plan Monitoring Committee and Objective 1 Monitoring Committee**

**Q19 Phil Williams:** What relationship will there be between the Rural Development Plan monitoring committee and the Objective 1 monitoring committee? (OAQ3950)

**Christine Gwyther:** The proposed implementation arrangements for the Rural Development Plan are set out in the draft submitted to the European Commission in December 1999 and declared receivable in January 2000. The Assembly is awaiting the Commission’s response to the document before beginning detailed negotiations on the plan, including its implementation. I recognise the clear need for links between the monitoring committee responsible for the Rural Development Plan, the Objective 1 programme monitoring committee and equivalent committees for the other European programmes and initiatives. The means by which such links are to be achieved will be developed alongside the ongoing negotiations with the Commission in consultation with the Economic Development and Agriculture and Rural Development Committees.

**Small and Medium Sized Welsh Farms**

**Q20 Janet Ryder:** How will Christine Gwyther ensure that the savings from modulating agricultural subsidies, will be used to benefit the small and medium sized Welsh farms? (OAQ3956)

**Christine Gwyther:** The receipts from modulation, and the matching funding from the Treasury will be used to increase the resources available to implement the priorities identified in the Rural Development Plan for Wales, approved by the Assembly in December, including agri-environmental schemes, food marketing and processing, support for less favoured areas and training and advisory services. These resources will be distributed in accordance with the scheme rules, having regard to the need to obtain maximum value for money from the expenditure.

### **Hill Livestock Compensatory Allowance**

**Q21 Kirsty Williams:** What proportion of the new hill livestock compensatory allowance scheme budget is being spent on administration? (OAQ3960)

**Christine Gwyther:** None of the administration costs for the new less favoured area scheme will be borne by the scheme budget.

### **GM Maize (National Seed List)**

**Q22 Jocelyn Davies:** Has Christine Gwyther taken a decision to add GM maize to the National Seed List and will she discuss the matter with the Assembly before making such a decision? (OAQ3952)

**Christine Gwyther:** In the light of public concerns, it is important that the decision I make regarding National Listing on whether this GM variety of forage maize is made openly and transparently.

For these reasons, I invited the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee to discuss this issue at its meeting on 1 March. The Committee is due to discuss the issue again, and I will make my decision subsequently.

### **Welsh Food Agricultural Produce Website**

**Q23 Jenny Randerson:** Has any timetable been set for the launch of a Welsh food and agricultural produce website on the internet? (OAQ3961)

**Christine Gwyther:** As part of the Assembly's agri-food strategy the Welsh Development Agency's food directorate has been developing its internet strategy for six months and will have a pilot site on the web by the end of March. This will contain information for consumers, producers and trade buyers, and will be further developed during 2000 using feedback from the pilot site, an internet strategy developed with the assistance of consultants of international calibre, and consultation with the industry and the agri-food partnership.

### **Slaughtering Facilities**

**Q24 Pauline Jarman:** How does Christine Gwyther intend to increase the slaughtering facilities within Wales? (OAQ3953)

**Christine Gwyther:** This is a commercial decision for operators. However, in recognition of the regulatory burdens on the meat industry, the Government announced in September 1999 that a review of the red tape in the meat sector would be undertaken, and a working group, chaired by Mr Robin Pooley, was established. The working group's report was released on 13 December and the Government has now issued a formal response.

The report identifies some areas where regulation could be streamlined, but its scope for action is limited: many of these regulations derive from European legislation or from UK law enacted to protect public safety.

The Assembly's main interest was to attempt to reduce the burden on small to medium abattoirs, which have an important part to play in delivering the Welsh agri-food strategy and which help to underpin the economic viability of the rural and agricultural economy. The group, on which Welsh interests were represented by Mr Bob Kennard, failed to agree on a recommendation on this issue and recommended that it be subject to a further review. This was disappointing but there will again be a Welsh representative on this further working group and I am determined that we will continue to press for fair treatment for the hard pressed small to medium sector and, indeed, all Welsh slaughterhouses

### **Licensing of T25 Maize in Wales**

**Q25 Peter Black:** What discussions has Christine Gwyther had regarding the possible licensing of T25 GM maize in Wales? (OAQ3964)

**Christine Gwyther:** In the light of public concerns, it is important that the decision I make regarding National Listing on whether this GM variety of forage maize is made openly and transparently.

For these reasons, I invited the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee to discuss this issue at its meeting on 1 March. The Committee is due to discuss the issue again, and I will make my decision subsequently.

### **Hill Livestock Compensatory Allowance**

**Q26 Christine Humphreys:** What proportion of the new hill livestock compensatory allowance scheme budget is being spent on administration? (OAQ3978)

**Christine Gwyther:** None of the administration costs for the new less favoured area scheme will be borne by the scheme budget.

### **Genetically Modified Crops**

**Q27 Glyn Davies:** When did Christine Gwyther last discuss the commercial release of genetically modified crops with the director of the Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research? (OAQ4003)

**Christine Gwyther:** The issue was discussed when Professor Chris Pollock, the director of the Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research, attended the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee meeting on 9 February 2000.

### **Meeting with the European Union Agriculture Commissioner**

**Q28 Geraint Davies:** When did Christine Gwyther last meet the European Union Agriculture Commissioner to discuss the problems faced by the industry in Wales? (OAQ3954)

**Christine Gwyther:** I met Commissioner Fischler last October in Strasbourg, to discuss a range of issues relating to the farming industry in Wales.

### **Olrhain Wyn Cymreig yn Electronig**

**C29 Geraint Davies:** A wnaiff Christine Gwyther ddatganiad ynglŷn ag olrhain wyn Cymreig yn electronig? (OAQ3990)

**Christine Gwyther:** Ni fyddai'n briodol cyflwyno dulliau adnabod electronig gorfodol ar gyfer defaid hyd nes y bydd gofynion yr UE wedi'u cysoni. Mae'n amlwg bod angen inni ddisgwyl canlyniad treialon yr UE ar ddulliau adnabod electronig, sydd yn mynd rhagddynt ar hyn o bryd, cyn cymryd penderfyniad ynghylch pa ddull fyddai'r gorau i'w fabwysiadu.

### **Electronically Tracing Welsh Lambs**

**Q29 Geraint Davies:** Will Christine Gwyther make a statement on electronically tracing Welsh lambs? (OAQ3990)

**Christine Gwyther:** It would not be appropriate to introduce compulsory electronic identification in respect of sheep until there are harmonised EU requirements. We clearly need to await the outcome of EU trials on electronic identification, which are currently underway, before making a decision on the best method to adopt.

### **Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research**

**Q30 Alun Cairns:** When did Christine Gwyther last discuss the commercial release of genetically modified crops with the director of the Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research? (OAQ3995)

**Christine Gwyther:** The issue was discussed when Professor Chris Pollock, the director of the Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research, attended the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee meeting on 9 February 2000.