

## Answers to Questions not reached in Plenary 21 June 2001

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

[W] signifies that the question was tabled in Welsh.

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### Questions to the Minister for Culture, Sport and the Welsh Language

*Questions were answered by the Minister for Assembly Business on behalf of the Minister for Culture, Sport and the Welsh Language.*

#### Distributing Lottery Money

**Q8 Geraint Davies:** How is the Minister ensuring that there is equality in the distribution of lottery money across Wales? (OAQ12059)

**The Minister for Assembly Business (Andrew Davies):** The distribution of lottery funding in Wales is a matter for the five lottery distributors. Policy directions issued to the distributors clearly set out requirements to ensure that funding is provided equally across geographical areas and also across differing sections of society.

All distributing bodies in Wales meet regularly and we have asked them to consider, jointly, the reasons for the low take up of lottery funding in certain areas. Together, and increasingly in conjunction with the Assembly, they are considering how best to address these issues. 'Capacity building', within communities, is one area in need of particular attention.

#### Encouraging Participation in the Arts in Wales

**Q9 John Griffiths:** What steps will be taken to encourage mass participation in, and appreciation of, the arts in Wales? (OAQ12092) *Withdrawn.*

#### Enhancing the Cultural Environment

**Q10 Nick Bourne:** What is the Minister doing to enhance the cultural environment of Wales? (OAQ12036)

**Andrew Davies:** These actions fall under two broad headings:

We have provided the cultural Assembly sponsored public bodies with significant increases in their budgets from 1 April 2001 onwards, which should enable them to play a vigorous part in delivering our policy to support arts and cultural activities.

The establishment of a dedicated portfolio, and committee, for Culture, Sport and the Welsh language should also enhance the profile of these sectors within Wales and internationally.

#### Importance of Broadcasting and Communications

**Q11 Gareth Jones:** Will the Minister make a brief statement on the importance of broadcasting and communications in the cultural life of Wales? (OAQ12060)

**Andrew Davies:** Broadcasting and the communications industries are important to us, for both economic and cultural reasons. The broadcasters based in Wales make an important contribution to our culture and to the Welsh language. Some 8,000 people are employed in communications industries in Wales. Cardiff is one of the largest centres of broadcasting expertise in the UK outside London. In recognition of this, the Interactive City 2001 conference was held at the Hilton hotel in Cardiff on 3 June and I delivered the keynote speech. Much of the UK's production of digital set-top boxes and digital televisions is located in Wales.

### **Mewnbwn i Ddeddfwriaeth Darlledu a Chyfarthrebu**

**C12 Cynog Dafis:** Pa fewnbwn pellach fydd gan y Cynulliad Cenedlaethol i'r ddeddfwriaeth arfaethedig ar ddarlledu a chyfarthrebu? (OAQ12067) [W]

**Andrew Davies:** Yn Araith y Frenhines ddoe, nodwyd y bydd Mesur drafft yn cael ei gyhoeddi i greu un rheolydd ar gyfer y cyfryngau a'r diwydiant telegyfathrebu, ac i ddiwygio'r rheoliadau darlledu a thelegyfathrebu. Hyd yma ni fu unrhyw ymgynghori â'r Cynulliad, ond yr ydym yn ceisio cael cyfrannu yn ystod y cyfnod cynnar. Yn yr uwchgynhadledd ar gyfarthrebu a drefnwyd gan Fforwm Cyfryngau Cymru yng Nghaerdydd ar 12 Mehefin, traddodwyd yr araith agoriadol gan y Gweinidog dros Ddiwylliant, Chwaraeon a'r Gymraeg. Yr oedd yr uwchgynhadledd yn gyfle amlwg i atgyfnerthu'r negeseuon yn ymateb y Cynulliad i'r Papur Gwyn eleni.

### **Input into Legislation on Broadcasting and Communications**

**Q12 Cynog Dafis:** What further input will the National Assembly have into the proposed legislation on broadcasting and communications? (OAQ12067)

**Andrew Davies:** The Queen's Speech yesterday indicated that a draft Bill to create a single regulator for the media and communications industries and reform the broadcasting and telecommunications regulations will be published. No consultation has yet taken place with the Assembly but we are seeking to ensure early input. The Minister for Culture, Sport and the Welsh Language gave the opening address at the communications summit arranged by the Wales Media Forum in Cardiff on 12 June. The summit was a high profile opportunity to reinforce the messages given in the Assembly's response to the White Paper this year.

### **Promoting the Contributions of those Aged under 18 to the Arts**

**Q13 Peter Rogers:** What steps have been taken to promote the contribution of those aged under 18 within the arts? (OAQ12033)

**Andrew Davies:** National Assembly funding for the arts in Wales is channelled through the Arts Council of Wales, which carries out its duties within the remit set by the National Assembly. The Arts Council published a report on the arts and young people in February 1999 and is a key partner in the arts and young people taskforce. This is a major policy and development area for the arts council. The Minister for Culture, Sport and the Welsh Language's strategy for culture in Wales, presented at the Culture Committee yesterday, has clear policy and action in respect of young people, the arts and education.

### **Encouraging Mass Participation in Sport**

**Q14 John Griffiths:** What policy is being followed to encourage mass participation in sport in Wales? (OAQ12093) *Withdrawn.*

### Promoting Wales as a Bilingual Society

**Q15 Christine Chapman:** Will the Minister make a statement on the promotion of Wales as a bilingual society? (OAQ12030) *Withdrawn.*

### Cronfeydd Strwythurol Ewrop

**C16 Dafydd Wigley:** Sut y mae'r Gweinidog yn sicrhau bod sefydliadau diwylliannol Cymru'n gallu elwa ar brosiectau a ariennir gan gronfeydd strwythurol Ewrop? (OAQ12066) [W]

**Andrew Davies:** Mae Celfyddydau Rhyngwladol Cymru, menter gydweithredol a ariennir gan Gyngor Celfyddydau Cymru a'r Cyngor Prydeinig, yn rhoi cyngor i sefydliadau ar geisio am arian o gronfeydd strwythurol Ewrop.

Mae Cymru'n Creu wedi sefydlu grŵp gorchwyl a gorffen i ystyried sut y gall y diwydiannau diwylliannol elwa ar arian strwythurol Ewrop.

### European Structural Funds

**Q16 Dafydd Wigley:** What steps is the Minister taking to ensure that Wales's cultural organisations can profit from projects financed by European structural funds? (OAQ12066) [W]

**Andrew Davies:** Wales Arts International, a co-operative venture funded by the Arts Council of Wales and the British Council, provides advice to organisations about accessing European structural funds.

Cymru'n Creu has established a task and finish group to consider ways in which the cultural industries can benefit from European structural funding.

### Pigeon Racing

**Q17 William Graham:** Will the Minister consider taking action to allow Wales to lead the way towards the recognition of pigeon racing as a sport? (OAQ12090)

**Andrew Davies:** No. This is a matter for the Sports Council for Wales, in conjunction with the other home countries' sports councils.

All Assembly money for sport in Wales is channelled through the Sports Council for Wales. In order to ensure the effective and efficient distribution of public funds, all the four home country sports councils, working together, have adopted a system of formal 'recognition' of activities and organisations. The councils do not decide what is or is not a sport. Rather, they identify which activities they wish to develop and which should be eligible for their assistance. They have also decided that a sport will not achieve recognition status unless all four unanimously agree it should be a recognised activity for grant-in-aid support.

The main criteria used by the councils for the purpose of recognition are 'physical effort' and 'skills'. In the case of pigeon racing, the lack of 'physical effort' on the part of the human participants is one of the main reasons that affects the council's decision about the eligibility for support.

We appreciate the difficulty that the lack of recognition causes the pigeon racing fraternity in terms of securing funding from the Sports Council for Wales. We also recognise the strength of feeling that this situation has generated. However, in the interests of continuity, we consider that responsibility for deciding which activities should be eligible for their assistance should remain with the sports councils. Therefore, until such time as there is unanimity of recognition from all the home country sports councils, pigeon racing will remain ineligible for support from the Sports Council for Wales.

### **Making Culture Readily Accessible**

**Q18 Nick Bourne:** What is the Minister doing to make culture readily accessible to all in Wales? (OAQ12035)

**Andrew Davies:** The abolishment of entry fees to the National Museums and Galleries of Wales made our national treasures freely accessible to all, and has led to a record number of visitors to its sites. The Arts Council of Wales's cultural diversity strategy launched by the Minister for Culture, Sport and the Welsh Language in April 2001, promotes equality of access to a full range of arts events for people of all ages, abilities, cultures and communities.

The Arts Council also actively promotes and funds community arts, and arts for young people in the arts for young people taskforce.

### **Restoring the Place of Sport in Schools**

**Q19 David Davies:** What steps has the Minister taken to restore the place of sport in Welsh schools? (OAQ12075)

**Andrew Davies:** The report of the physical education and school sport taskforce provides a common vision for all partners involved in improving standards and facilities for PE and school sport activities. The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning is broadly content with the report's recommendations and has made £500,000 available this year to take forward a number of the recommendations—including the appointment of a national PE and school sport co-ordinator.

Particular attention will be given to ensuring that development work builds on the good practice promoted by the Sports Council for Wales in the form of 'Dragon Sport' and 'Clwb Cymru' and complements the £48.75 million to be made available by the new opportunities fund to promote PE and sport in schools in Wales.

### **Support for the Arts in West Wales**

**Q20 Christine Gwyther:** Will the Minister make a statement on National Assembly support for the arts in west Wales? (OAQ12029) *Withdrawn.*

### **Cyngor i Gyhoeddwy Llyfrau Cymraeg (Marchnata)**

**C21 Owen John Thomas:** A wnaiff y Gweinidog ystyried y posibilrwydd o estyn cyngor i gyhoeddwy llyfrau Cymraeg i farchnata eu cynnyrch mewn archfarchnadoedd a manau poblogaidd eraill? (OAQ12063) [W]

**Andrew Davies:** Cyngor Llyfrau Cymru sydd yn gyfrifol am hyrwyddo'r diwydiant cyhoeddi yng Nghymru a darparu cyngor ar farchnata i gyhoeddwy yng Nghymru. Fe ofynnaf i gyfarwyddwr y cyngor llyfrau ysgrifennu atoch â manylion yr ymdrechion sydd yn cael eu gwneud ar hyn o bryd i helpu i farchnata llyfrau mewn archfarchnadoedd a lleoliadau perthnasol eraill. Rhoddir copi o ateb y cyfarwyddwr yn y Llyfrgell.

### **Advice to Welsh Book Publishers (Marketing)**

**Q21 Owen John Thomas:** Will the Minister consider the possibility of providing advice to Welsh book publishers in order to enable them to market their products in supermarkets and other popular places? (OAQ12063) [W]

**Andrew Davies on behalf of Jenny Randerson:** The Welsh Books Council is responsible for promoting the publishing industry in Wales and provides advice on marketing to publishers in Wales. I will ask the

director of the books council to write to you with details of the efforts currently being made to help market books in supermarkets and other relevant venues. A copy of the director's reply will then be placed in the Library.

### **Cymdeithas Meysydd Chwarae Cenedlaethol**

**C22 Owen John Thomas:** Pa drafodaethau a gafodd y Gweinidog yn ddiweddar gyda Chymdeithas Meysydd Chwarae Cenedlaethol? (OAQ12062) [W]

**Andrew Davies:** Fel y gwyddoch, mynychodd y Gweinidog dros Ddiwylliant, Chwaraeon a'r Gymraeg ginio blynyddol Cangen Cymru o Gymdeithas Meysydd Chwarae Cenedlaethol yn ddiweddar, lle cafodd gyfle i drafod a chymeradwyo'n gyhoeddus menter 'Caeau Owain Glyndŵr' y gymdeithas.

Mae'n bwysig bod cymunedau lleol ledled Cymru, a'r plant o fewn y cymunedau hynny yn arbennig, yn parhau i allu defnyddio cyfleusterau chwarae a lleoedd agored lleol. Bydd gwaith y gymdeithas a mentrau fel prosiect Caeau Owain Glyndŵr yn helpu i sicrhau a datblygu cyfleusterau chwarae a chwaraeon, yn arbennig i bobl ifanc heddiw a chenedlaethau'r dyfodol.

Yr ydym yn gobeithio y bydd cymaint o awdurdodau lleol â phosibl yn cymeradwyo'r cynllun.

### **National Playing Fields Association**

**Q22 Owen John Thomas:** What recent discussions has the Minister had with the National Playing Fields Association? (OAQ12062) [W]

**Andrew Davies:** As you know, the Minister for Culture, Sport and the Welsh Language recently attended the National Playing Fields Association Cymru's inaugural annual luncheon, where she was able to discuss and endorse publicly the association's 'Owain Glyndŵr Fields' initiative.

It is important that local communities throughout Wales, and the children within those communities in particular, have continued access to local recreation facilities and open spaces. The NPFA's work and initiatives such as the Owain Glyndŵr Fields project will help secure and develop environmentally-friendly managed facilities for play, sport and recreation, especially for the young people of today and future generations.

We hope that as many local authorities as possible will embrace the scheme.

### **Television Reception in Wales**

**Q23 Brian Gibbons:** Has the Minister received any representations on television reception in Wales? (OAQ12025) *Withdrawn.*

### **Staging the Commonwealth Games in Wales**

**Q24 William Graham:** Will the Minister conduct a feasibility study into the possibility of bidding for the Commonwealth Games to be staged in Wales? (OAQ12089)

**Andrew Davies:** The Minister has no intention of conducting a feasibility study into the possibility of the Commonwealth Games being staged in Wales.

As you are no doubt aware, the Commonwealth Games 2002 are being staged in Manchester. It is extremely unlikely that the games would return to any part of the UK for at least a further four or five games, that is, up to 20 years.

Any bid would need to be initiated by the Commonwealth Games Council for Wales.

Wales does not possess the range of facilities suitable for staging this event and, therefore, significant capital investments would be required. It would be difficult for Wales to justify such investment in facilities for a one-off event, as they would have considerable long-term revenue costs.

### **Cultural Organisations (South Wales West)**

**Q25 Alun Cairns:** Will the Minister give details of any cultural organisations she has visited in her ministerial capacity in the South Wales West area since her appointment? (OAQ12072)

**Andrew Davies:** The Minister for Culture, Sport and the Welsh Language has made two visits to the Member's South Wales West constituency since her appointment.

31 January 2001: visit to Swansea, the Grand Theatre and the Taliesin Theatre at the University of Wales, Swansea, the Swansea Arts Forum and the National Industrial and Maritime Museum.

9 May 2001: visit to the Glyn Vivian Art Gallery, Swansea, and the Banwen Library and Education Centre.

### **New Cultural Initiatives (South Wales West)**

**Q26 Alun Cairns:** Will the Minister make a statement on any new cultural initiatives in the South Wales West area? (OAQ12073)

**Andrew Davies:** There is much activity in terms of new cultural initiatives in the South Wales West area, for example, construction is underway on the new national swimming pool in Swansea which has attracted Sportlot funding via the Sports Council for Wales.

The Arts Council of Wales has been proactive in pursuing applications for lottery 'Arts for All' funding from arts organisations in this area. Recent projects have included:

Celtic Connections—a three-year project to raise the profile of celtic culture and roots in west Wales, through music, visual arts and literature.  
Awarded a grant of £54,750.00

Global Connections—a six-day series of One World Week arts workshops for children, young people and adults at Pembroke Town Hall. Awarded a grant of £3,000.

### **Strategy for Visual Arts**

**Q27 Eleanor Burnham:** Does the Minister intend to develop a strategy for visual arts in Wales? (OAQ12088)

**Andrew Davies:** The cultural strategy that the Minister for Culture presented to the Culture Committee yesterday provides a framework for the future and sets the priorities for the corporate plans of the cultural Assembly sponsored public bodies, including the Arts Council of Wales. The visual arts are an essential component of that strategy to develop excellence, accessibility and promote Wales and the image of Wales abroad.

### **Broadcasting and Communications Bill**

**Q28 Janet Ryder:** Has the Minister received any information on the publication of the broadcasting and communications Bill? (OAQ12057)

**Andrew Davies:** The Queen announced in her speech yesterday that a draft Bill to create a single regulator for the media and communications industries and reform the broadcasting and telecommunications regulations will be published by her new Government.

I have no information yet as to when the publication will take place, but I understand that this will be a draft for consultation, and that there will be an opportunity for the National Assembly to comment.

### **Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod**

**Q29 Glyn Davies:** What plans does the Minister have to give support to the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod? (OAQ12026)

**Andrew Davies:** The Minister for Culture, Sport and the Welsh Language and I are delighted that the Llangollen Eisteddfod's committee have decided to proceed with the International Eisteddfod this year.

We also realise that the Llangollen Eisteddfod has to look critically at its financial arrangements in order to achieve long-term security. I am pleased, therefore, that Denbighshire County Council, the Wales Tourist Board, and the Arts Council of Wales are working together with the Eisteddfod committee to develop a 10-year strategy to safeguard the future of the festival.

I am sure that it is this co-operative approach which will be most likely to find a long-term solution to the challenges facing the eisteddfod.

The Minister for Culture, Sport and the Welsh Language is meeting representatives of the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod on 28 June to discuss their financial concerns.

### **Feasibility Studies (Arts Council of Wales)**

**Q30 Richard Edwards:** How many feasibility studies have been funded by the Arts Council of Wales since the National Assembly has been established? (OAQ12021) *Withdrawn.*

## **Questions to the Minister for Rural Affairs**

### **Creating the Post of Fisheries Development Officer**

**Q7 Richard Edwards:** What plans are there for the creation of the post of fisheries development officer in Wales? (OAQ12052)

**The Minister for Rural Affairs (Carwyn Jones):** There are no plans to create such a post.

### **Delays in Compensation Payments to Farmers**

**Q8 Peter Rogers:** Will the Minister make a statement on delays in payment of compensation to farmers who had their animals culled during the foot and mouth disease crisis? (OAQ12045) [R]

**Carwyn Jones:** The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, is responsible for processing compensation payments to farmers. I am very conscious of the concern and hardship suffered by the farming community resulting from the delays in making payments and I have ensured that officials have been in regular contact with DEFRA. The delays have resulted from the sheer volume of claims that they have had to handle. Nevertheless £742 million has been paid to farmers across Great Britain out of a total of £760 million claimed.

The position as on 11 June is that there is an estimated backlog of under 500 outstanding payments, all of which have varying need to be resolved with the claimants.

### **Adding Value to Welsh Farm Produce**

**Q9 John Griffiths:** What progress is being made in adding value in Wales to Welsh farm produce? (OAQ12101) *Withdrawn.*

### **Reviving Farming in Monmouth**

**Q10 David Davies:** What new measures is the Minister proposing that are aimed at bringing about a revival in farming in Monmouth? (OAQ12084)

**Carwyn Jones:** In addition to providing support for Tir Mynydd, Tir Gofal, the organic farming scheme and afforestation measures, the rural development plan for Wales will introduce a number of new measures that will assist farming in Monmouth. These include all of the services available under Farming Connect; capital grants for farm improvement and farm diversification; wider forestry schemes including biomass; the processing and marketing of agricultural produce; and a number of activities under article 33 of the European Commission's Rural Development Regulation, targeted at developing the wider rural community.

### **Setting up a Fodder Scheme for Agricultural Emergencies**

**Q11 Christine Gwyther:** What discussions has the Minister had with his Westminster colleagues about the setting up of a fodder scheme for future agricultural emergencies? (OAQ12054) *Withdrawn.*

### **Securing Protected Geographical Indication Status for Welsh Produce**

**Q12 Alun Cairns:** What progress has the Minister made on securing protected geographical indication status for Welsh produce? (OAQ12082)

**Carwyn Jones:** Protection of geographical indication applications for Welsh lamb and Welsh beef have been submitted by Welsh Lamb and Beef Promotions Limited to the European Commission. Notices detailing the Welsh lamb and Welsh beef protection of geographical indications were advertised in the Official Journal of the European Communities in January 2000 and were open to objections until 25 July 2000. One objection was received from within Wales.

We have considered that objection and also sought the views of the industry in Wales as a whole on the two protection of geographical indications. The UK Government has now, on our behalf, asked the European Commission to ratify the two applications.

### **Future Outbreaks of Foot and Mouth Disease**

**Q13 Eleanor Burnham:** What plans are being laid to cope with any future outbreaks of foot and mouth disease? (OAQ12103)

**Carwyn Jones:** The foot and mouth disease operations centre for Wales remains able to respond speedily to any further outbreaks of the disease.

### **Assisting Small Farms in Wales**

**Q14 Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** What action has the Minister taken to assist small farms in Wales? (OAQ12098)

**Carwyn Jones:** The Farming Futures group will set out the long-term direction for agriculture in Wales together with a supporting programme of actions. It is a matter of public record that I regard the retention of the smaller family farm as important for the future sustainability of the industry.

### Encouraging the Growth of Farmers' Markets

**Q15 David Melding:** What is the Minister doing to encourage the growth of farmers' markets in Wales? (OAQ12056)

**Carwyn Jones:** A great deal of work has already been done by a variety of organisations to develop farmers' markets at the local level. The National Assembly for Wales Agriculture Department and Welsh Development Agency officials are currently taking stock of this work with a view to producing a coherent strategy, linked to proper marketing, for the future. There are a number of factors that the WDA must take into consideration when looking at financial support for farmers markets but, in general terms, the WDA will consider applications for assistance with the following:

- start up costs (up to 40 per cent and linked to the likely size of the venture).
- costs associated with the development of the market with respect to the number of producers involved.
- costs associated with the promotion of the market to the public.

### Dealing with the Supermarkets' Stranglehold on Farmers

**Q16 Jocelyn Davies:** Can the Minister make a statement on any discussions he has had with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food on a strategy for dealing with supermarkets' stranglehold on farmers over the price of produce? (OAQ12106)

**Carwyn Jones:** I have not had direct discussions with the UK Government on this issue. However, in view of allegations that supermarkets were taking excessive profits, the Government referred the matter to the Office of Fair Trading, which conducted an eight-month investigation into the profitability of the major supermarkets in the grocery sector. The outcome of the preliminary findings was made public on 8 April 1999 and John Bridgeman, Director General of Fair Trading, decided to refer the £60 billion a year grocery retailing sector to the Competition Commission for a full monopoly inquiry. The Competition Commission's report into the grocery sector was published by the Department of Trade and Industry on 10 October 2000.

I welcomed the commission's recommendation that a binding code of conduct should be developed for the industry, building on the Institute of Grocery Distribution's voluntary code to protect producers' interests and improve relationships in the food supply chain.

The National Assembly has sought to ensure that producers can contribute to the drafting of the code by the Office of Fair Trading. The draft code has been circulated for comment and the final version is expected to be published shortly.

### Encouraging the Welsh Wine Industry

**Q17 David Melding:** Will the Minister make a statement on what he is doing to encourage the Welsh wine industry? (OAQ12050)

**Carwyn Jones:** Fewer than 40 acres of vines are under cultivation in Wales, with only four out of the 20 registered vineyards in Wales operating commercially.

The WDA Food Directorate is assisting with efforts to re-establish the Welsh speciality wine group. In parallel, there are plans for a co-operative winery. The WDA stands ready to offer help in whatever way it can.

The WDA and Farming Connect can provide advice on grants that might be available under rural development plan schemes aimed at processing and marketing and small producers.

### **The Number of Farmers under Form D Restrictions in Wales**

**Q18 Peter Rogers:** Will the Minister make a statement on the number of farmers currently under Form D restrictions in Wales? (OAQ12046) [R]

**Carwyn Jones:** Following the removal of infected area status from Skewen, Abercynon and part of Raglan on 20 June, 100 Form D restrictions have been removed from affected farms. There are currently 2,274 farms in Wales under Form D restrictions.

### **Assisting the Reopening of Livestock Markets**

**Q19 Nick Bourne:** What is the Minister doing to assist livestock markets to reopen following the foot and mouth disease outbreak? (OAQ12048)

**Carwyn Jones:** The current restrictions on the movement of susceptible livestock are not intended to permit traditional trading, and livestock markets are closed.

I am examining the options for a managed return to trading that will maintain a balance between allowing commercial movement of animals and the demands of disease control.

### **Encouraging Entrepreneurship in Rural Wales**

**Q20 Richard Edwards:** How is the Minister encouraging entrepreneurship in rural Wales? (OAQ12051) *Withdrawn.*

### **The Handling of the Foot and Mouth Disease Outbreak**

**Q21 David Davies:** What steps is the Minister taking to ensure lessons are learned from the handling of this outbreak of foot and mouth disease? (OAQ12085)

**Carwyn Jones:** Officials from the National Assembly for Wales Agriculture Department are examining the issues and are involved with a similar exercise at the UK level.

### **Implementing the Right to Roam Strategy**

**Q22 Brian Gibbons:** What progress is being made to implement the right to roam strategy in Wales in the aftermath of the foot and mouth disease crisis? (OAQ12087) *Withdrawn.*

### **Ensuring a Fairer Price for Milk**

**Q23 Nick Bourne:** What steps can be taken to ensure that dairy farmers in Wales receive a fairer price for their milk? (OAQ12044)

**Carwyn Jones:** The Assembly and WDA are taking steps to implement the dairy elements of the Wales agri-food strategy, through development of the dairy action plan, and by awarding grants to suitable dairy processing projects. Key points of the dairy action plan are:

- improving the marketing of the sector
- maximising the performance of milk producers and processors
- improving the information base of the industry

Processing and marketing grants are available to help Welsh dairy farmers and processors increase their competitiveness, to process more Welsh produce and to gain an increased share of the UK market. The

marketing development scheme can help dairy farmers and processors improve their marketing and commercial expertise.

### **Encouraging Entrepreneurship in Rural Communities**

**Q24 Christine Gwyther:** What measures are in place to encourage entrepreneurship in rural communities? (OAQ12053) *Withdrawn.*

### **A Scheme to Buy Sheep and Suckler Cow Quotas**

**Q25 William Graham:** Will the Minister make a statement concerning discussions he has held with MAFF officials about the introduction of a scheme to buy sheep and suckler cow quotas from farmers leaving the industry, to enforce a reduction in livestock numbers? (OAQ12102)

**Carwyn Jones:** A number of options are being considered, including flexibility within the quota regimes, that are aimed at assisting the industry to recover from the impact of foot and mouth disease. No decisions have been reached.

It may be the case that farmers wish to leave but we also need to create the climate for young people to join an industry with a sustainable future. I have put proposals forward to the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee on encouraging young entrants.

### **The Rural Development Plan for Wales**

**Q26 Elin Jones:** What discussions has the Minister had with MAFF on the rural development plan for Wales? (OAQ12105)

**Carwyn Jones:** I have had a number of discussions with Ministers from the UK Government and the devolved administrations on the EC's Rural Development Regulation. However, the rural development plan for Wales is a matter for the National Assembly for Wales.

### **Increasing the Number of Welsh-branded Food and Drink Products**

**Q27 John Griffiths:** What progress is being made in radically increasing the number of Welsh-branded food and drink products? (OAQ12100) *Withdrawn.*

### **Farmers Awaiting Compensation**

**Q28 Alun Cairns:** How many farmers in Wales are still waiting to be compensated for the cull of their animals because of foot and mouth disease? (OAQ12083)

**Carwyn Jones:** The Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is responsible for processing compensation payments to farmers. It does not have the facility to provide details of outstanding claims by region.

### **The Appropriate Labelling of Genetically Modified Products**

**Q29 Peter Black:** What discussions has the Minister had with the Secretary of State for Wales regarding the appropriate labelling of products containing genetically modified organisms in Wales? (OAQ12086)

**Carwyn Jones:** On 22 January 2001, I attended, with the Secretary of State for Wales, Paul Murphy, a meeting of colleagues from the Scottish Executive and the UK Cabinet, to consider the issue of genetically modified crops. We strongly put forward the views of the National Assembly.

The National Assembly has adopted a sceptical stance on the release of genetically modified organisms into the environment and is keen to exploit marketing opportunities of identifying Welsh agricultural produce as free from genetically modified organisms. For this to be achieved full traceability and labelling of genetically modified organisms and products derived from genetically modified organisms are necessary. The EC currently requires that all foods containing genetically modified material should be clearly labelled.

### Promoting GM-free Welsh Foods

**Q30 Peter Black:** How can the Minister best promote GM-free Welsh foods in competition with GM-contaminated imports? (OAQ12049)

**Carwyn Jones:** I promote Welsh produce whenever possible. The WDA Food Directorate, in implementing the Assembly's agri-food strategy, leads on economic development in the agri-food sector, promotes Welsh products and implements the lamb and beef, dairy and organic action plans.

Only genetically modified foods or ingredients approved in accordance with the requirements of the EC Novel Foods Regulation can be marketed in the European Union. It is the responsibility of local authorities to ensure that the legislation is correctly enforced in relation to the UK. However, the Food Standards Agency follows up and investigates any allegations concerning the presence of unauthorised genetically modified ingredients.

## Questions to the Minister for Assembly Business

### Broadband Technology in Wales

**Q1 Gareth Jones:** What measures have been introduced to ensure that the benefits of broadband technology are brought to all areas of Wales? (OAQ12069) *Transferred for written answer.*

**Q11 Alun Cairns:** Will the Minister make a statement on the availability of broadband communication in Wales? (OAQ12096)

**The Minister for Assembly Business (Andrew Davies):** The National Assembly is firmly committed to bringing the benefits of broadband technology to the whole of Wales. We have already made a number of important steps in driving this forward. These include supporting projects such as strand 6 of the Llwybr/Pathway project, which brings asymmetric digital subscriber line availability to 10 rural towns in Wales. Last year, I launched the MARAN—multi agency rural area network—project, again part of Llwybr/Pathway, which brings broadband access to much of mid Wales. Furthermore, I and my Cabinet colleagues frequently meet companies such as British Telecom and NTL and encourage them to roll out broadband services in Wales. This has helped result in the provision of ADSL and cable modem services in some urban areas of Wales.

Nevertheless, we realise that some areas of Wales still remain unserved, and the Deputy First Minister and Minister for Economic Development and I will be carefully considering the recommendations of the report commissioned by the Welsh Development Agency on the policy actions needed to facilitate further broadband rollout in Wales.

Affordable broadband availability will also be a key feature in the Assembly's information age strategic framework, which I will be presenting in Plenary on 3 July.

*Questions 2 and 3 were withdrawn. Questions 4 to 8 were answered in Plenary.*

### The European TeleRegions Network

**Q9 Phil Williams:** Will the Minister make a statement on the European TeleRegions Network conference that he attended in April of this year? (OAQ12078)

**Q13 Jocelyn Davies:** Will the Minister make a statement regarding his role as president of the European TeleRegions Network? (OAQ12081)

**Andrew Davies:** This seminar announced the relaunch of the TeleRegions Network with new political leadership and management under my presidency. I was delighted that representatives of over 30 European Union regions attended the relaunch conference. Accepting the presidency of the TeleRegions Network provides a significant opportunity for Wales to work with partner regions across Europe in creating the information society, providing opportunities for sharing best practice and experience as well as co-operation on information and communications technology projects funded by European Commission programmes which can deliver benefits in Wales. The TeleRegions Network intends to strengthen its links with the European Commission, given the importance of ICT to regional development. As president, I intend that Wales will be a prominent player in this vital area of European policy.

#### **Co-ordinating the ICT Strategy for Wales**

**Q10 Nick Bourne:** Will the Minister outline his priorities in co-ordinating the information and communications technology strategy for Wales? (OAQ12039)

**Andrew Davies:** The information age strategic framework for Wales will be laid before the Assembly on 25 June, prior to its debate in Plenary on 3 July. I will make a full statement on my priorities then.

#### **Setting up and Maintaining Community Websites in Wales**

**Q12 Richard Edwards:** In his role as e-commerce Minister, what discussions has the Minister had with community-based groups to set up and maintain community websites in Wales? (OAQ12019) *Withdrawn.*

#### **Accessibility of the Internet to the Public**

**Q14 Richard Edwards:** Will the Minister make a statement on the accessibility of the internet to the general public in publicly-owned buildings such as libraries in Wales? (OAQ12042) *Withdrawn.*

#### **Promoting ICT to those Aged over 60**

**Q15 Glyn Davies:** What are the Minister's plans to promote information and communications technology to those aged over 60 in Wales? (OAQ12110)

**Andrew Davies:** The Minister for Health and Social Services has announced that the National Assembly for Wales will develop a strategy for older people in Wales over the next year. At its first meeting on 4 June, the strategy steering group agreed that information technology is playing an increasing role in communications among and by older people and that the issue will need to be considered in the strategy's findings.

#### **Providing Greater Access to the Internet**

**Q16 Christine Gwyther:** What measures are in place to provide greater access to the internet for the Welsh general public? (OAQ12018) *Withdrawn.*

### **Internet Take-up by Businesses in Wales**

**Q17 Alun Cairns:** Will the Minister make a statement on internet take-up by private sector businesses in Wales? (OAQ12095)

**Andrew Davies:** I am fully aware of the need to encourage more businesses to fully recognise the potential benefits of the internet. A number of projects and programmes are underway to help achieve this, for example, Wales smE-Business, Opportunity Wales and the network of Business Connect information and communications technology support centres. It is clear that these programmes are working, as the Department of Trade and Industry's annual benchmarking study for 2000 shows a significant increase in take-up compared to the figures for 1999.

### **ICT Policy (Promoting Equality of Opportunity)**

**Q18 Helen Mary Jones:** How will the Government's information and communications technology policy promote equality of opportunity? (OAQ12068) *Withdrawn.*

### **New Innovations in ICT**

**Q19 Peter Black:** What new innovations in information and communications technology does the Minister envisage being introduced into Wales before May 2003? (OAQ12040)

**Andrew Davies:** In the fast moving world of technology, it would be unwise to speculate on what developments might be deployed in Wales in the next two years. What matters is how technology is applied. The information age strategic framework for Wales, which will be laid on 25 June, prior to debate in Plenary on 3 July, will propose, as one of the priority areas, action to accelerate the availability of high speed broadband communication links throughout Wales. Progress in this area would facilitate the deployment of a range of services and technologies not presently generally available in Wales. Other areas which have early potential are interactive digital television and new mobile telephone technology.

### **Homes and Businesses Connected to a Cable Data and Telecommunication Network**

**Q20 William Graham:** Will the Minister make a statement concerning the number of homes and businesses in Wales that are connected to a cable data and telecommunication network? (OAQ12097)

**Andrew Davies:** British Telecom has 1.1 million residential and 340,000 business customers throughout Wales. NTL has built past 9,900 business premises and 293,000 residential premises in its franchise area.

### **Ensuring Access to New ICT in Wales**

**Q21 John Griffiths:** What progress is being made in ensuring access to new information and communications technology for all communities in Wales? (OAQ12094) *Withdrawn.*

### **Improving Broadband Connections in Wales**

**Q22 Phil Williams:** Will the Minister make a statement on the Assembly's contribution towards improving broadband connections in Wales? (OAQ12070) *Withdrawn.*

### **Enhancing ICT Provision for the Residents of Penybontfawr**

**Q23 Glyn Davies:** What plans does the Minister have to enhance information and communications technology provision for the residents of Penybontfawr? (OAQ12043)

**Andrew Davies:** The Assembly's plans for achieving greater availability and take-up of information and communications technology facilities for all the people of Wales will be set out in our information age

strategic framework for Wales, which will be laid before the Assembly on 25 June, prior to its debate in Plenary on 3 July. I will be making a full statement then.

### **ICT Policy (Promoting Sustainable Development)**

**Q24 Cynog Dafis:** How will the Government's information and communications technology policy promote sustainable development in Wales? (OAQ12080) *Withdrawn.*

### **Improving the Availability of High Speed Internet Access in Rural Wales**

**Q25 David Davies:** What is the Minister doing to improve the availability of high speed internet access in rural Wales? (OAQ12077)

**Andrew Davies:** The National Assembly is firmly committed to bringing the benefits of broadband technology to the whole of Wales and in particular those areas in which there could be particular benefits, such as in rural areas. We have been involved in a range of projects to take this forward, such as supporting projects like strand 6 of the Llwybr/Pathway project, which brings asymmetric digital subscriber line technology to 10 rural towns in Wales. We also supported the MARAN—multi agency rural area network—project, again part of Llwybr/Pathway, which brings broadband access to much of mid Wales.

Nevertheless, the Assembly realises that it needs to build upon this work and seek to make broadband available to currently unserved areas. Both the Deputy First Minister and Minister for Economic Development and I will be carefully considering the recommendations of the report commissioned by the Welsh Development Agency on the policy actions needed to facilitate further broadband rollout in Wales.

Broadband availability will also be a key feature in the Assembly's information age strategic framework, which will be debated in July.