

Answers to Questions not reached in Plenary 17/03/2010

[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 Rural Affairs

The Rural Affairs Budget

Q2 Lorraine Barrett: What are the Minister's priorities for the rural affairs budget for 2010-11? OAQ(3)1005(RAF) *Transferred for written answer.*

The Minister for Rural Affairs (Elin Jones): The priority of the Department for Rural Affairs is to deliver on its 'One Wales' commitments. Funding is in place to support the commitment to pursue a programme of tuberculosis eradication, to take forward the commitments in the rural development plan, and to commence delivery of the young entrants scheme.

Questions 3 to 8 were answered in Plenary.

Questions 9, OAQ(3)1012(RAF), and 10, OAQ(3)1014(RAF), were withdrawn.

Yr Economi Wledig

The Rural Economy

C11 Nerys Evans: A wnaiff y Gweinidog ddatganiad am yr hyn y mae Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru yn ei wneud i gefnogi'r economi wledig yng Nghymru? OAQ(3)1000(RAF) [W]

Q11 Nerys Evans: Will the Minister make a statement on what the Welsh Assembly Government is doing to support the rural economy in Wales? OAQ(3)1000(RAF) [W]

Elin Jones: Mae Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru yn ymrwymedig i gefnogi ac i ddatblygu economi Cymru, gan gynnwys ardaloedd gwledig. Er bod gan yr economi wledig rai nodweddion unigryw, rhaid iddi gael ei gweld fel rhan o'r economi gyffredinol. Mae amrywiaeth o raglenni'n cael eu cyflawni er mwyn cefnogi cynaliadwyedd economi Cymru at y dyfodol.

Elin Jones: The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to supporting and developing the Welsh economy, and that includes rural areas. While having certain unique characteristics, the rural economy has to be seen as part of the overall economy. A range of programmes is being delivered to support the sustainability of our economy in Wales for the future.

Sustainable Rural Businesses

Q12 Paul Davies: Will the Minister make a statement on what the Welsh Assembly Government is doing to support sustainable rural businesses? OAQ(3)1017(RAF)

Elin Jones: The Assembly Government is committed to ensuring that our rural communities remain sustainable, and that includes providing support to rural businesses. 'One Wales' sets

out our plans for developing and supporting the Welsh economy.

Young People and the Farming Industry

Q13 Gareth Jones: Will the Minister make a statement on financial incentives for young people to enter the farming industry in Wales? OAQ(3)0998(RAF)

Elin Jones: In addition to the grant aid of up to £15,000 on offer under the young entrants support scheme, to support those setting up as head of holding for the first time, subsidised training, advice and guidance is also available through the Farming Connect service.

The Farming Unions

Q14 Chris Franks: What recent discussions has the Minister had with the farming unions? OAQ(3)0980(RAF)

Elin Jones: I meet frequently with the farming unions and industry representatives. In addition, my officials are in regular communication with them, while union representatives sit on a number of my stakeholder groups.

Glastir

C15 David Lloyd: A wnaiff y Gweinidog ddatganiad am y cynllun Glastir? OAQ(3)1006(RAF) [W]

Elin Jones: Fe'ch cyfeiriaf at y datganiad cynhwysfawr a wneuthum ar y pwnc hwn yn y ddadl yn y Cyfarfod Llawn ar 16 Mawrth.

Glastir

Q15 David Lloyd: Will the Minister make a statement on the Glastir scheme? OAQ(3)1006(RAF) [W]

Elin Jones: I refer you to the comprehensive statement that I made on the subject, during the Plenary debate on 16 March.

Questions to the Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing

Clean Air Action Plan (Port Talbot)

Q10 Bethan Jenkins: Will the Minister provide an update on progress on the clean air action plan for Port Talbot? OAQ(3)1185(ESH)

The Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing (Jane Davidson): The Assembly Government published an action plan to improve air quality for Neath Port Talbot in 2009. Progress against all the actions identified in the plan is either complete or well under way, and my officials will review the plan in August in light of new evidence and data. A leaflet on air quality in Port Talbot is currently being distributed to every household.

Climate Change

Q11 Christine Chapman: What is the Welsh Assembly Government doing to tackle climate change in Wales? OAQ(3)1180(ESH)

Jane Davidson: The Assembly Government is fully committed to tackling the causes and consequences of climate change. The climate change strategy consultations of 2009 set out the action that is required to reduce emissions, foster behaviour change, and help us to adapt. I intend to publish the final strategy later this year.

Geothermal Energy Schemes

Q12 Bethan Jenkins: Will the Minister provide an update on any plans to roll out geothermal energy schemes? OAQ(3)1224(ESH)

Jane Davidson: Exploiting deep geothermal energy, for instance from warm water in deep coal mines, is not thought to be viable in Wales. However, heat can be extracted from near-surface soil using heat pumps. ACRES, the agricultural carbon reduction and efficiency scheme capital grant scheme, as part of Glastir, and the UK Government's renewable heat incentive starting in April 2011 will encourage uptake of this technology.

The Environment Strategy for Wales

Q13 Chris Franks: Will the Minister make a statement regarding the environment strategy for Wales? OAQ(3)1178(ESH)

Jane Davidson: The second environment strategy action plan for 2008-11 sets out 41 actions to be taken forward by the Assembly Government and 22 partners. The 2008-09 environment strategy annual report, launched last November, demonstrates the contribution that that makes to our environment strategy outcomes.

Food Independence

Q14 Leanne Wood: Will the Minister make a statement on increasing food independence in relation to building up community resilience? OAQ(3)1184(ESH) *Transferred for written answer by the Minister for Rural Affairs.*

The Minister for Rural Affairs (Elin Jones): I have set up a task and finish group that brings together Assembly Government officials, the Welsh Local Government Association, other key stakeholders and those actively engaged in community growing to develop options for encouraging and supporting communities or individuals wishing to grow their own produce. The group is in the process of refining its recommendations, and I expect to receive its final proposed action plan shortly.

Promoting Walking and Cycling

Q15 Mohammad Asghar: Will the Minister make a statement on the promotion of walking and cycling in Wales? OAQ(3)1183(ESH)

Jane Davidson: The Assembly Government is working with key partners to encourage greater participation in walking and cycling. Priorities for delivery are set out in the walking and cycling action plan, and include continued support for the safe routes in communities initiative, as well as other practical measures, including improved promotion.