

Answers to Questions not reached in Plenary 09/03/2011

[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

Apprenticeship

10. William Graham: What discussions has the Minister had about the Co-operative Farms agricultural apprenticeship scheme. OAQ(3)1300(RAF)

The Minister for Rural Affairs (Elin Jones): I have had no discussions, as this is an England-based scheme and the Co-operative does not have any farms in Wales. The Government provides financial support for apprenticeships through the young recruits programme, and additional support for young people wishing to enter the agricultural sector is provided through the young entrants support scheme.

Questions 11, OAQ(3)1295(RAF), and 12, OAQ(3)1296(RAF), were withdrawn

Community Orchards

13. Chris Franks: Will the Minister make a statement on support for the creation of community orchards. OAQ(3)1306(RAF)

Elin Jones: I am a firm supporter of community growing, as evidenced by the community grown food action plan that I launched in July last year. Community orchards are something that will be considered as part of the work being done to take that action plan forward.

Common Agricultural Policy

14. Nerys Evans: What recent discussions has the Minister had regarding the future of CAP direct payments. OAQ(3)1294(RAF)

Elin Jones: I recently met with the UK Government and devolved administrations in Brussels on 21 February 2011. During this meeting I reminded them of the importance of the single payment to Welsh farmers and how I am determined to oppose the UK Government's efforts to seek a reduction in the common agricultural policy budget.

Priorities

15. Mohammad Asghar: Will the Minister provide an update on her priorities for farmers in Wales. OAQ(3)1286(RAF)

Elin Jones: My priorities for the remainder of this Assembly include working to secure the best common agricultural policy deal possible, the implementation of Glastir, the eradication of bovine TB, and building on the success of my young entrants to agriculture support

scheme.

Questions to the Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing

Renewable Energy

10. Andrew R.T. Davies: Will the Minister make a statement on Welsh Assembly Government measures to promote the use of renewable energy. OAQ(3)1567(ESH)

The Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing (Jane Davidson): ‘A Low Carbon Revolution’ sets out the actions that will be taken to accelerate the transition to a resilient low-carbon energy system through energy efficiency measures and the promotion of indigenous renewable technologies. Practical steps include Welsh European Funding Office support for innovation, community-scale generation, the microgeneration accreditation scheme, and planning policies that facilitate renewable energy developments.

Priorities

11. Andrew R.T. Davies: Will the Minister make a statement on priorities for housing in South Wales Central. OAQ(3)1568(ESH)

The Deputy Minister for Housing and Regeneration (Jocelyn Davies): My priorities are set out in our national housing strategy. They include more affordable homes, the proposed housing Measure, improvements to the Supporting People programme, and the housing revenue account system. The work that I have put in place to address the changes in housing benefit is also important.

Flood and Coastal Risk Management

12. Darren Millar: Will the Minister provide an update on flood and coastal risk management in Wales. OAQ(3)1573(ESH)

Jane Davidson: This year we are investing £44.4 million in flood and coastal risk management, supplemented by £10 million in European funding. Initiatives are progressing to improve flood warnings, emergency response and public awareness. We consulted on a national strategy for flood and coastal erosion risk management, setting out our objectives, priorities and measures.

Dikerogammarus Villous

13. William Graham: Will the Minister outline the impact on the biodiversity of Welsh water habitats arising from the invasive shrimp species Dikerogammarus Villous. OAQ(3)1584(ESH)

Jane Davidson: The invasive shrimp has been found at two locations in Wales to date, Cardiff bay and Eglwys Nunydd in Port Talbot. Further surveillance will take place this spring. Meanwhile, we are working with DEFRA and the appropriate conservation agencies to determine the potential impact on biodiversity.

Affordable Housing

14. Gareth Jones: What are the Minister’s priorities for delivering more affordable housing in Aberconwy. OAQ(3)1576(ESH)

Jocelyn Davies: Within the wider context of the Welsh Government’s national housing

strategy, Conwy County Borough Council is responsible for setting the strategic housing agenda and priorities in Aberconwy, taking into account evidence of housing need. We will continue to support local authorities to best achieve their affordable housing delivery priorities.

Question 15, OAQ(3)1574(ESH), was withdrawn