

Elin Jones AM/AC
Y Gweinidog dros Faterion Gwledig
Minister for Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref: MB/EJ/0180/08

Paul Davies AM
Constituency Office
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17 May 2008

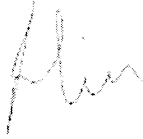
I am writing in response to your question to the First Minister raised in Plenary on 29 April 2008 where you asked whether there is a specific timeframe within which the European Union must warn the Welsh Assembly Government that regulations are being implemented. Your question was raised in the context of complaints that you have received from farmers who are having difficulties receiving their Tir Gofal payments and your understanding that this was because the Welsh Assembly Government was not prepared sufficiently to introduce regulatory changes in a timely manner.

There is generally no pre-determined timescales for the European Union to inform the Welsh Assembly Government regarding the introduction of new regulations. Regulations are mainly brought into force through debate by the relevant European management committees attended by all member states and the Welsh Assembly Government is involved in this process. The length of this process, including the periods for debating the draft regulations, can vary considerably depending on the specific measures being addressed.

When I wrote to you on 11 March 2008 I explained that the requirement for the Welsh Assembly Government to carry out administrative checks on CAP and Rural Development schemes claims, including cross-checks using electronic means, was made clear in Article 24 of Commission Regulation (EC) 796/2004. This Regulation was made on 21 April 2004 and applies to aid applications from 1 January 2005. The Welsh Assembly Government has been building functionality to conduct administrative checks electronically on a phased basis, building year on year, and the integration of the Tir Gofal administration from the Countryside Council for Wales in October 2006 was part of this programme to enable a more efficient delivery of the cross-checking requirement.

The Tir Gofal Scheme achieved its budgetary spend by the end of March 2008. Payments to agreement holders between 1 April 2007 and 28 March 2008 totalled £27.98million.

I hope this is helpful.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elin', written in a cursive style.

Elin Jones AC/AM
Y Gweinidog dros Faterion Gwledig
Minister for Rural Affairs