

Answers to the Written Assembly Questions for answer on 20 January 2011

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

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

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To ask the Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning

Jenny Randerson (Cardiff Central): What assessment has the Minister made of the potential merits of the 'European Survey on Language Competences' for Wales. (WAQ56941)

Answer issued on 24 January 2011

Discussions took place in 2008 with the UK Government on participation in the ESLC. Wales decided to focus resources on broader international surveys of skills such as PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment). The value of the ESLC is considered to be limited by two factors: lack of eligibility to include the assessment of Welsh as one of the two compulsory languages taught; and omissions in participation by key Member States such as Germany and Italy, and the UK's participation being represented by England only.

We are keen however, to consider the survey results to be published in early 2012, as well as any lessons for Modern Foreign Language policy and delivery in Wales.

The Welsh Assembly Government's commitment to improve opportunities to learn a foreign language is set out in the action plan, Making Languages Count, published in July 2010.

To ask the Minister for Economy and Transport

Mohammad Asghar (South Wales East): What steps have been taken by the Welsh Assembly Government to encourage Welsh firms to apply for tier one contracts related to the 2012 London Olympics. (WAQ56943)

Answer issued on 19 January 2011

The Welsh Assembly Government has promoted and delivered an on-going campaign to raise awareness of business opportunities associated with the Olympic Games to help companies maximise those opportunities, including joint events with the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) in Wales and visits to the Olympic Park for potential suppliers.

Officials are ramping up engagement with Welsh businesses on the estimated £700m of remaining contracts set to be awarded to businesses in the run up to 2012. Activities will include:

- o tendering events with businesses from Wales; to be held on 1 and 3 February 2011 in Swansea and Mold, and
- o joint events with project sponsors BT, Deloitte and Lloyds TSB in Cardiff on 8 March 2011 and at Llandudno - date to be confirmed.

We will continue to work with the ODA and the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games to identify opportunities for Welsh businesses.

Mohammad Asghar (South Wales East): What assessment has the Minister made of the number of tier one contracts related to the 2012 London Olympics won by Welsh firms. (WAQ56944)

Answer issued on 19 January 2011

Based on information released by the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games (LOCOG), the value of tier one contracts awarded directly by the Olympic Delivery Authority to Welsh businesses is currently valued at £668,403. It is difficult to accurately assess the value

of the contracts as a number are subject to commercial confidentiality and not fully declared within overall figures. We continue to work with the Olympic Delivery Authority and LOCOG to fully assess the value and benefits of contracts related to the 2012 London Olympics enjoyed by Welsh firms.

To ask the Minister for Heritage

Mohammad Asghar (South Wales East): Will the Minister provide an update on which nations plan to base their pre-games training camps for the London 2012 Olympics in Wales, and provide an update on any on-going discussions with nations yet to make a decision. (WAQ56942)

Answer issued on 24 January 2011

To date, we have attracted four countries to Wales that have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Welsh Assembly Government outlining their intentions to train in Wales. Multi-sport Paralympic teams from Australia, New Zealand and South Africa will carry out their immediate pre Games training in Wales. Australia and South Africa will base its team in Cardiff and Newport whilst New Zealand will be based in Swansea. The Trinidad and Tobago Olympic Committee has also committed to basing its team in Cardiff, along with the Amateur International Amateur Boxing Association ‘Road to London’ training camp.

The highly successful British Olympic and Paralympic Cycling teams will be based at the Newport velodrome which will be running at maximum capacity before the Olympic and Paralympic Games. The Irish Triathlon team will be based at the world class facilities at Swansea University and the surrounding Gower Peninsular.

In total to date, it is anticipated that camps will involve over 700 athletes and support staff who will train in Wales in the lead in to the Games with a direct investment into the economy running into millions of pounds and will provide the opportunity to develop sporting, cultural and social legacy opportunities for Wales.

The Welsh Assembly Government and partners have hosted National Olympic Committee visits from the following countries that have yet to decide where they will be based in the UK in the lead in to 2012:

Australia (Athletics), Belarus, Botswana, China (Boxing), India, Indonesia, Ireland, Papua New Guinea, Russia, Slovakia

Other nations who have expressed an interest in undertaking recce/fact finding visits to Wales in the near future include Brazil, Israel and Mexico..

To ask the Minister for Rural Affairs

Brynle Williams (North Wales): Will the Minister make a statement on the progress made to date to fulfil each ‘One Wales’ commitment within her portfolio. (WAQ56937)

Answer issued on 20 January 2011

I refer you to the latest version of my Department’s One Wales Delivery Plan progress report:

Commitment number	One Wales commitment	Status	Progress
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Commitment number	One Wales commitment	Status	Progress
		year period of current Action Plan.	woodland creation grant for inclusion into the Glastir scheme. This was formally launched by the Minister for Rural Affairs on 21 October 2010. A Glastir woodland management stakeholder group has also been set up in order to exchange information with key forestry stakeholders in respect of the woodland components of Glastir.
169(i)	Submit rural development plan for 2007-13 to the EU based on the level of Tir Mynydd funding agreed by the Assembly in March 2007	Delivered	Rural Development Plan (RDP) approved by the European Commission in February 2008 and delivery of all schemes progressing according to targets and budgets.
169(ii)	Develop a replacement Tir Mynydd scheme post 2010	Delivered and ongoing - TCD -1 January 2012	In May 2009, the Minister for Rural Affairs announced a shift in approach to land management schemes in Wales. From 1st January 2012, the four existing agri-environment schemes will be replaced by one sustainable land management scheme, Glastir. The first round of the scheme has yielded nearly 3000 applications. In addition, as referred to in 168 (ii), the Glastir woodland creation scheme has been launched. Applications for the Common Land element of the scheme are expected in early 2011 and the first targeted element applications will be processed in May 2011.
169(iii)	Develop a new farm entrants scheme taking into account the impact on other elements within axis two	Delivered	The first year of the Young Entrants Support Scheme (YESS) is now complete with 114 successful applications awarded grant totalling £1.5 million, supported by over £2.7 million of private sector leverage. The second application window opened on the 18 October and closed on the 14 January 2011. Six strategic awareness days have been held recently, including further promotion at the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society's Winter Fair.
170	Major initiative on local food procurement	TCD - by end 2012	The delivery of the Local Sourcing Action plan has progressed well since its launch in April 2009. It sets out a range of measures to increase levels of local sourcing by both the public and private sector. 100% of the plan is now underway or completed. A report on progress against the plan will be published later this year.
171	Shortly complete, publish and implement strategy for dairy industry		Launched in 2007, the Strategic Action Plan for the Welsh Dairy Industry is reviewed periodically. Activities related to the action plan are monitored to ensure the objectives are met and actions delivered

Commitment number	One Wales commitment	Status	Progress
		Delivered	<p>accordingly. Much of the plan has been delivered. The Action Plan is being reviewed with a view to developing a new action plan to ensure the plan is relevant and able to meet the changing needs of the industry.</p> <p>In addition, a new, over-arching Food Strategy for Wales – Food for Wales, Food from Wales was launched in December 2010.</p> <p>This sets a long term, ambitious, and proactive agenda to address the challenges ahead for the wider food sector.</p> <p>Any existing action plans – including that for the dairy sector will be re-visited in the light of the direction provided by the new food strategy. This will ensure that any actions will meet the changing needs of the industry.</p>
172	Seek derogation from EU regulations to prohibit burying fallen stock on farm land	TCD - March 2011	<p>Following refusal by EC for a return to burial of fallen stock on farm land, WAG has been successful in achieving a revision to the Animal By-Products Regulations to include provision for on-farm containment. This will come into force in March 2011. In parallel to this, WAG has funded research into on farm containment – bioreducer system. Following satisfactory completion of the research, WAG will support an application to the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) to be considered an accepted process under the revised regulations. Final results are due imminently and the dossier will be presented shortly thereafter.</p>
173	Vigorously pursue programme of TB eradication	TCD 2020	<p>A comprehensive TB Eradication Programme is in place which includes measures to address all sources of bovine TB infection (Annual report on the programme provided to the Rural Development Sub-Committee in July 2010). The Minister for Rural Affairs announced in September 2010 a consultation on a new draft Order to pursue a badger control strategy in a specified area in West Wales. The consultation closed on 17 December. The Minister for Rural Affairs is now considering the responses to the badger control strategy and the other consultation that recently closed on non bovines, with a view to making a decision on how to proceed in due course.</p>
174	Identify and address needs of deep rural areas	Delivered	<p>The Deep Rural Localities Report has been published and the key areas for action were agreed with Cabinet in November 2009. Implementation of actions on ICT, integration of community transport and rural proofing service delivery proceeding well.</p>
175	Maximum restriction on GM crops	TCD –	<p>As announced in an Oral Statement on 22 June 2010, policy on GM crop cultivation in Wales is to be developed. The first stage of this will be the creation</p>

Commitment number	One Wales commitment	Status	Progress
		Nov 2011	of a public register of those intending to grow GM crops in Wales. Officials are in discussion with Legal Counsel to review plans for taking forward the public register and to obtain general legal advice.
180	Promote energy efficiency and renewable energy production on-farm	Delivered	The Farming Connect Climate Change Development Programme was awarded to Bangor University and IBERS in August 2009. The programme offers advice on all aspects of energy efficiency and renewable energy production by holding on-farm events giving practical demonstrations and discussion groups to share knowledge and information. Up to five days one-to-one subsidised advice is available to farmers interested in energy efficiency and renewable energy production through the Whole Farm Plan. Up to 1500 euros of subsidised advice is also available through the Farm Advisory Service.
181	Explore introduction of grant scheme to convert to energy crops	Delivered	The Minister for Rural Affairs announced (as part of the Glastir announcement in Plenary in May 2009) that there would be no energy crops scheme.

Brynle Williams (North Wales): What assessment has the Welsh Assembly Government made of the risk to processing capacity within Wales of (a) the on-going decline in breeding livestock numbers and (b) changes to meat hygiene services cost recovery. (WAQ56938)

Answer issued on 20 January 2011

Breeding ewe numbers in Wales at June 2010 stood at 4,110,000, 2.9% higher than in June 2009. Female cattle numbers aged 2 years or older stood at 516,000 compared to a June 2009 figure of 511,000. Dairy and non-dairy breeds combined, were also up slightly in June 2010 compared with the June 2009 figure. Although the numbers in fact show an increase rather than decrease, it is too early to say whether this reversal in the decline of breeding livestock numbers will continue. (Source: Defra).

It is too early to report what effect the FSA meat hygiene charging changes will have on the processing capacity within Wales. We must wait for the outcome of the FSA consultation and I shall be formally responding to that consultation.

I will ensure that the FSA remains aware of its statutory obligations to consider the interests of businesses with a low throughput, and the action incumbent on it in the Welsh Assembly Government Food, Farming and Countryside strategy to work with us and Hybu Cig Cymru to devise a charging regime that is fair for small abattoirs.

Brynle Williams (North Wales): Will the Minister make a statement on what specific ways the on-going review of on-farm red tape has increased the competitiveness of the Welsh agricultural industry. (WAQ56939)

Answer issued on 20 January 2011

The Red Tape Review does not specifically address the issue of competitiveness although aspects of it assist in this respect. Its main objective is to seek to reduce the administrative burden on farmers and to offer suitable explanations where a continuing element of procedure is deemed necessary or desirable.

Brynle Williams (North Wales): What assessment has the Minister made of the conclusions of the Silver Birch exercise and their implications for animal health in Wales. (WAQ56940)

Answer issued on 20 January 2011

Conclusions and recommendations have not yet been finalised as the reports by Welsh Assembly Government and DEFRA are still being prepared, which involves the gathering of views and comments from participants. Welsh Assembly Government is also in the process of reviewing the current Government Framework Response Plan and Overview of Emergency Preparedness, which will take full account of recommendations arising from Silver Birch.