

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWER 4-8 May 2015

Questions were asked *inter alia* on: salmon smolts, community based industry, and CAP payments.

Monday 4 May

No relevant questions.

Tuesday 5 May

Enterprise and Environment

Rob Gibson (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government, in light of the draft recommendations in the wild fishing review, what research it is conducting on the potential benefits of releasing salmon smolts from hatcheries into salmon fishing rivers.

(S4W-25306)

Aileen McLeod: The Scottish Government is in the process of publishing a review of the performance of hatchery-reared salmon smolts (the stage at which the fish are changing from the freshwater to marine form) stocked in to Scottish waters (often termed 'salmon ranching'). The percentage of ranched smolts that return as adults is much lower than would be expected from salmon reared naturally in the wild. The report concludes that it is not clear that smolt ranching is an economically viable proposition. The report also notes that the practice of ranching carries potential threats to native populations of Atlantic salmon that would need to be balanced against any potential economic benefits.

Stocking of salmon smolts has been undertaken in a number of rivers over the years, although there are few examples of extant long term programmes. The Scottish Government did not receive any applications to stock salmon smolts in 2014, although such consents may have been approved by local district salmon fishery boards. The River Carron is often used as an example of benefits of stocking smolts, however a number of different life stages of salmon have been stocked in the river since 1995 and smolt stocking ceasing in 2011. A recent review by the University of Highlands and Islands concluded that it was not possible to determine whether stocking of salmon played a role in the increasing rod catch within the River Carron.

Wednesday 6 May

Enterprise and Environment

Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what support it provides to help sustain and promote community-based industries.

(S4O-04303)

John Swinney: The Scottish Government is committed to supporting sustainable economic growth and tackling inequality across Scotland. Businesses, including community-based industries, can benefit from the wide range of support our enterprise agencies and local authorities provide.

In addition, enterprising third sector organisations can access business support through Just Enterprise. Supported by the Scottish Government, Just Enterprise is committed to the growth and sustainability of Scotland's third sector – start up, business support, business recovery, procurement, leadership and learning services are all available.

Thursday 7 May

Enterprise and Environment

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government on what date it will publish details of the payment regions under the new common agricultural policy, and what discussions it has had with NFU Scotland regarding the delays in publication.

(S4W-25316)

Richard Lochhead: Details of the payment regions were announced to Parliament on the 11 June 2014. Since then, in October 2014, we wrote to each individual farmer with details of the provisional allocation of their agricultural land into the three new payment regions. Farmers were given the opportunity to request a review of the provisional allocation and we are currently working through those review requests.

Payment regions and payment rates can only be finalised once the 2015 single application Form forms have been submitted and validated and we know how much land has been declared and claimed in each region. We have regular discussions with NFUS on a number of issues including the CAP.

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government whether farmers applying for support under the new common agricultural policy will be required to submit their Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS) forms in advance of the publication of the details about the payment regions.

(S4W-25318)

Richard Lochhead: As per the answer to question S4W-25316 on 7 May 2015, farmers have already received details of the provisional allocations of their agricultural land into the three payment regions, however, this information is not necessary for the completion of the single application form (SAF). Farmers should complete their SAFs without delay ensuring that they only declare eligible land and eligible activity for the area they are seeking payments. Once this information is validated final allocation of payment regions can be made. All answers to written parliamentary questions are available on the Parliament's website, the search facility for which can be found at: <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx>.

Friday 8 May

No relevant questions.