

Mr Alun Thomas
Secretary to the S4C Authority
S4C
Parc Tŷ Glas
Llanishen
Cardiff
CF14 5DU

NFU CYMRU
Ty-Amaeth — Agriculture House,
Royal Welsh Showground, Builth Wells,
Powys, LD2 3TU
Telephone: 01982 554200
Fax: 01982 554201
Website: www.nfu-cymru.org.uk
nfu.cymru@nfu.org.uk
28th June 2007

Dear Mr Thomas

S4C Consultation — Serving Children in the Digital Future

NFU Cymru represents 15,000 members in Wales and we are pleased to be making a response to S4C's consultation on the future of children's digital programming.

Whilst we recognise the importance of increased children's programming we are concerned about the impact that this might have on coverage of Assembly proceedings.

Since the establishment of the National Assembly for Wales in 1999, NFU Cymru has been closely following developments in Cardiff Bay. The televising of the proceedings of the National Assembly on S4C2 has provided us with a fantastic means of monitoring and following events at the National Assembly, and we are concerned at the prospect of broadcasts from the National Assembly being curtailed in the way that is suggested in the consultation document.

At a time when the National Assembly is gaining increasing powers to legislate in its 20 fields of competence it becomes ever more important that proceedings at the National Assembly continue to be televised live. To abandon or reduce coverage at this stage would in NFU Cymru's view be a retrograde step. Whilst there is sometimes no substitute for actually going down to the Assembly itself, there can be no doubt that having the option of television coverage of National Assembly proceedings does save many car journeys, as well as saving travel time for those people who live quite far away from Cardiff. I also know from speaking to our members that a good many of them regularly tune in to watch proceedings at the National Assembly, especially if there is something of interest on in the chamber. In many cases watching S4C broadcasts are the only interaction that many people in isolated rural communities have with the National Assembly.

Of the three main options identified in your consultation paper we would ideally favour option 3 whereby the current level of broadcasts from the National Assembly are maintained and an uninterrupted New Service is also broadcast using additional and new capacity. This option would fully accommodate both the needs of children's programming and the needs of those who wish to follow National Assembly proceedings, but we are aware that capacity and funding issues may act to preclude this option.

Were option 3 found to be unfeasible, in our view Option 1 strikes the best balance between the importance of Welsh language children's programming and the need for live coverage of National Assembly proceedings.

In view of this need to obtain a balance between the needs of children's programming and coverage of the National Assembly, we would be dismayed should S4C opt for option 2 and cease broadcasting National Assembly proceedings altogether. If S4C were to decide on this option then we would want reassurance that such a move would be accompanied by a seamless transfer of coverage to a third party broadcaster, that there is no deterioration the level of coverage and that coverage continues to be available on the same basis as currently available i.e. via digital satellite, terrestrial and cable.

I trust you will find my comments useful, should you wish to discuss anything that I have said any further, then please do not hesitate before contacting me.

Yours sincerely

Huw Thomas
Assembly Adviser