

## Direct shipping routes to Europe could impact on Irish meat exports

**The option to bypass the UK entirely and ship products directly to continental Europe might prove an attractive option for Irish meat exporters once the UK leaves the European Union (EU).**

Irish shipping companies are reportedly making plans to bypass British ports after Brexit and travel direct to the continent to avoid new customs checks, increased costs and possible tailbacks that a stop at British ports may bring.



The plans may have a direct impact on meat and livestock exporters, as Irish hauliers have brought forward new direct routes.

In a survey conducted last March, the Irish Exporters Association (IEA), the voice of Irish exporters, reported that 57% of its members said that if transit time through the UK land-bridge were to extend due to additional controls and/or costs were to increase, they would opt to supply using a direct shipping service to a Benelux or other continental port.

This result comes despite promises by the British government that future trade will be 'frictionless', and agreement on a Brexit transition period prolonging the status quo until the end of 2020.

While freight traffic between Ireland and the UK will continue, a number of companies have already launched direct sea connections between Dublin and ports in Spain, France, Belgium and the Netherlands.

These include CLdN, a shipping company in Luxembourg, and the Irish Continental Group.