

Country report on animal welfare during long distance transport by land and sea

# Ireland

Speaker(s) name

- Dr William Sheehan (Veterinary Inspector/Veterinary Liaison Officer), Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
- Dr James Butler (Veterinary Inspector), Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

---

Multi-regional Whole Journey Scenario workshop on long-distance transport by land and sea between Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa

13- 15 January 2026, Amman, Jordan

---



World Organisation  
for Animal Health



# National Animal Welfare Standards: Dedicated Livestock Vessels

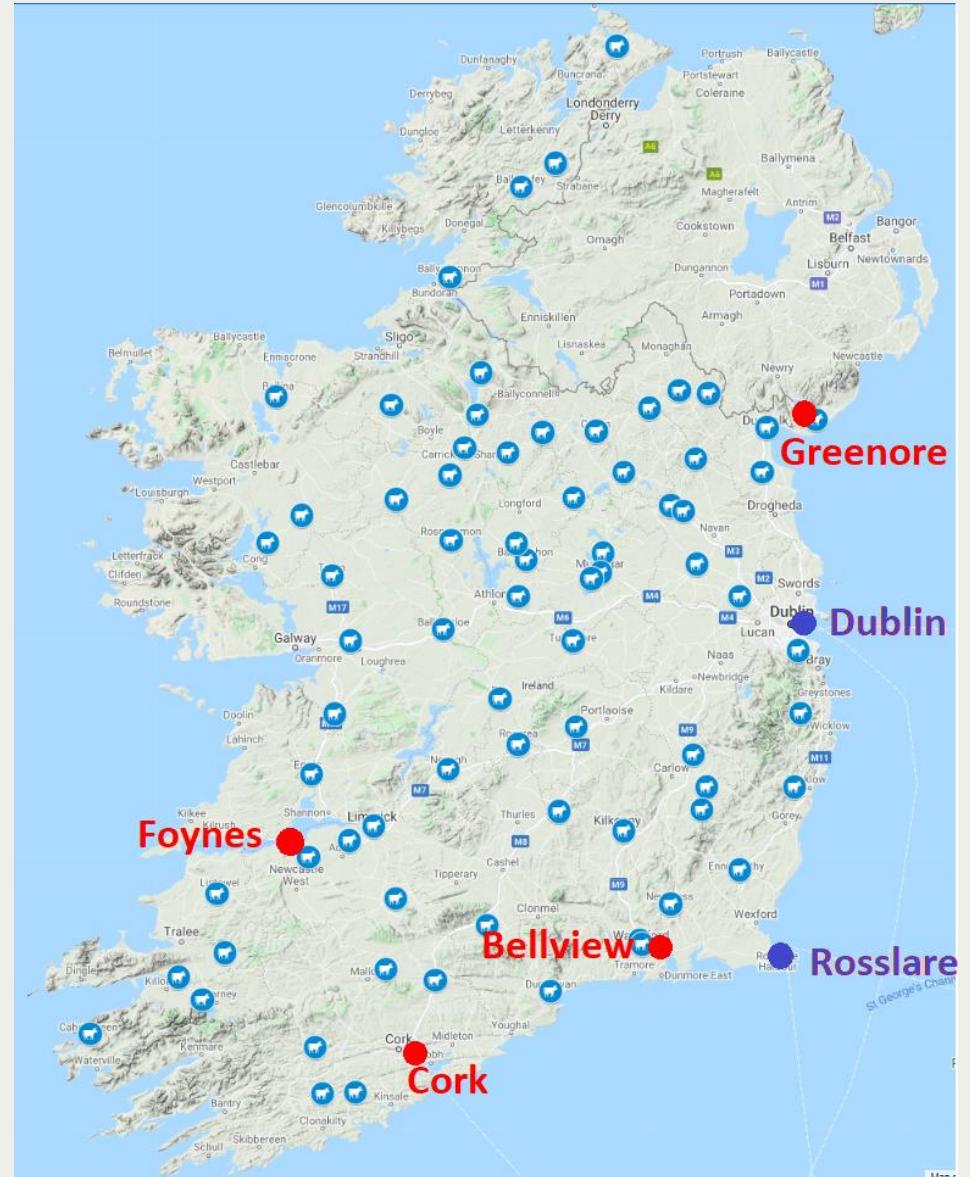


1. Background of livestock trade and relevant regulations in Ireland
2. Implementation – Vessel Approval & Checks Before, During and After Loading of Cattle



# Introduction

- Map shows assembly centres and major loading points for sea transport
- 300,000 + livestock exported annually
- Relatively few livestock imports
- Standards are laid down in Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 & supplementary national legislation





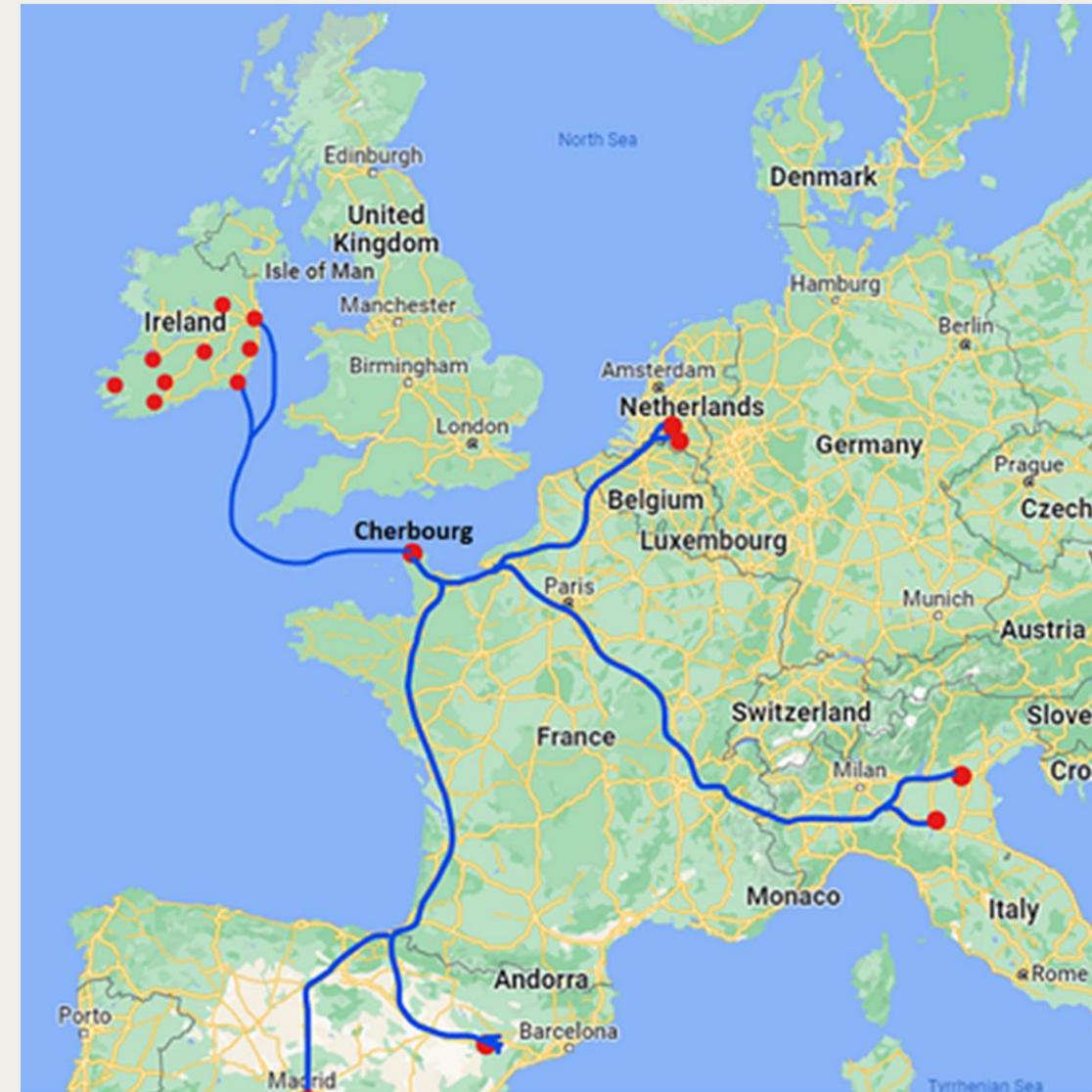
# Overview of country - livestock transport and trade

Cumulative Total by Country - all cattle traded from Ireland				
Export Destination	2025	2024	2023	2022
Spain	116139	109392	75042	73239
Netherlands	85418	78801	107284	97776
Northern Ireland	48065	58803	54409	48775
Italy	42145	40750	36463	29846
Poland	28553	25578	16987	3973
Romania	3268	4239	433	76
Hungary	1525	7001	4175	1463
Algeria	3583	2044	380	
Tunisia	2740	1390	235	
Morocco	2302	24983	30	
Libya	117	842	2405	9196
Egypt				3617
Turkey			2229	5571
Middle East Countries	1874	5466	7909	3387
Other Countries	18751	24931	15178	9408
<b>Totals</b>	<b>354480</b>	<b>384220</b>	<b>323159</b>	<b>286327</b>

- Most trade consists of calves traded to **EU countries** by **truck & ferry**.
- However, although lower in number, many stronger and more valuable animals are traded by **dedicated livestock vessels**, to trading partners in **Mediterranean Region** as shown.

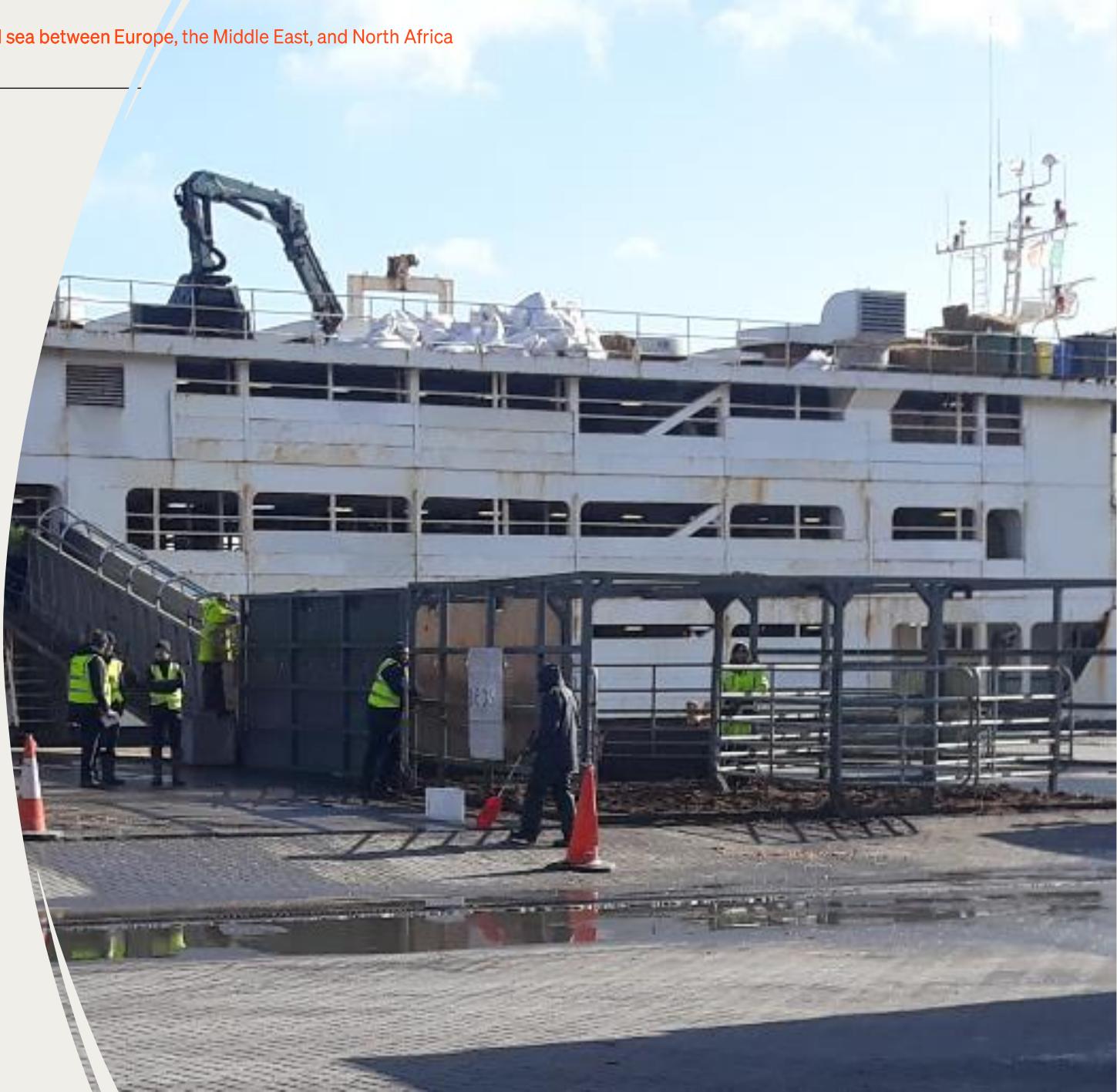
# Trade to European Union countries

- Large numbers of bovine animals to Spain, Netherlands, Italy – most are unweaned or young calves.
- Travel by truck and ferry
- Enter continental Europe via Cherbourg port
- Control Posts in Cherbourg – 12 hours rest for all unweaned calves, feeding.
- Council Regulation(EC) No 1/2005 & S.I. No. 580/2007 (Animal Transport - Roll-on Roll-off vessels)



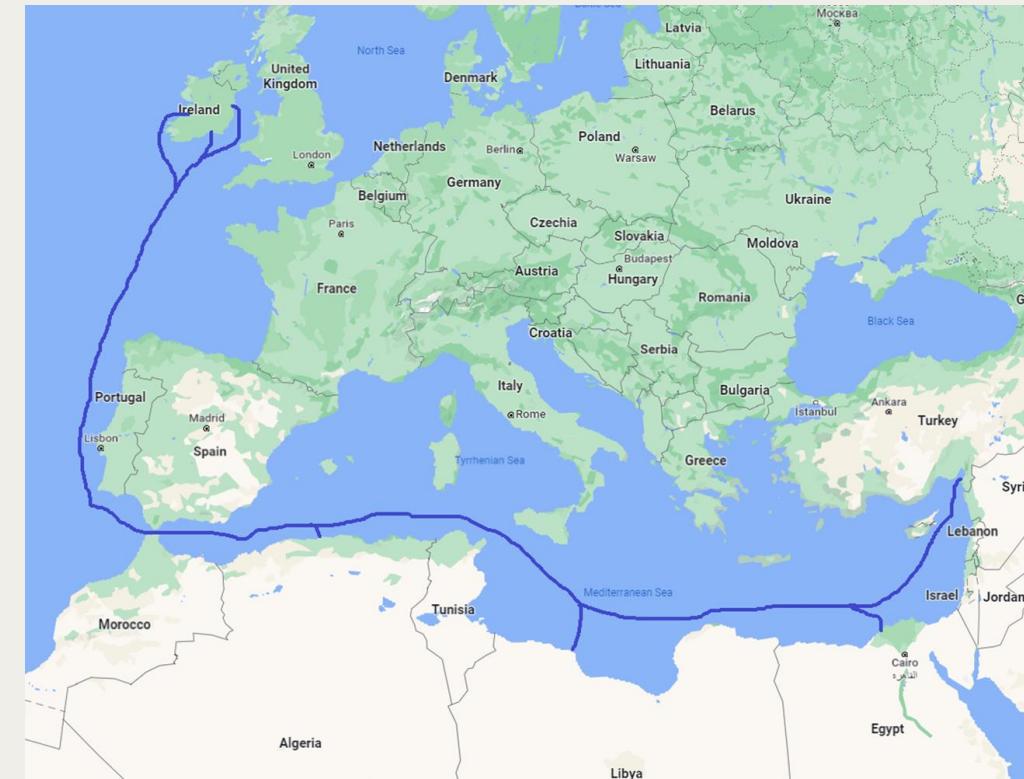
# Dedicated Livestock Vessels: Background

- Typically 8-10 voyages per year of cattle from Ireland aboard dedicated livestock vessels
- Average of approx. 1800 cattle per voyage
- Mediterranean region
- Journey varies 4 - 12 days (dependant on destination)



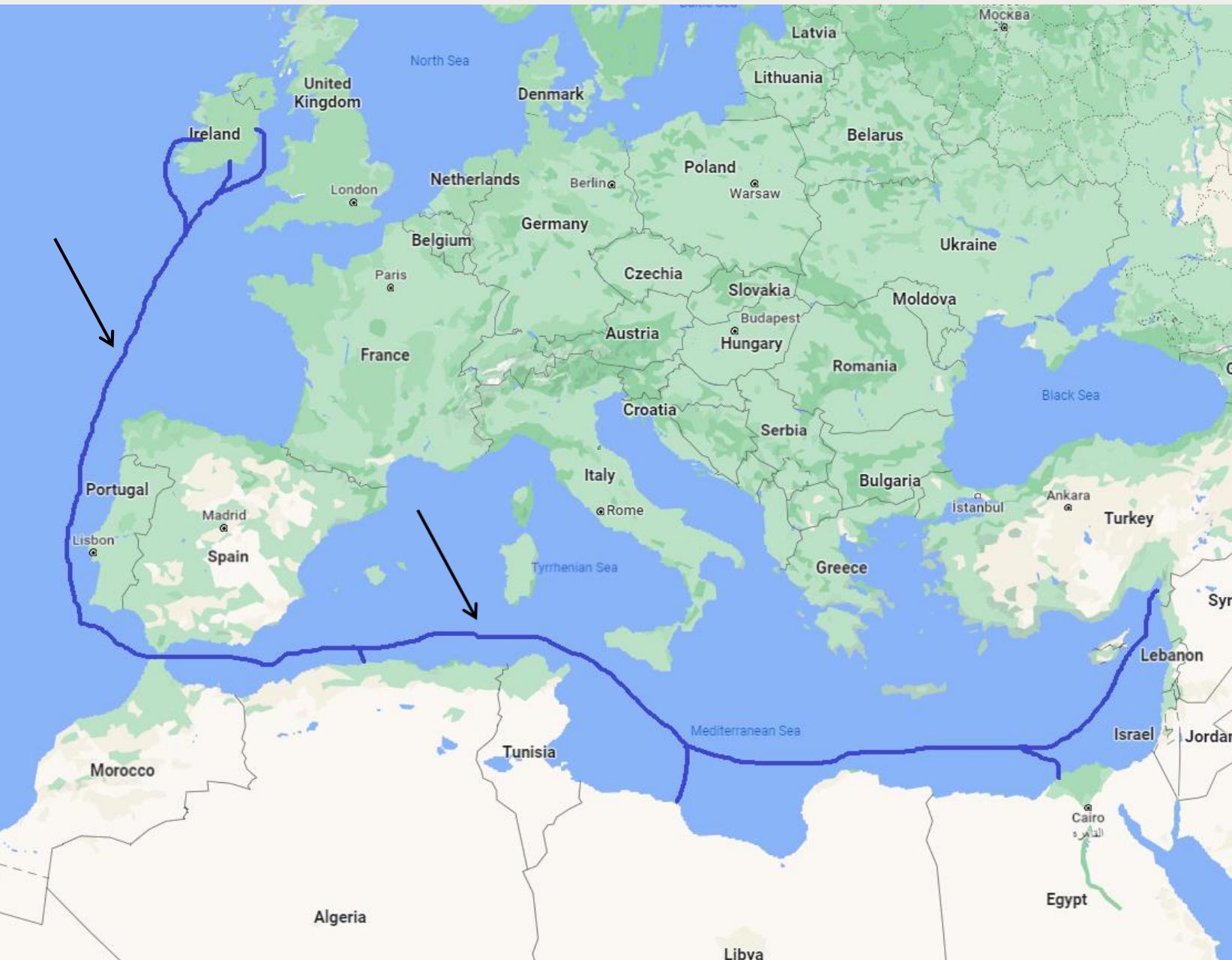
# Numbers of cattle exported from Ireland to Mediterranean-region countries neighbouring EU

Country	2025	2024	2023	2022
Algeria	3583	2044	380	
Tunisia	2740	1390	235	
Morocco	2302	24983	30	
Libya	117	842	2405	9196
Egypt				3617
Turkey			2229	5571
Middle East Countries	1874	5466	7909	3387
<b>Totals</b>	<b>10616</b>	<b>34725</b>	<b>13188</b>	<b>21771</b>



# Livestock exports from Ireland on Dedicated Livestock Vessels

- Atlantic portion of journey – potential for high waves.
- Mediterranean portion – potential for high temperatures.
- Onward journey of cattle after voyage - reliant on operator for information.
- Conditions and care of animals aboard ship.





# Competent Authority(ies)

---

- Irish Competent Authority = Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
- Authorities of other EU Member States are involved if animals are transported by road through Europe to a Mediterranean port (e.g. France, Spain, Croatia, Slovenia)
- Standards are those laid down in EU Rules
  - primarily [Regulation \(EC\) No 1/2005](#) on the protection of animals during transport
  - Lays down standards for fitness of animals, pre-transport inspection, certification, record-keeping, assembly centres, vehicles and ships.
- Ireland also has national legislation for vessels, and ferries carrying livestock, that goes beyond EU rules
  - [Statutory Instrument no 356 of 2016](#) for dedicated livestock vessels
  - [Statutory Instrument no 580 of 2007](#) for roll-on-roll-off ferries carrying livestock in vehicles



# Ireland's National Rules



- **Statutory Instrument no 356 of 2016 - Dedicated Livestock Vessels** - Sets out:
  - Vessel inspection and approval
  - Weather conditions
  - Voyage Plan
  - Inspection before loading
  - Duties of Master of the Vessel, and loading and care of livestock, stocking densities
  - Stability requirements, design of pens, stalls & passageways, ventilation, electrical, drainage, lighting, fire-fighting systems
  - Master's Report
  - Feed, water, patrols of crew

# Implementation of the Standards:

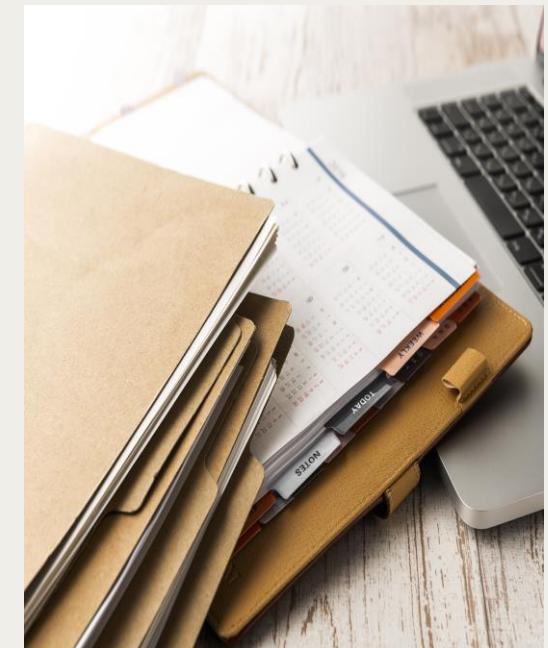
## Process for livestock vessel approval (Irish national rules)

!! Only an approved livestock vessel may transport livestock!!

- **Documentary check first – document review fee €900**

➤ To screen out the lowest quality vessels:

- a) **Flag State must be on White List** as published annually by the Paris Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control
- b) **Performance Level of the Recognised Organisation (RO)** issuing statutory certificates on behalf of Flag state must be recorded as **High** in the RO performance table published by the Paris MoU
- c) **Performance Level of the International Safety Management (ISM)** operating company must **not** be listed as “**Low or Very Low**”





# Implementation of the Standards:

## *Conditions for vessel approval (Irish national rules)*

### **Documentary check:**

- History of vessel, crew profile (relevant experience and competence), Stability information
- International Convention Certificates
  - International Convention Certificates
  - Safety Construction certificate
  - Safety Equipment certificate
  - Safety Radio Certificate
  - International Load Line Certificate
  - International Oil Pollution Certificate
  - International Air Pollution Certificate
  - International Sewage Pollution Certificate
  - Maritime Labour Convention Certificate
- Detailed plans, livestock pen plan, test results, power systems, ventilation, drainage, fuel capacities, storage, fire-fighting, lighting, drinking water, emergency backup systems



# Implementation of the Standards:

## *Physical inspection of the vessel*

- €10,000 deposit to cover inspection fee & travel costs
  - Vessel will only be inspected if document review is satisfactory.
  - Inspection usually not carried out in Ireland.
  - **Joint inspection with specialised Veterinary Inspector and Marine Surveyor.(NOW REQUIRED UNDER IMPLEMENTING REG 2023/372)**
  - Opening meeting – important to meet the officers. Outline plan for inspection.
  - Extremely detailed – all systems – can take 1-2 days
  - May require additional documents or additional stability calculations
  - Detailed inspection and demonstration of machinery, alarm tests, pens, all required equipment.
  - Deck surface non-slip, easily cleaned; Fittings safe & suitable



# Physical Inspection of Vessel

---

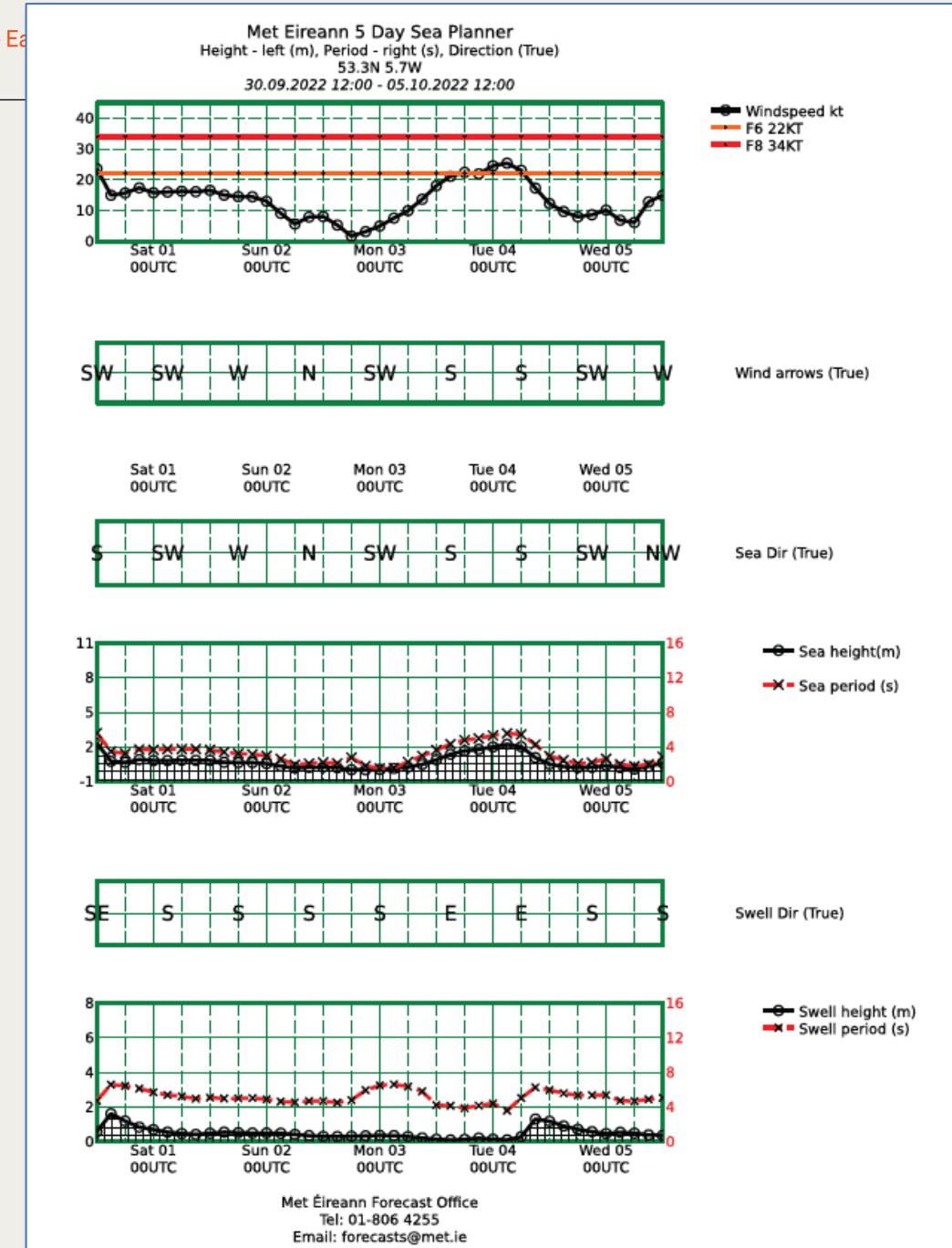
- Insulation provided for engine room bulkhead, tank-top floor, uppermost roofs
- Electrical cables and electrical fittings safely secured
- Design, dimensions and strength of pens and passageways, pen numbering, hospital pens
- Loading arrangements –ramps, slopes, foot battens, side protection and surfaces
- Ventilation, lighting, drainage (flood the decks), firefighting, feed, fresh water
- Engine room, electrical generation, water storage/generation, backup systems all inspected.
- Closing meeting with officers – outline preliminary findings.
- Two independent inspection reports; re-inspection of any non-compliances, final reports
- Approval Certificate, with conditions as appropriate. Approval for up to 5 years





# Checks before, during and after loading

- Five days notice of loading required
- Specialised weather report from Met Éireann (Ireland's state weather service)
- Does not depart if predicted wind of F8
- Vessels of <90m does not depart if predicted wind of F6



# Checks before, during and after loading



- Feed: 2% of live body weight of Hay of good quality
- 1.6% of live body weight of meal
- Generally mixture of 1/3 Hay and 2/3 meal
- Reserve of 25% or 3 days whichever lesser



# Checks before, during and after loading

---

- **Documentary check** – Master's report of last voyage (mortalities, sick/injured, weather encountered), cleansing & disinfection, crew list, cattle capacity plan, vessel approval certificate –conditions attached?
- **Physical inspection** – important as fittings deteriorate rapidly at sea – cleanliness, ventilation, drainage, feed & water storage & delivery, structure & facilities – pens, ramps, passageways; lighting, bedding
- **Loading Inspection** – Veterinary Inspector with Technical Agricultural Officers monitoring at all times – handling practices, fitness for transport, stocking density



# Checks before, during and after loading

- Stocking densities varies for journeys >12 days or into Red Sea (approx. 11% more space allowance)
- Loading Plan
- Stockman
- Veterinary Inspector travels with first voyage after initial approval and occasional voyages thereafter – welfare outcomes during voyage considered good.



# Veterinary accompaniment

- An inspector will accompany the first voyage after approval
- In Ireland, inspectors accompany as many sailings as possible
- Specialist sea survival training is provided
- Independent assessment of crew and ship performance
- Report is issued to HQ post voyage



# Thank you

---

Multi-regional Whole Journey Scenario workshop on long-distance transport  
by land and sea between Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa

13- 15 January 2026, Amman, Jordan

---



World Organisation  
for Animal Health