

## Ireland secures access to Thai market for beef exports

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In a significant development for Ireland's agriculture sector, the Thai market has officially opened to Irish beef exports. This milestone was announced today by Martin Heydon, the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Marine, and Noel Grealish, the Minister of State responsible for Food Promotion and New Markets.

Minister Heydon emphasised the strategic importance of this achievement, noting that Thailand has been designated as a priority market for Irish beef. He acknowledged the extensive efforts made by his department over the years to secure this access, highlighting the role of political, diplomatic, and official engagements in advancing Ireland's case. "Last autumn's trade mission provided further impetus to our efforts, and it is great to see our hard work now bearing fruit," he stated.

Thailand, the second-largest economy in Southeast Asia, has a population of over 65 million and a growing middle class, presenting a promising opportunity for Irish agri-food exporters. Minister Heydon described the opening of the Thai market as a significant step forward, offering Irish beef producers the chance to capitalize on this new access.

Minister Grealish welcomed the Thai government's endorsement of Ireland's high food safety standards and underscored the importance of expanding international markets for the sustainability and growth of the Irish beef sector. "Thailand increases the number of markets for Irish beef to over 70, and we are actively working on additional markets, including Vietnam," he noted. "Every new market enhances the economic sustainability of our beef sector and positively impacts family farms and rural employment."

The access agreement includes all edible parts of beef, both bone-in and boneless cuts, in fresh and frozen forms, although beef offal is not included. This agreement follows a rigorous application process and marks the first bilateral deal for Irish meat

exports to Thailand.

With beef consumption in Thailand projected to exceed 3 kg per capita by 2028, driven by a growing population, rising disposable incomes, recovering tourism, and an expanding food service sector, Ireland is well-positioned to enter this thriving market.