

Dairy companies lead Irish trade mission to Iran

By: Ciaran Moran - April 25, 2016



Aidan Cotter of Bord Bia

A high-level trade mission to Iran is taking place this week with the Department of Agriculture and Bord Bia.

The trade mission, which left this weekend, will have a strong emphasis on dairy and a number of leading Irish dairy companies will be part of the 17-company delegation.

Bord Bia's CEO Aidan Cotter will head up the trade mission and a departmental delegation is also in Morocco and Algeria next week to discuss bilateral trade, including the opening of those markets for live cattle from Ireland.

The trade mission will meet with Iranian companies, while the delegation will also visit a dairy processing factory.

Irish Exporters Association chief executive, Simon McKeever, said earlier this year that Iran offers 'huge opportunity' for Irish exporters now that international sanctions were lifted.

Although food did not form part of the international sanctions, issues surrounding financial transactions, dwindling foreign currency reserves and a drop in consumer sentiment as the economy contracted during that period made for a difficult trading environment in Iran.

He said the economy is worth in the region of €360bn and is particularly valuable to Irish food and drink companies and, in particular, dairy companies to supply the infant formula market.

Speaking ahead of the visit Aidan Cotter, Chief Executive of Bord Bia said: “The lifting of international sanctions on Iran opens the way for Irish food exporters to explore trading opportunities in the second largest economy in the Middle East.

“As the economy grows and demand for premium food products outstrips domestic supply, Iran is looking to countries like Ireland to supply high quality, safe and sustainably produced food.”

Bord Bia’s programme of events aims to familiarise companies with the Iranian business environment and provide them with opportunities to engage directly with targeted potential customers.

In addition, expert-led visits to retail, production and processing facilities will provide first-hand experience of the Iranian food supply chain and point to where the principal opportunities may lie.

Bord Bia will also facilitate one-to-one meetings between the 100 targeted Iranian food buyers and Irish exporters as the next step in building new trading relationships.