

**POLICY SUPPORTS
FOR REGIONAL AIRPORTS
IN RELATION TO KERRY AIRPORT**

SUBMISSION BY DAIRYMASTER

**KEY POINTS FROM INDUSTRY
FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

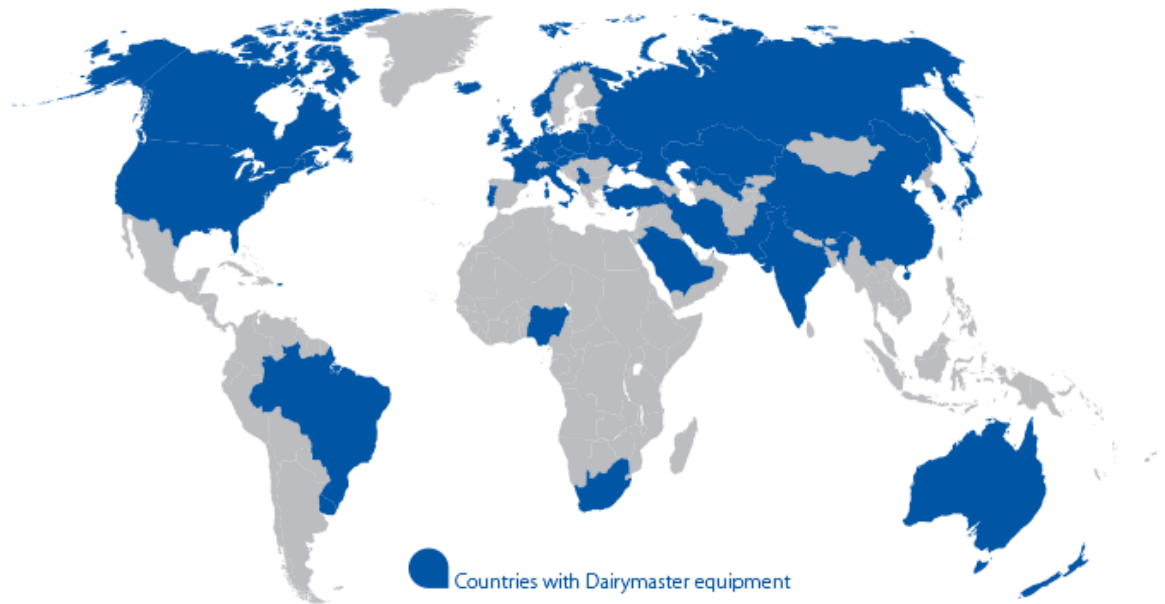
**ENSURING THE SAME OPPORTUNITIES
FOR ALL PARTS OF IRELAND**

KERRY AIRPORT



1 Stakeholder Category

Dairymaster provides high tech dairy solutions and is recognised as one of the world’s most innovative companies in agriculture. We are one of the largest employers within the North Kerry region with over 300 employees from the environs. We have satellite offices in the UK, USA, and Central Europe, other markets are serviced through distributors and dealerships in countries spanning from Canada to New Zealand.



As a large commercial entity in the local sense, we recognise, our rural location is among one of our most important assets, it means our people know our industry and we have good access to the domestic market, however it’s also one of the difficulties currently and into the future.

Travel times to international markets are longer and it is more difficult for customers to visit which is a key aspect of doing business. There is a necessity to improve air connectivity to allow current levels of business and employment to be maintained but also for increased growth and success for the organisation along with stronger economic growth and investment within the region.

2 Effectiveness of the Regional Airports Programme - Plan for the Future not the Past

The Department has stated it is committed to ‘inclusive and informed policy development’ in order to achieve this we believe there is a need to “Plan For The Future Not The Past”. With this in mind, and with a view to the growth and development of the region, we believe the current policy does not do enough.

We acknowledge the analysis completed in 2010, however this is now 9 years ago. We need forward thinking and believe there is clear rationale for the department to engage with businesses on this and to look to the future of the region and afford the same opportunities in Kerry as to those available in Dublin. We are willing to meet with department officials in this regard to further explain our suggestions as we understand the local situation, and we have seen what is happening internationally.

Without connectivity, investment decisions will likely be outside Kerry and possibly outside Ireland due to higher investment costs in Dublin or Cork. The Minister should consider this during this process, it is key that we allow people and businesses the opportunity to fully access new and existing markets. It is vital the Kerry region be provided with the links needed to these international markets.

It must be considered that the level of support by local businesses and stakeholders in the provision of a new and strategic policy around the growth of Kerry airport, gives justification for the Department to engage with the business community, educational institutes and other stakeholders within the region.

3 Programme changes

3.1 Kerry Airport Development

Kerry Airport is invaluable to the county. There is no direct access from Kerry to motorways, leaving the region at a disadvantage infrastructurally and commercially. Therefore, **air connectivity is vital** with commercially aligned connection hubs for sustainable and economic development.

Kerry Airport caters for approximately 350,000 passengers aiming to grow these numbers to approximately 700,000. The programme needs to cater for the development of a seamless and effortless customer experience with state-of-the-art security and other infrastructure within the airport. The airport and its staff already have the reputation of being friendly and welcoming, however for the future air travel from the region should be seamless and hassle-free.

Prompting the question what would “**Exceptional Customer Experience**” look like?

The entire travel experience can be elevated to an entirely new level within the region to facilitate speedy security checks with latest technology catering for young and old.

- **What could an Exceptional Experience be for a passenger at Kerry Airport?**

Seamless and Effortless:

- Online check in,
- Access to easy parking,
- Bag-drop off with a check-in through for connecting flights,
- Speedy security clearance for national & international travel,
- Seamless experience if travelling onward through another airport.

} **Total Time
15 minutes
To Gate**

“Experience the difference in a calm and comfortable environment”.

The experience at Dublin Airport also needs to be examined so that it’s a hassle-free experience for passengers with connecting to/from Kerry. Presently bag check through is not always possible and there is a need to go back and forth through security. The time needed to connect at Dublin Airport to other flights is excessive.

3.2 Additional Kerry to Dublin Routes

Dublin airport provides direct flights to almost 200 destinations. To avail of these international flights from a commercial stand point several elements are required:

- Amendments to Kerry-Dublin-Dublin Kerry flight schedule to be more in line with the economic demands of the county including additional flights early morning and late evening to suit the typical business being held outside Ireland as well as catering for domestic travel.
- Simplify connectivity of passengers and luggage connecting to and from international flights at Dublin Airport.
- Once off security checks for Kerry passengers travelling internationally.

3.3 Kerry to Amsterdam Route – Offers direct access up to 260 Routes

Amsterdam provides direct access to 260 routes, with that in mind the focus of Project Ireland 2040 is about enabling all parts of Ireland to achieve their full potential. Kerry Airport is a great asset to the county, it fortifies Kerry’s rural foundation, by providing a direct gateway to overseas markets. This supports and promotes the sustainable growth of rural communities, allowing continued development of rural areas, stimulating expansion of existing businesses.

Based on the figures provided by the department Kerry Airport has been supported by an average of €1.42m over the last 4 years. This represents approximately 0.16% of the net tax receipts from county Kerry. Our view is that increased connectivity from Kerry airport would increase economic activity in the region and would give a return much greater than what an investment by government would cost.

The reality is that this route is needed, ideally it should be done on a commercial basis, however like a start-up company it can be difficult to get going and a start-up often needs assistance. We believe there is a basis to truly examine the need, engage with the various stakeholders and then make an informed decision which includes economic and societal factors.

4 Support Ireland’s transition to a low carbon economy

Dublin airport currently experiences 31.5 million passengers - growing year on year. A balanced regional development will reduce the number of single passenger vehicles travelling to/from Dublin Airport. This will aid in the reduction of traffic congestion and pressures on local and national routes and, in turn, will result in the reduction of carbon emissions in line with new governmental policies.

5 PSO Scheme – Air Service Routes

The retention of the PSO scheme is paramount to the region along with maintaining and adding to the existing flight schedule to Dublin to facilitate international connections. An earlier morning flight and a later evening flight is vital to accommodate for the working day for those needing to do business outside of Ireland.

5.1 Travel time examples to Amsterdam

It is **not viable** to fly from Kerry-Dublin, Dublin-AMS same day return for the following reasons:

- Insufficient time to connect to the Dublin-Kerry flight to return on the same day
- Flight times do not allow enough time for an 8-hour work day meeting in Amsterdam

The next practical choice for a Kerry passenger is to drive to Cork Airport overnight and take a direct flight to Amsterdam. The following is a travel time comparison between a Kerry Passenger versus Dublin Passenger:

Kerry based passenger travelling from Cork Airport	Dublin based passenger Travelling from Dublin Airport
Round trip time 30 hours	Round trip time 15.7 hours

5.2 Proposed Improvements to the PSO scheme

- Simplify connectivity of passengers and luggage connecting to and from international flights to/from Kerry.
- Once off security checks for Kerry passengers travelling internationally from Kerry Airport and not necessitate rechecking or additional security screening.
- Amendments to Kerry-Dublin, Dublin-Kerry flight schedules to be more in line with the economic demands of the county with inclusion of additional flights comprising of an earlier morning flight and a later evening flight to accommodate for the working day for those needing to do business outside of Ireland.

5.3 Kerry to Amsterdam Route – Offers direct access up to 260 Routes

Amsterdam provides direct access to approximately 260 routes with this in mind the focus of Project Ireland 2040 is about enabling all parts of Ireland to achieve their full potential. Kerry Airport is a huge asset to the county, providing a direct gateway to overseas markets which do not need to be serviced through Dublin or where the travel time and extra connections makes it unattractive or unviable.

This supports and promotes the sustainable growth of rural communities, allowing continued development of rural areas, stimulating expansion of existing businesses by developing a transport hub.

5.4 Who benefits from additional routes from Kerry Airport?

National Road Networks:

- The number of people currently using the national road network to access Dublin airport creates undue and unnecessary pressure on local and national routes, leading to and from Dublin airport. Being able to provide flights from a local hub would reduce this pressure and in turn aid in the reduction of carbon emissions.

Industry:

- We now live and work in a global economy and many companies within Ireland face external pressures from centralised rapidly developing markets. To remain competitive and to gain access to highly skilled staff, the region as a whole would require an international hub and Kerry should not be at a disadvantage due to its location.
- If the events of Brexit have shown us anything, it is that we need to diversify from exporting to the UK and focus on a developing market and improving ties with trade partners within the Eurozone. To this end a new route from Kerry to Amsterdam would give direct access to a vibrant, multilinked hub to other EU and worldwide markets.

Tourism:

- There is clearly a high dependence on tourism within Kerry.
- There has been a noticeable decline in the number of UK visitors to Kerry coupled with the advancement of Brexit resulting in a dip in the economy, we need to mitigate the potential impacts of this situation as much as possible.
- A new route would generate an increase in the number of passengers from outside the UK which will result in additional bed nights and to ancillary spending in Kerry.

Education

- The established third level institution could benefit from the potential boost generated by overseas students. The increased student numbers would result in increased uptake to higher education and applied sciences within the area.
- There is an international opportunity for overseas student and research fellows to work with established research centres in the region.
- The value Kerry offers to the student body is readily available and affordable accommodation near the college and research centre environs.

6 The strategic outcomes – Project Ireland 2040

Project Ireland 2040 seeks to achieve ten strategic outcomes, building around the overarching themes of wellbeing, equality and opportunity. Of these ten priorities five apply directly to the future air connectivity between County Kerry and overseas markets such as Netherlands, Belgium, Luxemburg, Germany, etc.

- Enhanced Regional Accessibility
- Strengthened Rural Economics and Communities
- Sustainable Mobility
- A Strong Economy, supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills
- High-Quality International Connectivity.

Summary strategic outcomes :

1. Kerry airport is a major asset for the region, its development and growth should be supported so that there is balanced regional development and the same opportunities are available to the people and businesses in Kerry as in Dublin. Investment in the airport should be more than justified on an economic and societal basis.
2. Focus on creating an exceptional customer experience, with speedy check in and onward connections through Dublin with simplified procedures at Dublin airport. Assess whether this is also possible at other airports even though a passenger may be travelling with a point to point airline.
3. Increase the frequency and improve the times of the flight schedule to cater for both domestic and international passengers.
4. Engage with the local stakeholders to assess the viability of an Amsterdam route with the view of planning for the future and not relying on the past.
5. Ensure that the Kerry economy is protected and developed with the airport as a strategic resource.