

Tesco and DRS partner on a new refrigerated rail freight service

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Tesco and Direct Rail Services (DRS) have partnered to introduce a cool new service to Britain's railways.

The new service will be the first time Tesco has used refrigerated rail freight in the UK, distributing chilled goods from Tilbury to Coatbridge by low CO2 rail twice a day, seven days a week. This means that rail freight will play an even bigger role in helping Tesco to deliver Christmas this year and over the next couple of weeks this new service will transport hundreds of different products, including festive favourites such as sprouts, parsnips, carrots, onions, oranges and lemons just in time for that all important Christmas dinner.

Using rail has significant environmental benefits. The 415-mile route will use DRS's Class 88 bi-mode electric locomotives which can run on electricity and produce zero exhaust and greenhouse gas emissions. This service alone will take at least 17,000 containers off the road each year, saving Tesco 7.3 million road miles and nearly 9,000 tonnes of CO2e.

Jason Tarry, Tesco UK and ROI CEO said: "We've been using rail to transport our goods since 2008 and this new service reflects our continuing commitment to rail which has clear advantages for our business, our

customers and the planet. Our rail service will be an important part of our efforts to deliver a fantastic Christmas for our customers but the journey doesn't stop here as we continue to increase the number of containers we transport by rail as part of our commitment to reach net zero emissions in our operations by 2035."

Chris Connelly, NTS Deputy CEO and Rail Director, said: "This is fantastic news, not only for DRS and Tesco but also for the environment. This is an example of how rail can play an integral part in the race to net zero. Each train will remove around 40 lorries from Britain's roads and we're running two trains a day, seven days a week, saving 9,000 tonnes of CO2e a year. We're thrilled to be working with Tesco on this new service, helping them drive down their carbon footprint as they deliver for their customers throughout the UK."

All rail freight delivers 76 per cent fewer CO2 emissions¹ when compared to road; linking with other rail operations from across Europe at Tilbury Forth Ports ensures that fresh produce can travel with a significantly reduced carbon footprint.

Tesco is increasing its use of rail freight as part of its efforts to meet its commitment to net zero emissions in its own operations by 2035. Over the past year alone the supermarket has increased the number of containers with produce destined for stores transported by rail by nearly 50%.

1. Rail Delivery Group study.

Photo credit: David Clough