



31° Salone internazionale del biologico e del naturale  
31<sup>st</sup> International exhibition of organic and natural products

## SANA 2019 OPENS ITS DOORS FOR THE 31<sup>ST</sup> INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION OF NATURAL AND ORGANIC PRODUCTS

### All the leading players from the sector at the Convention “FROM THE GREEN REVOLUTION TO THE ORGANIC REVOLUTION. THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE”

The SANA Opening Convention held this morning was the natural conclusion for the “General Forum for the Organic Sector,” an initiative promoted by BolognaFiere in collaboration with FederBio and AssoBio, and with the support of the Italian Trade Agency (ITA).

“The European Union is a firm supporter of the importance of the organic agricultural production and for this reason supports the growth of this market with some determined policies as well as direct support for farmers,” explained **Phil Hogan (European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development)** at the packed debate this morning that involved a packed audience of professional operators from the sector.

In his address **Gianpiero Calzolari (President of BolognaFiere)** reminded the public that, “in the space of just a few years the organic sector has earned a frontline role in the sphere of food agriculture, evolving from a niche category to a driver of growth and development. Today organic products represent a mass phenomenon, a sector involving thousands of people, characterised by a new productive system that is increasingly oriented towards sustainability.”

In his speech **Paolo De Castro (European Parliament Commission for Agriculture and Rural Development)** pointed out that “Italy is leading the way in Europe when it comes to the organic sector. Italy and SANA focus on organic agriculture and Europe is ensuring that we have the significant resources required to continue to grow. What’s important is to ensure that growth is managed with respect for consumers, who must remain the priority for all actors in this sector.”

The speech by **Angelo Frascarelli (President of the Advisory Board of Rivoluzione Bio)** focused on the content of the “**2030 Organic Manifesto**” presented today in Bologna, and its role both for organic agriculture and the wider context of agriculture in general. “Organic production in Italy is a success story. For this reason we can say that we have passed from “The Green Revolution to the Organic Revolution”. Have we solved all the problems? No, the risk today is that the organic sector becomes a victim of its own success. For this reason we need to go further. How? Innovation, transparency and communication. What does this mean? The circular economy, bio-economics, eco systemic services, the reinforcement of the positive externalities of the organic sector; precision technologies, bio-digital agriculture, digital labelling to reinforce the distinctive identity and guarantees that organic produce offers consumers, communication and food awareness amongst consumers to grow the demand for organic products.”



**BolognaFiere spa**  
Viale della Fiera, 20 - 40127 Bologna, Italia  
Tel. +39 051 282111 - Fax +39 051 6374004  
bolognafiere@pec.bolognafiere.it  
Capitale sociale € 106.780.000,00 i.v.  
C.F. - P.IVA e Reg. Imp. BO 00312600372 - REA BO367296

**Show Office**  
Via Alfieri Maserati, 16 - 40128 Bologna  
Tel. +39 051 282111  
Fax +39 051 6374031  
sana@bolognafiere.it  
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“This region has spent 50 million euros on innovation and agriculture,” explained **Simona Caselli (Assessor for Agriculture, Hunting and Fishing at the Emilia-Romagna regional administration)**, “an investment unrivalled in Italy: we are the first! Also in Europe, the DG AGRI inform us that we are among the first for the number of innovation groups, we now have 200 of these in action and there will be more. Having asked the Bologna CNR to examine which of these groups are involved in mitigation and modifying activities concerning climate change, it emerged that 67-68% of them propose solutions that can help to fight climate change and boost resilience. Among those many are concentrating on organic agriculture and the safeguarding of biodiversity.”

On the topic of exports, **Ettore Prandini (President of Coldiretti)** emphasized how “it is necessary that all products within national and European confines respect the same criteria, ensuring that when it comes to food products – both Italian and foreign – on sale on the shelves, there is a similar quality pathway that concerns the environment, employment and health. For this reason it is important to reinforce activities of supervision and control of borders, where foreign organic products arrive that do not offer the same guarantees as their Italian counterparts, as was pointed out recently by the European Court of Auditors. Italy needs a mandatory Made in Italy brand for organic products to guarantee full transparency for consumers.”

“The growth of the organic sector is linked to the strategic relationship between agricultural producers and citizens/consumers,” explained **Dino Scanavino, president of the Confederation of Italian Farmers (CIA)** – “The price is right every time this virtuous synergy produces value for the environment and revenue for farmers.” So far, “the problem of agriculture has been the extreme difficulty of having a sufficiently strong relationship. But overcoming the economic obstacles of the sector with bureaucracy alone is of limited use, also in the organic sector, while controls are good but not the solution. What’s required is the organisation of production. The agricultural chain must be united, to have greater bargaining power.” While it is increasingly important “to work on innovation and research.”

For **Giorgio Mercuri, President of the Alleanza cooperative agroalimentari**, “The choice in favour of organic agriculture is often a lifestyle choice by the producer involving numerous sacrifices, if we think merely of the two or three years required to obtain certification, often they have to struggle to gain recognition for their efforts.” On the economic front, Mr Mercuri stressed that “it is not possible to imagine a future for environmental sustainability if we can’t even be sure that we will have an income and therefore the same economic and social sustainability are anything but assured. Cooperation in this sense is a valid tool from the perspective of fair pricing since the cooperatives can manage all of the production chain, not only the agricultural phases, but also all the way to the shelves with the finished products.”



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**Carlo Ferro (President of ICE, part of the Italian Trade Agency)** stressed the key role of exports. “Food agriculture, and in particular organic food agriculture, is a sector of great importance for Italian exports. Exports are the driver of growth in Italy. For this reason we want to reinforce our support for small and medium-sized enterprises that export. For some months, also thanks to the excellent relationships that, as ICE, we have with the representatives of all categories, we are doing substantial work together, such as: allocating more resources for SANA Bologna and the representation of Italian exporters at the forthcoming international trade fairs for the sector in Paris and Nuremburg.”

**Roberto Zanoni (Presidente AssoBio)** presented the new data on the progress of the organic market that “in spite of the economic situation in Italy that is far from brilliant, confirmed positive results, especially for exports, which in 2018 saw further growth of 10% and exceeded a value of 2.2 billion euros, representing now more than 5% of total Italian food agriculture exports. The domestic market too has grown by over 5% compared with the sluggish progress of the conventional food agriculture sector that has grown only in line with inflation. Furthermore we hope that by the end of the year the Italian Senate will approve new legislation, already approved by the Chamber of deputies in a bipartisan vote, concerning the organic sector. The new law would provide a strong stimulus for organic agriculture thanks also to the introduction of organic districts and investment aimed at encouraging the integration of young people into the world of agriculture.”

“In this key phase for the sector, it is an absolute priority to empower agricultural producers and boost national production through the widespread development of a short production chain at local level and the construction of a solid Made in Italy organic network,” explained **Maria Grazia Mammuccini (President of FederBio)** “Our country is a reference point internationally for quality food; the safeguarding of biodiversity and local and organic variety is the most coherent production method to add value to the local origin of food. And this too can help avoid the risk of a return to a price war that would be to the detriment of both farmers and citizens in terms of the quality of the food. We need to reaffirm the principle of “the right price” of agricultural products and to become a useful reference point also for the rest of the agricultural sector. But the growth of the organic sector does not only concern market aspects; it involves governments, the protection of biodiversity and the fight against climate change. Growing organic agriculture means investing to contrast and mitigate climate change. We must set ourselves the goal of achieving at least 40% of agricultural land cultivated in accordance with the organic approach and with this aim in mind, the recently installed government gives us cause for hope as it has incorporated into its programme important points such as the “ecological transition”, directing the entire productive system towards a circular economy approach and the development of organic agriculture as a priority for our food agriculture system.”

The Convention included the presentation of the “**2030 Organic Manifesto**”, which was structured into 10 specific points.



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- 1 – a type of agriculture that is active in tackling climate change
- 2 – the importance of an agro-ecological approach
- 3 – the reinforcement of the distinctive features of the organic sector
- 4 – the conversion of livestock breeding to an organic approach
- 5 – the crucial role of regulations and controls
- 6 – the fundamental role of innovation and the digital revolution
- 7 – models of territorial development
- 8 – information and the importance of traceability
- 9 – adoption of a national logo
- 10 – communication and awareness: promoting widespread food education and the role of proactive consumers

#### **For further information**

##### Press Office SANA

Absolut eventi & comunicazione  
Mariagrazia Lioce - Sara Telaro  
ufficiostampa@absolutgroup.it  
tel. +39 051 272523 / +39 340 9214636

##### **Website**

[www.sana.it](http://www.sana.it)

##### **Social media channels**

Facebook.com/sanabologna – Twitter.com/sanafiera  
Youtube.com/BolognaFiere – Instagram.com/Sana\_fiera

##### Communication and External Relations Manager

Isabella Bonvicini  
Isabella.bonvicini@bolognafiere.it  
tel. +39 051 282920 / +39 335 7995370

##### Press Office BolognaFiere

Gregory Picco  
[gregory.picco@bolognafiere.it](mailto:gregory.picco@bolognafiere.it)  
tel. +39 051 282862 / +39 334 6012743



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