

The Italian olive sector relies on science to relaunch the Made in Italy brand and regain its leadership

Researchers from the Italian Institute of Meteorological Research (INRiM) and the associations Assitol and Federolio discuss, in a scientific conference held in Turin, new control systems to guarantee the consumer the quality and authenticity of the Italian olive oil marketed in the rest of the world.

The Italian city of Turin hosted the on November 9 and 10 the workshop "The method of control - to control the method. From the technique to the norm: oils as a model system", organized by the INRiM, in which many professionals and academics presented their innovation projects in relation to the olive sector.

Work together to define new methods that can guarantee the quality and authenticity of olive oil for the benefit of the product and the consumer. This was the clear conclusion that could be drawn from this event that had the collaboration of representative associations of the Italian sector Assitol and Federolio. Specifically, the round table that closed the event focused on the importance of guaranteeing the quality of the commercialized olive oil through the use of parameters and methods that meet the maximum requirements of scientific reliability, which implies reviewing the current validation systems in order to provide a more reliable response to the operators of the olive market.

"We need to be able to offer companies in the sector safer and easier methods to use," said Angelo Cremonini, President of the Olive Oil Group of Assitol, who added that "it is essential to collaborate with Universities and research centers and create synergies that can guarantee, in the future, control systems capable of providing more answers."

In this sense, Cremonini indicated that from their association they are ready "to work hand in hand with all the other parts of the production chain".

From an operational point of view, the collaboration between science and business must go through the identification of innovative techniques that the same researchers make available for the application phase. "This is where operators come into play, adding these same methods within the production process," Cremonini said.

In the same line spoke Francesco Tabano, President of Federolio, who said that "it is essential to acquire a direct commitment to research that is applicable to the entire chain of olive oil in Italy." Thus, he recalled that new reliable methods, and therefore reproducible, and available at reasonable and profitable costs, are important for the entire sector," since all of us -production, industry and commerce- must aspire to offer the higher quality, authenticity and certainty to consumers."

The President of Federolio said that "this conference shows that the Italian olive sector must maintain a more intense relationship with Universities and research centers, allowing operators to request research tools that allow them to face the difficult commercial challenges that appear in markets around the world." "Only thus, measuring the level of innovation and regaining leadership, the Made in Italy system will be able to compete with other countries," said Tabano.

"To guarantee the quality and origin of olive oil, not only reliable measures are needed, but transparency, so that operators in the olive sector verify, certify and share their procedures and methods of analysis," said Andrea Mario Rossi, Director of the Olive Oil Research Program "Food Metrology" of the INRiM.

"The added value of the scientific contribution," Rossi went on, "is its neutrality: metrology does not make judgments, but provides verification and control tools that serve businesses and the consumer." In addition, the researcher expressed his satisfaction for the direct collaboration that INRiM is establishing with the Italian olive oil producers, because "it allows the world of science to cooperate to a large extent with the protection of the national olive heritage," Rossi concluded.

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