Macfrut Digital, the Forums programme

Three days dedicated to the fruit and vegetable sector at the industry's leading global event: Macfrut Digital, the business platform (Natlive) for professionals working in the fresh produce

industry, to be held from 8 to 10 September 2020. A single event, three revolutions: the first one is market-related, since a different approach was adopted due to changes in the global scenario; the second one is trade fair-related, due to the difficulty in hosting “physical” events; and the third one is communication-related, since it involved using smart language appropriate to the new medium used. These three innovations were well received by the sector, so much so that the event is now sold out.

The Forums

The Forums are one of the major innovations of Macfrut Digital and will be dedicated to exploring the sector’s main issues and are also available in English. Participation is free of charge, subject to registration for individual events, with a maximum of 300 participants.

The first Forum, ‘Goccia Verde: ANBI’s Sustainable Irrigation Project’, will take place on Tuesday, 8 September at 9.30am, organised by ANBI. At 11.30am the spotlight will be on the CAP at the Cia event entitled ‘The Italian Fruit and Vegetable Sector and the Road Towards the Green Deal: CAP, Innovation and Sustainable Chemistry’. The afternoon session will begin at 2.30pm with ‘The Opportunities Offered by the Officinal Plant Supply Chain’ organised by the Emilia-Romagna Regional Government and Apt. At 4pm, the spotlight will be on Acquacampus: ‘Saving Water with Irrigation Technology’.

On Wednesday, 9 September at 9am, a China-Europe debate on the fruit and vegetable sector will be held, during which buyers and exhibitors will share their experiences. At 11am, the Emilia-Romagna Regional Government and Apt will host a meeting entitled ‘The Future CAP for the Fruit and Vegetable Sector’. In the afternoon, at 2.30pm, ‘Innovation Technology in Horticulture: from Planting to Harvesting’, with Field Solutions. Subsequently, at 4.30pm, the Novamont Forum will be held, during which experiences and market prospects for biodegradable Mater-Bi® sheets will be discussed.

On Thursday, 10 September at 9.30am, the “Biosolutions International Congress” will be held, during which supply chains will meet the biostimulants and biocontrol industry, with a special focus on the brown marmorated stink bug. At 11.30am, the ANBI forum ‘Irrigation: Focus on Sustainability and Innovation” will take place, focusing on news and strategies available to agricultural entrepreneurs, with Italian experts in precision agriculture as speakers. In the afternoon, at 2.30pm, Greenhouse Technology: ‘Hi-Tech for a New Greenhouse Horticulture’.

The numbers

Altogether, there will be 530 exhibition units with 400 exhibitors, divided into 10 pavilions. Registrations were sold out about one month before the event. As for exhibiting companies, 40% of them are from abroad from 4 different continents and 60% are from Italy, and nearly one in two companies is from the production industry (47%). As of today, more than 6,000 visitors have

already registered, 70% of whom are from abroad. The maximum number of visitors allowed is 30,000.

Great international response

The largest number of exhibitors will be from China, with 87 exhibitors in total, thanks to the cooperation of ATPC (Agricultural Trade Promotion Centre), the promotional body of the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs. Also from Asia, a collective of companies from India and Indonesia will be present.

The Country Pavilion will host many African countries, including Angola, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Rwanda, Senegal, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. Central and South America (Colombia, Chile and the Dominican Republic) will also be present, as well as many Eastern European companies from Albania, Bulgaria, Moldavia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

Europe will have a strong presence at the trade fair, including Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, the UK, Spain and Switzerland.

The fruit and vegetable sector

Ranking second in agri-food exports, the sector’s exports grew by 6.9% in the first five months of 2020 (January-May) (Source: ICE - Italian Trade Agency). In terms of value, exports totalled 2 billion 133 million euros, with exports from the top five exporting countries on the rise: Germany, our largest market, +13.3%; France +13.3%; Austria +7.5%; Switzerland +21%; and the UK +9.5%. The EU remains the top target market for Italian fruits and vegetables, accounting for 86% of exports.

When considering exports in the long term (2015-2019), Italian fruit and vegetable exports are back to the levels seen in 2015, after the 2016-2017 boom. In fact, five years ago, exports amounted to 4 billion 844 million euros, compared with 4 billion 885 million euros in 2019. Last year, fruit and vegetable exports were down by 2.2% compared to the previous year.