

CIBUS CONNECT OPENS IN PARMA

500 new products, 10,000 business operators, 3,000 of whom foreign buyers - New relationships between the Italian food industry and international large-scale retailers - Concern about the US threat of new tariffs, but traffic light labels are more worrying

(Parma, 10 April 2019) – 500 new products, 1000 brands, over 700 exhibitors at the international food exhibition “Cibus Connect”, which opened today in Parma. Ten thousand business operators, 3,000 of whom foreign buyers, are expected at the event, organized by Fiere di Parma and Federalimentare in collaboration with the Ice Agency, Hundreds of chefs will use the new products at the cooking stations in order to offer a tasting to the Italian and foreign operators, who were welcomed in the two large “International Buyers’ Lounges” and who are listed with photos and a detailed description on www.cibus.it/espore/novita-di-prodotto/.

“The essence of an exhibition is the presence of new products and the activity of buyers - said **Gian Domenico Auricchio, President of Fiere di Parma** - and the smart formula of Cibus Connect, featuring two exhibition days and simplified stands, is increasingly popular with the food companies.”

The exhibition was opened in the morning by **Ivano Vacondio, President of Federalimentare, Carlo Maria Ferro, President of the Ice Agency, Ettore Prandini, President of Coldiretti, Massimiliano Giansaldi, President of Confagricoltura, Senator Anna Maria Bernini, and The Honourable De Castro.**

All the different components of the agri-food chain met at Cibus Connect to discuss future strategies for the sector. **The president of Federalimentare, Ivano Vacondio**, spoke on the most current issues:

“Neither the US tariffs nor Brexit are the real problem for the Italian food industry. In both cases will we manage to reach agreements that are advantageous to all the countries involved. The real threat to Made in Italy products is front-of-package labelling: a battle that the whole Italian food sector is ready to take on. This labelling system, devoid of any scientific foundation and based only on a marketing policy, risks conveying the message that there are good and bad foods and that a sticker is enough to show which is which. But this classification does not stand up to scrutiny: there are only balanced and unbalanced diets, in which no food must be demonized.”

A study by Ismea on agri-food companies in the South of Italy was presented at Cibus Connect by **General Manager Raffaele Borriello**: *“There is one thing that grows more in the South than in the North: the revenue of food industries.*

This was the conclusion of the study carried out by Ismea in partnership with Fiere di Parma and Federalimentare which analyzed 1,526 food industries with a balance sheet and turnover of over 10 million euros. The report showed that, despite only 23% of medium-large companies being located in the South (where there is still a predominance of SMEs), in the last three years the turnover of the food industry has grown more in companies in the South of Italy (+5.4%) than in the Centre and North (+4.4%).”

The meeting *“From category management to supply chain strategy: the relationship between distribution and agrifood industry”*, organized by PWC and GDO Week7 Mark-Up, analyzed the “sentinel” products, that is, those products that manage to make inroads in

the different foreign markets despite the Italian sounding phenomenon. Operators in four different companies presented their experiences in this area: **Nikolay Yanev, Head of Prime Now 3P Business Italy (video division of Amazon)**, **Shunsuke Ozaki, EVP of Hankyu Oasis Co, a Japanese large-scale retailer**, **Ji, Senior Marketing Leader of Hema, a fruit and vegetables retail company controlled by the Chinese Group Alibaba**, and **Roberto Comolli, General Manager of - Il Viaggiator Goloso**, who discussed the most common mistakes made by companies entering international markets. PwC Italian presented the trends in the Food sector, the level of confidence of CEOs, and a focus on the internationalization of the Italian agri-food sector. Evidence presented by the study included: a food industry turnover of €140 billion in 2018 (+2%); food Exports of €32.9 billion in 2018 (+3%); 49% of the Retail&Consumer CEOs who were interviewed are focusing on internationalization plans; there is a growing ethical-sustainable trend among consumers, with over two thirds of consumers willing to pay more for local, “0 km” products.

Several food sector experts and representatives spoke at the Cibus Connect opening conference. Commenting on the recent threat of the US government to impose tariffs on different European and Italian food products, MEP Paolo de Castro, first Vice President of the Agriculture and Rural Development Commission of the European Parliament, announced that a response is forthcoming, but from Europe, not from Italy.

The President of the Ice Agency, Carlo Maria Ferro, also called for a new bilateral agreement between Europe and the USA, pointing out at the same time that companies need to be able to cooperate among themselves and make new investments.

According to Massimiliano Giansanti, President of Confagricoltura, the food sector has grown in a disjointed manner, thanks to single companies rather than the national system. He therefore called for common strategies, more attention to the development of key infrastructure for Italy, and agreements between sector operators.

For Ettore Prandini, President of Coldiretti, the food chain is too fragmented and cooperation agreements are needed to promote products.

The opening of Cibus Connect also saw Federalimentare, Cibus and FMI (Food Marketing Institute) signing a Memorandum of Understanding that will be important in internationalization initiatives with the USA, above all, but not exclusively, in terms of incoming.