



PRESS RELEASE



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Agriculture emergency: a problem of mechanization

Agrievolution Summit opens in Rome. Undersecretary for Economic Development Adolfo Urso opens two days of work for shedding light on the problems of agriculture and strategies for the dissemination of mechanical means in the poor countries.

World agriculture is in a crisis and mechanical means are required for a new *green revolution*.

The primary economy must sharply increase productivity to rebuild food stockpiles which are now reduced to a minimum, to meet the needs of a population which will increase by three billion over the coming thirty or forty years, to produce bio-fuels which do not increase greenhouse gasses. But the machinery and equipment available are not sufficient.

This is what emerged at the International *Agrievolution* Summit opened in Rome this morning in a statement delivered by Undersecretary for Economic Development Adolfo Urso televised live via a satellite channel and in video streaming on the summit's Internet site.

Unacoma President Massimo Goldoni affirmed, "It is not necessary to have chemical means and seed selections available if there are no agricultural machines and equipment for performing the basic tasks". Goldoni also noted, "Compared to Europe, which alone accounts for 40% of the tractors in operation in the world, the entire continent of Africa possesses a mere 2% of all those in use and this means inefficient plowing systems, the waste of water resources and greater exposure to the variables of climate and weather".

Mechanization must join the world FAO meeting opening next week, June 3, and the Doha Round scheduled for next September. "Machinery plays a fundamental role in the development of the agricultural economies and instruments must be put in place to favor the spread of machinery distribution in the less advanced countries", said Undersecretary Urso.

The technological gap is one of the salient themes for *Agrievolution* as is evident in the statements made by the organizations attending the summit. A comparison provided by the Indian Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, FICCI, discloses a density of tractors registered in India per 1,000 hectares at 15 against a concentration of 68 tractors in France, 211 in Italy and 461 in Japan. These figures do



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not mean that the market is standing still in that part of the world. India is, in fact, one of the countries reporting the most interesting rates of growth in mechanization with a 78% increase in the spread of tractors from 1994 to the present. Demand is on the increase also in China, Brazil and Russia, all present here at the summit with their respective manufacturers associations.

The scenario for Europe, laid out by Federico Corradini, the president of the continent's manufacturers associations CEMA, calls for a market stabilizing at around 166,000 tractors annually, with more than 9.3 million machines in operation with an average age of twenty years. This means that the great part of demand will be due to the need to replace these machines with new generation models.

With production valued at €21 billion, Europe is also one of the world's leading manufacturers, along with the United States, represented at the summit by the machinery manufacturers association AEM.

The goal of these American and European builders is to step up cooperation with the newly industrialized countries for increasing production in new areas and designing machines with the precise specifications needed for various agricultural systems, especially for the least developed countries.

Analyses of the evolution of machinery demand has disclosed that in Europe, the United States and Brazil, agriculture is investing in increasingly substantial ways in bio-fuel lines. This phenomenon, underscored by Geoffrey, the Director of FAO's Infrastructure and Agri-industrial Division, has come along as a new feature for the agricultural production system and a driving factor for the machinery market. However, in the opinion of the FAO representative, the technical and financial aspects of transforming agricultural raw materials into bio-fuels have yet to be thoroughly studied and carefully evaluated.

Moreover, the issue of bio-fuels will be taken up at the round table scheduled for tomorrow morning after a statement to be delivered by Giorgio Starace, Minister Plenipotentiary of MIPAAF. Participating in the round table will be government officials from Brazil, Egypt, India, Russia and the United States as well as Poul Skytte Christoffersen, the chef de cabinet of the European Commission for Agriculture and Rural Development.