**The Puglia market: decrease in sales of tractors, awaiting government funds**

***A total of 1,297 tractors were registered in the region in the year 2016, a 14% decrease compared to the previous year. The implementation of the Rural Development Plan and funding by INAIL should encourage a recovery of the market and contribute to the replacement of the machines that are mostly obsolete.***

The Agrilevante exhibition, which will take place in Bari from 12 to 15 October 2017, and that will showcase all the major producers of machinery, equipment and components for agriculture, will also be the occasion to monitor the performance of the market in the Puglia region. Registration of tractors in 2016 decreased by 14% compared to 2015 (1,297 machines against 1,511 of the previous year), and the region will have to monitor – on the basis of analytical data that will be presented at the Agrilevante exhibition – sales performance in the first nine months of 2017. This will allow assess to what extent the Rural Development Plan (PSR) and the government funds granted by INAIL (which will come into effect at the end of April) will have incentivated the purchase of mechanical machines. The economic situation of the region does not, in fact, differ from what the general trend of the Italian market has been in the past years. In the period between 2008 and 2016 the registration of tractors in the Puglia region dropped by an overall 27%, a figure that is only slightly better than the national average (-33%) recorded in the same period. FederUnacoma (Confindustria), the Italian Agricultural Machinery Manufacturers Federation, stresses that the crisis of the sector – tractors and of other machinery for agriculture – is a factor that weakens Italian agriculture, which on the contrary needs technologies and new generation systems to obtain more profitable crops, optimize productive factors, and improve the quality and healthiness of the products. The problem with mechanization in most of the Italian regions, in fact, does not concern the number of machines but the quality of these machines. The figures provided by the statistics department of the Federation indicate that there is a total of 139,000 tractors in the Puglia region (which amounts to about 7% ot the total number of tractors recorded at a national level, that is just above two million), although the average age of these machines is very high (more than twenty years old), which means inefficient tillage and low levels of safety for operators of mechanical machines. The aim of government funding, if available and continuous, should be to gradually replace the machines. On the occasion of Agrilevante a careful analysis will also be carried out with regard to distribution of the machines and market performance of single provinces. The 139,000 tractors operating at present in the region are located in great part in the provinces of Foggia (30%) and Bari (27%), followed by the provinces of Taranto (15%), Barletta-Andria-Trani (12%), Brindisi and Lecce, which both amount to 8% of the total. It will be interesting to forecast the possible development trends of these markets for the next years. Very different performances are recorded with regard to registration of machines, that are connected to sales performances in the different areas. In 2016 registration of tractors in the province of Bari decreased by almost 16%, a figure that is only slightly more positive than the average regional percentage (-14%). The trend was varied according to areas: the most significant decrease was recorded in the province of Foggia (-34,6%), while the most steepest increase was recorded in the province of Taranto (+32%).

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