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**Desk area, simulators and training courses for young people and technicians**

**Training and safety in the spotlight at Agrilevante in the Desk area set up by FederUnacoma. More than 400 students from agricultural institutes in Puglia, Basilicata and Calabria took part in the training days. Two simulators for driving experience.**

Work in the countryside has become appealing and is attracting more and more young people. This was demonstrated by the 400 students from agricultural institutes in Puglia, Basilicata and Calabria who took part in the training days on safety and new technologies in agricultural machinery at Agrilevante, the great mechanization exhibition for Southern Italy. Many of the young people we met here at the fair - says the manufacturers' association FederUnacoma, organiser of the days - are attracted by the certainty of a job opening, given that farms increasingly need specialised operators, especially if they are experts in the digitalisation of crop operations and precision farming. Thanks to innovation, it has not only been possible to increase yields and productivity in the primary sector, but - FederUnacoma emphasises - also to improve the sustainability of production, food quality, the impact of crops on the environment and the safety of operators. However, the use of the latest generation of machinery, especially automation technologies, requires skills towards which it is precisely young people who show the greatest willingness. In order to drive a modern tractor, one has to learn how to handle software with which one can control connections to the trailer, and operations on the ground - from ploughing to sowing to harvesting - supplementing them, perhaps, with information from the weather services. "In the Desk area of *Agrilevante*, students were able to try out a simulator that reproduces many of the situations one might find oneself in when driving an agricultural vehicle in the open field. Many of the operating functions of the machines," explained Lorenzo Iuliano, FederUnacoma technical service engineer, "are now managed through a digital screen, similar to the touch screen of a tablet". "In the Desk area we have also set up a roll-oversimulator, the most frequent accident that can happen in the countryside. We had the youngsters try the roll-over in complete safety," Iuliano continues, "to show how the newly developed safety devices can reduce and often eliminate the consequences of such accidents". The real problem, however, remains that of safety awareness, which is often underestimated. The Italian fleet has a very high average age, so - the manufacturers' association recalls - many of these vehicles are not equipped with the latest generation devices that protect the operator.

The *Agrilevante* Desk demonstration days also served to make young people aware of risks and the importance of prevention. On these topics, Inail and *FederUnacoma* also organised a 16-hour training course for 60 officials from *local health authorities*, who are responsible for verifying the compliance of agricultural machinery with legal standards. "The technical regulations on agricultural machinery are constantly evolving, which is why it is necessary to provide a permanent training programme also for those operators who are called upon to perform conformity checks on the vehicles. Sector events," concluded Domenico Papaleo, engineer of FederUnacoma's technical service, "can be the framework within which such training activities can be organised".

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