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**Precision agriculture, a step in the future**

***The systems for the electronic and satellite control of environmental parameters and cultivation operations offer incredible prospects. Approaching agricultural labor will be more and more scientific, with economic, environmental and safety benefits for operators.***

Biodiversity and agriculture are fully compatible, and they support each other. This is the message coming from the roundtable organized by FederUnacoma, held yesterday during the trade fair of Agrilevante in Bari. “Contrary to what is claimed by many people, namely that precision farming would only be suitable for US-style productions - explained Angelo Frascarelli, professor of agricultural economics at the University of Perugia – we must say that it is exactly the opposite, because Precision agriculture has important applications to a highly specialized and differentiated agriculture. It is in this kind of farming, made up of small and medium-sized companies that are often oriented towards typical and organic productions - added Frascarelli – that this type of technology allows for greater savings.”

Precision agriculture, which is essentially a management strategy that uses modern instrumentation and is aimed at the implementation of agronomic interventions, takes into account the actual cultivation needs and the biochemical and physical characteristics of the soil. For Frascarelli, this is the “agriculture of the future, because it will allow not only to optimize agronomic interventions, but will also free farmers or contractors from the fatigue of the work, by using self-guided tractors.” “With the help of intelligent machinery, it will be much easier to achive a quality agriculture. - said FederUnacoma President Alessandro Malavolti - “It reduces any margin of error, that an operator can commit in driving an agricultural machine and in carrying out crop operations, up to its total elimination This is an extraordinary breakthrough; precision agriculture is opening the doors of the third green revolution.” The presence of Slow Food and small-scale farming can also benefit from precision farming “without distorting the intrinsic characteristics of productive niches that may in this way be further enhanced, - said Marcello Longo, Coordinator of Slow Food Puglia - because we want good and healthy food for everyone. If precision farming helps to produce more environmentally sustainable products, by reducing crop yields, fertilizers, water and energy, that's fine!” A major contribution to the development of precision agriculture may be given by the use of drones, as it has been emphasized in a conference organized by Mirumir and the University of Bari. It is no coincidence that an agreement has been recently signed between FederUnacoma and Mirumir, which for fours years has organized the Dronitaly event, to promote the use of drones in agriculture through the organization of collective events within the FederUnacoma exhibitions. Drones allow to use color cameras to test soil conformation and its general conditions, while thermal cameras are used for monitoring vegetative stress, and multispectral cameras to create vivid maps, as it was explained by Simone Pascuzzi of the DISAAT Department at the University of Bari. “A specially-designed software processes data that agronomists can easily read - said Pascuzzi – to determine prescription maps and treatments able to eliminate dangerous parasites or check the nutrition status of crops.”

“But drones experimentation does not stop here – said Daniela Pitton of Mirumir: “Drones distribute insect capsules useful in the biological fight against corn borer, spray fertilizers on terraced vineyards, and distribute products to fight mosquitoes. Moreover, they have been recently tested for the pollination of walnut trees.” All this can be transferred into a precision agriculture that, if properly used, will allow for economic savings and environmental preservation.”

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