



MANIFESTO

of the **GREEN ECONOMY**
on Agri- food
for the occasion
of **EXPO 2015**



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This Manifesto expresses a point of view of the Green Economy on agricultural food production on the occasion of Expo Milano 2015. The Manifesto has been approved by the Plenary Assembly of the Italian National Council of the Green Economy, formed by 66 business organizations, with the participatory process of the States General of the Green Economy.

The goal of the Manifesto is to voice in an international context the Italian Agri-food Green Economy point of view on 7 crucial topics in our times:

- *Sustainable and quality-based development of the agricultural food production;*
- *The priority of agriculture between food production and other uses;*
- *The impacts of climate change on agriculture and the measures to address the climate crisis;*
- *Sustainable farming models;*
- *Food safety and security;*
- *Food waste;*
- *Threats to food production and consumption of agricultural soils.*

This Manifesto has been translated, disseminated and is open for signatures in order to stimulate the reflection and debate on the occasion of Expo 2015.

*National Council of the Green Economy
Met at the Ministry of the Environment, Land and Sea on 5th May 2015*

Adopt a Green Economy vision to ensure a sustainable and quality-based development of the agricultural food production

The first priority of agriculture has to be producing enough food to sustain an extended and inclusive well-being for present and future generations. Agriculture has to produce adequate revenue for farmers, decent occupation in rural areas and high-quality products made with appropriate farming techniques. These conditions are necessary for human health and the natural environment, for a wholesome nutrition and a durable development of agricultural activities. These functions are ensured when agri-food – as is happening more and more – is carried out with a green economy vision: such a vision uses the know-how, best practices and advanced techniques of eco-innovation to combine superior product quality, high productivity and protection of the natural capital.

Coordinate the different functions of agriculture, giving priority to food production

Protecting, restoring and increasing biodiversity are specific duties of an agriculture that aims for quality, enriched by a wide variety of species, flavours, nutritional values and by a broad range of lands and local ecosystems. Preserving the gift of a rich and abundant biodiversity is a key strategy of a multifunctional agriculture moving towards a green economy. Agriculture also supplies a very important and dynamic sector of the green economy: bioeconomy, based on the conversion of biomasses coming from multiple origins – residues, waste or co-products of both forestry and agricultural production processes – to renewable sources of energy or to raw materials for a number of activities, from traditional wood craft to advanced green chemistry processes. These endeavours, as well as other leisure, social and educational activities taking place in the countryside, such as rural tourism, are sustainable for the land if they are held in line with the green economy principles: they shouldn't cause significant environmental impacts or remove terrains intended for farming. Instead, they can help improve the conservation and management of lands, restore degraded and marginal areas, provide additional revenue streams for the agricultural world and reduce rural flight.

Undertake appropriate measures for climate crisis mitigation and adaptation

Climate change already has a considerable impact on agriculture: if effective mitigation measures are not adopted, these impacts could become unbearable. The increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather such as floods, droughts, high temperatures and heatwaves are causing massive hardship on agriculture. In order to avert the climate crisis from escalating further, deep cuts in greenhouse gas emissions are required by promoting energy efficiency and conservation, sustainable mobility and renewable energy sources. Agriculture can have a significant role in climate crisis mitigation: on one hand, an efficient management of pastures, fields and forestry can contribute to the absorption of greenhouse gases (in fact, an economic value should be assigned to such activities). On the other hand, a series of actions can reduce agricultural emissions: for instance, using renewable sources of energy and a lower amount of nitrogen fertilizers, improving the quality check on forage, implementing livestock effluent management systems and recovering biogases. It is also essential, especially for agricultural food production, to reinforce and extend the measures for climate crisis adaptation. It is important to develop more specific measures to protect the territory, to prevent and reduce hydrogeological risk, along with a wide dissemination of good farming practices that can improve the resilience of agriculture to climate changes (such as choosing more resistant plant and animal species, restoring organic matters into the soil, regularly adopting rotation practices with leguminous crops, and using water-saving techniques).

Overcome unsustainable farming policies and encourage dissemination of best practices

Environmental pressure on land is exacerbated by agro-industrial practices which are set on short-term and low-cost market strategies, pursue low quality productions, make use of harmful substances, degrade land and water resources and are incapable of recognising the economic values of natural capital and ecosystem services. Those practices, already called into question among agriculture experts, can eventually be overcome by promoting an agri-food green economy policy based on sustainable quality production – a true driving force of local cultures and economies – and by using media and communication to enhance awareness of its positive effects on environment, employment and general well-being. It is necessary to focus on well-grown land – without the open field use of genetically modified organisms (GMO) – and best practices backed up by a good level of know-how and information, and by a greater contribution from research and eco-innovation: best practices on organic farming, biodiversity, eco-sustainable quality production chains, restoration and conservation of plant and animal species, local products, land and cultural heritage.

Protect food security, intensify controls and develop short supply chains

In the global market, due also to shortcomings in the control systems and international standards, food fraud (through the improper use of names or trademarks that recall quality products on merchandises made instead with poor and sometimes adulterated raw materials), manipulations and treatments with unsafe substances, have raised many concerns over health and food security. To prevent risks and protect the quality of food chains, the following actions must be taken:

- controls must be improved and strengthened on a global scale;
- the fight against fraud and harmful manipulation of food has to be carried out;
- environmental and health regulations need to be harmonised;
- the traceability and protected designation of origin of food products have to be ensured;
- short food chains and local productions must be strengthened.

Short food supply chains may also be facilitated by the development of urban and peri-urban agriculture which – without replacing the larger productions of the countryside – can play an important role as a green infrastructure connecting rural and urban systems, thus promoting the expansion of green spaces and curbing the proliferation of construction.

Stop food waste and promote a circular economy for agri-food resources

The green economy aims at reduction, efficient and rational use of resources, according to a circular economy model. This model is also valid for renewable productions, such as agri-food, that are not unlimited and bear environmental and economic costs. Notwithstanding the remarkable progress in agricultural productivity, it would be irresponsible not to stop the waste of food and agricultural resources; in particular taking into consideration the continuous increase in world population and food consumption, as well as the factors of pressure and risks for the agricultural sector. Paradoxically, while part of the world population continues to suffer from hunger and malnutrition, another significant part is affected by obesity and wastes a large amount of food. To fight food waste, better information is necessary, as well as a sounder education on nutrition. More conscious and sober lifestyle and food consumption attitudes are required.

It is also vital to apply a circular economy model to food chains, meant to actively prevent and minimise waste and losses in all steps: production, processing, packaging, storage, transport and distribution, all the way down to final consumption. It is essential, in particular, to disseminate best practices and the best available techniques for the correct and sustainable use of all the by-products and derivatives from agricultural food production, and to recycle and recover all the remaining waste.

Stop threats to food production and agricultural soils

In addition to the climate crisis, a number of other environmental pressure factors are a serious threat to food production: the emission of air pollutants, the massive water use and contamination as well as the pollution of land (caused, among other factors, by the illegal disposal of waste). The green economy focuses on high environmental quality – vital for food production – encouraged by appropriate, stable, clear and simple legislation. It needs to be supported by effective controls in order to avoid unnecessary and costly bureaucracy. The uncontrolled construction of dwellings and infrastructure causes a special concern as it engenders an outrageous consumption of agricultural land. Land management and land use policies should be changed: the plentiful volumes unexploited by housing, industry and services have to be regenerated and used instead of consuming new land. Agricultural soil is an irreplaceable natural capital: it should be preserved as a strategic green infrastructure, essential for the production of food, for bioeconomy activities and for many ecosystem services indispensable to the quality of land and landscape. Consumption of agricultural soil is furthered by the abandonment of the countryside, particularly in the hills and mountains, which is instigated by the economic hardship (lack of availability and access to credit, low profitability and lack of generational turnover) that has hit numerous rural areas for many years. Nevertheless, there are many success stories of recovery and revitalisation of quality agricultural activities, restored farming, protection of newly productive agricultural land, made possible by integrating local species and ancient knowledge with eco-innovative techniques and multifunctional activities to maximise the value of the land.

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE GREEN ECONOMY IS COMPOSED BY:



1. **Acquisti & Sostenibilità** (Supply Chain and Business Sustainability Organization)
2. **ClimateHouse Agency** (Consultancy and certification body for the energy efficiency of the construction sector)
3. **AIAB** (Italian Association of Organic Farming)
4. **ANCO** (Italian Consortium of Waste Recyclers such as used oils, used batteries, and used electric devices)
5. **ANEV** (National Wind Energy Association)
6. **ANIT** (National Thermal and Acoustic Insulation Association)
7. **ASCOMAC Cogena** (Italian Association for the Promotion of Cogeneration)
8. **ASSISTAL** (Plant Constructors, Energy Service Companies and Facility Management National Association)
9. **Assobioplastiche** (Italian Bioplastic and Biodegradable and Compostable material Association)
10. **Assocostieri** (Italian Association of coastal depots of mineral oils)
11. **Assogasliquidi – Federchimica** (Italian Combustion and Fuel LPG and LNG Production and Distribution Association)
12. **Assoreca** (Association of consultancy and service companies active in the environment, energy, safety and social responsibility)
13. **Assorimap** (Italian Association of plastic recyclers)
14. **AssoRinnovabili** (Association of producers, industry and services for renewable energy)
15. **Assovetro** (Italian Glass Manufacturers Association)
16. **Asstra** (Transport Association)
17. **AutoRecycling** (Automotive Recyclers Association)
18. **C.A.R.P.I** (Autonomous Consortium of Companies for recycling, collection and production of plastics)
19. **CDC RAEE** (Coordination Center for Electric and Electronic Devices Recycling Management Consortiums)
20. **CDCNPA** (National Coordination Center for Batteries and Rechargeable Batteries Management)
21. **CIA** (Italian Farmers Confederation)
22. **Cial** (Italian National Consortium for the Recovery and Recycling of Aluminium Packagings)
23. **CIB** (Italian Biogas Consortium)
24. **CIC** (Italian Consortium of Composters)
25. **CNA-Ambiente** (Italian Confederation of Crafts and Small and medium-sized Enterprises)
26. **COBAT** (Italian National Consortium for Collection and Recycling)
27. **Coldiretti** (Italian national confederation of independent farmers)
28. **Comieco** (National Consortium for the Recovery and Recycling of Cellulose -based Packaging)
29. **CONAI** (National Consortium for Packaging Recovery and Recycling)
30. **Confagricoltura** (General Confederation of Italian Agriculture)
31. **Confartigianato - Settore Ambiente-Sicurezza** (Italian Crafts Confederation - Environment and Security Department)

32. **CONIP** (National Plastic Packaging Consortium)
33. **CONOE** (National Mandatory Consortium responsible for the collection and treatment of animal and vegetable oils and fats)
34. **Consorzio RICREA** (Italian National Consortium for Steel Packaging Recovery and Recycling)
35. **COOU** (National Mandatory Consortium of Used Oils)
36. **Corepla** (National Consortium for the Collection and Recycling of Plastic packages)
37. **Coreve** (National Consortium for Glass Recovery and Recycling)
38. **DAEL** (Consortium for the Agriculture-Energy District of Lombardia)
39. **Ecogas** (National Ecogas Consortium)
40. **Ecomondo - Key Energy – Cooperambiente** (Italian International Trade Fair of Material & Energy Recovery and Sustainable Development)
41. **Ecopneus** (Non-profit Limited consortium established to manage the traceability, collection, treatment, and final recovery of End of Life Tyres)
42. **EcoTyre scri** (Italian Consortium for tyre manufacturers and importers)
43. **Federambiente** (Italian federation of Public Environmental services)
44. **Federesco** (National Association of ESCos, Energy Service Companies)
45. **Federidroelettrica** (National Federation of Hydroelectric Producers)
46. **Federutility** (Italian Federation of Energy and Water companies)
47. **Fercargo** (Italian Association of private rail-companies)
48. **FIPER** (Italian Producer of Renewable Energy Federation)
49. **FIRE** (Italian Federation for the Rational use of Energy)
50. **Fise Assoambiente** (Federation of Italian private companies working in the field of environmental services)
51. **Fise Unire** (Waste Recovery and Recycling Operators' Association)
52. **Global Compact Network Italian Foundation** (based on ONU initiative for adopting sustainable and socially responsible policies)
53. **Fondazione per lo Sviluppo Sostenibile** (Sustainable Development Foundation)
54. **Forum per la Finanza Sostenibile** (Italian Forum for Sustainable Finance)
55. **FREE-Coordinamento** (Coordination of Italian Associations on renewable energies and energy efficiency)
56. **Freight Leaders Council** (Association of Logistics and Transport Companies)
57. **GIFI** (Italian Group of Photovoltaic Companies)
58. **Green Building Council Italia** (Italian Association for Sustainable Building)
59. **Green economy Network Assolombarda** (Energy Service Company Consortium on renewable energy and energy efficiency solutions)
60. **JPE 2010** (Energy Service Company Consortium on renewable energy and energy efficiency solutions)
61. **Kyoto Club** (Organisation of business companies, associations and local municipalities and governments)
62. **Legacoop Servizi** (Italian Cooperative Association of Services and Tourism)
63. **NGV Italy** (Italian Consortium for natural gas transport industry)
64. **Planet Life Economy Foundation** (Organization for including sustainable principles in the dynamics of enterprises management)
65. **Rilegno** (National consortium for the collection of cork and recycling of wooden packaging)
66. **Symbola - Fondazione per le Qualità Italiane** (Foundation for Italian Quality)

Coordinators of the Working Groups are part of the National Council.

- 1** *Adopt a Green Economy vision to ensure a sustainable and quality-based development of the agricultural food production*
- 2** *Coordinate the different functions of agriculture, giving priority to food production*
- 3** *Undertake appropriate measures for climate crisis mitigation and adaptation*
- 4** *Overcome unsustainable farming policies and encourage dissemination of best practices*
- 5** *Protect food security, intensify controls and develop short supply chains*
- 6** *Stop food waste and promote a circular economy for agri-food resources*
- 7** *Stop threats to food production and agricultural soils*

To sign the manifesto go to:

www.statigenerali.org

