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The commitment of Veneto Region for the primary sector and the role of "Veneto Agricoltura" agency

Veneto region has a population of 4,5 million people, homogeneously distributed on the territory.

Our region represents 6% of the national territory and is the 8th widest region of Italy. It can be divided into three areas: a mountainous one, about 29% of the territory, a hilly one, about 15%, and a plain area, 56% of the territory.

The regional extension is about 18.000 km², 852.000 ha are cultivated, and 270.000 ha are forestry areas.

Because of the economical development, for the last 30 years the territory has been undergoing a deep transformation: the processes of urbanisation and industrialisation have led to a reduction of the extension of agricultural lands.

The extra-agricultural activities are concentrated in the central area of the region and are made of small and medium farms; in mountainous areas the main activities are connected to forestry and tourism, while in the southern area the leading activity is agriculture.

In spite of the deep reduction of the farming land, and the relative decrease of farms, the farm invoice and the medium farm area are increased. Considering the invoice of the various sectors, Veneto is one of the leading regions in Italy; from the gross sealable production (GSP) point of view, our Region occupies the third position, just after Lombardia and Emilia-Romagna. Among the most important sectors, the vine culture, the meat sector, the milk and dairy producing and the grain farming are worth notice.

Moreover the 15 regional typical productions (DOP and IGP) represent 22% of the actual regional GSP.

In the end, the structural and economical analysis of Veneto agriculture highlights a non homogenous situation: some farms are highly competitive, but many others need a complete re-organisation in order to survive.

The role of Veneto region in this situation is planning and realising actions aimed to sustain and develop the farms marked oriented. The Rural Development Plan (RDP) - considered the answer to "Agenda 2000" - represents the mean by which the Region aims to reinforce the rural organisation of Veneto.

The RDP specific aims:

1. improving the competition and efficiency of agricultural and transforming industries (process and product innovation, quality, professional training ...)
2. development of a multi-activity farming system to sustain lesser competitive farms (agri-tourism, handcraft activities, niche productions ...)
3. Safeguard and protection of the environment and rural landscape:
 - a. Developing farming activities in critical areas;
 - b. Improving sustainable farming activities;
 - c. Creating the instruments to for agriculture to get a defensive role towards the rural territory.

The role of Veneto Agricoltura

Veneto Agricoltura is the Veneto Region's institute that promotes and realises interventions for the modernisation of the agricultural structures, for the development of acquaculture and fishing, with particular reference to the activities of research and testing of the agricultural, forestry and agro-industrial sectors and as a support to the market.

Veneto Agricoltura promotes process and product innovation of the competent sectors, also through the agricultural divulgation and rural activity, and delivers specialist services for

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exploitation and marketing of regional typical products; promotes and organises quality certification activities of alimentary products; improves rational employment of environmental resources and applied search activity, testing, information and vocational training and is especially alert to the bio-diversity preservation through the management of regional forest nurseries and nature reserves.

Among the many activities and studies in progress or just completed, it is worth notice the work realised on the production disciplinary measures, voluntarily adopted by horticultural farms which want to label their products with the mark of Veneto Region. These operating protocols, specific to each culture, provide for obligatory controls which allow the complete tracing of any product from the market place to the producing farm.

This last example well illustrates the work realised and concludes the present report.