

[ INTERVISTA ] Sergio Rossi, amministratore delegato di Fiere e Comunicazione, lancia BtoBio

# «Un sostegno importante per un settore in espansione»

[ DI GUIDO TREBBIA ]

«Sono stati gli operatori del mercato a chiederci una manifestazione come BtoBio – spiega Sergio Rossi, amministratore delegato di Fiere e Comunicazioni. – Abbiamo così realizzato un nuovo appuntamento biennale e solo professionale, che avesse finalmente un carattere e una caratura internazionale e che raccogliesse i protagonisti della filiera del biologico certifi-

cato. Abbiamo così dato largo spazio a prodotti di qualità assoluta per buyer, distributori stranieri e nuovi canali oltre allo specializzato, come il normal trade, la ristorazione, e la ristorazione collettiva, il fuori casa e così via. BtoBio, così, è una fiera al servizio del business, con in più l'Expo 2015 sullo sfondo, il cui tema *nutrire il pianeta, energia per la vita* è centrale rispetto alla nostra visione».

Ai nastri di partenza  
la nuova  
manifestazione b2b  
per il mondo  
del biologico



[ Sergio Rossi.

Fiere e Comunicazioni, protagonista da alcuni decenni del panorama fieristico italiano e internazionale, è la società che negli anni Ottanta inventò la prima fiera dedicata al biologico. Parliamo di anni in cui la

cultura del biologico si trovava ancora in una fase embrionale, in cui le produzioni erano an-

[ ENGLISH VERSION BY LAURA MONTI

## BTOBIO, «SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT TO AN EXPANDING SECTOR»

BtoBio Expo, the new biennial international professional exhibition of certified organic products, will make its debut in May in hall 18 of FieraMilano, Rho-Però. As the organizers are keen on stressing, the show has been designed upon specific demand of a few important specialized players, who have asked Fiere e Comunicazioni to design a new exhibiting model for the sector. The demand was submitted to Fiere e Comunicazioni because this was the first exhibition organizer in Italy to believe in the organic business and strive towards its promotion. For the organizers BtoBio starts as a review of top-level production, services, and information on the certified organic sector at an international professional level, also intended to promote a *contamination* of the traditional market and its channels (out-of-home consumption, catering, stores, modern distribution, hospitality, canteens, etc.) by the organic sector. The selected venue is Milan, because the main Lombard city is seen as a privileged reference point for contacts with the international market by its tradition, logistic approach, and attractiveness. BtoBio will exploit the synergy with the show Tutto Food, dedicated to top-quality traditional agro-food products; this combination was designed to capture and *contaminate* professional operators in the traditional business with an organic influence.

The tens of thousands of Italian and foreign buyers expected to attend the show will thus find certified organic products at BtoBio and traditional foodstuffs at Tutto Food.

The over 30 thousand operators ensured by Tutto Food will be admitted free of charge to hall 18, where they will find a broad range of certified organic products for their reference market. Moreover, buyers and decision-makers from the entire Italian and international distribution system related to the organic sector will be invited. The admission to BtoBio costs 20 EUR, but a 50% discounted invitation can be downloaded from the website of the show [www.btobio.it](http://www.btobio.it).

**Strengthened channels.** BtoBio was primarily designed for the purpose of opening up new distribution channels, in order to turn the organic sector into an easy-to-access mass phenomenon.

Sales in specialized stores recorded an excellent performance in 2010; according to the available data, this was 15-20% up compared to 2009 – which is great news. But BtoBio is intended to provide a broad overview of the excellence of the organic business to buyers and distributors in all channels – normal trade, public and private collective catering, out-of-home consumption. In other words, the idea is to promote a revival of organic products both in large scale distribution and in traditional stores, canteens, catering, and hospitality; on the other hand, opening outlets also in normal trade is a huge opportunity for development for the organic sector.

Meanwhile the usual Ismea-Nielsen reports further confirm the vitality of the organic business: the year 2010 closed positively for the sector, with an 11.6% annual growth of consumptions in value, the highest figure in the past eight years.



**Ismea data.** While Ismea, in its final report on the conventional sector, speaks about *brakes on* (-0.6% in volumes and -0.5% in prices) for 2010, the increase of organic product purchases appears even more significant when considering that the organic sector recorded *amuch higher performance* than the agro-food sector in its entirety and the other high-quality segments in that year.

In terms of distribution, sales are promoted primarily by hypermarkets, but other channels also provide satisfactory results (particularly traditional and self-service stores).

In addition to the positive performance of the specialized sector (15 to 20% growth), organic sales also involved large-scale distribution, traditional retail, hypermarkets, and supermarkets. More specifically: hypermarkets +18.2%, supermarkets +3.7%, traditional stores +29.3%, small supermarkets +26.8%, and hard discount stores +14.9%.

The main categories of packaged organic products growing above average (around 13%) include milk and dairy products, soft drinks, and biscuits, confectionery & snacks.

Organic product consumption is confirmed as particularly strong in northern Italy, which accounts alone for over 70% of buys in value. Moreover, the north-east and the south showed the sharpest growth in 2010. Where available, organic products are conquering more and more space. And the new exhibition in Milan is intended to boost this process.

**Aquaculture.** One of the most promising segments of the organic business, though perhaps less familiar, aquaculture will find ample room at BtoBio. Aquaculture involves more and more operators, and a ministerial decree for its regulation was published on September 9 last. One point summarizes the potentials of organic aquaculture: it is a food production sector where the growth rate is among the highest at world level. The available official data points out to a global annual production of about 35 thousand tons as a result of a discipline that closely controls the suitability of sites allocated for aquaculture, and ensures the implementation of the organic breeding method throughout the lifecycle of the animals and weeds, proper breeding practices, system certification, cleanliness, proper nutrition... In order to further boost this recently codified activity, BtoBio will organize the convention *Organic Aquaculture year 1. A high-potential market*, with lectures from highly-qualified experts.

**Food and much more.** BtoBio Expo is not just a show of certified organic food products, but also an overview of the organic business in all respects, including

non-food. Thus, hall 18 of FieraMilano will include areas dedicated to feeds, seeds, fertilizers, bee-keeping products, textiles and apparel, health, beauty, and herbal products (all certified).

Organic beauty products represent a typical case of newborn and constantly growing market, which currently includes over 2,300 products and involves 165 companies (both Italian and foreign). According to the data collected by Siste (Società italiane per le scienze e tecniche erboristiche), Italian consumers favour organic beauty products because they are more effective (57%), for health reasons (28%), because they are not tested on animals (32%), for environmental reasons (25%), or for their greater safety (18%).

The organic beauty segment boasts a huge potential for the future: in France and Germany, for example, where the awareness of organic issues is generally broader, a 15-17% penetration rate is recorded, vs. 6-7% in Italy. However, it should be noted that consumers of organic beauty products in France have grown from 5 to 18% in two years. Another virtuous example is the UK where the organic sector gave signs of crisis in 2009, but consumptions grew by 30% in the same year, up to a 40 million EUR value.

"A close look at the confirmations we have received so far shows that the products and services represented at BtoBio substantially cover all segments of the business," says **Sergio Rossi**, CEO of Fiere e Comunicazioni. "While being a first edition, the companies' reaction was very positive."

**Meetings.** BtoBio is also an opportunity to offer a rich agenda of events, including training and workshops, analyses, stages and happenings for connoisseurs.

For example, 3 interesting conventions will focus on non-specialized distribution channels:

- *Normal trade and other new channels for development of the organic business*, in co-operation with *Largo Consumo*, attended by Ismea, Abbascià kea food, Juice Bar, Almaverde Bio, Sogegro, Andmi.

- *Organic products in catering between costs, benefits, and values*, in co-operation with *Ristorando*, attended by Conal, Mipaaf, Sinab, Accredia, Avenance Italia, CirFood, Aiab, Ausl of Bologna, and the Dairy Centre of Brescia.

- The third one, still to be defined and organized by the Lombardy Region, will address the serving of organic products in school canteens in Lombardy, with a truly outstanding panel of speakers. ■



**[ Gastone Rossi.**

cora molto limitate e a livello legislativo in Italia e in Europa, non era ancora stato fatto quasi niente. Fu allora che **Gastone Rossi**, presidente della società e convinto consumatore e promotore del bio mise a disposizione le sue competenze professionali a vantaggio del settore.

### **[ STANDARD SEVERI**

La fiera nacque come incubatore di un settore che, secondo le intuizioni della direzione di Fiere e Comunicazioni, aveva davanti a sé un enorme poten-

ziale di crescita, sviluppo, ricchezza e contenuti.

«I prodotti certificati *bio* sono garanzia di procedure adottate dall'intera filiera, e sono sinonimo di qualità, freschezza, naturalezza, perché gli standard richiesti sono molto severi nel controllo degli additivi nei processi di produzione agricola, trasformazione, lavorazione e conservazione e impongono agli allevatori un tipo di allevamento più sano e genuino – afferma Rossi –. Il bio certificato è sano, gustoso, sicuro. Per questo il consumato-

re premia il bio: perché il cliente è sempre più selettivo, e l'attenzione alla qualità a 360° - valori etici, tutela ambientale, salubrità del prodotto consumato - è sempre più centrale nelle decisioni di acquisto».

Anche i prodotti esposti a BtoBio saranno rigorosamente certificati. «A monte, noi effettuiamo un controllo, mentre a valle, durante i giorni di fiera, saranno dei rappresentanti della Sezione Certificatori di Federbio a controllare che i prodotti esposti siano certificati – spiega Rossi –. Su questo



siamo stati chiari sin da subito: BtoBio si regge su dei pilastri, e la certificazione del prodotto biologico è uno di questi. Per questo non si vedranno prodotti certificati bio in Tutto Food e prodotti non certificati bio nella nostra rassegna».

## [ CRESCITA TUMULTUOSA

E l'andamento del mercato del biologico stimola a impegnarsi in questo settore.

«Visto l'enorme potenziale del settore e la sua costante crescita e dopo tanti anni di sviluppo, in taluni casi impetuoso, - afferma l'ad di Fiere & Comunicazione - molti protagonisti del settore (produttori, trasformatori, consorzi, associazioni ecc.) hanno sentito la necessità di una nuova piattaforma di accelerazione di questo comparto per una maggiore e migliore diffusione dei



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prodotti bio all'estero e in tutti i canali».

I numeri del bio oggi testimoniano una realtà economica e una adesione a nuovi stili di vita in grande e continuativo slancio e fermento.

«Uno slancio che ha bisogno ora di un momento di incontro e confronto a livello in-

ternazionale: questo ci hanno chiesto, ed è per questa nuova sfida che siamo tornati a occuparci del settore in maniera attiva. BtoBio Expo si presenta a questa prima edizione come una nuova, importante opportunità fieristica per gli operatori del biologico, - conclude Rossi - con una prospettiva di

successo e crescita derivante dal fortissimo radicamento nel mondo del biologico di Fiere e Comunicazioni: una garanzia di serietà, impegno ed esperienza che aiuterà espositori, visitatori, enti, associazioni, media e istituzioni a incontrarsi, conoscersi e sviluppare nuove sinergie». ■