

VareseNews

“Let’s not waste any more food”

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✖ “It’s time for lunch: let’s not waste our food.” It was with this invitation that Giuseppe Geneletti, the head of Public Relations at Whirlpool EMEA brought the SiFood Presentation Congress to an end. **SiFood** stands for **Science & innovation Food district**, which is the name of the new district for technological innovation for food sustainability, **which has been created thanks to Whirlpool’s commitment.**

According to a number of estimates, **the cost of food waste is nearly €9 billion per year.** SiFood has been created to reduce this figure.

“Almost 50% of fruit and vegetables are wasted in Italy. This quantity is less than the amount of these products cooked, but the fact remains that waste has got an environmental cost, too, namely pollution,” said **Alberto Cigada, from the Polytechnic of Milan**, who is now on the scientific committee of SiFood.

“There are problems of storage, both in retail outlets and at home,” Cigada said. “It’s not that you should buy less, but buy better. **Technologies can play an important role in preventing waste**, helping consumers to understand when and how it is best to buy food. The future of Italy lies in food, and we have to invest in it, because the Chinese will never be as good as us, at least not for the next thirty years. Innovation is the way to turn knowledge into money; that’s why **SiFood can help Italy to win.**”

This is a commitment in which Whirlpool believes strongly, using all of their knowhow and experience. “We want to stimulate innovation, with effective collaboration between the public and private sectors,” said **Mauro Piloni, the President of SiFood.** “We want to stimulate the growth of the production system, we want to develop human capital and create profiles, even several, because the themes are cross-technological. Our ambition is to attract financial resources, and we want to interact constructively with business and non-business players. **We want to have the future in our hands, we want to have an active part in it.**”

In order to do this, it is necessary to have a common commitment, shared by a lot of people, to put innovation and research at the service of a project that will seriously reduce food waste.

“Smart refrigerators and smart household appliances will be the products that reduce waste,” Piloni went on. “We’re already active as a scientific committee; we’ve tried to understand the types of technologies that are present in universities. **Our goal is to create a pilot project: a compatible project that we can get going quickly. And we have to make the most of the EXPO.**”

Thus, Varese has acquired a central role in this new initiative, not only because of the presence of multinational leaders in household appliances, but also because of a great sensitivity throughout the territory. At the beginning of the work, **Mario Temperelli**, the general secretary of the Varese Chamber of Commerce, presented SiFood. **“There are 1500 businesses in the province involved.** And the quality of this project will bring a competitive advantage for the whole of Varese Province.”

The Union of Industrialists, UNIVA, has also joined SiFood. According to **Vittorio Gandini, the director of UNIVA**, “The Italian system lacks sufficient initiatives that increase the value of the cluster model. But Italy, with all of its districts, can't stay out of these projects. The Varese Union of Industrialists has joined SiFood, in order to involve more of the European resources that clusters are rely on: institutions, universities and industry.”

After a number of institutional speeches, the proceedings at the Ville Ponti, which were chaired by **Andrea Bordone**, continued with a workshop and a round table meeting coordinated by **Valerio De Molli of the Studio Ambrosetti**. It was an opportunity to present a series of successful experiences and cases related to innovation and technology. **“You might go faster on your own, but you'll certainly get further when you're part of a team,”** was the slogan at the opening of De Molli's speech. “It's a fact that those who invested more in innovation and research and development have gained more in terms of growth. And Italy is last in the European cluster (before Greece) and has values that are half those of Germany. As a country system, we give €19.2 billion to research. This serious delay is not only public, but above all affects the private sector.”

Roberto Maroni, the President of Lombardy, also insisted a lot on this when he spoke at the end of the conference, after **he had stipulated a protocol on competitiveness with Whirlpool** a few hours before.

“One of Lombardy's strong points is innovation. Businesses in Lombardy are leading innovation, and they invest about €3 billion per year, out of the total of €4 billion that Lombardy invests in research and development. This is a world that, as Lombardy Region, I want to help. And my main duty is to find the money for businesses and social organizations. For this reason, I want to talk directly to the European Union, and so, I'm creating a system with the industrial areas of the other European countries. During my term, I've promised again to invest 3% of the GDP in research and innovation: this is the highest percentage, and means nearly €9 billion. This is the job of the regional council, to help and promote the process of increasing investments in technologies.”

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