

Agriculture, Coldiretti: “A difficult year”

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“It’s been a difficult year.” The president of Coldiretti Varese, **Fernando Fiori**, and the director, **Giovanni Luigi Cremonesi**, point out how pre-Alpine agriculture will remember 2019 as a year “deeply and seriously conditioned by the weather conditions, as well as by the invasion of wild animals that continued in the autumn months and in this first part of winter with a recrudescence that leaves us bewildered.”

This is Coldiretti’s 2019 report:

2019 started badly, with the fires that have affected for days the high part of the province of Varese and with a long and worrisome dry phase, followed by a spring characterized by high temperatures and by the return of the cold, which in our provinces **has decimated the production of honey, with the zeroing of the acacia harvest.** It was a good year for cereals, although market prices are still unsatisfactory; summer fruit were certainly also affected by bad weather, while for the wine sector, although there was a small decrease in production linked to the climate issue, the quality was very good.

The effects of bad weather have particularly increased in our provinces in summer, when **frequent hailstorms have damaged plantations and structures**, with particular recrudescence where the warm air of the plain crossed the cold air descending from the Alps, as in the Valsassinese corridor, where on many occasions there have been serious flooding events that have isolated several alpine pastures and caused serious damage to businesses.

With regards to meat, there has been recorded a recovery for the market of pigs and of poultry stable like that of beef. For the milk and cheese product industry, quotes of cow's milk to the barn have recorded a resurgence and they are then maintained stable throughout the year, with a **good performance on the international market above all of Grana Padano and Gorgonzola** also produced with milking in our province: two cheeses PDO, on which now, however, burden duties required from United States.

A year boom for the collection of mushrooms and chestnut, with good marking for these latter. Climatic conditions weighed also on the floriculturist sector in particular the heavy rain has created problems both in the management both in the sale of some types of plants and flowers. There are positive data on the front of the direct sales and performances of "Agrimercati" of "Campagna Amica" as well as farmhouses of "Terranostra" which confirms as growing polo of attraction and of contract with consumers.

In 2019, as mentioned, a higher proportion never seen before, and worrying, **the phenomenon of wildlife**: in the province of Varese, the ravages of boars and wild animals in the fields are daily with a damage bulletin that day by day takes on sizes ever more worrying: ungulate and wild animals ravaging fields from every corner of the pre-alpine rural district and operations of contrast, so far, have proved to be ineffective to solve once and forever the problem.

Boars together with other wild animals put at risk a wide spectrum of crops, with damages that reach also for individual cases several thousands of Euros. **Incursions caused damages** to Nursery, orchards, to crops in open fields, from growers of small fruits to the vineyards, to legumes in addition to oilseed and, as seen of meadows and of grain maize and silage. On the part of ungulate animals have been recorded even destructions of beehives, as well as the devastation of the centuries old dry-stone walls. **Several times Coldiretti Varese reiterated the need of a fresh census on the territory**, because the population of this animals is much higher to the estimate from Ispra.

di Translated by Reato & Tantari (Reviewed by prof. Robert Clarke)