



The Real Taste of Food Processing & Packaging

Press Release

**“FRESH CUT AND READY-TO-EAT PRODUCTS IN DEMAND FROM ITALIAN CONSUMERS. ITALY SURPASSES CHINA TO BECOME THE SECOND LARGEST TOMATO PRODUCER IN THE WORLD”.
AS REVEALED ON DAY THREE OF CIBUS TEC**

The 600 new products at the food technology exhibition at Fiere di Parma include an “earthquake-proof cheese factory”

(Parma- 27 October 2016) Italian consumers are showing demand for fresh cut fruit and vegetables and ready-to-eat convenience foods.

This is what emerged from the **“Vegetable Innovation Lab. Developments in Vegetable Consumption”** conference, which took place in partnership with Fresh Point Magazine and New Business Media on day three of Cibus Tec, the food technologies exhibition **closing tomorrow at Fiere di Parma**.

Even though relatively small in absolute value, fresh cut salads and frozen vegetables show a current trend and development potential projected to 2020 significantly on the increase, with pre-washed and cut salads sales expected to rise by 7.5% over the next 5 years.

Moreover, the study presented at the conference revealed, taking the sector as a whole in terms of retail channels, a change in domestic sales between August 2014-2016: both fresh cut and ready-to-eat foods rose sharply in 2015, by 6.4% and 8.2% respectively, before flattening out in 2016 with increases of only 0.3.% and 2.1%, amounting to 90,000 and 10,500 tons sold respectively (*source: Ismea-Nielsen, Consumer Panel*). In terms of value, there has been growth over the last two years in ready-to-eat foods, whilst fresh cut vegetables fell slightly in 2016.

But what were the factors behind these trends in fresh cut and ready-to-eat foods over the last two years?

One is certainly the client base (households purchasing the product), which increased in 2015 and 2016, alongside an increase in 2015 in the frequency of purchase and the average quantity of product per purchase. However, two indicators showed a downward trend or remained unchanged in 2016. A fall in the average quantity per purchase, due to a renewed focus on the part of families on reducing household waste in less than favourable economic circumstances, is the main cause of the slowdown in this sector’s development in 2016.

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One of the critical factors at play, as well as keys to potential growth, is market penetration, which remains low still today, particularly for ready-to-eat food - only 24% of Italian families made one ready-to-eat food purchase during the last year, compared to 77% for fresh cut products; the second is the low rate of purchase frequency: 1 purchase on average every 3 weeks for fresh cut products; 1 purchase every 3 and a half months for ready-to-eat foods.

In this respect, the greatest innovative strides were made in soups, fresh prepared vegetable-based products (i.e. burgers, first courses, prepared side dishes such as mashed potatoes and flans), ready-to-eat foods and fruit juices.

The development in the consumption of vegetables also includes frozen products. This is certified by the sales trends projected for the next five years by Euromonitor, anticipated to increase by 2.6%.

From frozen produce to one of the most typical Made in Italy products, the tomato.

Day three of Cibus Tec was **Tomato Day conference**, held in partnership with AMITOM & WPTC - the World Processing Tomato Council - who crowned Italy the second largest producer in the world, with 5.2 million tons of processed tomato, exceeding their historical competitor China.

The second largest processor in the world after the USA, Italy represents 14% of worldwide production and 49% of European processing, with a total turnover of over 3.1 billion euro, about half of which is from exports.

According to a study presented at the event, over the coming years global demand will send the quota of prepared tomato-based sauces beyond that of pesto-based sauces.

Tomato Day also included the request for PGI for peeled tomatoes, which, whole and flavoursome, may be considered the best testimonials to the excellence of our produce in the four corners of the world.

This 51st edition of Cibus Tec is showcasing over 600 products, including the **earthquake-proof cheese factory**. After the 2012 earthquake that destroyed thousands of valuable Parmigiano Reggiano wheels, the Florentine company ROSS created special *scalere* (the wooden shelves where the maturing cheese is stacked) able to resist the most violent tremors.

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