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**Agricultural machinery: the strategic partnership between Italy and the USA**

***In the first four months of the year, the US market increased by 7.6% imports of agricultural machinery made in Italy, thus becoming Italy’s main trading partner in the agromechanical sector. Italian machines appreciated for innovative content, customisation possibilities, reliability. The appointment with EIMA 2024 expected by US operators to familiarise themselves with the wide range of technological solutions able to meet every need of North American agriculture.***

Made in Italy agricultural machinery is increasingly appreciated by US farmers. This is indicated by Istat data on Italian exports of technologies for agriculture in the first four months of the year. Surveys by the National Statistical Institute, processed by the Association of Manufacturers FederUnacoma, indicate an increase in trade with the USA, which in the period considered exceeded the threshold of 320 million euros in value (+7.6% on the first quarter of 2023). Thanks to this increase, the United States has become Italy’s leading trading partner in the sector, absorbing a share of 14.5% of total Italian exports, overtaking historic partners such as France and Germany. The growth in US demand for made in Italy agricultural technologies - FederUnacoma explains - is mainly related to the item equipment and machines, which recorded +12.6% for a total of 250 million euros, while the item tractors recorded a slight decrease compared to the first four months of 2023 (- 6.7%) reaching 71.2 million euros. The data on export performance in the early part of the year therefore confirm the importance that the Italian-US partnership has also played in the field of agricultural mechanics, one of the excellent production sectors of the Italian industrial system. Wide range, technological innovation, customisation of machinery according to the specific needs of agricultural companies are the factors that have allowed Italian technologies to increase their quotas even across the Atlantic.

Precisely for this reason EIMA International, the biennial exhibition of agricultural mechanics that will hold its 46th edition at the Bologna Fair from 6 to 10 November, has become an unmissable event for North American businesspeople, who in recent editions attended the exhibition in an increasingly consistent way. This is the information released by Italian Trade Agency and FederUnacoma during the AG Media Summit, held in Kansas City from 3 to 6 August, where the Italian Foreign Trade Agency and the Federation of Manufacturers have an institutional presence. In the last four editions of the event - the organisers recall - the USA is the most represented country of the American continent, with the number of businesspeople rising from 695 in 2016 to 1,260 in 2022. The incremental trend, according to forecasts, should also be confirmed for EIMA 2024, an edition that promises to be a record-breaking one, after the already extraordinary one recorded in 2022, when over 320,000 visitors, including buyers, foreign delegates, industry operators, agriculture and mechanics enthusiasts, crowded the Bologna exhibition centre, consecrating the exhibition as a "top" event worldwide in terms of range and innovative content. With its 14 sectors of specialisation and 5 thematic showcases (EIMA Components for components, EIMA Digital for digital technologies and 4.0, EIMA Energy for agroenergy, EIMA Green for gardening machines, EIMA Idrotech for irrigation systems), which occupy an exhibition area of over 370 thousand square metres in total, the Bologna exhibition showcases 60,000 models of machines, equipment and components for agriculture and green care. From viticulture to irrigation systems, from open field crops to phytosanitary treatments, US agricultural entrepreneurs will be able to find in Bologna the most suitable agricultural technologies for each specific production need.

But EIMA International is not only a commercial and promotional event, it is also an opportunity for public decision-makers, technicians, agronomists and sector experts to discuss the main issues related to the agricultural sector. Between press conferences, conventions and workshops, dozens of meetings have already been scheduled to date, but - the organisers explain - this is a calendar that is still being finalised and is going to be enriched even more as the November date approaches. In the context of the Bologna event, the official foreign delegations, promoted by the Italian Trade Agency, play a fundamental role. This year they include 440 selected economic operators from more than 80 countries. Of particular interest to North American operators is the exhibition of the winning models in the Technical Innovations contest, which will allow them to familiarise with the latest generation technologies developed by the exhibiting companies and which, as per tradition, is set up in the Quadriportico area. Innovative content also characterises the dynamic tests that are held throughout the exhibition in the spaces outside the halls: the Tractor of the Year finalist tractor show, demonstrations of machinery for bioenergy supply chains, tests of gardening machines and greenery care. Also on the subject of dynamic testing, one of the most eagerly awaited innovations at the forthcoming EIMA is the space called REAL, focused on robots, drones and highly automated systems that make it possible to increase production yields, improve crop sustainability and optimise the use of production inputs. With the robotics area, the Bologna event opens an important window on frontier technologies, which are already revolutionising the way of doing agriculture and which represent a fundamental support to face the challenges of our time: the growing demand for food goods, soil and environmental protection, production quality and safety at work.

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