



Futurpera 2017 with a 30% more attendance

The Future of the Abate Pear and the conquest of new markets, starting with China: these were the 'hot topics' discussed at the World Pear Forum, held during the second edition of Futurpera, the fair dedicated to the pear industry, which took place in Ferrara from 16 to 18 November 2017. To sustain the Abate Pear, there is a need to increase yields and obtain greater profitability than is currently the case for Italy's top pear. In Emilia-Romagna alone, Italy's biggest pear-producing region, in the last 15 years the cultivated area has fallen from 27,000 to 19,000 hectares; but what is worse is that yields per hectare, instead of improving, have hit around 25 tons. The blame lies in part with climate change, with the future looking bleak in this regard. The outlook for the 2021-2050 period is that one summer in three could reach the extremely high temperatures recorded in 2017. Another sore point is the limited number of varieties on offer and the absence of pollinators, an issue which does not appear to concern producers in other countries. Yields are better even in South Africa, where pear cultivation covers only 13,000 hectares and the crop is still in recovery; likewise, in Chile, where the Abate is the second most produced

variety, and in the Benelux countries, too. With regard to opening new markets, there were many calls for the expansion of exports beyond the borders of the European Union. According to Gianni Amidei, Chairman of OI Pera, the latest data for the EU's number-one producer, Italy, show a production of about 735,000 tons in 2017 - an increase of 8% compared with 2016, with good quality levels favouring long-distance exports. Nevertheless, the EU remains the main market for the Italian product. This is why Marco Salvi, regional president of Fruitimprese, calls for institutions to work on phytosanitary agreements with countries whose markets are potentially very receptive, such as Canada, Mexico, China, Russia, Vietnam, the US, India, Brazil and South Africa. The event was a great success overall, with the participation of more than 120 specialist companies and a 30% increase in both visitors and professionals, including more than 3,000 participants in the World Pear Forum. Following this success, a series of initiatives will be launched next year in anticipation of the event's third edition in 2019 which will continue to promote the product and the entire chain, focusing once more on innovation, growth and positioning the product. **BB**