



Closing press release – June 14th 2010

FIRE SUCCESS FOR THE FOOD SAFETY TECHNOLOGY CONVENTION

The convention was a crucial step towards IPACK-IMA 2012

June 14th 2010 – International institutions, primary companies and the academic world met in Bologna on June 9th and 10th to discuss the issues connected to food safety and the technology employed to ensure the protection of products intended for people's tables both in advanced and developing countries.

These are crucial issues in an increasingly globalized world. Ipack-Ima SpA, the most important exhibition organizer in instrumental mechanics, packaging and processing (both food and non-food), addressed them in a symposium with the support of Unido – **United Nations** Industrial Development Organization – and the Wfp – the **United Nations** World Food Programme.

The symposium highlighted the primary role played by Italian companies working in the processing and packaging industry, both as part of the Italian agro-food production chain and as an international model of cut-edge technology for the improvement of food preservation and safety.

"I am proud of the outcome of this convention – Ipack-Ima spa CEO Guido Corbella explains – which brought together Italy's top academic world specialized in food issues with primary companies in a wide-ranging event featuring the participation of the UN and several international diplomats. The handbook "Integrated Risk Management in food processing and production chains", written by Professor Claudio Peri is our tangible contribution to raising awareness on the issue of food safety."

The two-day symposium featured plenary lectures, conventions and round table discussions; speeches by Mr. Corbella and UN representatives Diana Battaglia, director of Unido Italy, and Federico Bonini, managing director of Wfp committee in Italy; and the presence of Giandomenico Auricchio, president of Federalimentare. Special guests included the ambassadors of Cape Verde and Zimbabwe and delegates from Algeria, Colombia, Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco, Mozambique, Senegal and Kenya.

"Federalimentare represents – Mr. Auricchio underlines – the entire Italian food industry. This symposium gave us a chance to let the world know about the enormous progress achieved in food safety and to show the accomplishments brought about by substantial investment: 2 billion Euros, 15% of employees dedicated to these issues, one billion self-monitoring audits each year, 750 thousand audits performed by authorities which are still poorly planned but nevertheless necessary and welcome."

Claudio Peri, professor emeritus at Università di Milano, President of the Quality Monitoring Center of the Accademia dei Georgofili, Florence and true inspirer of the symposium's scientific committee gave a passionate speech.

"Over the last decades, food processing technology and its progress – Mr. Peri maintains – have been key in ensuring constant improvement in food hygiene and safety, coupled with a drastic reduction in toxoinfections and endemic disease in develop countries. This progress is

yet to be achieved in extensive underdeveloped regions of the planet, where over a billion people still suffer from food scarcity and 200 million people, mostly children, are still fated to die from lack of food. Only an evolution in food production, preservation and processing techniques can solve the double problem of food security (availability of food) and food safety (uncontaminated, hygienically safe food). This symposium gathering academics, companies, UN agencies and diplomacy is a strong answer to these issues."

World hunger is a hot topic and the leitmotif of in-depth sessions scheduled during the convention. *"This bears testimony – underlines Pietro Sebastiani, Italy's ambassador to the UN agencies in Rome – to Italy's peculiar culture and traditional support to the poorest areas of the planet".*

The symposium established that addressing food scarcity through improving agricultural production in underdeveloped countries is no longer a satisfactory solution. It is necessary to focus on other links of the food chain, from harvest to finished products ready for transport, warehousing, distribution and consumption.

The challenge today is to set up small-size food production chains involving as few steps as possible in the poorest regions of the planet, and to quickly process all produce into dry products such as flour, pasta, biscuits which can be easily preserved and distributed to populations in need.

In light of this goal, the European Union puts a great deal of attention on packaging aimed at ensuring safe food and thorough information on food origin, content and container for all consumers. This aspect was highlighted by Catherine Simoneau, head of European Commission Community Reference Laboratory for Food Contact Materials, whose work focuses on the improvement and standardization of monitoring systems and their scientific aspects, with the aim of issuing specific European regulations that can also be adopted and enforced by developing countries.

In addition, scientific research and specific regulations must be coupled with strong, deeply shared, far-reaching ethics acknowledging the double role of food as nourishment and as a crucial social element tightly connected to the history and traditions of any community and deeply rooted in common symbols and religious faiths.

Corporate social responsibility plays a key role in addressing these issues. Frans W.A.Brom, head of Technology Assessment at Rathenau Institut and co-founder of the European Society for Agricultural and Food Ethics further explains, *"Companies must focus on effectively communicating their reliability in order to build long-term consumer loyalty. When you sell food, you sell emotions and you need to be honest. Trust is earned slowly over time but can be lost in an instant as a consequence of serious food crises such as the dioxin food poisoning and countless other instances."*

In addition to in-depth sessions, the symposium also featured interesting round table discussions with fast-paced debates on hot topics brought up by the speeches.

"The Food Safety Symposium – concluded Guido Corbella at the end of the two-day meeting in Bologna – was an extraordinary success both owing to esteemed, world-renowned speakers and to the hearty participation of a large and qualified public. This paves the way for an incredibly successful IPACK-IMA scheduled at fieramilano in 2012 and for the Expo 2015."

For further information

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