**EIMA-SIMA: the dispute on the European table**

During the General Meeting of CEMA, the European Committee of agricultural machinery manufacturers, ***FederUnacoma replies to the statements made by the French organizers about an alleged "approval" of the Italian federation on the change of dates and on the overlap of the SIMA and the EIMA of Bologna. The statements on the positioning of the Paris exhibition are also groundless, while inconsistencies emerge between the technical data provided by the French organizers and those actually certified.***

The General Meeting of CEMA, where all the national industry associations are represented, was held yesterday in Alpen, Germany. Among the items on the agenda, the key issue was presented by the organization of Italian manufacturers FederUnacoma against the corresponding French association Axema, in reference to the EIMA (Bologna) and SIMA (Paris) exhibitions, promoted respectively by the two organizations. At the end of the general meeting, the issue is now entrusted to the initiative of the CEMA President, Antony Van Der Ley, who the Federation of Italian Manufacturers hopes will censor Axema's behaviour both in terms of method (the sudden and unilateral way in which the decision was made) and merit (the inconvenience and economic damage caused to exhibiting industries). The story stems from the decision of the French organizers to radically change their calendar by moving the SIMA from the traditional period, namely February of odd years, to the autumn of even years, and setting the next edition in November 2020, overlapping with EIMA. The petition submitted by FederUnacoma to the European Committee highlights the organizational difficulties deriving from this decision and the damage to exhibiting industries, forced to double their investments in order to participate in the two exhibitions, or to choose only one of the two, giving up important opportunities for business. FederUnacoma also believes that, given that the two exhibitions are directly promoted by the manufacturers' organizations, the issue of the calendar should have been discussed within the CEMA, for the aspects related to integrity and fair competition. It also deems that the conduct of the French organizers - who proceeded unilaterally without informing the other associations in the appropriate forum - goes against the principles of collaboration and transparency that are binding for associations that are members of the committee. In response to the FederUnacoma petition (dated April 19), Axema presented its own memo (May 14) in which it defends its choice, arguing that the possibility of a change of date, proposed in December 2018 and January 2019 to the organizers of EIMA and of the German exhibition Agritechnica, "had not encountered any opposition". These - said FederUnacoma during the General Meeting - are groundless statements. "We disputed this move in every forum, we opened the formal dispute at CEMA - explained the president Alessandro Malavolti - and at the first signs of a calendar change, long before the French exhibitions had made their decision official, we even called a press conference in Paris within the SIMA, in which we advised the organizers that any possibility of overlap with EIMA would be unfair to the latter and harmful for exhibiting companies and operators". According to FederUnacoma, the French arguments appear unsustainable also in reference to statements made outside the context of CEMA. In a recent interview with the newspaper "Terre-net", for example, SIMA Director Isabelle Alfano argued that the French decision is justified by "the need for an alternation between the two largest European exhibition, in the two most powerful agricultures of Europe, Germany and France". An unsubstantiated claim - notes FederUnacoma - since it is a known fact that EIMA has far surpassed the French show in terms of visitors, exhibitors and technical content, and that the two major reference exhibitions today are, without a doubt, Agritechnica of Hannover and EIMA of Bologna. The gap between the Bologna event and the Paris one - the Italian organizers point out - appears even more evident if one consults the official statistics of UFI, the international organization that classifies exhibitions on the basis of the certified data and not the simple declarations provided by the organizers. According to official UFI statistics, in its last editions SIMA did not surpass 140 thousand visitors, declaring instead in its press releases and in its own publications that it achieved over 230 thousand visitors. If we consider that in the last edition (November 2018) EIMA exceeded 317 thousand officially certified visitors, the superiority over the French show is overwhelming. Furthermore, with regard to the number of exhibiting companies, the difference between the two events is striking: in the latest editions the UFI statistics show a figure of no more than 900 for the French fair (compared to the approximately 1,800 declared by the organizers), a number that amounts to half of the exhibitors present at EIMA.

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