



SALOV Group: the project to improve biodiversity on the ground continues with CNR.

The planting of 52 different varieties of olive trees begins at Villa Filippo Berio.

SALOV Group is continuing its collaboration with the National Research Council (CNR), aimed at improving oil quality through research on the productivity and sustainability of olive cultivation, making use of the immense potential of Italian olive biodiversity, the largest in the world. To do this, in May the planting of 52 different varieties of olive trees began at the Villa Filippo Berio farm, which is owned by the Group.

Massarosa, May 2020 - The **SALOV Group**, a company that has always been oriented towards quality and which has acquired considerable expertise in the world of olive oil, has been carrying out **important projects at national and local level** for several years, such as its collaboration with the **CNR** (National Research Council), the largest public research institute in Italy.

The objective of the partnership is to **investigate the productivity and sustainability of olive cultivation in order to improve the quality of the oil.**

The planting of 52 different varieties of olive trees on the Villa Filippo Berio farm, a true open-air research centre covering 75 hectares, which the Group owns, is intended to improve olive biodiversity: *"We are proud to be able to host these important experiments at Villa Filippo Berio which seek to find solutions to improve Italian olive cultivation as a whole, with the aim of promoting efficient, high-quality and above all sustainable production"* - Dr. **Daniele Piacenti, Head of Selection and Blending at SALOV Group.** *"We are certain that we can bring new energy to an increasingly standardisation-oriented olive oil sector through this project."*

Developing SALOV's olive biodiversity

Italy has the largest number of olive varieties in the world. The collaboration with the CNR Institute for BioEconomy, which began in 2019, specifically aims to fully harness the immense potential of this biodiversity.

The project, now in its second phase, has resulted in 52 different new varieties being planted in the olive grove of Villa Filippo Berio, which are ready to be studied. The varieties, which come mainly from marginal areas in central Italy, are all typical of traditional olive growing with lower agronomic requirements. **The project will prove useful for rediscovering under-cultivated plants, helping to provide new strength to the olive sector.** This study of native biodiversity may also be helpful in **identifying plants less susceptible to *Xylella Fastidiosa*, which is putting Italy's entire olive-growing sector at risk.** The results of the research will be reported, becoming a **shared resource** for high-quality olive production.

"These experiments will help us to identify the most interesting and resistant varieties to be introduced and planted in the Villa Filippo Berio olive grove. The study will also be instrumental in recovering ancient Tuscan cultivars that have fallen into disuse over the years and which will be making a comeback in one of the areas best suited to olive cultivation," said **Claudio Cantini, T.I. Technologist at the CNR.**

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The collaboration with CNR will also continue with other important projects such as **Life Resilience** which aims to:

- **develop genotypes of productive and pathogen-resistant plants;**
- apply practices and innovate in the use of **natural vector control methods** to demonstrate their effectiveness in preventing the negative effects of *Xylella fastidiosa*;
- **mitigate climate change**, mainly in relation to land use and forestry, a priority issue for the EU. In fact, the analysis and enhancement of olive biodiversity in Italy will be a decisive weapon in counteracting the major climatic changes taking place and that require unprecedented countermeasures.

50 of the 75 hectares of the olive grove at Villa Filippo Berio were made available for this project, divided into 16 plots with 4 different soil and plant management areas.

1. An area where olive trees are grown using traditional techniques;
2. An area where a herbaceous cover was planted at the base of the olive trees to encourage the development of helpful insects for the plants, to combat harmful insects;
3. An area where various treatments with natural products are being carried out on the crowns of the trees in order to increase the olive yield;
4. An area in which the above methods are used in conjunction, i.e. the planting of herbaceous cover and the use of natural fertilisers on the leaves of the trees.

The ongoing collaboration includes various different components that, although independent, are aimed towards the common goal of improving olive oil quality and the development and testing of **new precision farming techniques applicable to olive growing with a view to ensuring the complete environmental sustainability of cultivation.**

The **SALOV Group** was founded in 1919 by Filippo Berio's daughter, Albertina, and a number of Tuscan industrialists who together pursued Filippo Berio's vision of championing quality olive oil around the world. The group is based in Massarosa, in the province of Lucca, and is among the **largest companies in the olive oil sector** with a consolidated net turnover in 2019 of approximately 275 million euros and 91 million litres sold. Since 2015, it has been part of the Shanghai-based Bright Food Group, China's second largest food operator.

The SALOV Group, which has always been present on the Italian market with the famous **Sagra** brand, launched the **Filippo Berio** brand for the first time in Italy at the end of 2019, which was already well-established worldwide and currently the market leader in the USA and UK, as well as in Belgium, Holland, Switzerland and Russia, where it is enjoying increasing success. Filippo Berio is present in Italy with a dedicated range, one capable of responding to an increasingly demanding consumer in terms of quality and, above all, **traceability and sustainability**. In fact, thanks to the Filippo Berio Method, every stage of the production process is traced and certified starting from the field and the application of integrated production techniques.

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