



SALOV GROUP (FILIPPO BERIO): PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP SIGNED TO COMBAT XYLELLA

The partnership aims to strengthen laboratory infrastructure in support of a long-term research programme focused on the selection of new olive tree varieties resistant to the bacterium

Ugento (Lecce), 1 July 2026 – **Salov**, through its historic extra virgin olive oil brand **Filippo Berio**, has signed a public-private partnership agreement with the **Institute for Sustainable Plant Protection of the National Research Council (CNR-IPSP)**, the non-profit organisation **Save the Olives**, and local producer **Agricola Melcarne (Forestaforte)**. The partnership aims to strengthen research and actions to **combat the spread of Xylella fastidiosa**, while supporting research focused on identifying environmentally sustainable solutions for the reconstruction of territories devastated by the epidemic.

The partnership forms part of a long-term strategy that combines **scientific research, agronomic innovation, and concrete field actions**, benefiting the entire olive oil supply chain and consumers in Italy and around the world. At the heart of the initiative is support for research infrastructure investments designed to advance research and development activities aimed at identifying olive tree varieties resistant to Xylella.

The project supported by Salov includes the enhancement of laboratory infrastructure and field testing activities, with the objective of accelerating plant selection and screening processes through a mobile laboratory capable of cultivating experimental plants under controlled and optimal conditions. The project is the result of a collaboration between CNR-IPSP, Agricola Melcarne (Forestaforte), and the Save the Olives non-profit organisation, and will be able to reach its full potential only through continued support and engagement from the production sector.

The three-year agreement is implemented through Salov's support for the activities of Save the Olives, a volunteer-based non-profit organisation dedicated to safeguarding olive-growing heritage.

“Through this partnership, we aim to contribute to a long-term project with a strongly practical, field-oriented approach, while enhancing the value of public research investments that, without the support of the business community, risk going underutilised. For us, innovation



means taking responsibility for driving change and shaping the future of the sector. With this project, we intend to make a concrete contribution to protecting a heritage of economic, environmental and cultural value for Italy and the world. This partnership is fully aligned with the supply-chain commitment that has always been part of our DNA. At Villa Filippo Berio, we already operate an open-air laboratory where, together with the CNR, we develop solutions for innovation and sustainability while sharing the results of our research” commented **Gianmarco Laviola, Chief Executive Officer of Salov – Filippo Berio.**

“Our Institute is actively engaged in a broad multidisciplinary research programme on this bacterium, with a particular focus on strategies to contain Olive Quick Decline Syndrome. Since the earliest evidence collected from outbreaks in the region, our attention has focused on selecting resistant plants capable of counteracting the pathogen’s effects. From the very beginning, this field experimentation has involved the active participation of local private companies, creating a public-private partnership supported not only through research projects but also through fundraising initiatives encouraged by the development of a strong relationship of trust. The contribution of the private sector is therefore vital, particularly in ensuring the valorisation and transfer of research outcomes. Research products developed together with producers are far more likely to achieve rapid and effective adoption in operational settings.” added **Maria Saponari, CNR Researcher and Xylella expert.**

The announcement of the agreement coincides with the inauguration of one of the largest experimental fields dedicated to *Xylella fastidiosa* research in Ugento, Puglia. The site hosts an extensive collection of olive biodiversity developed through targeted cross-breeding programmes aimed at achieving both bacterial resistance and high-quality olive oil characteristics. This valuable genetic resource is intended to support the regeneration of a geographical area severely damaged by the bacterium, which has not only devastated natural resources but has also had a significant socio-economic impact on local communities.

The event was also attended by institutional representatives and officials from EFSA (the European Food Safety Authority), as well as an international delegation of scientists who travelled to Puglia for scientific discussions and updates. Their presence underscores the importance and level of attention that this phytosanitary emergency has attracted across Europe. Should the disease expand further across Mediterranean olive-producing countries, from Spain to Greece, the consequences for the future of the entire olive oil sector would be incalculable.



Salov

Founded in Lucca in 1919 and headquartered in Massarosa, Italy, Salov is today one of the leading international players in the olive oil sector, backed by a long-standing heritage and solid expertise developed over more than a century of activity. Its portfolio includes renowned brands such as Filippo Berio, the historic brand founded in 1867 and now a market leader in numerous international markets, globally recognised as a symbol of excellence and quality, and Sagra, a historic Italian brand with a strong presence in the seed oils segment as well. Thanks to a growth strategy strongly focused on international expansion, Salov now operates in more than 70 countries, offering a broad and diversified portfolio that authentically reflects the Italian olive oil tradition while successfully meeting the needs of global markets. Drawing on its extensive industry expertise, the company oversees the entire supply chain through rigorous raw material selection and comprehensive quality controls throughout the production process, ensuring exceptionally high standards and consistent product quality. In 2025, Salov recorded consolidated net revenues of approximately €500 million and sales of 100 million litres, further strengthening its position as a leading international player in the olive oil industry.

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