

What a passion for olives

This project starts in Calabria and aims to develop high quality and typical products starting from olives

It is called "Alive", but it should not be read in English. This is because the project managed by the Council for Research in Agriculture and Analysis of the Agricultural Economy (Crea) of Rende, based in the town of Cosenza, aims, precisely, at olives: in particular, how to characterise and enhance table and dual-purpose olives. In short, the aim is to study different table olive cultivars (such as the Ascolana tenera, Itrana, Nocellara del Belice, Bella di Cerignola, Nocellara Messinese, Carolea, Leccino, etc.), developing innovative production techniques better suited to "climate change" phenomena, and enhancing the use of the microbiota to increase the olive tree's resistance to biotic and abiotic stresses.

After four years of work, the project has generated important results. At the research level, they ranged from the characterisation of the soil on which the plant is established, to the morpho-bio-agronomic

characteristics of new olive cultivars, to the transformation of drupes into table olives using innovative techniques. The most important work was to identify the Italian dual-purpose olive cultivars that can produce high quality table olives. The Nocellara from Messina, for instance, gave the best results in terms of 'texture'.

It should also be noted that in order to disseminate the results of the scientific research as widely as possible, the "Alive" project organised evident dissemination-training events that provided a valuable contribution to the professional training of technicians and operators in the olive-oil sector. To this end, 11 webinars were held last year and a further four events will be organised in person this year. An important contribution to the organisation of training events came from the partnership with Conaf (president Sabrina Diamanti and councillor Carmela Pecora) and Onb (president Vincenzo D'Anna and coordinator Giovanni Misasi).

Another important result was the birth of M-Bioma Srl, a spin-off supported by Crea, whose president is the first researcher **Innocenzo Muzzalupo of Crea - Forest and Wood Research Centre of Rende, coordinator of the "Alive" project**. "M-Bioma is already working well - the president emphasises - both in terms of its contribution to the study of how the olive plant manifests greater thermoplasticity to climate change, and of the marketing of the new biological fertilisers". ■



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- 1 Ascolana
- 2 Bella di Cerignola
- 3 Carolea
- 4 Itrana
- 5 Nocellara del Belice