



WATER, the new challenge for the European agricultural policy

Water is an increasingly valuable resource to be preserved and used wisely, and this is another challenge indicated by the European Union, which covers all production sectors in the country, including agriculture in its dual capacity. On the one hand, the primary sector is the main user of water, and on the other hand, the irrigation and reclaiming system make a positive contribution to the preservation of the entire territory.

The network of reservoirs and irrigation channels contributes to the hydro-geological character of the land

The collective network, whose management is entrusted to 633 irrigation bodies, covers a good 14,000 km in the central-northern part of Italy and 5,500 in the southern part. This grid of canals plays a protective role in the territory, contributing to its hydro-geographical character and providing a key environmental function. Furthermore, the water used for irrigation helps to replenish groundwater.

Then there is the other aspect, equally important, which is water quality. Again, the irrigation cycle will help to raise quality standards, through dilution of nutrients and phytosanitation practices. Nationally, the issue of water has long been a matter for the National irrigation plan of 2004 with a budget of 1,122 billion euros and 600 million in additional funding for 2011. The financed works provide investments aimed at strengthening the most important infrastructures, with the aim of increasing storage capacity and modernizing the distribution networks. To these latter, most extensive networks will be connected, funded by the Regions with the Rural Development Programme.

“AGRICULTURE BENEFITS EVERYONE”

The National Strategic Plan for rural development, drawn up by the Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies, aims at supporting competitiveness in the sector, enhancing the environment, improving the quality of life in the rural areas and increasing the farms' potential sources of revenue. With 17.6 billion euros until 2013, co-financed by the European Union.



“European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe investing in rural Areas”
Information regarding application for funding available at www.reterurale.it or on your Region's website