

Hemp chain for fashion: first italian experience

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The consortium CANAPAITALIA was founded in July 1999 in Ferrara by farms and manufacturing enterprises, with initial support of region Emilia-Romagna and of province of Ferrara.

The aims of Consortium are the exploitation and the revival of the cultivation of this fibre, which is an integrant part of the culture of this region, recovered thanks to the creation of a renewed value given by a completely Italian know-how.

The consortium CANAPAITALIA includes not only the farmers, but the whole chain, from the seeders to the manufacturers until the final users. The founder members of the Consortium are: Simint, Progetti Ambiente, Produttori Sementi, Raggio Verde, Stylfil, Giotex and Sorgeva; which then were joined by Berto Industria Tessile, Manifatture Tessili Prete, New Style, Picchi, Mion, Ecosistema, IFT Crespi, Ecocanapa and N.E.T. and, as official partner for paper's sector, Cartiere Fedrigoni.

The enterprises of the Consortium, joining the project, have the common aim of exploiting their own imagine through the respect of environment and of Italian territory and of the products that the territory is able to offer. These products were born first of all by a sustainable and renewable agriculture, which keeps the environment healthy, recovers and exploits it, as well as by the high technology and by the big experience of the Italian manufacture.

Thanks to her big excellence they can invest in a particular moment of crisis of the sector and they can invert the concept of concurrence into the value of real content that is bringing its benefits already.

At the moment the project is going on also thanks to the contribution of Fondazione Cassa Di Risparmio in Bologna.

In the province of Ferrara the cultivation and the manufacturing of the hemp have started again.

This city was considered the best side of the Consortium, principally because the area around Ferrara was, in the past, the area of the biggest and best production of hemp.

Therefore in 1998 in Ferrara the experimentation started.

During these years, thanks to the collaboration of Province of Ferrara, of the GAL Delta 2000 and of the Region Emilia Romagna, it has been possible to investigate the agronomic techniques and the mechanization systems for the seeding and the harvesting of the hemp. It has also been possible to estimate the economical profitability for farms and manufacturing enterprises.

In general the results have been positive both for the agronomic techniques and for the mechanization systems. Also the fibre obtained has a good quality.

The activity of the hemp chain started in 2001, with the first seeding out of experimentation, about 50 hectares, and with the purchase of the harvesting machines.

In 2002 the harvested surfaces by consortiated farms covered 250 hectares and this year almost 1000 hectares have been planted.

More over the consortium C in collaboration with Ecocanapa Srl (joining the consortium) is now working at the construction of a system for the initial processing of hemp. The system will be used to scutch the hemp, namely separate the fibres from the wooden part of the plant.

Simint is the company using the Armani Jeans brand. It not only produces wearing by vegetative fibre tissues with a low environmental impact, such as the hemp, but also it follows a marketing strategy focused on the creation of high moral value purchasing mentality. This mentality means health care, respect for the consumer and the environment. This strategy gives the opportunity to communicate to the consumer.

In fact the hemp, as well as biological linen and cotton, constitutes the head of all the activities which put the consumer in the condition of choosing a product that could preserve his own health, respect the environment and consequentially give the consumer the possibility to respect him/herself.

The factories and manufacturing enterprises, associated to Canapaitalia Consortium, have accepted the challenge of verifying technical and economical profitability of hemp cultivation and manufacturing: it will be still necessary to work on research and experimentation in order to give hemp the right place in our lives.

The Consortium, therefore, aims to realize this objective, in accordance to the strengthening and widening of the hemp chain, in order to make the hemp to shift from a niche production to a valuable input for industrial use and an interesting opportunity for agriculture.