

MARCA DIGITAL SESSION 2021: THE EVENT'S SUCCESS EXCEEDS ALL EXPECTATIONS

Bologna, 26 March 2021 – **MARCA DIGITAL SESSION** was MarcabyBolognaFiere's response to the ongoing restrictions on holding in-person trade fair events as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The digital platform for meetings between producers and the grocery retail chain, created thanks to the know-how of the organisers of the reference event for the Private Label business community, served also as a preliminary event ahead of the next in-person edition.

The market's response to MARCA DIGITAL SESSION exceeded all expectations:

**220 partner Private Label producers present – 4000 meetings held –
9000 participants – 175 foreign buyers from important foreign retail groups –
30% of foreign operators from Eastern Europe (the 2021 focus area) – plus retail groups from: the rest of Europe, USA, Canada, South America, Asia and the Middle East, 100 Italian buyers from the leading retail groups on the Committee of MarcabyBolognaFiere**

There were particularly satisfying numbers for the organisers, BolognaFiere in collaboration with ADM, who worked to hold the first edition of the initiative in close collaboration with ICE Agenzia, the Italian Trade Agency, making use of a network of agents operating abroad.

The meetings between the 325 participating companies (80% Italian) and the 275 operators from grocery retail, performed a strategic role, considering that the majority of these meetings were intended to define partnership agreements to create private label products. The study carried out by ADM and The European House Ambrosetti for MarcabyBolognaFiere (presented on 24 March during MARCA DIGITAL SESSION 2021), in fact, highlighted that the supply chain for PRIVATE LABEL PRODUCTS follows a rationale of strategic long-term collaborations: in 98% of cases the supply relationships last more than two years and in almost 50% of cases the Private Label partner companies today have supply contracts with Grocery Retail players that have been in place for more than 8 years.

The economic results of these negotiations could therefore represent an interesting economic opportunity for participating Private Label partners, as was confirmed by the fact that the average duration of the 4,000 meetings activated by the BolognaFiere platform was around 18 minutes, leaving us to suppose that many of the contacts initiated can hopefully lead to further negotiations at the in-person fair, when it will also be possible to present the products that are the subject of the potential agreements.

The internationalization activities promoted by BolognaFiere with buyers from international retail groups met with a very positive response from foreign buyers; in fact, 175 took part in the project, testimony to the interest that the quality of 'Made in Italy' products (both food and non-food) arouses in global markets. It has been noted that at the foreign fairs specialized in Private Labels, Italian producers are always present in large numbers. The many meetings held at MARCA DIGITAL SESSION offer significant hope that Italian companies will manage to retain their leadership in the European rankings for the creation of private label products for international retail groups, in spite of the fact that the pandemic has prevented the hosting of many of these specialized events.

"We believed that it is was important to give business and the operators new opportunities to meet during a period in which such occasions continue to be restricted," announced Gianpiero Calzolari, president of BolognaFiere. "The results achieved by MARCA DIGITAL SESSION and the substantial participation of international

buyers consolidate the knowledge that the event, a leader at national level, arouses a growing interest also among international buyers, whose presence has been growing constantly over the years. It is a response that projects us towards a MarcabyBolognaFiere with important international credentials, capable of offering companies new and solid business opportunities. Our work is already focussed towards this goal, which will further boost the effectiveness of participation at the Fair, in the hope of soon being able to resume in-person activities."

"Grocery retail," declared Marco Pedroni, president of ADM, "is a value for the country, providing a service that is safe and convenient for citizens and support to the system of small and medium-sized firms in the agri-food sector that need to find market outlets across the national territory. The success of this digital session of Marca is confirmation that we have taken the right route, that of constant dialogue and discussions involving the overwhelming majority of companies involved in agriculture, industry and retail distribution that want to work and compete in a sound and sustainable way. I consider this to augur well for the future."

As part of MARCA DIGITAL SESSION the two traditional MarcabyBolognaFiere themed conference events were held in virtual form.

On March 24 the convention **Dall'emergenza al rilancio sostenibile: il contributo della Marca del Distributore** (From the emergency to a sustainable recovery: the contribution of Private Labels), organized by ADM in collaboration with The European House-Ambrosetti) analysed the performance of Private Labels with a focus on the sustainability of the Italian market. The second appointment, on March 25, **La Marca del Distributore guida il rilancio sostenibile in Italia e in Europa – I distributori e i produttori in azione** (Private Labels driving the sustainable recovery in Italy and Europe – distributors and producers in action), organized by MarcabyBolognaFiere and ADM in collaboration with IRi and IPLC) analysed the drivers of the last year's performance and the relationship between Private Labels and Sustainability.

With the intention of extending and reinforcing dialogue with international grocery retail, further developing its ties with MarcabyBolognaFiere, a survey of the European Private Label scenario (involving 50 European retailers) was conducted and presented on March 25. This survey also collected some case studies to represent the strategic importance of sustainability, confirming what was revealed in the studies conducted by ADM and TEHA. The topics pertinent to these international testimonies will be reprised and examined in greater detail during the next in-person edition of MarcabyBolognaFiere.

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