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**Contractors as knowledge multipliers**

***Contractors are called upon to play a central role in the transition towards agriculture 4.0, informing farmers about the advantages and opportunities offered by new cultivation practices and new technologies. The theme discussed during the conference "The role of agro-mechanics in an ecological transition" held on the second day of EIMA International***

Innovation, and with it the theme of digital transition, are at the centre of the 44th edition of EIMA International, the great exhibition of agricultural and gardening machinery being held in Bologna until 23 October. Numerous meetings, seminars and workshops are dedicated to this important theme. Particulary interesting among these was the conference entitled "The role of agro-mechanics in an ecological transition", organised by the Confederation of Italian Agromechanics and Farmers (Cai), which took place on Wednesday 20 October during the second day of the exhibition. Digitisation is revolutionising the primary sector and this calls for a radical change in mentality. In particular, farmers must seize the economic and environmental advantages of precision farming and minimum tillage techniques. In this perspective - the conference explained - farmers can play a fundamental role as knowledge 'multipliers'. But to do so, they must invest in training. “We must prepare ourselves to propose these innovations. We have to grow in terms of training to convince farms to use innovation,” said Gianni Dalla Bernardina, president of CAI, opening the conference. “We have to be ready and the agro-mechanical register can help select companies capable of providing these services in the field, but also consultancy to guide farmers towards a new way of farming.”

European policies are also pushing in this direction. Under the new CAP 2023-2027, farmers are being asked to make an increasingly decisive and concrete commitment to preserve soil fertility and help combat climate change. “In order to meet these requirements, farmers need a change of pace, and contractors must be able to direct them towards innovation, supply chain contracts and business networks,” stressed agronomist and journalist Roberto Bartolini. But precision farming requires more than a satellite dish. You need knowledge, you need to put together data and know how to interpret them in order to make the right agronomic decisions. In order to be competitive, agro-mechanical companies will have to equip themselves with agronomists and computer scientists. Contractors must not only carry out cultivation operations in the field; they must also - as emerged from the work of the conference - become true consultants able to provide farmers with information on the best agronomic strategies to adopt, but also on the contributions that the Pac and Psr will make available if certain practices are adopted.

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