

VareseNews

“Latte Varese” gambles on immigrants, and establishes agreements with bars

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If you want to wage war against Cyclops, you will have to sharpen your wits. This is what the agricultural cooperative "Latte Varese" has done to resist the excessive power in the market of the milk multinationals, such as the French company Lactalis (whose brands include: Galbani, Invernizzi, Cademartori, Locatelli and Président), on the one hand, by reaching agreements in the local area with the trade associations, and on the other, by launching new products onto the market.

For companies that are members of the traders' association Confesercenti, a 10% discount is going to be applied to all Latte Varese products, which, in addition to fresh and long-life milk, include cheeses, yogurt and goat's milk. Soon, a new product will be launched onto the market, acidified milk, to meet the demand of the foreign community in Varese, especially the north Africans and South Americans. It is an interesting market, considering that there are over 76,000 foreigners (source: Osserva.it) living in Varese Province. "We must try to exploit our products, which are often unknown to the local people," explained Fabio Binelli, the chairman of the Latte Varese cooperative. "The agreement with Confesercenti will help to achieve this, because it strengthens and publicises this information."

Agriculture in Varese Province is a niche, and milk production, close to 8 million litres per year (5 million litres is pasteurised, and 3 million litres is sold loose), is not sufficient to meet the domestic demand. Thanks to the cooperative, the producers have achieved a price (36 cents per litre) that will allow them to survive the fierce competition of the large groups, considering that loose milk is sold to dairies for 30 cents per litre. "I know that I'm being provocative," added Carlo Crosti, the cooperative's sales manager, "but when a shop opens in their town, every mayor should have the courage to demand that local products are sold."

In neighbouring Switzerland, things are a bit better. The outlines of cows are placed even at petrol stations, because the Swiss people recognise the added value of their country's milk production.

"Here, in Italy, we lack a directed system, but in Switzerland, the stables are protected by special laws," Binelli pointed out. Actually, a piece of the system is also present in the Latte Varese, as the 35 partners include the Varese Town and Provincial councils, but it is clearly not enough, because they are entitled to one vote, the same as everyone else. While waiting for real direction, the multinationals continue their work of conquering the market by lowering the price to below €1, even to the distributors of raw milk, thereby eliminating a source of additional income, which, in some cases, is

vital for the local producers.

However, it is still the large scale distribution that is the “culprit” in this process, in which local interests clash with global interests. Gianni Lucchina and Cesare Lorenzini, the director and chairman, respectively, of Confesercenti, expressed their concern. "If we continue at this rate, there won't be any agricultural producers, so food producers, left in the area," said Lorenzini, referring to the alarming data published by the farmers' association Confagricoltura.

Lucchina blamed political choices made ??in the past concerning opening hours, and the "bulimic" presence of shopping centres in the area. "They decided to change our habits, without us wanting it."

Here's the bill.

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