



## **"Life Resilience has been concluded: 18 olive genotypes identified as potentially resistant to Xylella fastidiosa.**

*Among the main achievements of the European project against Xylella fastidiosa is the development of 18 new genotypes that are potentially resistant and have great agronomic properties, reducing CO2 emissions and water footprint. Villa Filippo Berio of Salov, one of the project partners, hosts experimental plots on which monitoring continues.*

Massarosa, September 13, 2022 – Life Resilience, the European project – supported among others by Villa Filippo Berio Agricultural Society owned by Salov – has come to a close. Its goal was to combat Xylella fastidiosa (XF) by promoting a sustainable agricultural production model, reducing carbon footprint and mitigating climate change through the use of technological resources.

Four years of intense work have come to an end, resulting in a replicable best practice model throughout the Mediterranean basin. Among the achievements is the development of 18 genotypes that are potentially resistant to Xylella fastidiosa and the identification of good practices that have resulted in a significant reduction of CO2 emissions and water footprint.

### ***The Xylella fastidiosa and Life Resilience***

Xylella fastidiosa is a parasitic bacterium that can attack various plant species, including vine, peach, almond, citrus, oleander, and olive, causing death in many cases. This disease represents a significant ecological and economic problem, as the rapid loss of specimens significantly damages ecosystems and rural economies of Mediterranean countries. Just to give an example, in Puglia (a region in the South of Italy), Xylella fastidiosa has caused over 1.6 billion euros in damages in 6 years.

In response to this situation, several organizations from Italy, Spain, and Portugal - the Agricultural Society Villa Filippo Berio of Salov, the Institute for Bioeconomy (IBE) belonging to the National Research Council (CNR), Balam Agriculture S.L, the University of Cordova (UCO), Agrifood Communication, Greenfield Technologies S.L, ASAJA National, Nutriprado L.D.A, SAHC-Sociedad Agrícola de Herdade do Charqueirao, S.A. - participated in the 2018 RESILIENCE project, which was co-financed by the European Union under the LIFE program. The program was created to develop productive and disease-resistant plant genotypes, apply sustainable practices, and promote the use of natural methods for controlling the pathogen's vectors.

The project also considered a priority theme for the EU, namely mitigating climate change through better use of the territory and a more environmentally friendly forestry. In order to improve the sustainability of agricultural practices, the project also focused on optimizing the water resource procurement and use system and reducing the carbon footprint.

### ***The results of Life Resilience in details***

The main result of Life Resilience is the attainment of 18 genotypes that are potentially resistant to Xylella fastidiosa, characterized by excellent agronomic properties - early onset of production, vegetative vigor and productivity - as well as good profiles in fatty acids of oils.

At a practical level, useful information emerged to optimize the monitoring and control of Spittlebug, the main insect vector of the bacterium Xylella Fastidiosa, obtaining a greater understanding of the "insect" system within olive groves.



An interesting aspect of the project is that it considered the olive grove as a whole rather than the single olive tree. In this perspective, thanks to the introduction of auxiliary flora, nesting boxes, and proper pest control management, biodiversity has increased in all areas of the agrarian environment.

In addition, precision agriculture was possible thanks to the use of data from satellites and drones that helped understand how to make the activity within the olive grove more sustainable.

Finally, thanks to the implementation of sustainable practices from Life Resilience, the use of phytosanitary products and fertilizers was reduced, as well as the use of water and fossil fuels, reducing CO2 emissions by 18,665 tons and water footprint by 389,375 m3 in the 250 demonstration hectares where the project was implemented (Villa Filippo Berio, El Valenciano, Herdade do Charqueirao).

### **Salov's Commitment**

Over the four years of the project, Salov made Villa Filippo Berio land available for studying the implementation of sustainable practices, controlling vector insects, increasing biodiversity, and soil health. The 50 hectares affected by the project were divided into 16 plots with 4 different soil and plant management practices:

- 1 area where olive trees are grown using traditional techniques
- 1 area where a grass cover is planted at the base of the olive trees to promote the development of useful insects and counteract the settlement of harmful species
- 1 area where natural plant-stimulating products are used to increase the plants' physiological resistance
- 1 area where the previous variables are combined, so the planting of a grass cover and the use of natural fertilizing products on the trees' leaves

Some of the genotypes potentially resistant to *Xylella fastidiosa* are planted in the experimental plots of Villa Filippo Berio. These experimental plots will continue to be monitored even now that the project is concluded to determine the bacteria's resistance and the agronomic characteristics of the future new olive varieties.

*"The results obtained from this project are very interesting and have confirmed, once again, the importance of research. Aware of the dynamics and needs of the sector in which we operate, today more than ever, here at Salov, we feel the responsibility to contribute to improving the entire system for quality olive production. In a moment when the challenges posed by climate change are becoming increasingly urgent, we are proud that our olive grove at Villa Filippo Berio can contribute to finding possible solutions for a more sustainable and resilient agriculture"* - comments Eng. Fabio Maccari, CEO of Salov Group.

**SALOV SpA** was established in 1919 by Giovanni Silvestrini, a long-time business partner of Filippo Berio, the founder of the homonymous brand, and a group of entrepreneurs from Lucca. Quickly, the company became a reference point for Lucca in the world. Salov is based in Massarosa, in the province of Lucca, and is one of the largest oil companies with a consolidated net revenue of approximately 376 million euros and 120 million liters sold in 2021. Since 2015, it has been part of the Bright Food International Group.

The Salov Group has always been present in the Italian market with the historic Sagra brand and launched the Filippo Berio brand in Italy for the first time in 2019, a brand with over 150 years of history present all over the world and in leading position in the USA, UK, Russia, Belgium, Switzerland, and Hong Kong.

In Italy, Filippo Berio is present with a dedicated range, capable of responding to an increasingly demanding consumer in terms of quality and, above all, traceability and sustainability. Thanks to the Berio Method, each stage of the production process is traced and certified starting from the field and from the application of sustainable integrated production techniques.