

By Simona Giacobbi

Environment, enterprises, policies and innovation form the medium where industry and agriculture are finding a new frontier, working toward a green future.

That was the theme of a conference organized by Confederazione degli Imprenditori Italiani nel Mondo (CIIM) of Toronto, entitled "A green future for the industry? Technologies and innovations for a clean environment: the new frontier for industry and agriculture," which took place last week at the Westin Harbour Castle.

The meeting brought together politicians and entrepreneurs from Italy and Canada, including representatives from three corporations that have patented as many eco-sustainable products; Novamont, Mg Trade, and CBB Decanter. There were also politicians and researchers, e.g. Romolo Benvenuto, member of the Environment Committee of the Italian Parliament; internationally famous researcher Catia Bastioli; and Giuseppe Russo, vice president of Sbarro Health Research Organization, who spoke on cancer and pollution. Paolo Ponti, director of the Toronto office of the Italian Trade Commission, and Elena dell'Osbel, vice director of the Italian Chamber of Commerce of Toronto, contributed their expertise.

"We gave an important contribution to the debate, tackling high-level issues," declared Leonardo Kosarew, president of the Toronto chapter of CIIM. "At the end of the conference, we had a lively discussion, born of the interest for issues that impact our everyday life, such as bioplastics. We also had the pleasant

# Industry working toward better future

## Italian entrepreneurs living abroad promote eco-sustainable products



Left to right: Giuseppe Russo, Romolo Benvenuto, Leonardo Kosarew, Mario Cortellucci and Catia Bastioli (Photos: Massimiliano Galassi — Italiani.ca)

surprise of welcoming Hon. Mario Sergio, currently on the campaign trail. In summary, we got a double recognition of our work, from both Canadian and Italian politics. Our programs include a visit to Milan, on November 22, for a showcase on the reborn Fiera Campionaria delle Qualità Italiane, in order to present the opportunities offered by the Canadian market."

"Our field is bioplastics," remarked Novamont CEO Catia Bastioli, winner of the award for "European innovator of the year." "It's an opportunity to talk about our reality, our approaches and the models we draw inspiration from, pursuing a truly eco-sustainable future. We spoke to this peculiar audience of people who live in Canada but have a connection with Italy. Our concept is a

bio-refinery integrated in its territory. The idea is to go beyond product innovation, creating sustainable systems through process innovation, both in production and use. As regards the former, we are working with Italian farmers associated to Coldiretti, Italy's biggest organization. We are testing low-impact cultivations that could be used for our purposes, with any discarded waste going to energy production. Farmers participate in the industrial process through a joint venture with our industrial element. This is a short path, allowing innovation to flow from agriculture to industry. It minimizes environmental impacts by trying to reverse the trend to greater energy and raw materials consumption. Our sector is growing significantly, and it will likewise grow in North America. We'll probably

build a bio-refinery in this continent. Our model was well received in Europe, and Ontario authorities and farmers showed great interest too. Canada and United States will therefore be considered for our future projects."

A green future needs help from technology, but also from sound environmental policies.

Benvenuto illustrated the report to the Italian Parliament on climate change. "We consulted with international scientific bodies and associations, describing the phenomenon and giving some indications on possible solutions. In order to meet the commitments required by the European Union, i.e. a 20% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2020, we listed 10 possible lines of action, including greater emphasis on energy saving and renewable energy in industries and residences and drastic interventions on existing power plants to try and reduce Italy's dependence from oil. Three lines concern transportation and infrastructures. We need to push railways over trucks. In Italy, 80% of cargo still moves by truck; this system is very wasteful. We called this "the iron therapy". In addition to railways, we should also boost maritime transport, especially for cargo. Also, we need to work on low-emission engines, tax breaks for highly efficient cars, limits to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions for new models, and bio-fuels; however, this last item is hard



to accomplish in Italy, given our very particular agriculture; finding areas to devote to bio-fuel cultivations is far from easy."

"It will be necessary," he continued, "to negotiate ways for all countries to go beyond the Kyoto Protocol, new international agreements on the reduction of greenhouse gases. Canada must do its part; like all industrialized countries, in fact, it produces a lot of them. We can also strike bilateral deals for the huge environmental market, which has become the fourth largest, with €1,000 billion in world turnover. We expect that Canada will be able to play a significant part in carbon sequestration, by careful management of its forests. I got a very friendly reception in Toronto," concluded Benvenuto. "I wasn't aware of the existence so many Italian-Canadian entrepreneurs. It's a stimulating community, and I think that this is yet another way for bringing our quality on foreign markets." ♦