



FIRAB

Fondazione Italiana
per la Ricerca
in Agricoltura Biologica
e Biodinamica

FIRAB presentation and curriculum

GENERAL DATA

LEGAL NAME Fondazione Italiana di Ricerca in Agricoltura Biologica e Biodinamica
(FIRAB)

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FIRAB brief description

The Fondazione Italiana per la Ricerca in Agricoltura Biologica e Biodinamica – FIRAB (in English: the Italian Foundation for Research in Organic and Biodynamic Agriculture) was set up in 2008 by organic and biodynamic farmer (Associazione Italiana per l'Agricoltura Biologica –AIAB- and Associazione per l'Agricoltura Biodinamica), environmental (Legambiente) and labour (Unione Lavoratori Italiani dell'Agroalimentare - UILA) associations with the financial support of private organic companies, farms and not-for-profit organisations.

The Foundation has a national structure with regional chapters (linked to its founder association decentralised structures) to act closely with farmers on specific local needs; FIRAB promotes applied research in low input farming through a participatory approach, including through farmer-to-farmer exchange, and operates technical and scientific dissemination. Further to support organic farmers through regional, national and European projects, FIRAB acts in broader relevant issues in the food and agriculture area, notably in food security and sovereignty.

Most of its initiatives are carried out in collaboration with national research institutions such as the Udine, Milan, Padua, Pisa, Florence, Viterbo, Rome and Reggio Calabria Universities, along as the Italian Agricultural Research Council (CREA) or the Italian Institute of Services for the Agricultural and Food Market (ISMEA). At European and international levels, FIRAB cooperates with scientific and civil society organizations involved in research governance and implementation, food & ag. scenarios, land issues, agroecological models of production.

FIRAB is member of the EU and Italian organic technology platforms and its experts contribute to policy analysis issuing specific policy recommendations. Moreover, FIRAB is co-convenor of European events such as the Nyeleni Europe Forum (Austria, 2011), EFSA-civil society dialogue (Bruxelles-Parma, 2012) or the St. Ulrich meeting on Democratizing Agricultural research for Food Sovereignty and Peasant Agrarian Cultures (Germany, 2013). Through its Secretary General, FIRAB contributed to the FAO International (2014 and 2018) and European (2016) Symposia on Agroecology.

Projects

FIRAB has carried out research and innovation projects at European, national and regional levels on a miscellanea of topics:

European:

- Horizon2020 DiverIMPACTS (Diversification through Rotation, Intercropping, Multiple Cropping, Promoted by Actors and Value Chains towards Sustainability) on crop diversification implementation and assessment
- EU 7FP GLAMUR (Global and Local food chain Assessment: a multidimensional performance-based approach) on value chains sustainability assessment
- EU 7FP Transmango (Assessment of the impact of drivers of change on Europe's food and nutrition security) on food system vulnerabilities.
- EU 7FP STABIWINE (Use of biopolymers for sustainable stabilization of quality wines) on criteria and technologies for sustainable wine production
- EU Grundtvig DARE on agricultural research democratization
- Venture Fund 'Agroecology and food systems' on socio-technical fine-tuning among European organisations working on agroecology
- LIFE Env. SEMENte parTEcipata on assessment of ancient wheat varieties and participatory breeding

National:

- PEI-AGRI-BIO: a 2-year explorative project on methodologies for implementing the EIP framework in the Italian organic sector
- ALT.RAMEinBIO: a 3-year project on copper alternatives in organic viticulture and horticulture
- BIODURUM: a 3-year project on sustainability of organic durum wheat systems
- SOS-BIO: a national assessment of the environmental performance of organic agriculture in 6 Italian regions
- Rete Nazionale dei Centri Sperimentali: a monitoring initiative on organic-relevant activities of regional experimental and training centres.
- Economic surveys and assessments on Italian organic produce export in Europe, on product prices in different distribution channels and on economic impact assessments following market shocks

Regional:

- In Lazio: a quadrennial program meant to implement conversion of conventional farms to organic and biodynamic farming; agroecological participatory actions in organic horticulture.
- In Sicily: cultivation and wine making according to new EU organic wine standards.
- In Calabria: local agro-biodiversity assessment; adaptation to organic approaches; sustainable wine making.

- In Lombardy: education and training activities on organic and agroecological practices.
- In Veneto: ecoregions development; setting up of a *maison des semences*.
- In Tuscany: local pedo-climatic adaptation of wheat populations.
- In Liguria: agroforestry in inner areas.
- In Marche: mobile slaughterhouses for medium size animals.
- In Umbria: organisation of organic platforms for school canteen delivery; development and testing of a sustainability assessment app.

FIRAB acts as consultant for the Barilla pasta company on sustainable wheat farming.

Selection of FIRAB publications:

- Proceedings of 3° GRAB-IT workshop sull'agricoltura biologica "Sostenibilità delle produzioni agricole"
- "La conversione al biologico nella realtà metropolitana della provincia di Milano"; "La conversione al biologico nella coltivazione di ortaggi e frutta"; "Pratiche agroecologiche: condizionalità fa rima con sostenibilità"; "Modelli di distribuzione alternativa sfida ambientale e socio economica"
- Agroecologia. Principi e opzioni a vantaggio dell'agricoltura biologica (http://www.firab.it/site/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/TerritoriBIO-Agroecologia_web-def.pdf)
- Chapter in "The GMO emperor has no clothes. A Global Citizens Report on the State of GMOs" edited by Vandana Shiva
- FIRAB is co-publisher (along with the International Institute for Environment and Development -IIED- and Centro Internazionale Crocevia – CIC) of Food. Riots and Rights, authored by Luca Colombo and Antonio Onorati, 2013.
- FIRAB cooperates with AIAB on "Bioagricoltura notizie", weekly on-line magazine, and "BioAgriCultura", bimonthly printed magazine)

More at: www.firab.it

FIRAB managers

President: Mr. Vincenzo Vizioli. Former AIAB President, he has 30 years of experience in promoting organic farming at technical and political level, with experience in coordination of national and EU projects.

Secretary General: Mr. Luca Colombo. He previously served as GMO campaign coordinator for Greenpeace Italy and as head of research for the Genetic Rights Foundation. He was nominated as civil society representative in the Ad Hoc Technical Selection Committee for the Committee on World Food Security's High Level Panel of Experts.