*Press release no. 23/2025*

**Agrilevante: Solutions for the Mechanization of Intensive Olive Groves**

***Italian olive oil production is unable to meet rapidly growing domestic demand. Super-intensive farming systems can help bridge the production gap, but they require large arable land and adequate access to water resources. The use of new-generation mechanical equipment is essential to optimizing processing and addressing the shortage of qualified labor.***

The olive oil sector, with its variety and quality, is one of the flagships of the Italian agricultural economy, but it is struggling to keep pace with rapidly growing demand both domestically and internationally. Olive oil production, in fact, fluctuates on average between 250,000 and 300,000 tons per year, while domestic consumption stands at around 500,000 tons. This is the central topic of the workshop entitled “Olive Cultivation Models: Traditional, Intensive, and Super-intensive. Planting Systems, Cultivation Practices, and Mechanical Innovations in Super-intensive Olive Groves,” organized by the publishing house “L'Informatore Agrario” as part of Agrilevante, the exhibition of Mediterranean agricultural technologies currently taking place in Bari. To bridge the production gap, it was explained during the meeting, it is necessary to revitalize Italian olive growing and, at the same time, optimize cultivation techniques and methods, which are currently burdened by both the shortage of specialized labor and costs that are still extremely high. The use of mechanical vehicles and next-generation equipment—such as pruners, ridgers, harvesters, mechanical weeding machines, and autonomous robots—is essential to address these two variables, but must be tailored to the specific farming characteristics. During the workshop, it was emphasized that high-intensity livestock farming is currently the most suitable system for promoting the sector's productive recovery. However – the speakers noted – the feasibility of this system is conditioned by the surface area of the farm, which, for example, should allow the rows to be oriented from north to south for optimal illumination of the espalier, and by the availability of adequate water resources. With specific reference to cultivation practices, in the first years of cultivation, weed control operations should be carried out on the rows, anticipating the grassing of the inter-rows so as not to compromise the root system of the young seedlings (in the case of "organic" crops, it is possible to opt for the use of mulching on the rows). Particular care must be taken with pruning operations which - as the speakers pointed out - should be carried out alternately to ensure the plants' vegetative-productive balance and production yield. This type of processing can also be performed with machinery specifically designed to reduce costs and increase productivity.

**Bari, October 11, 2025**