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By Mike Knowles

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Half of Macfrut visitors 'attended' via smartphone

Organisers herald success of industry's first virtual trade fair, but say they are still planning a physical event in 2021



The Cesena Fiera team on site at Macfrut's physical home in Rimini

Macfrut Digital, the first fruit and vegetable industry trade fair to be held entirely online, reportedly attracted an audience of more than 18,000 – with more than half of those people apparently attending the virtual event via a smartphone.

Heralded by the show's president Renzo Piraccini as "a great communication project" that overcame the challenges laid down by the Covid-19 crisis, the show's reinvention as a digital-only exhibition encouraged each participating company to create content that could be accessed by all visitors, primarily in the form of videos.

As a result, the show's 400 exhibitors were given the opportunity to present themselves to potential customers – including around 600 buyers, 550 from abroad.

Among the international pavilions, China was out in force with a total of 87 companies participating, alongside exhibitors from Chile, Dominican Republic, Senegal, Mozambique, Kenya, Somalia, Indonesia, Uzbekistan and Colombia. In total, foreign companies made up 40 per cent of the show's exhibitors.

A total of 11 technical forums took place during the event. Among these, one of the most popular was one entitled 'Overview of the China-Europe fruit and vegetable sector (see earlier report here), which underlined the great interest shown by China towards the European continent and the major opportunities for growth in trade between the two regions.

Sustainability was also a hot topic, with a number of different environmentally

friendly solutions presented as possible ways of combating climate change. Two of the forums, for example, focused on irrigation techniques and the importance of water conservation.

The first, promoted by ANBI, presented the Goccia Verde project, a voluntary certification programme for the sustainable use of water and land. During the second, the Acquacampus technical forum on water-saving irrigation technology, was attended by Agronica, Irritec, Intracare and Agrostar, who showed how technology might optimise water resources.

Elsewhere, a new biodegradable film called Mater-Bi attracted attention. Developed by a firm called Novamont, the material is now being used for a new line of salad bags launched by Italian company La Linea Verde.

Moving with the times

"It's clear that we are pioneers working on a will depend on factors very much outside

<http://www.fruitnet.com/americafruit/article/1474/parts-of-san-diego-quarantined-as-psyllid-count-mounts>

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For Renzo Piraccini (pictured), Macfrut Digital showed that the Italian fresh produce has what it takes to adapt and move with the times.

project that has great potential. This is where the future is going and Italian fruit and vegetables absolutely have to keep up with fast-changing times, especially in a period like this where travel is limited," he commented.

"The platform will remain open until the end of September so that the forums and video content can be viewed on demand, which represents a great asset available to the sector.

According to Piraccini, many have complimented the organisers on its new venture. The next edition of Macfrut is scheduled to take place on 4-6 May 2021 in Rimini, although clearly the show's future form and development

of their control.

"We do not know if digital fairs will replace physical ones in the future," commented one attendee. "We are all linked to direct interpersonal relationships, even to do business. Certainly we must recognise Macfrut's ability to react and, immediately, to understand this crucial moment for the Italian and world fruit and vegetable business, not stopping and on the contrary putting all of its chips on a virtual fair."