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System application and the availability of vine germplasm

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Viticulture systems are based, obviously, on the vine, man, his history, his knowledge and the environment, which combine to form the various "terroir" or Denomination of Origin (DO). Grapevine, by its nature, has a long lifespan and generational rhythms. Knowledge about the area, the variety and the characteristics of clones come from everyday life and an accumulation of understanding.

Different vine-growing areas claim historical and synergic structures for processing and marketing systems. While they are linked to tradition, innovation is necessary to respond to new lifestyles and preferences that reward typologies that are often based on new varietal ranges and clones.

This innovation, which has led to "Vigneto Italia", has been favored by public projects such as FEOGA 1970-1975 and incentives for renovation in 2000-2006.

Today, 15,000 to 18,000 hectares of the estimated 600,000 hectares of total cultivation area undergo renewal or replacement annually. This translates into a nursery demand for an estimated 50-60 million rootlings that must follow the rapid changes and stimuli of the market. A striking example of this are the varieties Prosecco and Pinot Grigio: the former has gone from two million grafts to nearly 18 million, and the latter from one million to the current 12 million. Similar significant variations have taken place for low-productivity Sangiovese clones or others that are utilized for the production of "commodity" wines.

While modern viticulture is based on tradition, at the same time, it requires nurseries to respond rapidly to changes in a hard-to-predict market. Nurseries attempt to face this challenge thanks to vast varietal and clonal offerings but to fully succeed in satisfying the variations in the market, a genetic patrimony that is ten times greater than what is currently available would be necessary. Greater availability could also compensate for declassifications resulting from material that is no longer suitable in sanitary or genetic terms. However, the economic commitment necessary to sustain public research bodies in their quest for new genetic material is hard to come by and the spread of already available initial and basic material is not always optimal.