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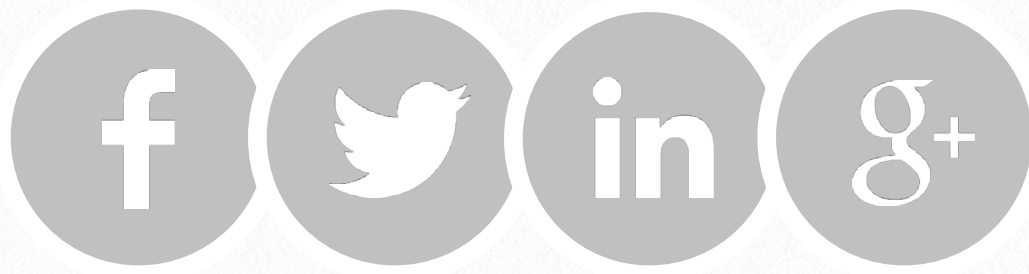


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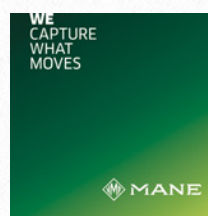
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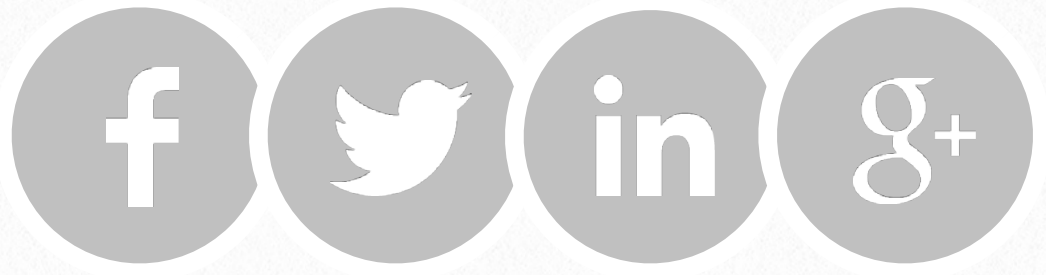
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# Success for the World Pasta Congress and the Annual Meeting of the National Pasta Association in Philadelphia

Editorial team



A three-day event covering innovation, global market and networking for the pasta industry. Pastaria magazine was media partner of the prestigious event.

From 23 to 25 October, Philadelphia hosted the highly successful World Pasta Congress and the Annual Meeting of the National Pasta Association, bringing together sector experts and professionals. The event provided a unique platform to discuss industry trends, share innovations and promote global collaborations. Thanks to conferences, workshops, round tables and networking sessions, participants explored crucial topics and analysed the opportunities offered by the global market.

## The programme

The programme opened on 23 October with a series of organisational meetings and preliminary sessions. The General Assembly of UNAFPA (Union of European Pasta Makers' Associations) and the General Assembly of IPO (International Pasta Organisation) took place during the morning, laying the foundation for dialogue on an international scale. The lunch break offered delegates an informal networking opportunity. The afternoon was dedicated to the meetings of the National Pasta





Chef Rosario Del Nero, ambassador of the National Pasta Association

Association committees, where issues relevant to the sector were discussed. The day ended with the NPA Board meeting, followed by a reception for new members and participants, which preceded the welcome dinner. On 24 October, NPA President Nora Stabert officially kicked off the congress with an opening speech. This was followed by a session dedicated to the global durum wheat market, moderated by Jim Meyer, with speeches by Jim Peterson, President of the Wheat Quality Council, and Jaime Mas, Technical Director of the Gallo Group (Spain) and President of the European Union Semolina Producers'

Association. The session explored the current state and the future prospects of this strategic market, highlighting the challenges posed by climate change, geopolitical uncertainties and increasingly stringent regulations. Peterson and Mas emphasised the role of genetic selection technologies to ensure a sustainable production and address the growing global demand for pasta, whilst still maintaining high quality standards. The morning continued with a legislative and regulatory update for the United States, presented by Veronica Colas, who provided an overview of the evolving regulations that impact the food industry.



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A technical session followed, exploring innovations in pasta production technologies, featuring presentations by Renato Dall'Agata (Fava), Martin Bolli (Bühler Group), Giovanni Cannata (De Mari Pasta Dies), Daniele Capecchi (Landucci), and Yiğit Güler (GEA Group). In the afternoon, participants had the opportunity to take part in individual networking sessions, followed by a guided tour of the city of Philadelphia, designed to combine moments of leisure with opportunities for informal exchange. The day ended with the World Pasta Congress Gala, a celebratory moment that brought together all the delegates.

On 25 October, World Pasta Day, NPA Treasurer Jim Meyer opened the day with a short keynote speech, followed by Emily Boyd's presentation of the Nielsen report. In her analysis, Boyd illustrated how the pasta market continues to show resilience, with dry pasta leading the category's growth. She highlighted the extraordinary growth in online sales and the importance of "club" and discount channels to respond to consumer price sensitivity. At the same time, Boyd analysed the rise of premium and sustainable products, emphasising the role of the younger generations in shaping new consumer trends. The impact of GLP-1 drugs, which

From left: Randy Gilbertson (Pasta Montana), Jaume Mas (Pastas Gallo), Esteban Abascal (La Moderna), Rodrigo Iglesias (ABIMAPI) and Manoj Venugopal (Virginia Park Foods) at the World Pasta Congress





From left, Giuseppe Di Martino and Riccardo Felicetti

reduce appetite, was cited as a challenge but also as an opportunity to develop specific products for new consumer segments.

Subsequently, a panel discussion moderated by Esteban Abascal (La Moderna) explored the challenges and opportunities of the global pasta market. Experts such as Randy Gilbertson (Pasta Montana), Rodrigo Iglesias (ABIMAPI), JaUme Mas (Pastas Gallo) and Manoj Venugopal (Virginia Park Foods) offered a global view of the sector, ranging from automation technologies to exports and to

the growth of specific segments such as whole-grain and gluten-free pasta. Michael Reimer, Curtis Pozniak, and Kristie Sigle then explored the role of agricultural innovation in meeting the unmet needs of pasta consumers.

For one of the most innovative sessions, Kevin Kenny delved into the role of artificial intelligence in the food industry, showing how this technology is transforming labelling, the supply chain and the development of new products. Kenny emphasised that to make the most of these opportunities, companies must invest in training and governance,

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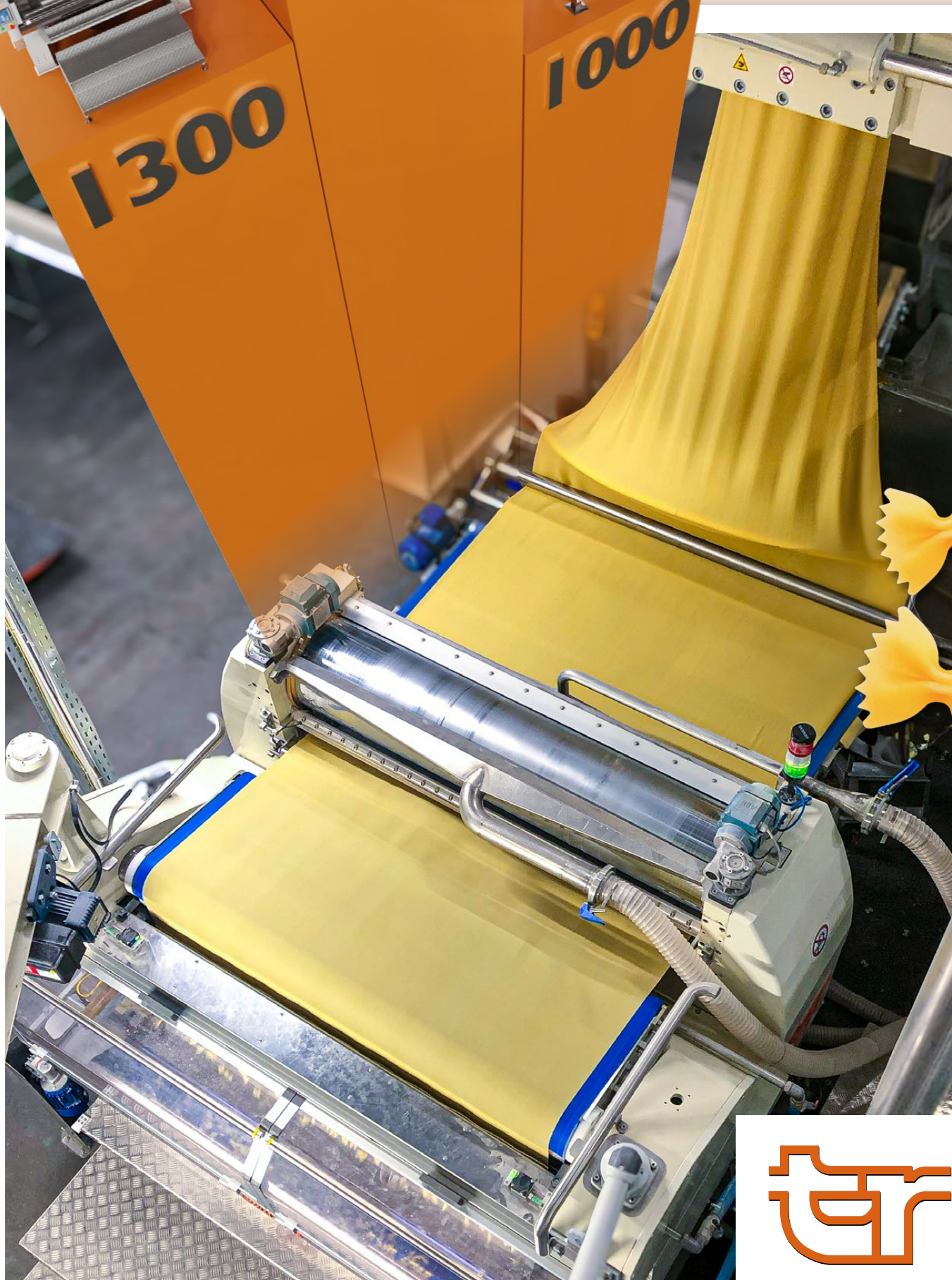
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maintaining a balance between artificial intelligence and human experience. The day ended with a culinary presentation and a pasta tasting led by NPA Ambassador Chef Rosario Del Nero, followed by an NPA Billion Meals Challenge update led by Tom Quinn (Nuovo Pasta Productions) and Cristiano Laurenza (IPO), and by a presentation by Dr Nyree Dardarian, who spoke about wellness through pasta in a speech titled *Nourishing the Body and Soul: The Pasta Wellness Revolution, Let's Share a Meal*. The event closed with a well-received acceptance speech by Nora Stabert.

## Collaboration with Pastaria

A distinctive feature of the event was the collaboration with Pastaria, the trade magazine for the international community of pasta producers.

As media partner, Pastaria provided in-depth coverage, with interviews and reports on the topics covered, helping to give international visibility to the event.

## Results and conclusions

The event was attended by over 130 delegates from various countries.

The feedback received highlighted the high quality of the speeches, the relevance of the topics covered and the effectiveness of





the networking activities. Many participants emphasised the importance of such meetings to keep up-to-date on industry news.

The World Pasta Congress and the Annual Meeting of the National Pasta Association represented an important opportunity to consolidate the professional pasta community, promoting exchanges of ideas and innovative solutions.

## **The next edition of the NPA Annual Meeting**

Whilst expressing its great satisfaction with the results obtained, the National Pasta Association will be happy to

welcome industry operators to the 2025 edition of the Annual Meeting that will be held in the splendid setting of Amelia Island, Florida, from 16 to 18 March.



Nyree Dardarian



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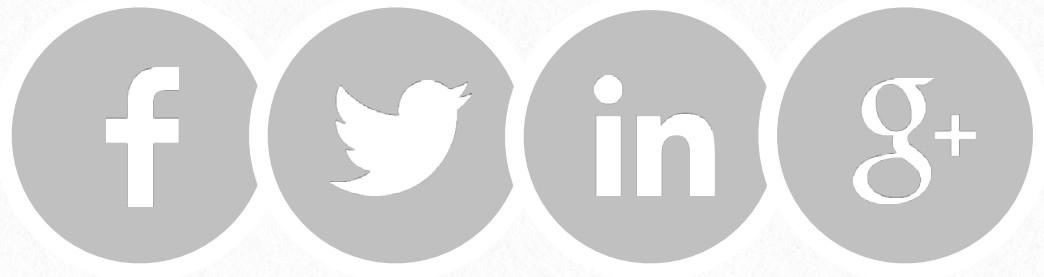
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2



# Shaping the future of pasta: an interview with Nora Stabert, president of the National Pasta Association

Editorial team



With the President of the National Pasta Association, we delve into market trends, consumer shifts, and the innovation driving the American pasta industry.

**You are the President of the National Pasta Association and Vice President of Sales at Winland Foods. However, you started your career at your family's company, Philadelphia Macaroni Company, a well-known leading brand in the American market. Can you briefly tell us how your journey in the pasta industry began?**

I joined Philadelphia Macaroni Company, my family business, in 2018 as Vice President of Strategy, joining the fifth generation of our company. At that time, my brother, Sam Stabert, was also working there alongside my father, Bill Stabert, and uncles, Luke Marano Jr. and Mark Marano. While a passion for pasta has been evident in my life since I can remember, joining the business and the National Pasta Association has been an extremely rewarding experience.

Our company was founded in 1914 in Philadelphia's Italian Market, where our headquarters remain today, not far from here. In 2023, I took over as Chief Operating Officer, and in April 2024, while celebrating our 110<sup>th</sup> year, PMC was acquired by Winland Foods. Currently, I'm Vice President of Sales at Winland responsible for the sales and service for the foodservice, ingredients and co-manufacturing channels.

**It is the morning of the first day of this important event, organised by the association you preside over, in your Philadelphia. What do you feel and what atmosphere do you sense from these first steps?**

This event has been 18 months in the making, and I'm thrilled it's finally here. The energy is palpable, and so many people have worked tirelessly to bring this event to life. I'm eager to gather with the global pasta industry to learn, exchange ideas, and celebrate all things pasta. We have a record attendance of over 130 participants from 60 organizations. Collaborating with the International Pasta Organisation, we've put together a dynamic agenda that includes critical topics including the durum market outlook, innovations in manufacturing, regulatory updates, potential impacts of Artificial Intelligence, and sustainability in agriculture. The weather here in Philadelphia is beautiful, with sunshine mirroring the vibrant atmosphere of the event. It will be an unforgettable gathering thanks to everyone's efforts.

**It is known that Luke Marano, your grandfather, then at the helm of the Philadelphia Macaroni Company, contributed enormously to the birth of the International Pasta Organisation and**

**was among the creators and promoters of the World Pasta Congress. Would you like to share a memory of him with our readers?**

Absolutely. For my brother Sam and me, engaging in the association that our grandfather, Luke Marano Sr., was so passionate about has been incredibly rewarding. A story my father, Bill Stabert – who served as PMC’s Chief Commercial Officer of PMC before retiring in 2020 and a long-time active NPA member – recently shared comes to mind. Even in retirement, my father remains curious and engaged with the NPA, illustrating how deep our family’s connection runs.

My grandfather, Luke Marano Sr., was a daring entrepreneur who never shied away from taking risks. One legendary example is when the industry was searching for quicker-cooking pasta solutions. My grandfather knew that precooking was very important, and he brought my father, at the time, to a long goods extruder producing capellini at the time. He had my father grab a stick with 40 lb. of freshly extruded product on it and marched downstairs in our Philadelphia plant. He opened the steam blow off valve, and had Bill move the stick through the steam for several minutes. His boldness and problem-solving were key to positioning our company as a trusted partner to some

of the world’s most innovative brands. It’s incredible to hear colleagues and NPA members recount fond memories of him, reflecting the lasting relationships formed through our industry association.

**Can you give us a picture of the pasta industry in the United States?**

That’s a great question. We’ll explore this topic in more depth at the NPA Annual Event and World Pasta Congress, where NielsenIQ will present market insights. Additionally, we’ll host a global fireside chat with international market representatives. Pasta in the U.S. market spans dry, fresh, frozen, short, long, and specialty types, available in both conventional and alternative flour varieties. According to NPA estimates, the average American consumes around 20 pounds of pasta per year. Historically, the market evolved from being regionally fragmented to one that saw major players like Coca-Cola and Hershey entering, and eventually exiting, the space. Innovations in equipment and manufacturing continue to shape the future, which will also be discussed in our sessions.

**We would like to take advantage of your certainly privileged observation point, to ask you to give us a picture of the US market at the moment, and in particular**



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**to ask you if in your opinion more or less evident consumer trends are underway in the US market and possibly in the North American and American markets.**

In my view, the pasta industry is benefiting significantly from the value proposition it offers to today's consumer. Pasta is convenient, versatile, has a simple ingredient profile, and spans from value to premium options. How many other clean, simple, and delicious food options can you name that provide a core meal component for a family of four at around \$2 per pound?

NielsenIQ will discuss consumer trends, but from my perspective, the pandemic created a sustained increase in pasta demand. Today's consumers are seeking added benefits in legacy categories, and pasta is no exception. We're seeing innovation in shapes, sizes, packaging, preparation methods, and added health and nutrition benefits. Manufacturers and members of the NPA and IPO are creatively addressing evolving consumer needs, which will be highlighted in our sessions this week.

**What, in your opinion, are the most interesting growth opportunities for pasta producers offered by these**

**markets and what are the most promising segments?**

I believe the Mediterranean diet and the popularity of Italian food present significant opportunities across all pasta segments. While I'm personally more of a traditionalist when it comes to enjoying my own pasta, I'm really excited to see the new shapes, formulations and food solutions to come as the Food Industry emphasizes innovation into the future. You're seeing a lot of big food names talk about doubling down on innovation, and I think that pasta has such a wonderful opportunity to shine in delivering against that.

**We know that in a not too distant past, pasta has been the subject of harsh attacks, with no scientific basis, which have compromised its image (pasta makes you fat, for example) and that have led to the spread of no-carb diets. What is the reputation of pasta in the United States at the moment?**

As a working mother of two young children, I'm personally very grateful for pasta every day. It's a healthy base made with simple ingredients, and I pair it with proteins and vegetables to create meals that make my family happy. I see a large segment of consumers that align with my view here!

In terms of broader diet trends, whether they are fad diets or otherwise, I'm pleased to see pasta being embraced as a versatile solution fitting a variety of dietary preferences. The innovations we discussed earlier are where pasta can proactively address evolving consumer needs.

**You have been leading the NPA for a year and a half: what have been the main initiatives that the association has carried out since you took office?**

One of the biggest initiatives has been organizing this event, the World Pasta Congress. The strength of our network is evident, especially with the inclusion of guests from the International Pasta Organisation and other international entities. This event creates numerous opportunities to learn, advocate, and share

ideas focused on the resilience and full potential of our industry. Additionally, we've restructured our committees to set up a future-ready NPA. The passion within the National Pasta Association is immense, and our committee restructuring ensures we remain agile and equipped to achieve our objectives efficiently.

**Can you provide us with a profile of Philadelphia Macaroni Company for our international readers who may not know?**

PMC was founded in 1914 and continued to invest in dry pasta manufacturing over generations. Our history was fueled by a strong commitment to pasta manufacturing, with a core value proposition centered on partnering with customers to realize their pasta dreams and innovations. We have built

## **NORA STABERT**

Nora serves as Vice President of Sales at Philadelphia Macaroni Company, a 5th-generation, family-owned manufacturer of dry, frozen, and specialty pasta for industrial, retail, and foodservice customers. In her role she is responsible for corporate strategy, overseeing strategic business initiatives from development through execution. As a member of the National Pasta Association ("NPA"), Nora served as the Vice Chair of the NPA Board prior to taking on the role of Chair in March 2023, and has been an active member of the NPA Communications Committee since 2019. The NPA is an organization comprised of manufacturers, marketers, millers, and suppliers in the pasta industry. The NPA serves as a cohesive advocate, promoter, and center of knowledge for the pasta industry, members of the government, and consumers, with the ultimate goal to increase US pasta consumption and support a thriving industry.



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long-standing relationships with some of the world's most iconic brands through our dedication to quality and product excellence. Some key milestones for the company include major greenfield projects which highlight the entrepreneurial spirit of the Marano family such as our Grand Forks, North Dakota pasta facility, and expansion into flour milling in 2006 with the start of our Minot Milling division. Another transformational milestone was our acquisition of A. Zerega's Sons in May 2020. Zerega, a sixth-generation pasta manufacturer, brought a rich history dating back to the first commercial pasta facility in the U.S., located in Brooklyn. In April, Philadelphia Macaroni Company became part of Winland Foods, which has been a fantastic steward of our legacy.

**If you can disclose this, in what direction are Winland Foods' innovation efforts focused?**

Winland is an innovation partner to global retailers, leading food service operators, and some of the world's most iconic brands. Innovation is one of our core strengths, enabling us to deliver pasta solutions that meet evolving consumer needs. These include convenience, value-added features, super-premium offerings, unique packaging, new shapes and formulations, and more.

**Is there something you wish to talk about or an appeal you want to make to international operators through the pages of our magazine?**

Pasta is a global food, and the industry itself transcends geographical boundaries. This event exemplifies that, bringing together a diverse international audience, which reflects the current global nature of the industry. The mission of the NPA centers on advocating for the pasta category, educating the industry, and ensuring we have a strong and resilient sector so that pasta remains the carbohydrate of choice. Our objectives align closely with those of the International Pasta Organisation. Collaborating and working with our international audience is such a wonderful opportunity, and I look forward to the collaboration moving forward.

**Let's close with two quick, colourful questions: what is your favourite pasta shape and what is your favourite pasta dish?**

Cavatelli is my favorite pasta shape, and I love a simple pasta and marinara.



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# 3



## A bright future for pasta: Carl Zuanelli's vision

Editorial team



How pasta can address global population growth and industry challenges. We discussed it with Carl Zuanelli, President of the International Pasta Organisation, in Philadelphia.

**You are the founder and CEO of Nuovo Pasta Productions, an important and dynamic US company that produces fresh pasta, and you are the president, in your second term, of the International Pasta Organisation, the international association which Pastaria is also honoured to be part of. Can you briefly introduce your pasta factory to the international readers of Pastaria who may not be familiar with it?**

Yes, of course. First, thank you, for interviewing me. I truly appreciate the Pastaria magazine for what it represents for our industry, connecting all the players, whether they are pasta manufacturers, equipment manufacturers, or ingredient suppliers. I appreciate all the work you do for our industry, and thank you for having me here today. I'm very proud to be the founder and CEO of a company called Nuovo Pasta Productions. Nuovo was founded by me 35 years ago. At that time, I was an investment banker, and the "product" I was dealing with was money. While money is essential in our lives, I didn't see it as a product but rather a byproduct of our work. I wanted to be involved in an industry that made something tangible, and I chose pasta. Pasta has been a part of my life from the earliest moments; in fact, the first solid food I ever ate was pastina, and I still eat pasta every day. So being in an industry centered around a food I love – and that is beloved globally – was an easy choice. Today, Nuovo employs 350 people, and I'm proud to be part of that team. We supply North America with fresh pasta, including tortellini, ravioli, gnocchi, and more. We also produce sauces, and I'm proud to say we are one of the largest importers of DOP Italian basil from Liguria for the pesto we make in the U.S. That's a little about our company.

**How much is the US fresh pasta market worth and how is it doing?  
How many players are there in this market?**

Regarding the U.S. market, it is composed of three primary national providers that can produce at scale, and Nuovo is one of them. Additionally, there are regional artisan producers, many of whom I am fortunate to know personally. These artisan producers have their own

specialties and excel in their respective niches. Rana, which is the largest fresh pasta producer globally, is also the largest player in the U.S. market. They have done an excellent job of bringing attention to fresh pasta, which has helped the market grow significantly since their entry into the U.S. I have great respect for their work. The traditional retail market for fresh pasta, excluding club stores, is valued at about 500 million dollars in the U.S., based on Nielsen data. When you include national chains and club stores like Costco, Sam's Club, and Walmart, the market exceeds one billion dollars in total sales.

### **What is the image of fresh pasta for the US consumer?**

Fresh pasta is considered a premium product in the United States. It is sold in the same section of the supermarket where you find Parmigiano Reggiano, various types of salumi (both imported and domestically produced), and high-quality European olives. This section of the store is a destination for customers seeking premium selections. Fresh pasta has earned a well-deserved reputation as a premium product within the overall pasta category.

### **And is it considered a healthy and sustainable product in the United States?**

There are two main points to consider. First, one of the appeals for consumers is that fresh pasta represents a restaurant-quality meal. There is a significant trend today toward recreating a restaurant experience at home, and fresh pasta enables that – whether it's stuffed pasta, ravioli, tagliatelle, or gnocchi. This is especially true when paired with refrigerated sauces, which are also considered premium. Regarding sustainability, we make sure to source our ingredients from the most sustainable suppliers possible. Additionally, we use post-consumer recycled plastic for our packaging, which saves over three-quarters of a million pounds of virgin plastic from entering the market each year. That's one of our key sustainability efforts.

### **What is the market penetration of this type of product and the frequency of its consumption?**

There is a significant window of opportunity, as data indicates that less than 25% of the overall U.S. population consumes fresh pasta. This suggests a substantial potential for market growth.

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**What does the US consumer particularly appreciate about this product?**

One of the most impactful benefits for consumers is that fresh pasta provides a restaurant-quality meal they can enjoy at home. There is a phrase gaining popularity in the United States: “dining in is the new dining out.” Recreating a restaurant experience is becoming increasingly important, and fresh pasta is one of the key food products that allow consumers to do this.

**What actions do you think should be implemented by producers and their associations to increase the level of penetration and consumption of fresh pasta?**

That’s a really good question. We believe there needs to be more consumer outreach through marketing and advertising to highlight the benefits of fresh pasta. Many consumers may be unaware of its availability and practical uses at home. Therefore, it is the responsibility of manufacturers, including Nuovo, to educate consumers – especially new ones, such as Gen Z, or current consumers of dry pasta – about the additional options available in the pasta category, including fresh pasta.

**We are conducting this interview at the end of the NPA Annual Meeting and the World Pasta Congress. How would you rate this edition?**

I believe this World Pasta Congress was an excellent opportunity, and I think we made the most of it by bringing together the major players and protagonists of the industry in one location. We were able to set aside competition and unite around our shared passion for pasta. It was wonderful to see competitors sitting at the same dining table, engaging in meaningful discussions about industry challenges and listening to the excellent speakers assembled for the event. This gathering provided a space for discussions about new technology and international shared experiences. We had representatives from the Brazilian Pasta Association, the American Pasta Association, the European Pasta Association, and an Indian representative, all on one panel, discussing issues impacting their respective countries and regions, as well as the common challenges we face. In today’s era, we face geopolitical challenges, government regulations, and climate change – all of which impact our industry. There were many conversations about how we can overcome these obstacles and continue to grow. So, overall, I think the World Pasta Congress



held in Philadelphia was a tremendous success.

**Would you like to outline to Pastaria readers an initiative that involved your association, undertaken during your presidency or soon to be implemented, that is particularly dear to you?**

Yes, one of the key aspects of associations is that they are, of course, made up of their members. At the IPO, we are now encouraging greater participation from our members. In 2024, we established two new committees: the Science and Nutrition Committee and the Communication Committee. Both committees consist of members from various global regions, allowing us to share data in ways we haven't done before. These two major initiatives will, I believe, strengthen the IPO and make it a central hub where global players can connect, have a voice in the industry, and learn from developments occurring outside their regions.

**As president of IPO, no one is more qualified than you to provide us with a broad and long-term vision of pasta. How do you see the future of pasta?**

That's a fantastic question, and thank you for asking it. At the World Pasta Congress, a representative from an important

equipment manufacturer, Bühler, shared some fascinating data: by 2050, the global population will reach 10 billion. In 2022, it was around 8 billion. Regardless, in just over two decades, we will have over 2 billion more people to feed. I believe that because pasta is one of the most beloved foods worldwide, this means 2 billion potential new pasta consumers. The current pasta manufacturers, as well as new ones that will emerge over the next 12 or more years, will be the ones feeding that growing population. I see a bright future for pasta, not only because it is one of the healthiest and most nutritious foods but also because it is one of the most delicious. Chef Rosario Del Nero described pasta as a canvas on which beautiful meal "paintings" can be created, whether by professional chefs or home cooks. I am confident in the industry's future, and as long as I am part of it – which I foresee being for a long time – I will continue to share my passion with my company, the National Pasta Association, the IPO, and all its members.

**Are there, in your opinion, initiatives that the pasta industry should undertake?**

One crucial aspect is celebrating the growers or farmers who produce durum wheat, the fundamental ingredient of our

TECHNOLOGY PERFORMANCE RELIABILITY

# CUOCITORE LINEARE LINEAR COOKER

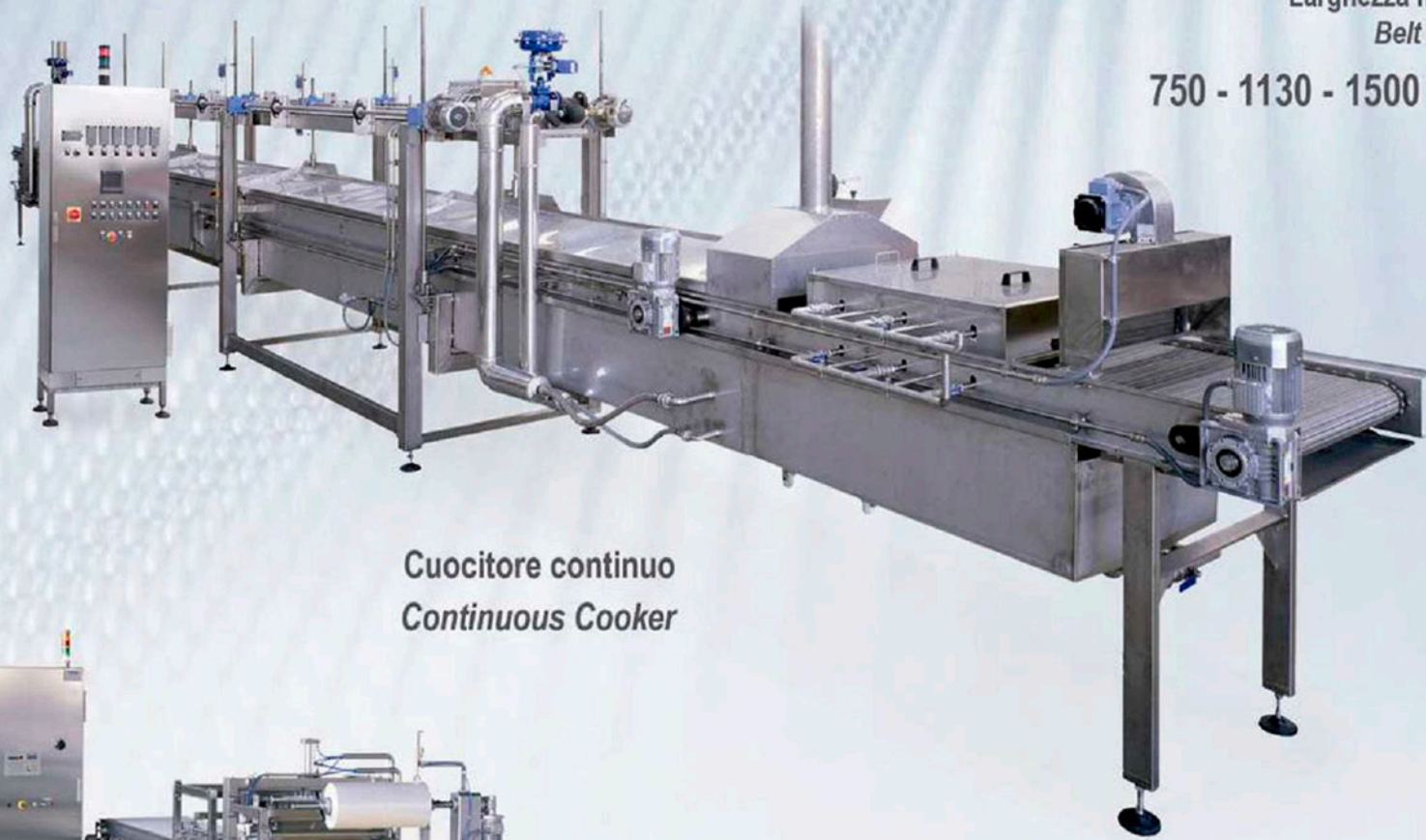
100 - 1000 kg/h

Prodotti: paste ripiene, sfoglie con interfoglio, cannelloni  
For processing filled pasta, sheet with interleaf film, cannelloni



Larghezza nastro  
Belt width

750 - 1130 - 1500 mm



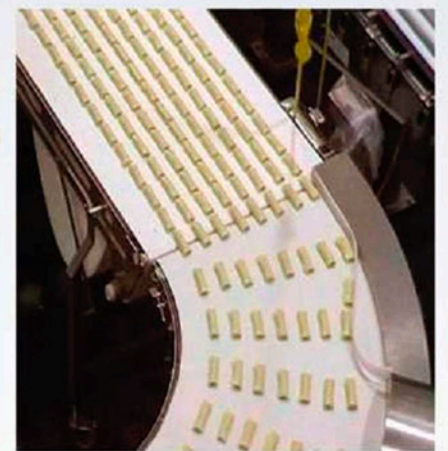
Cuocitore continuo  
Continuous Cooker



Interfoliatrice  
Line for sheet  
with interleaf film



Paste ripiene  
Filled pasta



Sfoglie per Lasagne  
Lasagne sheets



Sfoglia con interfoglio  
Sheets with interleaf film



Cannelloni

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product. They are not always recognized as the partners they truly are. We need to provide them with information, whether through research and development on sustainable practices or seeds for the industry. We should also give them a voice at the table, allowing them to share their concerns and optimistic perspectives for the industry and treating them as true partners. One area where we can improve as an industry is by fully embracing and celebrating these hardworking growers who produce the durum semolina that forms the basis of our products.

**Finally, a question about us: what can Pastaria do for the international community of pasta producers?**

If Pastaria continues to serve as a central voice of communication, it will remain an invaluable media source, both digitally and in print. Subscribers look forward to the information provided, which covers science, technology, and essential advertisements for equipment and ingredient suppliers. Additionally, the Pastaria Festival is a significant contribution to our industry. It serves as a central gathering place dedicated solely to pasta, allowing pasta makers from around the world to learn from expert speakers, meet equipment and ingredient suppliers, and engage in one-on-one discussions.

This is an incredible service that Pastaria provides, and I encourage you to continue your focus and alignment with the industry as we both grow into the future.

**Let's wrap up with two quick, fun questions: what is your favorite pasta shape, and what is your favorite pasta dish?**

That's like asking me to choose my favorite child or my favorite wine – it's a very difficult question to answer. It really depends on where you are and the experience of what and where you're eating. If you're in Calabria, enjoying macaroni Calabrese with a delicious tomato sauce, or in Liguria, savoring trenette or trofie with pesto, or in Veneto, having bigoli with seafood, those are some of the most wonderful pasta experiences. And there's nothing like being in Sicily, enjoying a simple yet amazing pasta dish by the sea, perhaps pasta alla Norma with eggplant and tomato. As I mentioned, the first pasta I ever ate was pastina with a little butter and freshly grated Italian cheese, and there's really nothing better. So, it's hard to pick just one. I'm sorry I can't give you a direct answer, but it's truly difficult to choose.



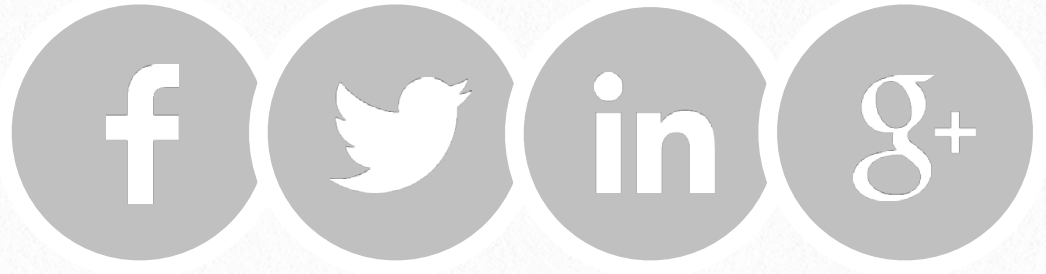
each pasta maker  
has its own semolina  
from the field to the table  
ours is **tailor made**  
and caters to the supply chain  
of each pasta factory



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4



# **Billion Meals Challenge: the pasta community leading the fight against hunger**

Editorial team



**Tom Quinn, President of Nuovo Pasta Productions and a key voice of the National Pasta Association, outlines the initiative aimed at tackling global food insecurity with a goal of delivering one billion meals in ten years.**

**During the World Pasta Congress, on 25 October, World Pasta Day, you will present the Billion Meals Challenge project. Can you explain what it is, how it was born, what its goals are and who this initiative is aimed at?**

Absolutely. The Billion Meals Challenge started through a connection with a gentleman named Tony Robbins, who is an inspirational speaker and writer. He experienced significant food insecurity during his youth and resolved that once he achieved success, he would dedicate much of his efforts to combating food insecurity worldwide. This issue remains critical, and unfortunately, it affects every part of the globe, whether it be the United States, Europe, Asia, Africa, or South America.

In 2023, between 700 and 800 million people worldwide didn't know where their next meal would come from. This number is 122 million higher than the previous year, reflecting a 19% increase. In 2023, 80 million people were at risk of starvation and death. This situation worsened significantly, with approximately 340 million people affected, primarily due to conflicts in Ukraine, difficulties obtaining fertilizer from Russia, and conflicts in the Middle East. The urgency to combat global food insecurity has never been greater.

So when we heard about this, the National Pasta Association, through Carl Zuanelli, decided to take action. We established the Billion Meals Task Force to inspire our members to take meaningful action in their communities. The goal wasn't to ask people to send food worldwide or even to distant places within the United States. It was about doing something in your local community, because every community has food insecurity issues. We created a structured system and a conversion chart to quantify contributions. For example, euros correspond to a specific number of meals, and donated food items, such as pasta, eggs, or flour, are converted into meal equivalents.

We used numbers from the United Nations World Food Program as the foundation for developing a standardized conversion system, enabling companies to speak a common language, regardless of how they were contributing. We even created a conversion metric for donated hours, so if

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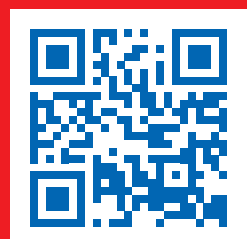
Nowadays, the needs in pasta factories are ever greater: production plants must be more compact, easily washable and highly efficient.

**SIDE responds by building innovative machinery from time to time, acting on the basis of specific customer requests.**

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companies volunteered locally to help feed people, their time could be accounted for in the overall impact. In 2023, the global pasta community – through the combined efforts of the National Pasta Association and the International Pasta Organisation – created nearly 78 million meals, with 32.4 million meals in the U.S. and 45.4 million in Europe. I must say, though, that this figure is likely underestimated. As we were working to capture the attention of our members both domestically and internationally, we didn't receive reports from the majority of them. The true number is probably well over 100 million meals. Our ultimate goal is to raise awareness so that the global pasta community contributes a billion meals over ten years, averaging 100 million meals annually. I genuinely believe we are well on our way to achieving this. When I got involved at Carl's request and learned more about the dire situation worldwide, I realized it's impossible to remain indifferent once you know the shocking statistics – you have to act. Our biggest challenge remains reaching all our members globally. This issue, unfortunately, connects us all, but it also exemplifies how the National Pasta Association and the International Pasta Organisation can join forces to accomplish meaningful work and demonstrate to the

world that the pasta community truly cares.

### **What results have been achieved and how many companies have you involved?**

I don't have the exact number of participating companies, but I can say that the NPA received about a 20% response rate in the first year. Frankly, getting attention for a new project takes time, and our initial goal was to generate enough interest to make an impact.

Even with just a 20% response rate, we generated over 32 million meals, which makes me confident that the true number is much higher. Our goal at the World Pasta Congress is to present this information to all attendees and readers, encouraging those who have contributed to share their efforts and inspiring those who haven't to take action.

I believe that building awareness will yield even better results next year and beyond, as this is a long-term commitment for the National Pasta Association and our team. By continually raising awareness, we hope to achieve even greater outcomes.

You know, as I mentioned, between 700 and 800 million people were hungry. Last year, we created 78 million meals worldwide, which is a significant achievement, but it only addresses about



10% of the need – there is still 90% left. While we know we can't fill the entire gap, we are committed to doing as much as we can. I am very proud and pleased with the initial result of 78 million meals, especially considering we started the year at zero. So we've made great progress as it relates to understanding what happened in 2023 we're working now to get results for 2024 and I believe we'll outpace that number towards the end of 2024.

**What should a pasta producer interested in contributing to this solidarity-based initiative do, who should they contact?**

They can reach out to Cristiano Laurenza at the International Pasta Organisation, or they are welcome to contact me personally at the National Pasta Association.

Alternatively, they can use the email addresses for either the IPO or the NPA, and we will assist them. Ideally we can understand more of what they're doing already. I spoke to a member who operates both in the United States and internationally. They told me how, in their New York City offices, every Thursday, they cook pasta and distribute it to people on the streets of New York. I asked them, "How have you not told us about this?" It really comes down to awareness. These are actions that people are already taking

because they know it's the right thing to do. So we're hoping to take more of those stories. We've worked to leverage all our internal media resources, including the National Pasta Association's *Pasta Journal*, which is distributed monthly. We use the journal, which reaches all members, to highlight organizations – sometimes not even our members – that have made significant efforts to help people get food where it is urgently needed. Doing so is crucial to making this a human experience, rather than just another email sitting in someone's inbox. We are all inundated with technology and emails, and even I sometimes don't take the time to read everything.

And the concept was to use these media elements that we have to really let people know what's going on and the severity of the situation, what people are doing to help.

There's a lot of really great people that don't get a whole lot of recognition and awareness.

And the idea of highlighting these organizations, whether it be in Philadelphia or California or New York, is hopefully somebody will read that, and if they don't know what to do, and they're in those areas, they can contribute to those organizations that are already doing the hard work. It's just a matter of connecting



# Pasta line



*Bello*

riduce la migrazione dell'umidità dal ripieno alla pasta, conferisce un aspetto più "liscio" al ripieno

*Buono*

conferisce omogeneità e buona palabilità al ripieno

*Sicuro*

contrasta la crescita microbica indesiderata

**Applicazioni:**  
ripieni a base di ricotta, di carne e di verdure

**La linea comprende:**  
Fibra R15, Fibra EMU, Fibermix, SM (conservanti naturali)

pasta makers and manufacturers with the people that need it so. And it's as simple as that, I hate to oversimplify, you know the solution, but pasta as a category and as a lifestyle has created so much joy around the globe, we now have to use that to create sustenance and help people live another day, or week, or month, or year, and be able to connect the pasta makers who really have a great passion for pasta and their communities, but connect them with the people that can really use that help.

**Would you like to make an appeal through Pastaria to the international community of pasta producers, which has always been very sensitive and generous?**

Yes, I was incredibly impressed with the first-year results from the International Pasta Organisation. I understand they faced the same challenge we did in the United States: raising awareness. Like us, they didn't receive reports from the majority of their members. I strongly encourage anyone reading this in Pastaria magazine to take action – right in your own community. Every community around the world is affected by this issue, and if you can't find a place, reach out for us and we'll help you to find a place. That's our role: to facilitate and support these efforts.

The pasta community has always excelled at outreach and has consistently cared about the wider community and the people who enjoy our product, to which we dedicate our lives. The key message here is simple: take action, because doing something is always better than doing nothing. If you're unsure where to start, reach out to us, and we'll guide you. If you're already contributing, share your story, because your efforts can inspire others – whether they are manufacturers in Europe or America. We share these stories to motivate people to do more, because the challenge is immense, and as global citizens, we have a responsibility to help in any way we can. The pasta industry has been incredibly good to us, shaping our lives and those of our colleagues. Now, it's time to extend that joy and those opportunities to the people who need them most.

**You are also an expert in legislative issues, holding the role of Chair of Regulatory & Technical Committee for Nuovo Pasta. Are there any upcoming developments that could be of interest to US or international pasta producers or are there any specific regulatory issues that are currently affecting the US production sector and/or that could**

## **be of interest to international producers?**

Yes, there are several initiatives we're working on with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to update some of the standards of identity, which haven't been significantly revised in over 70 years. While we aren't making comprehensive changes, one of the most crucial updates for manufacturers both in the U.S. and internationally involves the pasta category. Interestingly, pasta isn't even specifically defined in the U.S. standards of identity; it's referred to as "macaroni and noodles," reflecting how outdated these standards are. Currently, pasta is one of the few grain-based categories that have both a minimum and a maximum for enrichment levels, whereas other categories only have a minimum. The FDA has been very receptive, and we've had multiple direct conversations with them. We are now in the process of submitting the necessary documentation to remove the upper limits, allowing pasta manufacturers globally to operate under the same enrichment standards as other grain-based products in the U.S. This change is significant because it impacts both imported and exported pasta, affecting numerous manufacturers worldwide. Another issue we're tackling, specific to the U.S., is enhanced producer responsibility, which

essentially imposes a tax on manufacturers for the plastic used in product packaging. Unfortunately, depending on whether a product is refrigerated, dry, or frozen, different types of plastic are required to ensure freshness and safety across the distribution chain. Currently, five U.S. states have passed legislation to enforce this tax, and we, as part of the National Pasta Association's Regulatory and Technical Affairs Committee, are engaging with these states and others to explain the impact. Any cost increase in one part of the production cycle inevitably affects the entire supply chain, leading to higher food costs, a critical concern for consumers globally, especially here in the U.S. We aim to streamline these processes as much as possible while doing what's necessary to keep costs manageable for both manufacturers and consumers worldwide. These are just two of the many issues our committee is handling. Over the past five or six years, we've dealt with numerous challenges, such as the Boeing and Airbus tariff situation, where the U.S. government considered imposing steep tariffs on European ingredients. We successfully negotiated significant reductions, allowing manufacturers to continue producing quality products without adding unnecessary costs to the system.



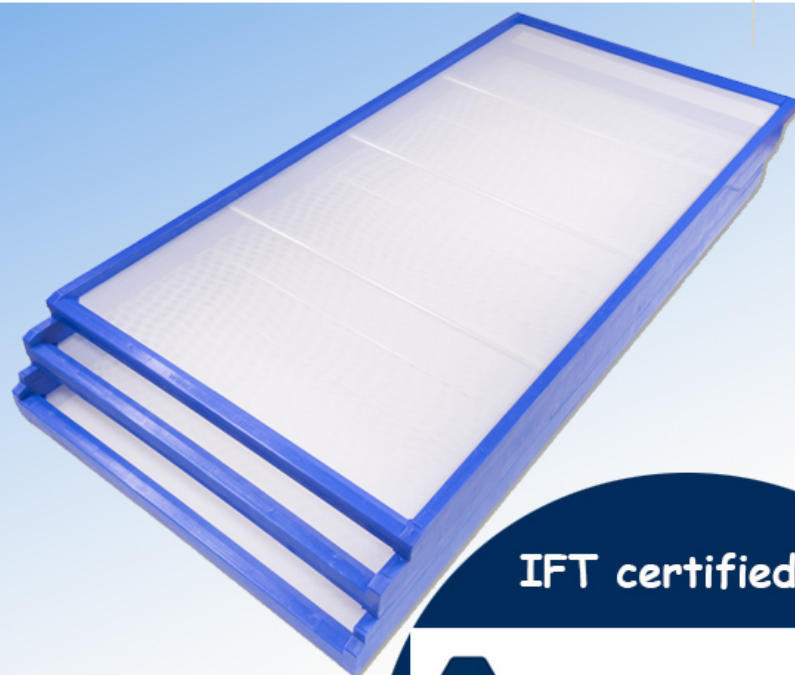
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**Is there anything you would like to discuss with international operators through the pages of our magazine?**

The only thing I would add is that one of the lessons the pandemic taught us is just how small the world truly is. The more the international pasta community can unite and collaborate across both sides of the ocean, the more we can positively impact the entire globe and our industry. The goal isn't to keep dividing the same pie but to make the pie bigger, to expand the category and help people understand that pasta isn't just a carbohydrate – it's a lifestyle and a sustainable one at that. Pasta is one of the most sustainable foods in our global food system, but not enough people are aware of this. Events like the World Pasta Congress, where the

international community gathers around one big table to discuss how to make pasta even better, are crucial. So, keep an open mind and look for ways to get involved. If you're an international pasta producer and not yet participating, join the International Pasta Organization. If you're based in the United States, join the National Pasta Association. You can't make a difference unless you're part of the process, and I encourage everyone, no matter where they are in the world, to take part.

**We are on the second day of the NPA Annual Meeting and the World Pasta Congress: how is the event going?**

Oh, I think it's been an amazing event. I've had the great pleasure of attending the

**TOM QUINN**

Tom Quinn is President and Chief Operating Officer at Nuovo Pasta Productions, Ltd. and has been with the Company since 2004. His experience and skills in both sales and operations over his 35-year career have included both retail and food service and has been instrumental in helping to guide Nuovo to its current level of success.

Tom's responsibilities include overseeing all daily operations of the Company, high-level contacts with domestic and international equipment suppliers, senior management contacts of Supply Chain and Quality Assurance Departments, and interaction with regulatory and municipal officials.

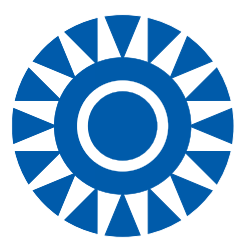
He is the chairman for the National Pasta Association's Government Affairs Committee and the Membership Committees. Locally, Tom is the Chair of the Bridgeport Regional Business Council as well as being an active member of the Connecticut Business Industry Association. He is a member of the Board of Directors of Meals on Main Street, an organization fighting food insecurity in Westchester County, NY. He holds a B.A. in Economics from Fairfield University. Tom published his first nationally award-winning book, *Delivering Greatness*, and lives in Fairfield CT with his wife Linda of 36 years, and they have two children.

NPA Annual Meetings for over seven years now, and it's truly remarkable to have so many representatives from all over the world come together to discuss topics of mutual interest and importance. Being able to see everyone in person, face-to-face, is invaluable. One outcome of the pandemic was an increased reliance on technology – using Zoom, Teams, and other forms of electronic communication – but there is still no substitute for in-person interaction, shaking hands, and really getting to know people. That's one of the greatest benefits of the World Pasta Congress and this global meeting. I'm extremely excited for days two and three, as they will give us the chance to bake bread, share pasta, exchange stories, and genuinely connect with the people we often only read about. There's simply no substitute for that kind of personal interaction. After all the struggles and isolation brought about by the pandemic, being able to come together like this is incredibly refreshing and uplifting.

**Let's close with two quick, colourful questions: what is your favourite pasta shape and what is your favourite pasta dish?**

Okay, my favorite pasta shape is probably ravioli – mainly because it pays for my house! Actually, I genuinely love ravioli and

tortellini. I also have a special fondness for homemade gnocchi. There's nothing quite like going to a local restaurant where they make gnocchi in-house; you can always tell when a chef or owner prepares something with love, and it truly shows in the taste. I also have a particular fascination with carbonara, which is one of my absolute favorite dishes. So, while I do enjoy a good cream sauce on gnocchi, if I had to choose, I'd always go with carbonara.



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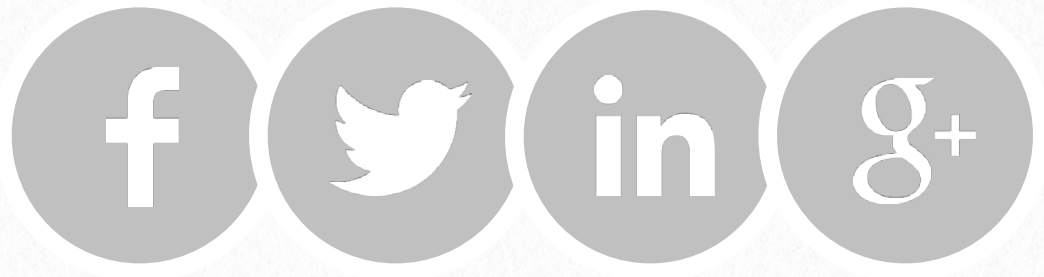
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5



# A Miller's perspective on World Pasta Day

Editorial team



**Jim Meyer, Managing Director of Richardson USA's Durum Milling Business Unit, shares his thoughts on the future of semolina and sustainability during the World Pasta Day celebrations in Philadelphia.**

**Can you please tell us about Italgrani: what products does it supply to pasta manufacturers, what markets does it cover, where are its processing plants and what production capacity do they have?**

Italgrani USA had its beginnings in the United States in 1980. At that time, the company was owned by the Ambrosio family from Naples, Italy. The Company built a small durum wheat mill in St. Louis, Missouri, with construction being completed in 1987.

Over the years, the milling operation continued to expand to meet the increasing needs of our customer base. Today the St. Louis operations encompasses two milling lines with a total daily durum grind of 1,800 MT. This represents the largest durum milling plant in North America.

Our customer base covers virtually all aspects of the pasta market in North America. We sell semolina and durum flour to: dry branded, private label, food service, fresh, frozen and meal solution customers. We also produce organic and whole wheat semolina for various customers. In all cases, we make product to specific customer requirements to ensure a consistent quality for each customer. Shipments are made across the United States as well as into Canada.

In 2021, Italgrani USA was acquired by Richardson International, and we have continued to grow the business and the customer base since the transaction. Richardson is a family owned, Canadian based, business that has started its operations nearly 170 years ago. A key component of the Richardson footprint is that it has a large number of high-speed grain elevator operations in the most abundant durum wheat growing areas in the Canadian prairies, which provides a consistent source of high quality durum wheat for the St. Louis milling operations.

**What do pasta producers in your reference markets currently ask of the milling industry?**

Our customers desire that the semolina or flour they receive from our plant is consistent, not only from load to load but also from crop year to crop year. With that consistency, they can set their production equipment to achieve the best results for their operations and ensure a consistent

customer experience when they cook and consume the pasta.

Our operations in St. Louis are well equipped to provide this consistency because we have 108,000 MT of grain storage attached to the mill. This allows us to blend the durum we purchase to make a consistent semolina.

**Do you currently see any particular, innovative or promising trends in your markets in the use of durum wheat semolina for pasta making? If so, which ones?**

Several of our customers are exploring the idea of variety specific semolina, that is, semolina made with a specific variety of durum wheat. This is essentially a identity-preserved or IP program. This effort can have some challenges in terms of added costs to produce, finding a consistent source of the specific variety, and the crop year to crop year variances in grain quality that are likely to occur.

Fortunately, the durum breeding programs in North America have been making good improvements in the varieties that are commercially available. These improvements increase the chances that there will be good quality durum available from year to year.

**In Italy, origin (only wheat of Italian origin, for example) and variety of wheat (single-variety production, for example) have long been strategic elements through which pasta manufacturers distinguish their pasta and compete on the market. Does this also occur in your reference markets?**

At this point, this is not a marketing element in the US pasta markets.

**Organic and wholemeal durum wheat semolina: based on your direct experience, can you give us some indication of the trend of these segments in the pasta making sector?**

Whole grain pasta products entered the US pasta markets some years ago to much promotion around the associated health benefits of eating whole grains. At the early stages of their introduction to consumer markets, there was a steady annual growth rate.

In the more recent years, the consumption of whole grain pasta products has essentially plateaued at less than 5% of total consumption.

While these products fit into the “better for you” category, they are more expensive than conventional pasta offerings.

**The topic of sustainability is extremely important for the consumer and**

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**essential for the pasta producer. How can the milling industry in general, and Italians in particular, respond to the growing demand for sustainability by pasta manufacturers? Are there special requests that pasta producers address to you (for example, farmers adopting specific agronomic practices)?**

Our customers are concerned with sustainability and the ways that the pasta supply chain can contribute to these efforts.

At our company, we work on sustainability in two ways. Within our operations, we are always looking for the latest innovations in milling technology which will allow us to use less resources in the production of the semolina. For example, by upgrading

equipment, we can reduce the amount of power needed to produce the semolina and also improve food safety, and reduce machine down time at the same time.

A second sustainability program in our St. Louis mill is that we work with the local utility to power down the milling operations during periods of high stress on the power grid. This reduces demand and helps the utility better regulate power usage.

**In terms of quality, how do you assess the latest durum wheat harvest for pasta production?**

In North America, the majority of durum is grown across the prairies in Canada, and primarily in North Dakota and Montana. These areas had a generally good crop

## **JIM MEYER**

Upon Richardson's acquisition of Italgrani USA in 2021, Jim was named Managing Director, Durum Milling Business Unit. Additionally, in response to the growth of Richardson's American operations, a U.S. Country Office was built in St. Louis, MO, where Jim oversees the operations as Vice President, Richardson US Office Lead.

Jim joined Italgrani USA in 1988 as the Chief Financial Officer and was quick to be promoted to Executive Vice President in 1989. In 2006, Jim was named President of Italgrani USA. Italgrani USA (now named Richardson USA) is the largest durum milling company in North America, providing semolina and durum flour products to pasta manufacturers across the United States and Canada. In addition to his work at Richardson USA, Jim is also on the Board of Directors of the National Pasta Association and has served as the Treasurer of the NPA for a number of years. He also sits on the Board of Directors of the North American Millers Association and sits on the Board of Trustees of the Grain Foods Foundation, where he serves on the Executive Committee and also acts as Treasurer. Jim graduated from the University of Missouri with a bachelor's degree in accounting.

year, with increased yields per acre as compared to last year's crop. Crop quality is generally good and the supply of milling quality durum is more than adequate.

**I would like to take advantage of your experience and expertise to ask you for a forecast, necessarily a short-term one given the international geopolitical scenario, on the prices of durum wheat semolina for pasta production.**

As always, projecting the price of durum wheat can be a difficult endeavor. I would say that generally that the near-term market values for durum wheat will stay in a rather narrow trading range. Harvested quantities are good, so there will likely not be any shortfall on quality durum for processing, meanwhile the growers will likely want to see some price appreciation before selling more of their 2024 crop. As you mentioned, geopolitical factors can very easily come into play as durum is traded in many different countries.

**We are on the second day of the NPA Annual Meeting and of the World Pasta Congress: are you satisfied with how the event is going?**

I have been involved with the National Pasta Association for over 30 years. The last time this event was held in the United States was in 2009 in New York. That

event was a substantial success from many perspectives. I have attended several other world congresses, including in South America and Rome. I thoroughly enjoyed these events. Over the past 18 months, we worked very hard as a team at the NPA to organize this event, and so far, it's going wonderfully.

**Let's close with two quick, colourful questions: what is your favourite pasta shape and what is your favourite pasta dish?**

Farfalle is my favorite pasta shape. My favorite dish would be linguine "tutto mare". I love pasta with seafood.

**Would you like to add anything to conclude this interview?**

Pastaria is a fantastic resource. I look forward to receiving each copy. There's always something interesting in the publication. I really appreciate the collaboration between the IPO, Pastaria and the National Pasta Association.

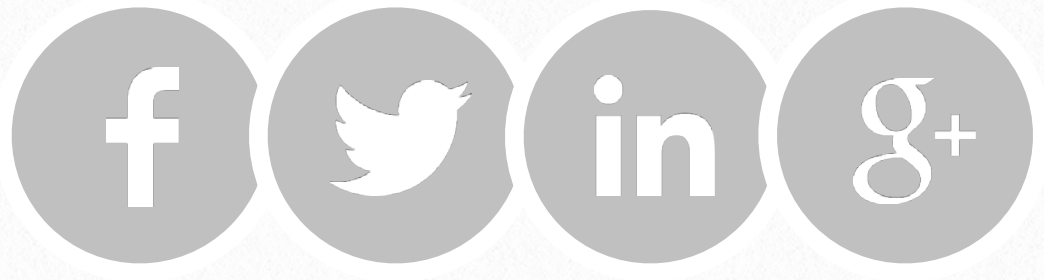


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# Spain, pasta, and durum wheat: an

# interview with Jaume Mas of Pastas Gallo

Editorial team



Jaume Mas

At the World Pasta Congress in Philadelphia, Jaume Mas, Technical Director of Pastas Gallo, discusses Spanish market trends and the future of durum wheat.



**Pastas Gallo is a well-known Spanish pasta manufacturer that has been operating successfully since 1946. To start, I would ask you to briefly introduce the pasta factory to our readers who may not be familiar with it.**

We are the leading brand in dry pasta in Spain, with a revenue of 250 million euros, nearly 700 employees, four factories in Spain, and exports to more than 40 countries. We produce dry pasta, but not only that. We also make fresh pasta, sauces, ready meals, and soups, which is our latest area of investment.

**What is the Spanish pasta market like at the moment? How is consumption going?**

Growth is good, with the Spanish market growing at 3.4% last year, which is more than expected for a mature category in a mature country. This growth can be attributed to two main factors. First, the context of inflation, which, although moderating, has hit Spain hard over the last two to three years. Pasta, being an affordable staple, plays an essential role in our diet and has seen increased consumption during these inflationary years. Second, new segments are adding value for consumers, such as premium, health-focused, convenient, and whole wheat options, which are expanding the market through these categories.

**In this market, which segments, related to pasta, are offering the best performance and which, in your opinion, can represent the most interesting growth opportunities for companies in the sector?**

New segments are adding value for both consumers and the overall category. I would also add gluten-free to the mix, along with whole wheat, convenience, health, and premium options. However, we cannot overlook the basics: private labels are very strong in the Spanish market and have also grown during the high-inflation years. So, both the premium and the mainstream classic pasta segments are pushing hard.

**Among other things, you are a great expert on durum wheat: you graduated in Agricultural Engineering in both Spain and France. As Technical Director of Pastas Gallo, you manage a combined purchase of 200,000 tons of durum wheat per year. You are also President of Semouliers, the Association of Semolina Millers of the EU, which represents 180 members and are a member of the Expert Group EU Crops Market Observatory, an advisory body for DG-Agri at the European Commission. Given your specific expertise, could you comment on the latest durum wheat harvest in terms of both quantity and quality for pasta-making purposes?**

Well, estimates vary, but while the official figure from the European Union is 7.2 million tons, we estimate that it is closer to 7.6-7.7 million tons in total. Quality across the EU is quite heterogeneous: in countries like Greece and Spain, the quality is good but with low protein; in Italy, protein levels are higher in the south, but there are some DON (vomitoxin) issues in the north. France also has variable quality, but all of it is blendable and usable by the European industry. Combined with 2.5 to 2.7 million tons of high-quality durum imports that we expect this season, we should have the

necessary quality for producing high-quality pasta in the European Union.

**What scenarios do you see for Durum wheat, in terms of availability and prices, in the short term, given the ongoing conflicts and the geopolitical crises? What do analysts say? Is it possible to make forecasts?**

Fundamentals are solid in the short term, with global durum production this season exceeding global consumption for the first time in five years. However, geopolitical factors play an increasingly important role and can introduce short-term market volatility. As such, making accurate market forecasts is a challenging task.

Nonetheless, availability should not be an issue this season, and we expect lower volatility compared to the past three years.

**single-variety productions, for example) for pasta, are there any trends that you consider interesting to distinguish and improve production, to create margins or to beat the competition on the shelves?**

We have our own breeding program as an innovation tool aimed at improving the quality output of our domestic crops. Premium products can certainly create margins for the category, and we want to be active in this market segment.

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## JAUME MAS

Jaume Mas did graduate on Agricultural Engineering both in Spain and France. Joined the Gallo Group in 1998, and has been working at the Export Department, R&D, Quality, and today, as its Technical Director, manages a combined purchase of 200.000 Tn of durum wheat per year. He is at the same time President of Semouliers, the Association of Semolina Millers of the EU, representing 180 semolina mills processing about 8,5 MTn of Durum Wheat per year, and member of the Expert Group EU Crops Market Observatory, consultancy body for the DG-Agri at the European Commission.

Multi-cereal, gluten-free, and ancient grain products also play a significant role in developing “better-for-you” categories, and we are actively working on them.

**Is there something you wish to talk about or an appeal you want to make to international operators through the pages of our magazine?**

We share a common goal of promoting pasta and face many challenges that we can tackle together. Organizations like UNAFPA and IPO are excellent platforms for sharing knowledge and addressing these challenges collectively. I encourage different operators to join and work together to create global value for pasta.

**Let's close with two quick questions: what is your favourite pasta shape and what is your favourite pasta dish?**

My favourite shape, for sentimental reasons, is alphabet pasta. I have vivid memories from my childhood of making

words while eating homemade soup. It may not be the most sophisticated shape, but it holds a special place in my heart. As for my favourite dish, it's our premium brand selection, *Trecce Trafilate al Bronzo* from our Gallo Selección 1946, paired with artichoke sauce. It's simply delicious..



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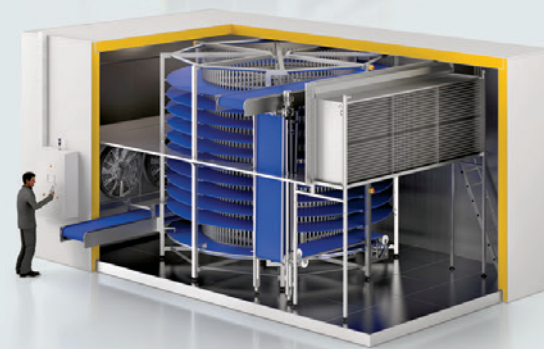
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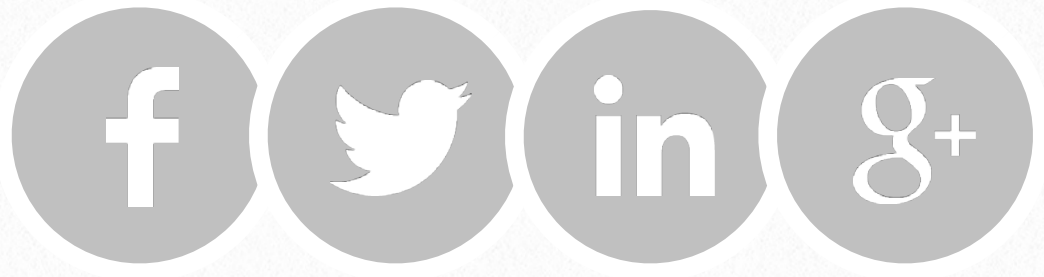
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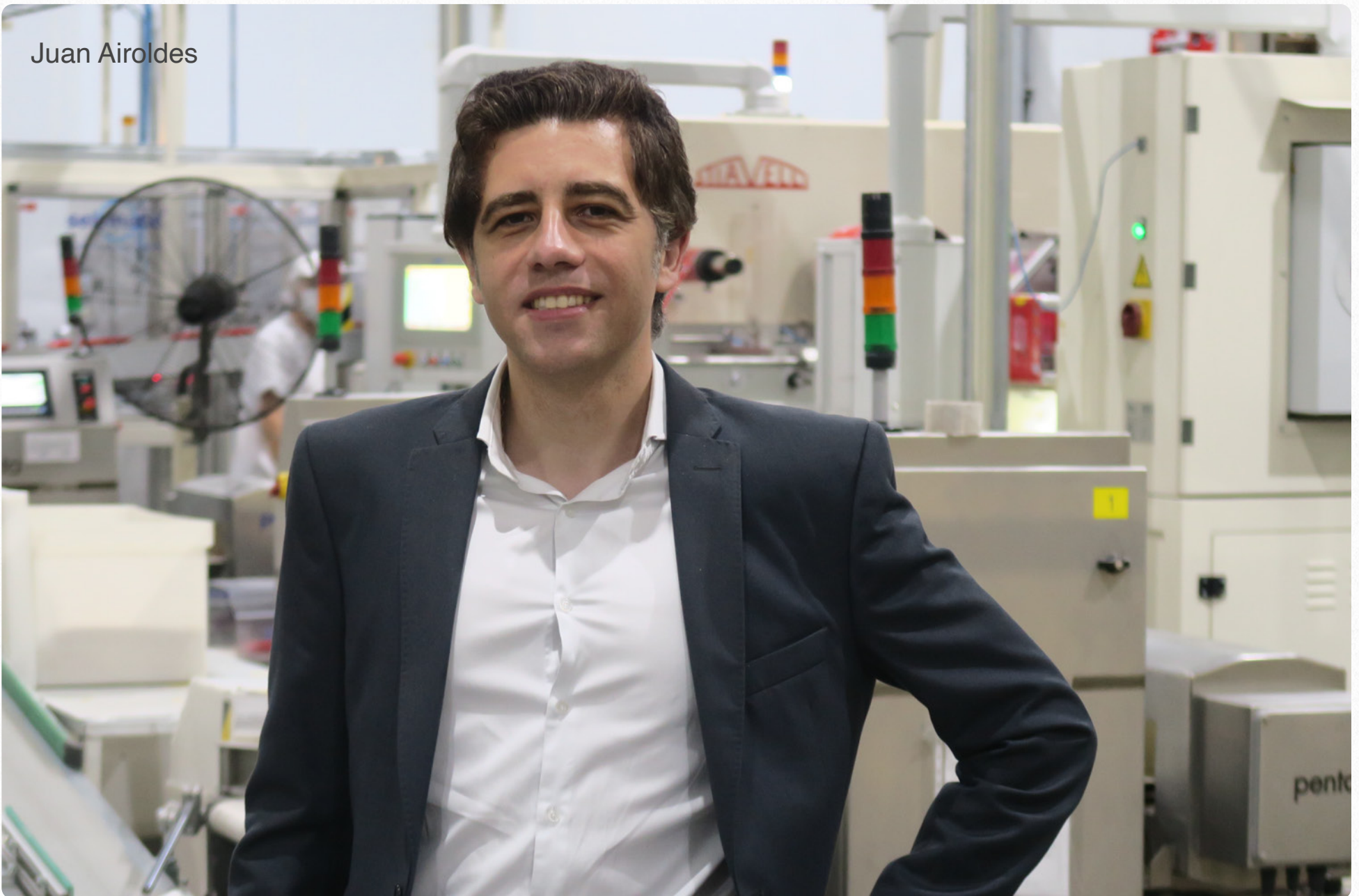


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# UIFRA and the revival of Argentine pasta: Juan Airolde's vision

Editorial team



Juan Airolde

**Juan Airolde, President of UIFRA since 2017, shares the challenges and opportunities facing Argentina's pasta industry.**

**You have been the secretary of UIFRA, the association of pasta producers of the Republic of Argentina, since 2017. Can you provide Pastaria readers with an overview of the Argentine pasta production sector (how many companies, what type and size, what production capacity, etc.)?**

What stands out to me first is the production capacity we have. We have a huge production capacity compared to the level of consumption in Argentina, which includes both domestic consumption and exports. I mean domestic consumption plus exports.

What is remarkable about Argentina is the difference between production capacity and consumption, which includes local consumption plus exports of about 350,000 tons per year, while our production capacity is around 900,000 tons per year. So, there is a huge gap, but it's hard to explain how we ended up in this situation. Sometimes we think that milling companies started running pasta businesses to add value to their flour and products, without being aware of what was really happening in the market. You might think that this is now an advantage for us because of our large production capacity. So the logical question would be, why don't we export? If we have such a gap, we don't export because Argentina has structural problems with

competitiveness. In other words, we are not competitive. We have problems in general, including a huge government intervention, high taxes, and low workforce productivity, so in the end, we always end up being too expensive for the global market. So that's a key issue that we need to address.

We have a large production capacity distributed among three major companies, six mid-sized followers, and about 20 small to medium-sized companies.

Roughly 8 to 10% of our production capacity is dedicated to high-value products.

**Tell us about UIFRA: what is its mission, which companies does it represent, how many members are there and who currently chairs the association?**

Well, I think we can proudly say that the majority of the industry is part of UIFRA. We do have pasta makers that are not part of the association, but they are very small, like startups or garage-based pasta businesses. Overall, the industry is united under UIFRA, and all sizes and types of companies are represented. We are strong because we have the leading companies, and we are significant given the context of Argentina's challenges. As you know, we have high inflation and significant government intervention. In this context, having a self-defense institution becomes

important for pasta producers, especially when the country is unstable, like ours. I myself have chaired the association since 2017. We use a model called Executive President, where the pasta producers select a professional who is not the owner of a pasta company. This is because the position involves challenges and risks, as you have to deal with the government and labor unions.

It's a very simple and flexible structure. However, the board that makes decisions is, of course, composed of all the key players.

**So Argentina has long been called upon to face recurrent and profound economic crisis. How is the Argentine economy doing now, and how difficult is the situation specifically for pasta producers?**

Well, Argentina has been in crisis for the last 10 years or more. This has been very stressful for our industry, and as a result, we are mainly focused on volume and price. As I mentioned, Argentina experiences heavy intervention in this sector, with our local currency, the peso, being very weak, and inflation being extremely high. As a result, we have survived the last 10 years, but at the same time, we have modern production capacity, which gives us some hope for the future. Right now, we produce simple

products, but we use advanced technology. So perhaps in the future, we can leverage that technology to produce more sophisticated products.

**About ten years ago, certainly within a better economic context, Argentina witnessed a progressive increase in the use of durum wheat semolina in the production of dry pasta, historically and traditionally made with soft wheat flour. Many pasta manufacturers introduced lines of dry pasta produced exclusively or largely with durum wheat semolina onto the market to improve the product and add value to the production, an initiative that was appreciated by consumers and welcomed by the domestic market. In an economic context like the current one, what has happened to this trend in production and towards which types of pasta are Argentine consumers moving? What consequences does this have on the production choices of pasta manufacturers?**

Yes, about 10 years ago or more, Argentine pasta makers began to focus on durum wheat because it adds value and because we are capable of producing durum wheat in Argentina. We are one of the few countries able to produce this valuable type of wheat, but the economic situation has





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forced us to revert to using soft wheat. We initially had success with this project about 10 to 12 years ago, and durum wheat pasta captured 40% of the market, which was significant for us. However, this percentage gradually started to decline, and now it represents only about 25% of the market. As a result, we lost 10 years of development because of the crisis. I think we still have an opportunity with durum wheat, but we need to use it more effectively and educate consumers on why durum wheat is beneficial.

**Are there market segments, relating to pasta, that are particularly dynamic and promising for the future?**

I'm proud to say that gluten-free pasta is one of them. The value agenda has changed; whereas 10 years ago we

focused only on durum wheat, now it includes not only durum wheat but also other options, similar to trends in other parts of the world. I think gluten-free pasta is the main alternative option, currently making up about 1% of the market. It's still a small portion, but it's important for us. After that, we have protein-enriched pasta, whole grain pasta, and pasta "al Bronzo." This is something new in the market, and people are starting to accept it and learn about the differences. So, it still represents a small portion of the market, but we feel that consumers are becoming more curious about these products.

**In 2017, after a trip along the Argentine pasta supply chain, at your invitation and that of UIFRA, we were strongly impressed by the extraordinary**

**JUAN AIROLDES**

Juan Airolde has a degree in Communication from the National University of Lomas de Zamora. His career was strongly linked to the nonprofit sector. He started at Cáritas, later moving to the Argentine Episcopal Conference. He was an advisor to the Board of Directors of Banco Provincia de Buenos Aires in matters of community relations. In the Pasta Industry he developed his career at "Fideos Doña Irma", a small family owned pasta company specialized in laminated pasta. In 2011 he began his work at UIFRA as an external collaborator. He has been President of this Entity since 2017.

In the challenging context of the Argentine economy, Airolde has developed a job focused on three guidelines:

- the Argentine pasta Industry can be at the forefront in Latin America
- its progress will be achieved through its diversification and intensive value aggregation.
- the Durum Wheat is called to be a protagonist due to the local facilities for its production.

**potential, in terms of the supply chain, of this country, which can certainly play a leading role as a pasta producer in the Latin American market. What do you think the Argentine pasta industry should focus on to become the Latin America leader?**

First of all, we need to work with the government to see how they can help us become more competitive. We have deep-rooted problems that are difficult to solve. I believe the private sector has done what it was supposed to do in terms of investment. We have invested in the best way possible. We have state-of-the-art technology operating in Argentina, but we need to follow a structured plan both at the governmental level and within the private sector. We need to move away from an emergency mindset and focus on a development agenda.

**Is there anything you'd like to say to international operators through Pastaria?**

I think one of the best things we can do is get to know each other, strengthen our connections, meet in person, and value the relationships we have in this industry. Especially starting with Mercosur, in our case. I mean, it's strange that I know more pasta makers from Italy, Turkey, or the United States than my own neighbors. So, I

believe in building a strong international community, but we need to start at home, with our neighbors, whom I really appreciate and admire.

**What Pastaria, can do in order to help UIFRA and your community of pasta operators to to get closer?**

I think you are already doing a lot through Pastaria, the IPO, and also ABIMAPI. These are three key players that are helping us get to know each other, start conversations, and see what we have in common through communication. Pastaria is also doing a lot through events, like Pastaria Festival and Fiera Pastaria. I can't imagine a better job being done.

**Let's close with two quick questions: what is your favorite pasta shape, and what is your favorite pasta dish?**

I believe pasta is delicious even when prepared simply. I always tell people to try high-quality durum wheat pasta "al Bronzo" with just a bit of olive oil and Parmigiano Reggiano cheese. That is my favorite dish because it's simple, universal, and shows how tasty pasta can be without a complex sauce.

My favorite pasta shapes are long and wide ones, like tagliatelle.

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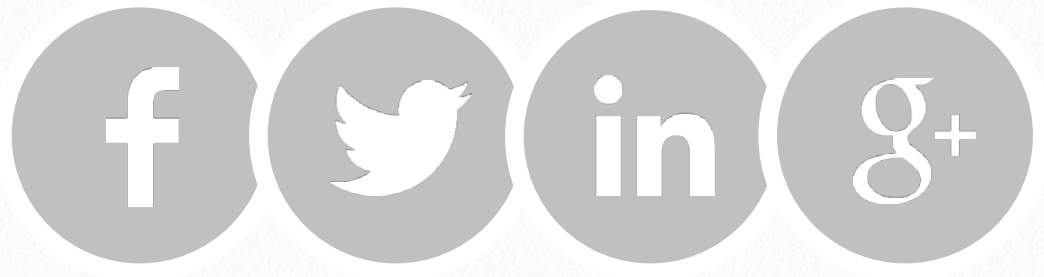
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# Navigating Brazil's pasta market: insights and future outlook

Editorial team

From left: Randy Gilbertson (Pasta Montana), Jaime Mas (Pastas Gallo), Esteban Abascal (La Moderna), Rodrigo Iglesias (ABIMAPI) and Manoj Venugopal (Virginia Park Foods) at the World Pasta Congress



Rodrigo Iglesias discusses ABIMAPI's efforts, market potential, and the role of sustainability in the global pasta industry

**Can you give us an overview of the Brazilian pasta industry? How many pasta manufacturers are there, what type of product, what is the overall or average production capacity**

Today, ABIMAPI represents the Brazilian Manufacturers Association for pasta, bread, and cakes. We manage various product categories, not just pasta. Currently, we have nearly 150 members, and specifically in the pasta manufacturing sector, we have about 40 members who account for roughly 80% of the total market production. The market is highly concentrated, with a few very large companies.

Estimating overall pasta production in Brazil is challenging. We lack precise figures because our members often do not disclose exact production volumes. However, we use Nielsen data to estimate market size, which is more accurate and reflects sales figures that we can share publicly. For example, our dry pasta market reports approximately 1.15 million metric tons annually, though this figure needs verification.

Our market is primarily focused on dry pasta, and we do not have substantial data on fresh pasta production. It is worth noting that Brazil has significant production of pasta made from flour and eggs. Consumption habits here are heavily oriented toward pasta made with soft wheat flour, which accounts for about 50% of the market. Another

30-35% of pasta is made with soft wheat flour and egg powder. Durum wheat pasta makes up only 10-15% of the market.

Despite durum pasta's smaller share, Brazil remains the third-largest consumer market for pasta globally. Our per capita consumption stands at 5.4 kg, far lower than Italy's 24 kg, indicating significant room for growth. Pasta's affordability is key, particularly for the large segments of the population in economic classes C and D. This potential for expansion was evident during the pandemic when home-cooking surged, boosting pasta sales and production.

We are also seeing growth in alternative pasta products, such as rice, corn, and gluten-free varieties. Some of our members specialize in rice pasta, a product that has become widely recognized in Brazil. This segment, along with gluten-free options, continues to grow, reflecting evolving consumer preferences.

**At the moment, what is the economic situation in Brazil, how is the market doing and how is pasta consumption doing in particular?**

Brazil's economic environment has been marked by recovery and stabilization post-pandemic, though growth remains moderate. Pasta consumption has plateaued compared to the pandemic boom,

but overall demand remains steady. Companies expanded their production capacity by 20-25% to meet pandemic-era needs, and maintaining this high output is crucial now.

We're also navigating significant structural changes, notably a comprehensive tax reform scheduled to take effect through 2024 and 2025. Brazil's complex and burdensome tax system is a notorious barrier for businesses, especially international firms. This reform aims to simplify taxation, potentially easing costs for essential food products like pasta. We at ABIMAPI are actively advocating for pasta to be classified as a staple food, deserving of favorable tax treatment, which would make it even more accessible to consumers.

Meanwhile, the return of the food service industry, which suffered during the pandemic, also holds promise for pasta producers, as dining out becomes increasingly popular again.

### **What is the trade balance of pasta in Brazil?**

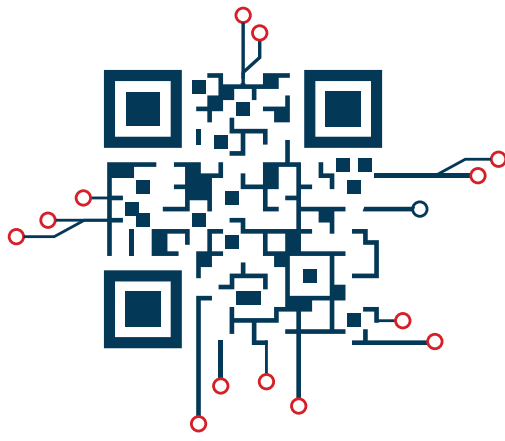
Brazil's pasta trade balance is currently negative, with imports exceeding exports. High-quality durum wheat pasta, primarily imported from Italy, forms the bulk of our imports. We also import various specialty and gluten-free pastas. Our exports, on the other hand, are concentrated in Latin

America, leveraging proximity and logistical ease. Countries like Venezuela and Peru are key markets, although economic instability in Venezuela has dampened growth there.

Despite challenges, our exports have potential. Brazil's large-scale production capabilities allow us to offer competitively priced pasta to neighboring countries, yet we remain heavily dependent on imported wheat, especially from Argentina. This reliance makes us vulnerable to external economic and climatic shocks.

**For years Abimapi has stood out for its work in support of Brazilian pasta producers and for being an active member of the International Pasta Organisation, which – among other things – promotes the image of pasta worldwide. What has the association been mainly involved in over the past year and what will be its next commitments?**

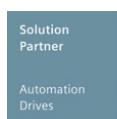
The IPO is extremely important for Brazil, especially as we face numerous challenges in our sector. As I often mention during IPO meetings, Brazil can sometimes feel isolated from global trends. This is partly because only about 5-10% of the Brazilian population speaks English fluently, which limits our international engagement. However, it remains crucial for our country to stay connected. We have highly skilled food engineers and some of the world's leading



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universities specializing in food engineering. One standout institution is the University of São Paulo (USP), which is well-known for driving innovation. Our companies are also at the forefront of food technology advancements.

Despite this, it's essential for us to remain linked to global developments in technology and innovation. Staying informed about the latest advancements in pasta production techniques, sustainability practices, and more efficient manufacturing methods is vital. For example, sustainable energy use is a significant focus area. We need to explore how machinery can operate more efficiently to reduce our carbon footprint and minimize environmental impact. This is especially relevant for facilities in Brazil that require large-scale energy use, such as those for drying and packaging pasta, as well as for baking biscuits and cakes.

Brazil is fortunate to have a predominantly clean energy supply, with about 80% of our electricity generated from hydroelectric power. However, some facilities still rely on non-renewable energy sources like gas and oil. As we look to the future, we must align with international standards and practices in sustainability, not only to reduce emissions but also to address health and wellness concerns.

This is where the IPO becomes invaluable. The organization fosters the exchange of

knowledge and innovations. While we may be competitors in the international market, growing global pasta consumption benefits all of us. Beyond market expansion, we are also contributing to global nutrition. As someone from the NPA highlighted yesterday, there are still many people facing hunger, particularly in Brazil, where climate change continues to present severe challenges. This year alone, we've experienced floods, wildfires, and significant environmental disruptions, especially in the Amazon region, adding to the difficulties our country must overcome.

### **Are there, at this moment, particular critical issues that Brazilian producers are called upon to tackle?**

Logistics remain a major challenge. Brazil's vast geography complicates distribution, particularly when moving goods from production hubs in the south to more remote northern regions. Climate change exacerbates these issues, with extreme weather disrupting supply chains. For instance, droughts have lowered river levels in the Amazon, making transportation by boat impossible, while floods have devastated infrastructure in southern states. These environmental challenges highlight the urgent need for climate adaptation strategies within our industry. Brazilian companies are not yet fully prepared for the frequency and

severity of these events. We must also confront the broader challenge of supply chain vulnerabilities, especially as global wheat prices remain volatile due to geopolitical conflicts.

### **What is the image, the reputation of pasta today in Brazil?**

Pasta holds a cherished place in Brazilian culture, particularly as a symbol of family and tradition. For many, Sunday meals with spaghetti, tomato sauce, and meatballs at a grandparent's house are deeply rooted memories. Pasta also plays a role in festive occasions like Christmas and New Year's, when lighter pasta salads are preferred, given Brazil's summer heat. This emotional and cultural connection to pasta emphasizes its status as a comfort food that brings people together.

Moreover, pasta's affordability makes it an essential staple for lower-income families. It's a democratic food that can feed an entire household, providing nourishment even when more expensive proteins are out of reach. This is especially relevant in a country where economic disparities are vast, and many people struggle with food security. However, challenges remain. While dry pasta is generally seen as a healthy and versatile meal option, the rise of processed and instant noodles has complicated perceptions. These products, often high in

sodium and unhealthy fats, have fueled debates about health and nutrition, with influencers and nutritionists warning against overconsumption. This has become a contentious issue, as we work to balance industry needs with consumer health.

The pasta industry in Brazil is responding to these concerns by innovating and improving product health profiles. For instance, companies have committed to reducing sodium and eliminating the need for frying in instant noodle production, offering healthier alternatives. This shift demonstrates the sector's ongoing commitment to health and sustainability, emphasizing advancements in food engineering and continuous efforts to make pasta a nutritious and accessible option for all Brazilians.

Despite these efforts, educating the public and changing perceptions remain a challenge, especially as debates around ultra-processed foods grow. The industry must work collaboratively, not only to improve product offerings but also to engage with regulatory bodies and consumers to promote healthier, more sustainable food choices.

### **Like the NPA, ABIMAPI also periodically organises a particularly interesting international event: when is the next edition?**

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The ABIMAPI International Congress occurs biennially, with the next edition planned for March 2026, likely in Atibaia, near São Paulo. While details are not yet finalized, we aim to provide a convenient venue for both domestic and international attendees. The congress will feature networking events and business meetings with global buyers, fostering collaborations and showcasing Brazilian pasta innovations.

**Is there something you want to say or an appeal you want to make to international pasta producers through our magazine?**

Yes, my main message is one of collaboration and forward-thinking. We need to focus on the future, especially given the challenges we face, not just in Brazil but globally. Climate change is causing increasingly severe weather events, from hurricanes in the U.S. to extreme heat waves in Europe. These changes also threaten our food systems, including pasta production,

which relies on stable, moderate climates. Rising global temperatures put wheat crops at risk, posing a challenge we must confront together as an industry.

The pasta sector is interconnected, with countries like Brazil heavily reliant on wheat imports from Argentina. Any disruption, whether due to climate or geopolitical crises, such as the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine, impacts global supply chains and prices. While these issues are complex, climate change is particularly urgent. Unlike conflicts, which may eventually end, climate disruptions are accelerating.

We need global collaboration and commitment. Companies must invest in sustainable practices, such as reducing reliance on fossil fuels and optimizing energy use, even if these initiatives are costly. The pandemic already demonstrated the need to prioritize resilience and sustainability. Some global players, like Barilla, are leading the

**RODRIGO IGLESIAS**

Rodrigo Iglesias has been working in international business for almost 15 years, including two MBAs in this area. From the Brazilian foreign trade procedures through the Santos' Port (the Latin America biggest port) to the strategic area assisting national policies of Brazilian Exports Promotion. He has developed business intelligence analysis for Brazilian product's introduction in Africa and Middle East and he is FMCG-oriented since 2014 - looking for opportunities in biscuits, pasta, breads, cakes and other cereal and roots based packaged food area at ABIMAPI.

During his professional life, he has already visited more than 20 countries in the Americas, Europe, Africa, Middle East, and Asia, including an MBA in Europe.

Nowadays, he is the International Head of ABIMAPI including institutional activities as IPO member and the export promotion project management in partnership with ApexBrasil.

way, but a coordinated, industry-wide effort is crucial.

Time is running out. We've talked about climate change for decades, but now its effects are undeniable. We need actionable, long-term strategies. In Brazil, there's a tendency to think short-term, planning only for the next year rather than the next decade. However, real change requires substantial investments now to see results in 10 or 20 years. We must shift our mindset and adopt a future-oriented perspective. This involves both the private and public sectors. While governments play a role, the private sector must also take responsibility and act decisively. Collaboration and shared ideas are essential to ensure the sustainability of our raw material supply and the overall resilience of our industry. The time for action is now. So that's the idea. Okay, Abbiamo bisogno di collaborazione e impegno a livello globale. Le aziende devono investire in pratiche sostenibili, come la riduzione della dipendenza dai combustibili fossili e l'ottimizzazione dell'uso dell'energia, anche se queste iniziative possono risultare costose. La pandemia ci ha già mostrato quanto sia importante dare priorità alla resilienza e alla sostenibilità. Alcuni grandi attori globali, come Barilla, stanno aprendo la strada, ma è necessaria un'azione coordinata da parte di tutto il settore.

Il tempo sta per scadere. Abbiamo parlato dei cambiamenti climatici per decenni, ma ora i loro effetti sono innegabili. Servono strategie concrete e a lungo termine. In Brasile, spesso pensiamo a breve termine, pianificando solo per l'anno successivo invece che per i prossimi dieci o vent'anni. Tuttavia, un vero cambiamento richiede investimenti significativi oggi per ottenere risultati tra 10 o 20 anni. Dobbiamo cambiare mentalità e adottare una prospettiva orientata al futuro.

Questo coinvolge sia il settore privato che quello pubblico. Sebbene i governi abbiano un ruolo da svolgere, il settore privato deve assumersi la responsabilità e agire in modo deciso. La collaborazione e lo scambio di idee sono essenziali per garantire la sostenibilità dell'approvvigionamento delle materie prime e la resilienza complessiva del nostro settore. Il momento per agire è adesso. Ecco il messaggio che vorrei condividere.

### **To close on a lighter note: what's your favorite pasta shape and dish?**

I love spaghetti, which is a staple in Brazil. A simple dish of spaghetti with garlic and oil or a classic tomato sauce with small meatballs brings back childhood memories of family gatherings. While I enjoy trying different pasta dishes when I travel, spaghetti will always hold a special place for me.

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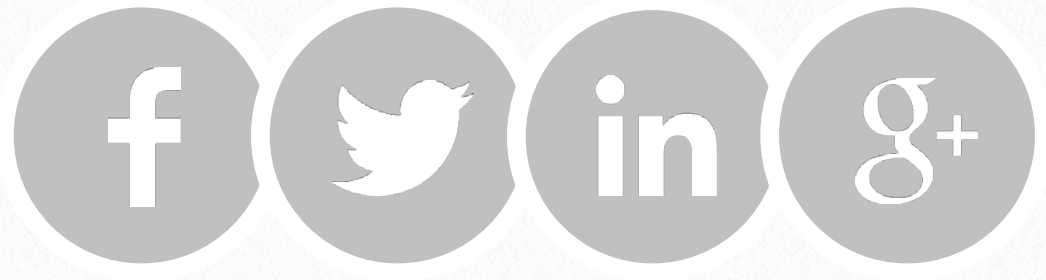
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9



# Barilla and its commitment to sustainability, inclusion, and diversity: an interview with Melissa Tendick

Editorial team



In this interview, given on the occasion of the NPA Annual Meeting and the World Pasta Congress, Melissa Tendick, President of Barilla America, explores the role of pasta in American culture, emerging trends, and the company's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and sustainability.

## **What is pasta's image in the American continent today? What is its reputation?**

Pasta is a beloved dish in the U.S., cooked and enjoyed by everyone from beginners to seasoned chefs. Thanks to its versatility, affordability, and accessibility, pasta is a popular ingredient choice, no matter what is on the menu – from a classic Italian meal to an international fusion.

Pasta is also central to the Mediterranean Diet, which is one of the dietary patterns recommended by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, and a delicious canvas to a variety of under-consumed foods like vegetables, proteins, and healthy fats. As for reputation, Barilla's 2024 survey revealed that pasta represents more than just a meal – it represents connection and togetherness. 79% of Americans agree that pasta symbolizes sharing, further aligning with the idea that pasta is a sign of love. We believe that everyone deserves to enjoy a delicious pasta dish joyfully, surrounded by family and friends.

## **Are there countries or geographical areas in America where false beliefs about pasta are still widespread and compromise its image?**

Pasta is used differently across a multitude of cuisines, so we do not believe that any one person has a true or false belief of pasta. However, as a company with over

145 years of rich Italian heritage, we are happy to lend our expertise and Italian food culture to help home cooks understand and embrace Italian culinary traditions but also to integrate them with local values and tastes.

An area we've found to be insightful to Americans is how to treat the water in which they cook pasta. While many are aware that the water should be as “salty as the sea,” many don't know when to add the salt, or how much is too much.

Our Executive Chef, Lorenzo Boni, suggests adding four teaspoons of salt per gallon of water right when it comes to a boil, before adding the pasta.

In addition to the above, there are still cooking techniques that are not widely accepted by Americans, such as not adding oil to pasta water. Our survey results show that only 4 in 10 Americans believe that oil should never be added to pasta water, and we'd like to see that number higher.

## **What do you think the international community of pasta producers can do to promote and spread a correct image of this product (good, nutritious, healthy, affordable and sustainable)?**

First of all, pasta is a simple and wholesome food, made only of wheat and water. It is accessible, versatile and can be



easily integrated into a balanced diet. Moreover, it contains important nutrients and complex carbohydrates, which are a valuable source of sustained energy. I believe that it is important to foster a proper food culture around pasta, thus celebrating its history while promoting healthier eating habits, community bonding, and culinary creativity. Educational messages about the benefits of pasta, including its nutritional value within a balanced diet, can be the first step of a multi-pillar approach.

**Can you give us an overview of the pasta market trend in the American continent? Are there any particularly interesting consumer trends?**

Consumer demand for multi-functional foods that offer nutritional benefits, convenience, and taste, has exponentially increased, as Americans want a variety of options and allergen-friendly foods when they go to the grocery store. Our Protein+ pasta in the US is one of the brands that meet consumers' growing wants and needs. For those who need gluten-free options, we offer a full Gluten Free pasta line. Finally, we offer Whole Grain pasta for anyone seeking to increase their intake of fiber and whole grains without sacrificing taste.

Another trend we're seeing is an appetite for new pasta shapes. When surveyed by Barilla, 46% of Americans say they're always on the lookout for new shapes to try, with 54% reporting their interest in new shapes increasing depending on the season. That's why we're especially proud of Barilla Love – a heart-shaped, seasonal pasta we introduced for Valentine's Day. Barilla Love initially launched in 2023 via a consumer giveaway and came back earlier this year at retail and in Nordstrom Cafes across the country.

**Barilla has long placed people at the centre of its corporate policy. Would you like to tell us about any recently concluded, still on-going or about to be implemented initiative or project by Barilla Americas that is particularly significant and aimed at promoting diversity and ensuring social inclusion (D&I)?**

For Barilla, diversity and inclusion means the voice, perspective, and individuality of each and every one of our employees, partners, and customers matter. In 2020, we achieved gender pay equality globally for all employees by eliminating the unjustified gender pay gap. As part of Barilla's commitment to gender equality, we have worked for years to elevate women to positions of leadership. Along with

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achieving gender pay equality globally in 2020, we implemented a new global parental leave policy offering 12 weeks of fully paid leave to each parent, regardless of gender, marital status, or adoptive status. To champion a truly inclusive work environment, we must also drive cultural change through our external partners. To do so, we've enacted a supplier diversity program that seeks to give diverse suppliers equal access to corporate procurement opportunities. In 2018, Barilla Group launched the Global Supplier Diversity Program showing our commitment to global inclusive sourcing from diverse groups including minority, women, LGBTQ+ and disabled-owned businesses. We are constantly adapting new initiatives and programming that support recognition of employees bringing their full selves to

work. For example, here in the US, we commit to supporting employees marching in Pride parades, participates in the Center on Halsted's Silver Fork program, a culinary arts and job readiness training program for LGBTQ+ students in Chicago, and sponsors Openly, a Thomson Reuters Foundation digital news platform dedicated to reporting on global issues affecting the LGBTQ+ community. As such, we're proud to have been recognized as one of the "Best Places to Work for LGBTQ+ Equality" with a score of 100% in the Corporate Equality Index for nine consecutive years.

**Barilla also tends to establish deep ties with the communities and territories in which it operates, promoting actions that can generate benefits for these communities and territories. It supports**

## **MELISSA M. TENDICK**

Melissa Tendick, President of Barilla Americas, is responsible for the regional operations of one of the largest Italian food companies in the world.

Melissa joined Barilla 20 years ago; prior to her current role, she held the position of Vice President of Marketing for the region. The ever-changing marketplace of today has challenged her to remain agile and adapt quickly to meet customer and consumer needs. As a steward of strategy creation, she has contributed to driving both top- and bottom-line growth.

Her previous experience at Andersen Consulting and Accenture readied her for the fast-paced environment of consumer goods. Melissa has been steadfast in her leadership and her support of diversity, equity and inclusion through executive sponsorship of employee resource groups including a focus on gender equality. She demonstrates her dedication to mentorship programs both internally and externally.

Melissa was born and raised in the Chicago area where she currently resides with her husband and two daughters. She holds a Master of Business Administration degree and a Bachelor of Science degree in Business with a minor in Spanish.

**and takes part in actions and projects aimed at facilitating access to food, promoting social inclusion and local economic development. Would you like to outline to Pastaria readers one or more projects for communities in America in which Barilla is involved and that are particularly dear to you?**

At Barilla, we believe in the joy of food for a better life and look to instill that joy in both our people and the communities we serve. As a food company with Italian heritage, we know that cooking together is the ultimate expression of that joy of food, which is why we champion connections through cooking to help instill that joy in our customers, the communities we serve, and our people. Connection through cooking has led us to partner with incredible organizations such as Feeding America, a nationwide network of food banks, food pantries, and local meal programs. Most recently, we made a financial commitment to our trusted and valued partner, Feeding America, to support Americans who were devastatingly impacted by Hurricane Milton and Hurricane Helene.

**Is there something you wish to talk about or an appeal you want to make to international operators through the pages of our magazine?**


It is essential that all stakeholders within the pasta sector collaborate to foster sustainable growth, which supports local economies, the supply chain, and ensures consumers' access to affordable and nutritious food. Healthy competition encourages innovation and contributes to the industry's overall improvement, benefiting both consumers and the planet.

**Let's close with two quick questions: what is your favourite pasta shape and what is your favourite pasta dish?**

There are too many to choose from! Currently, my favorite shapes are our Bucatini and Mezzi Rigatoni from our *Al Bronzo* line. *Al Bronzo* is a premium-made pasta line, expertly crafted using a bronze die cut and using the highest quality semolina. Each shape in the *Al Bronzo* line is designed to deliver extraordinary sauce grip for more flavor in every bite, making it the perfect pairing with any sauce or vegetable, whether it's served in a casserole or a fresh dish on the stove. When I'm cooking at home, my go-to recipe for a simple yet delicious meal is linguine with pesto, potatoes, and green beans. However, when I go to restaurants, my favorite dish to order is spaghetti alle vongole. It's a classic that transports you to Southern Italy every time!



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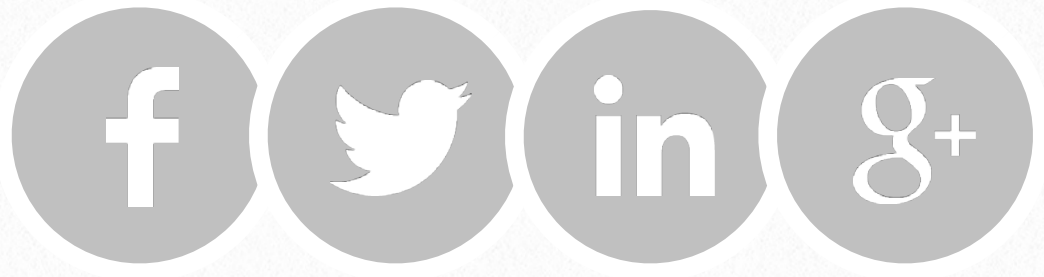
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# 10



## **Pasta, a global and sustainable solution for the food challenges of the future**

Editorial team



**Between climate challenges and demographic growth, Cristiano Laurenza, secretary general of the International Pasta Organisation and the pasta makers of Unione Italiana Food, explains how pasta can be a sustainable and affordable answer for tomorrow's world.**

## **Pasta worldwide: what are the figures of this product that has spread to almost every latitude?**

Currently, global production of pasta stands at 17 million tonnes per year. Italy, as the key producer, leads this ranking, followed by the United States, Turkey and a number of other countries. The International Pasta Organisation's report includes all the relevant data, which show that this is a continuously growing sector. This is an important milestone that confirms the universal appeal of pasta. Although there are still countries where pasta is not produced or consumed, its production has nonetheless spread to some 52 countries. This creates potential for further market expansion.

## **What, in your opinion, are the main advantages of pasta and its distinctive characteristics?**

In its dry version, pasta has a simple composition: durum wheat semolina and water. The making of dough from durum wheat and water is an ancient process which spread everywhere because it was so easy to prepare. Italian pasta makers then made history by imposing the use of durum wheat and creating a national specification that has placed Italian pasta at the top of the world rankings in terms of taste and quality. Nutritionally, pasta is a balanced food, rich in complex carbohydrates and protein, and can be easily adapted to cuisine all over the world. It is a versatile food, which pairs well with meat, fish, legumes, vegetables and even fruit. Its simplicity and adaptability make it ideal for a global diet. Moreover, at a time when sustainability is so vitally important, pasta stands out for its low environmental impact: water and energy consumption during production is low, and the most significant impact is from home cooking. Also from an economic perspective, pasta is an affordable food that can feed a family for a few euros which guaranteeing a complete and tasty meal.

Pasta is poised to become the food of the future, a solution to the problems of malnutrition and obesity, especially in view of the global demographic increase that awaits us. Thanks to its nutritional characteristics, pasta can meet the dietary needs of millions of consumers in tomorrow's world. And it is

precisely for all these reasons that it continues to enjoy lasting and growing success.

**Let's talk about IPO's mission: what are the association's aims and how does it intend to pursue them?**

The International Pasta Organisation (IPO) was founded in 2005 in Barcelona, although the various producer associations had already been collaborating for some time. The IPO's mission is to promote pasta worldwide, highlighting its nutritional benefits and debunking false myths, such as the idea that pasta is fattening or not recommended for those who want to control their weight. In fact, numerous scientific studies have proven the opposite. The IPO also aims to educate consumers on the preparation of pasta, given that correct cooking techniques are not yet widespread in many countries.

**How many members does the International Pasta Organisation have, and who are they?**

The IPO consists of national associations of pasta producers, but individual companies are also entitled to join if there is no local association available. A significant recent milestone was the joining of the historic National Pasta Association of the United States, which celebrated its 120<sup>th</sup>

anniversary in 2024. This collaboration strengthens the possibility of achieving even greater results.

**So let's talk about Italy now. How is the Italian pasta industry doing?**

Over the past 20 years, pasta consumption in Italy has remained stable at between 26 and 28 kg per capita. There has, however, been a slight downturn in recent years, with consumption settling at a slightly lower level of around 24 kg per capita. The reasons for this are many and complex, but it is important to point out that it is, nevertheless, a very slight decline. The Italian industry continues to produce around 4 million tonnes of pasta, worth almost 8 billion euro.

A significant phenomenon is the increase in the value of pasta, accompanied by the expansion of the premium sector. Once upon a time, the market used to be mainly dominated by mainstream manufacturers, with a few niche brands at the high end. Today, however, the premium segment has expanded considerably, reducing the space of the mainstream segment. Private labels are also gaining ground: in Italy, they account for about 20% of the market, while in other countries they rise to as much as 50-60%.



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## What are the future challenges for the Italian pasta industry?

Le prossime sfide che dobbiamo affrontare sono di portata globale e complesse, tanto da risultare preoccupanti e difficili da gestire. Il cambiamento climaticoThe challenges we are facing are complex and global in scope, so much so as to be worrying and difficult to tackle. Climate change poses a serious threat to agricultural production, especially durum wheat. Recently, we have witnessed a drastic change in production geography: Canada, which was the world's largest producer with 55% of production, has suffered a significant decline, while Turkey has unexpectedly emerged as the largest producer. This historical change, which has taken place in a very short time, is not the result of climatic factors alone, but of a combination of elements.

Nonetheless, climate change does remain a major concern.

Geopolitical uncertainty, which has exacerbated the global situation, is another key challenge. The various conflicts now underway threaten supply chain stability. Countries that were traditionally reliable as regards the importing of durum wheat may suddenly become unaffordable or risky. This cereal is rare and valuable, with the specific qualities needed to produce high quality pasta. It is, therefore, crucial to find the right mix of grains to balance characteristics such as protein index and gluten quality.

Wars and geopolitical tension can also dramatically affect grain prices, which are closely interrelated. If, for example, corn prices rise, soft and durum wheat are affected, and this volatility can destabilise

### **CRISTIANO LAURENZA**

Luigi Cristiano Laurenza since 2010 is the Secretary General of the Italian Pasta makers of Unione Italiana Food and Head of the Legal Area and the Foreign Trade and Internationalization Area of the Union. He is also the Secretary General of the UN.A.F.P.A., the Union of the Organizations of Pasta manufacturers of the European Union since 2012 and of the I.P.O., the International Pasta Organisation, since 2022.

Cristiano is an attorney as from 2001 and was graduated in law in the University of Rome "La Sapienza" in 1996. He holds a master's degree in "International Contracts" at the University "Luiss" in Rome.

Before acting in the trade associations' system he worked as an attorney between 1996 and 2001 in two relevant law firms where he dealt with civil and commercial law. Cristiano worked also in the area of the product distribution as quality assurance assistant in Pfizer Howmedica in London from July 1996 to July 1997.

He is a sommelier, a sports enthusiast and a travel lover. Cristiano is resident in Rome, where he and his wife are raising two children.

the entire sector. So this kind of price instability is also a critical challenge. Last but not least (speaking as secretary general of the Italian pasta makers of Unione Italiana Food) is the question of increasing international competitiveness. Foreign producers, often supported by subsidies, manage to keep their costs down due to cheaper labour and energy costs. This leads to increasingly fierce competition. Behind a product as seemingly simple as pasta lurks tremendous complexity, consisting of climatic, economic and geopolitical challenges that have to be handled with great care and strategy.

**You have recently issued a specification to regulate voluntary claims on pasta packaging. Can you speak to this?**

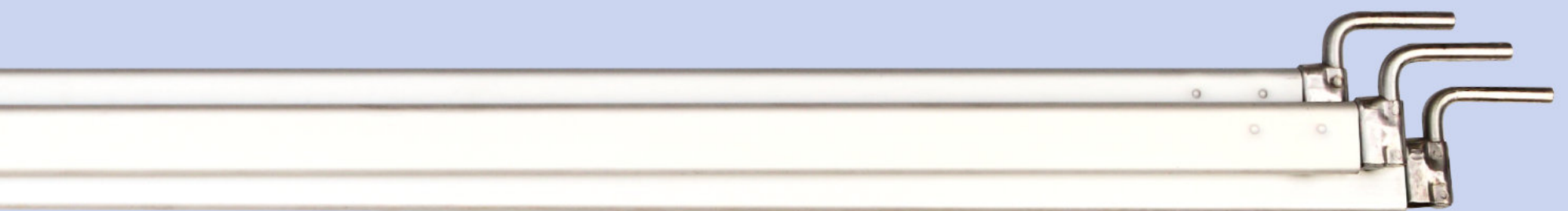
We felt the need to adopt a specification to prevent messages on the packaging from being misunderstood. Regarding nutritional and health claims, European legislation is clear, but for performance and image-related claims, there was no specific regulatory framework. We have therefore developed a code that suggests limitations to the use of generic or irrelevant statements, to ensure the transparency and accuracy of the information provided to consumers. This work is constantly evolving, and soon environmental claims

will also be regulated, to provide a clearly defined framework (for more information on this specification, read article [\*Voluntary claims for pasta advertising: the contents of the self-regulatory code adopted by the pasta makers of Unione Italiana Food\*](#), on Pastaria International 5/2024, *editor's note*).

**What is your favourite pasta shape and your favourite dish?**

I love spaghetti, even though my daughter isn't fond of it, which is a bit of a family letdown for me! Joking aside, to my mind, spaghetti is the most iconic shape. As for dishes, a classic garlic, oil and chilli, if prepared to perfection, is unbeatable: the amount of oil and garlic must be balanced, and fresh chilli makes all the difference.

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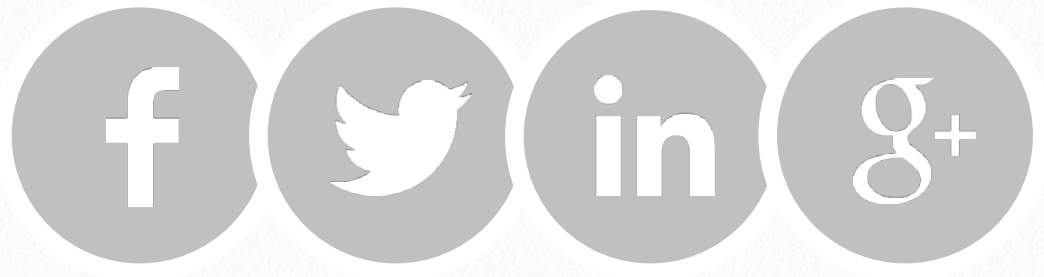
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# 11



## Raffaello Ragaglini, a life dedicated to promoting pasta around the world

Editorial team

Raffaello Ragaglini and Nora Stabert



Enthusiastically welcomed to Philadelphia, Raffaello Ragaglini, Honorary Secretary General of the Union of European Pasta Industries Associations and of the International Pasta Organisation, retraces the milestones in the international promotion of pasta, celebrating its central role in global nutrition.

Raffaello Ragaglini, Honorary Secretary General of the Union of European Pasta Manufacturers' Associations (UNAFPA) and of the International Pasta Organisation (IPO), was welcomed with warmth and enthusiasm by the members, receiving sincere applause in recognition of his extraordinary contribution to the sector. In Philadelphia, during the IPO assembly, he shared his lengthy experience, which has lasted over 55 years.

In particular, he recalled the meeting with Luke Marano, which took place in 1993 during a meeting of the National Pasta Association, an event that marked the beginning of a fruitful collaboration to promote and defend pasta consumption at a global level. Their joint efforts led to organising the first World Pasta Congress, held in Rome on 25 October 1995, with the participation of 400 international delegates.

Since then, the World Pasta Congress and the World Pasta Days, celebrated every year on 25 October, have become key events for the industry. Among the most significant milestones, Ragaglini mentioned the second Congress in Venezuela (2000) and the third in Barcelona (2005), where the International Pasta Organisation was officially born.

In his speech, Ragaglini stated: "Pasta represents passion, tradition, sharing, quality, health and sustainability. It is the food that best interprets a healthy, conscious and environmentally friendly food culture, and which has become a pillar of the future of global nutrition".

Today, pasta is acknowledged as a symbol of healthy, sustainable and universal food culture, capable of adapting to every culinary tradition. Ragaglini concluded by recalling the contribution of the Marano family, founders of the Philadelphia Macaroni Company, who have enthusiastically supported the sector.

Celebrating World Pasta Day, Ragaglini emphasised how this food is not just a symbol of tradition and quality, but also a pillar for the future of global nutrition.

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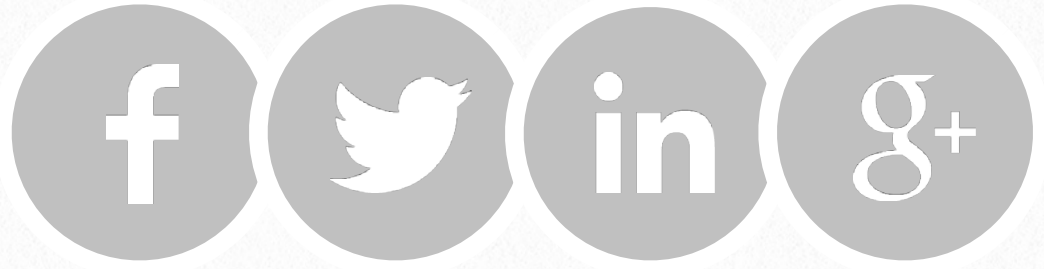


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# 12



## **Antioxidant compounds and technological quality of gluten free pasta enriched with tomato and linseed by-products**

Lorenzo Estivia<sup>a</sup>,  
Gabriella Pasini<sup>b</sup>,  
Davide Colombo<sup>a</sup>,  
Andrea Brandolini<sup>c</sup>,  
Amel Betrouche<sup>d</sup>,  
Alyssa Hidalgo<sup>a</sup>



The aim of this research was to evaluate the antioxidant compounds and the technological quality of gluten-free pasta enriched with 10% or 15% of tomato waste or linseed meal. The enriched pastas contained more fibre and lipids than the control. The addition of tomato and linseed waste improved tocopherols concentration and increase free soluble polyphenols proportionally to the enrichment percentage, while the bound insoluble polyphenols were only higher in linseed-enriched pastas. The addition of by-products increased the cooking losses of the pastas with tomato waste and slightly decreased the hardness and cutting force of all enriched pastas.



## Introduction

Foods prepared with gluten-free ingredients and containing no more than 20 parts per million of gluten can be called “gluten-free products” (GF). Often, however, they are low in minerals and bioactive components, and nutritionally inferior to the wheat-based foods they replace. These include GF pasta made from gluten-free flours, primarily made from rice, corn, and pulses. Numerous studies have proposed supplementing such products with plant-based ingredients, rich in nutritionally significant compounds, in order to boost their micro- and macronutrient content while also engaging in a circular economy. The industrial processing of fruit and vegetables generates large quantities of by-products (peels, cores, pomace, unripe and/or damaged fruit and vegetables), the disposal of which can be expensive and negatively impact the environment. An alternative solution involves transforming by-products into ingredients for functional foods, yielding economic and social benefits.

In this work, we propose enriching GF pasta with tomato waste, which is rich in fibre, protein and antioxidant compounds (carotenoids, tocopherols and polyphenols) and linseed waste, packed with protein, water-soluble fibre, lignans and phenolic acids.

The aim of the study, then, was to evaluate the composition, antioxidant properties and technological quality of the resulting pasta.

## Materials and methods

The gluten-free control pasta was prepared using a basic formulation consisting of 66.7% rice flour and 33.3% fava bean flour. The enriched pasta samples were prepared by replacing 10% or 15% of the basic formulation with tomato waste (TP), obtained by grinding the waste dried at 45 °C for 10 h, or with linseed cake (LI), a by-product of the mechanical extraction of oil by hydraulic press.

To prepare the pasta (macaroni shape), the flours were pre-treated with a PROGEL<sup>®</sup> extruder (Braibanti, Milan, Italy); the pasta was prepared in a Mac30 pilot system (Italpasta, Parma, Italy) and then dried at low

temperature (max. 60 °C) in an experimental cell (Braibanti, Milan, Italy). The uncooked pasta samples were analysed to determine moisture (method 44-15.02; AACC International, 1999), protein (method 979.09; AOAC, 2000), lipid (method 136; ICC, 1995), ash (method 923.03; AOAC, 2000) and total fibre (method 978.10; AOAC, 2000) content; carotenoids, tocols and phenolic compounds were assessed using the HPLC method (Betrouche et al., 2022). For the five pasta samples cooked to the optimal cooking time (8 min), weight gain and dry residue in the cooking water were recorded. Texture was measured using a TA-XT plus Texture Analyser (Stable Micro Systems, Surrey, UK) equipped with a 5 kg load cell. To assess the effect of the different pasta formulations, the data were processed by analysis of variance (ANOVA) using the

Statgraphics® Centurion program (Statpoint Technologies). The averages and standard deviations were calculated using the Excel program (Microsoft®).

## Results and discussion

The fibre, protein, lipid and ash content, presented in [Table 1](#), shows that the enriched pasta samples contain more fibre and lipids than the control, while protein and ash values are similar.

[Figure 1](#) shows the content of carotenoids, tocols, and free and bound phenolic compounds of the same pasta products. It indicates that the addition of tomato waste and linseed improves tocol concentration, but a positive effect on carotenoid content was only evident in the pasta enriched with 15% tomato waste. Specifically, lutein accounts for approx. 80% of carotenoids in the control and linseed cake-enriched pasta products. Despite the abundance of

**Table 1** CHEMICAL COMPOSITION (AVERAGE) OF GF UNCOOKED PASTA ENRICHED WITH TOMATO WASTE (TP) AND LINSEED CAKE (LI). THE DIFFERENT LETTERS INDICATE SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE VARIOUS PASTA SAMPLES ( $P \leq 0.05$ )

Pasta	Fibre	Protein	Lipids	Ash
	(g/100 g)			
Control	0.9d	13.66c	1.64c	1.18d
10% TP	4.42b	13.41c	1.62c	1.37c
15% TP	5.34a	13.74bc	2.15b	1.59ab
10% LI	1.69c	15.1ab	2.47b	1.49bc
15% LI	1.88c	15.36a	3.39a	1.69a



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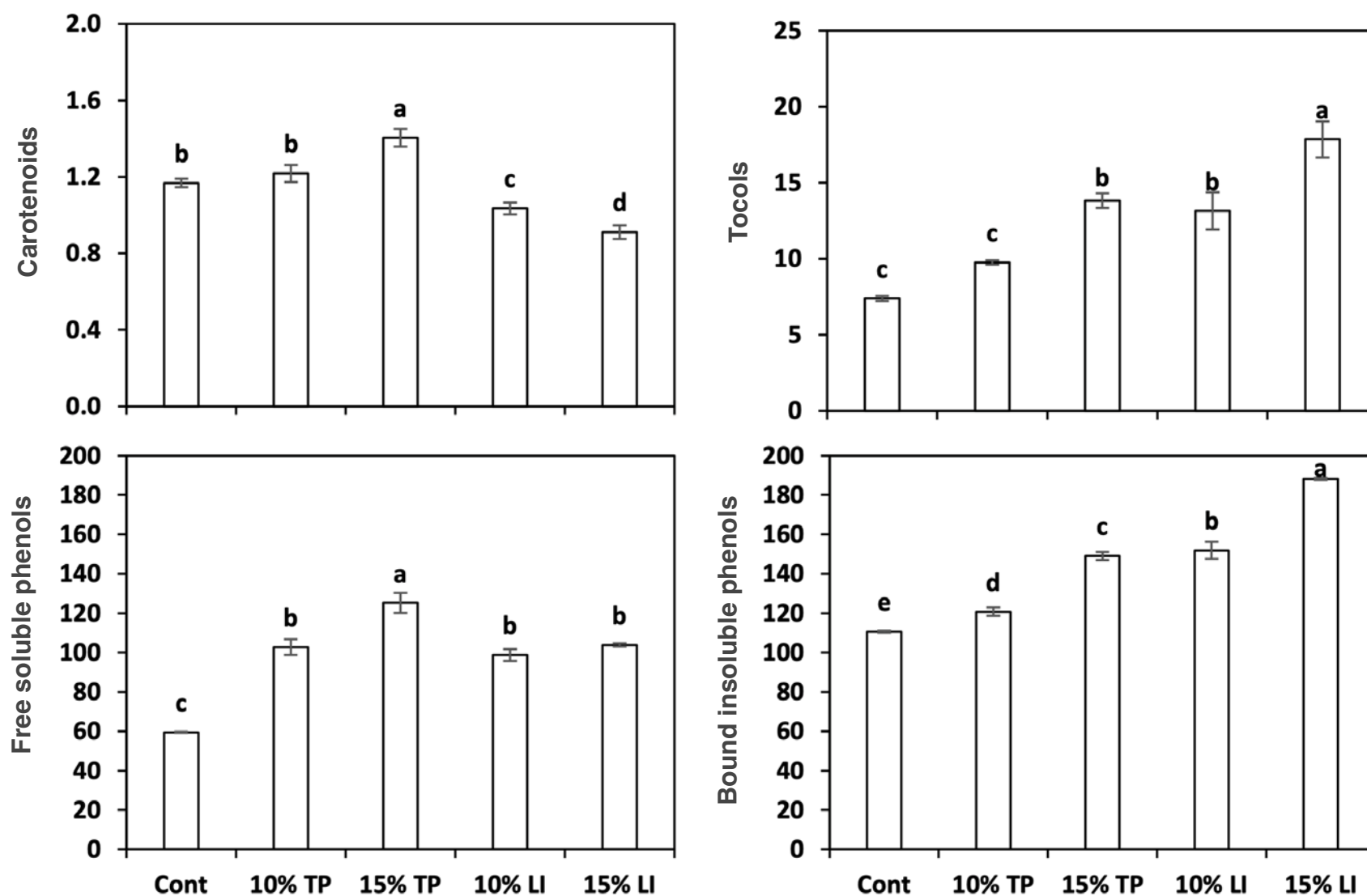
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**Figure 1** TOTAL CAROTENOID, TOCOL, FREE SOLUBLE PHENOL AND BOUND INSOLUBLE PHENOL CONTENT (mg/kg) IN UNCOOKED CONTROL GF PASTA AND IN THE PASTA SAMPLES ENRICHED WITH TOMATO WASTE (TP) AND LINSEED CAKE (LI)



lycopene +  $\beta$ -carotene in the tomato waste, the pasta products supplemented with this ingredient also contain abundant lutein (approx. 50% of total carotenoids) from the fava bean flour; thus, lycopene +  $\beta$ -carotene account for 39% and 43% of total carotenoids in 10% and 15% of the enriched samples, respectively. The  $\alpha$ -,  $\beta$ -, and  $\delta$ -tocopherols are only present in the TP-enriched pasta products, whereas  $\gamma$ -tocopherol is prevalent in all pasta samples, with values between 6.55 mg/kg d.m. (approx. 90% of total tocopherols) in

the control and 10.27 mg/kg d.m. (approx. 80%) in the pasta with 15% TP. The only tocotrienol detected,  $\beta$ -tocotrienol (40%), is only present in pasta products enriched with linseed cake.

The increase in free soluble polyphenols is similar for both by-products, and proportional to the percentage enrichment, whereas bound insoluble polyphenols are higher in linseed cake-enriched pasta products. The main free polyphenols present in the enriched pasta products are catechin (36-49% of the total), tyrosol

**Figure 2** IMAGES OF THE GF PASTA PRODUCTS (L15 AND L10, ENRICHED WITH 15% AND 10% LINSEED CAKE, RESPECTIVELY; T15 AND T10, ENRICHED WITH TOMATO WASTE; C, CONTROL) BEFORE AND AFTER COOKING



(17-29%) and protocatechuic acid (16-19%). The individual bound polyphenol content closely reflects that of the flours used to prepare the pasta samples: ferulic acid, present in rice flour, is abundant in the control (86%) and, to a lesser extent (49-72%), in all enriched samples, particularly those with linseed cake; the presence of naringenin (11-16%) and quercetin (9-13%) is significant in pasta samples with tomato waste, and protocatechuic acid (16-22%) in those enriched with linseed cake.

[Figure 2](#) contains images of all pasta products before and after cooking. It can be noted that the addition of the by-products results in a progressive darkening of the macaroni, but does not compromise its shape.

The enriched pasta products did not show significant weight gain compared to the control, with the exception of the pasta enriched with 10% linseed cake ([Figure 3](#)). Similarly, no statistically significant differences were observed in terms of cooking losses between the control and pasta products enriched with 10% or 15% linseed cake ([Figure 3](#)); enrichment with tomato by-products leads to an increase in these values. The higher quantity of protein and lipid in the linseed by-product compared to the tomato by-product likely strengthened the protein-starch matrix of the pasta, limiting losses during cooking. It should be noted that cooking loss should be less than 10% for pasta (AACC, 2000), so the samples with linseed cake meet this indicator of pasta quality.

In general, the enrichment led to a

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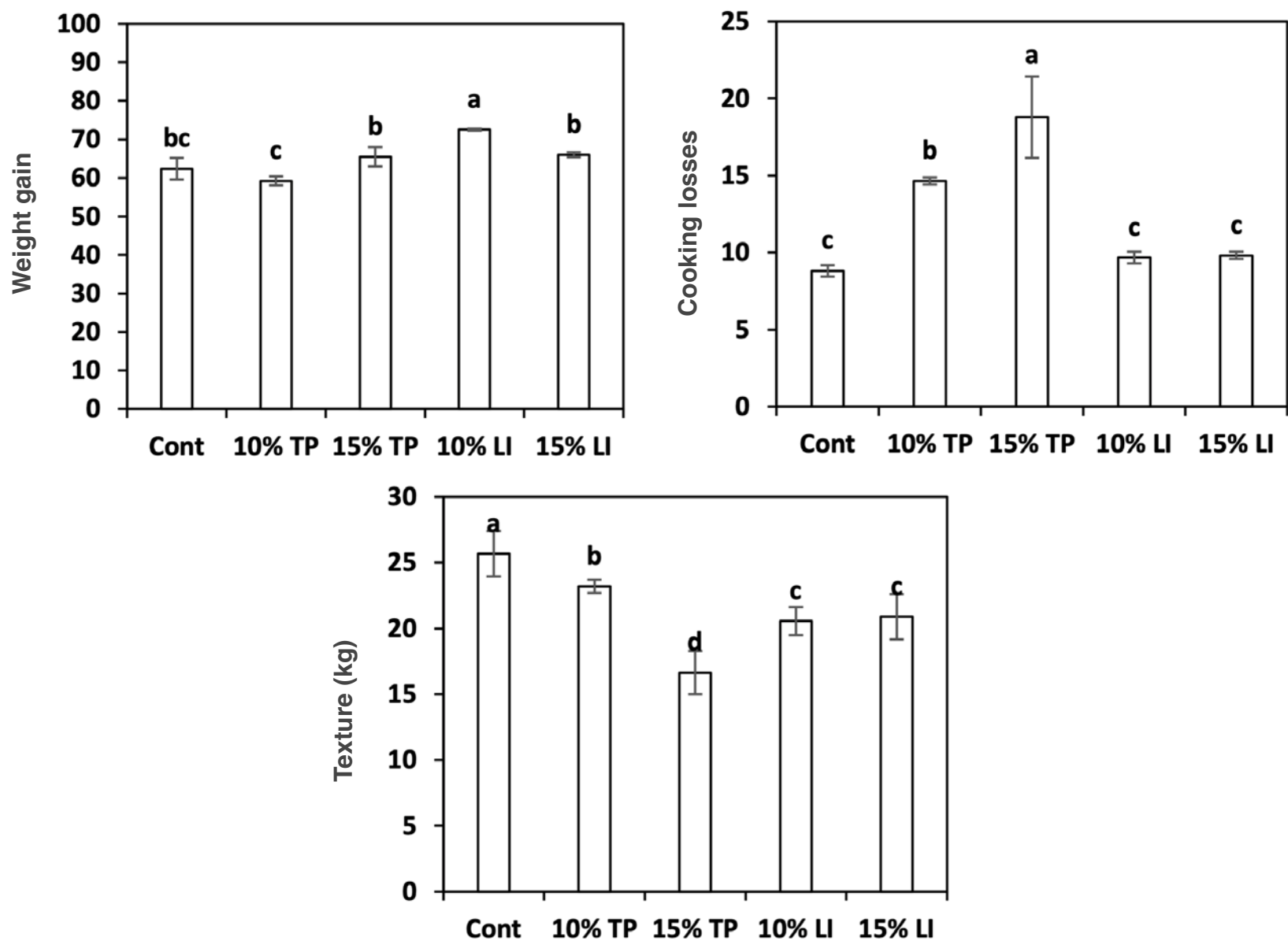
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**Figure 3 COOKING BEHAVIOUR OF THE CONTROL GF PASTA AND PASTA ENRICHED WITH TOMATO WASTE (TP) AND LINSEED CAKE (LI)**



significant loss in texture across all samples compared to the control, and in the case of the pasta enriched with tomato waste, the decrease was directly proportional to the increase in the substitution percentage. The loss in texture is probably related to the interference of by-products in the starch-protein matrix of the pasta, reducing the strength of this structure (Bianchi et al., 2021).

## Conclusions

Enriching GF pasta with tomato and linseed by-products is a good alternative solution to improve its nutritional composition. In fact, addition of these by-products significantly increased the bioactive compound content in the enriched pasta products, with a particular impact on the fraction of polyphenols potentially capable of yielding health benefits (Acosta-Estrada et al., 2014). The addition of by-products, however, also

increased cooking losses in the case of the pasta with tomato waste in particular, and slightly reduced the texture of all enriched pasta samples. Further research is needed to determine and assess stability and bioavailability of the health compounds examined, following cooking and digestion, as well as the acceptability of the product to consumers.

## Notes

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ICC Standard Methods, 2<sup>nd</sup> Supplement. Method: 136; International Association for Cereal Science and Technology: Vienna, Austria, 1995.



## Pasta sheets production line

Automatic line for the production of pasta sheets consisting of: automatic feeder, continuous kneading machine, feeder belts, scraps recovery belts and two dough sheeting machines.

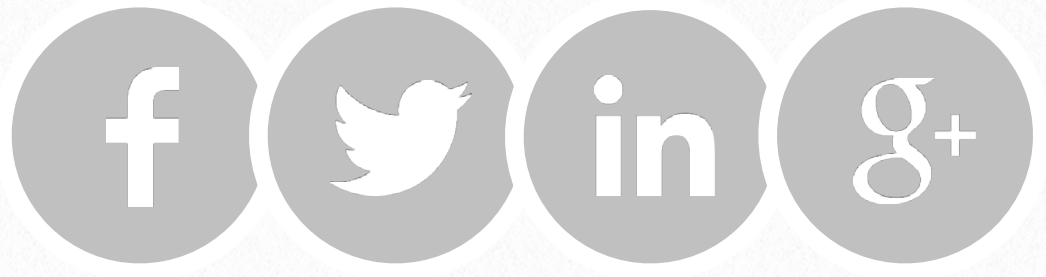
The line is designed to feed forming machines for the production of filled pasta. The plant is entirely made of stainless steel, engineered with easy-clean design.



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# 13



## **GEA Open Day on December 6 in Galliera Veneta**

Press release



**GEA opens its doors to the future of fresh pasta with an exclusive event at the Technology Center in Galliera Veneta. The Open Day, aimed at pasta producers and partners, will take place on December 6.**

On December 6, 2024, GEA invites pasta producers and partners to an Open Day at its Technology Center in Galliera Veneta (Padua, Italy).

A unique event dedicated to the latest innovations in the fresh pasta industry, with the opportunity to discover advanced technological solutions developed to improve production processes, reduce environmental impact and optimize product quality. During the event, participants will have the opportunity to get a first-hand look at the revolutionary technologies that will shape the future of fresh pasta by attending in-depth presentations and hands-on demonstrations.

Key topics that will be covered during the event include:

- *Technological innovations for filled pasta:* Simone Bertoncello (GEA Fresh Pasta Sales Area Manager) will guide the participants through the technological innovations developed by GEA for filled pasta, like the telescopic bushings, desmodromic knurl and the vacuum system for soft fillings.
- *Microbiology of fresh pasta:* Stefano Zardetto (Food Technologist) will talk about hygiene, food contamination and biological hazards in fresh pasta.
- *From filling preparation to final packaging:* GEA technologies and innovations. Mirko Valeri and Fabio Anselmi (GEA Sales

Engineer) will present the technological solutions developed by GEA for making fillings and packaging fresh pasta.

- *“A new wave in fresh pasta”:* presentation of the new pasteurization technology: Simone Bertoncello will present the revolutionary solutions developed by GEA for fresh pasta pasteurization.

The event will be enriched by a guided tour of the Technology Center, during which participants will have the opportunity to experience complete plants, forming machines and innovative systems for processing and packaging fresh pasta. Don't miss this opportunity to share the vision of GEA for a sustainable future of excellence in fresh pasta production.

## Date and location

The Open Day will take place on December 6, 2024, from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Technology Center at 27 Viale Europa in Galliera Veneta (Padua).

## To participate

You can register [here](#).



# A NEW WAVE IN FRESH PASTA.

## Open Day - Fresh Pasta.

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**December 6<sup>th</sup> 2024, GEA Technology Center, Italy.**



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