

The water which supplies the local territory

The Canale Emiliano Romagnolo transports water for irrigation from Bondeno to Rimini

A one-hundred thirty-five kilometres canal from Sant'Agostino, in the heart of the lower Ferrara area, to Cesena, 60 cubic metres of water per second, 336 thousand hectares of land crossed: these statistics alone may not say much, but if they are applied to a particular area - that slice of the Po Plains located between the Po in Ferrara and Romagna with its vocation for agriculture on a vast scale - then things change radically. And since these are the statistics for the Canale Emiliano-Romagnolo, this easily explains how much this structure, now half a century old, is, still today, fundamental for the success of agriculture which is the backbone of this territory. "The first project for an irrigation chan-

nel which from the Po serviced all the provinces of the region, from Piacenza to Rimini - explains the president Massimiliano Pederzoli - goes back to 1600, but only in the years just before the First World War did they arrive at defining a structure, and was then only built in its current version, in 1955. And we can say that, by counting also the section from Cavo Napoleonico connecting to Sant'Agostino with the River Po, we are the longest irrigation channel in Italia, in addition to having the most important water concession in the region. The Canale, is, therefore, a structure of strategic importance for the entire local economy as demonstrated during the summer of 2017, when we contributed to limiting the dama-

ges caused by the drought, increasing the gross saleable production by at least 400 million euros."

Today, the Cer resupplies irrigation water to agricultural businesses in the provinces of Ferrara, Modena, Bologna, Ravenna, Forlì-Cesena and Rimini. Among its partners, in addition to a variety of Land Reclamation Authorities of the territories traversed, there are also large companies like Petrolchimico in Ravenna, whose positioning was identified by Enrico Mattei because of the presence of the waters of the Canale. In addition, it supplies potable water to important multiservice companies like Hera in Imola, and Romagna Acque in Ravenna. Indeed, over time, the Cer began to supply its waters also for extra-agricultural use: "Through our collaboration with these companies - continues the president, Pederzoli - we began supplying water for po-

table uses. Through our installations we supply the water network of the entire Romagna Riviera and our water is used by important companies like Amadori. In addition, we guarantee our partners a series of fundamental services which we have developed in over 70 years of scientific research: these are services to facilitate the optimal use of irrigation waters through the regional platform of Irrinet, which is connected to the national network of Irriframe, while our research centre, Acqua-Campus, a small yet very efficient one, is recognised at a European level for its professionalism: it is enough to think that when the Ministry of Agriculture gave clearance to build the CER, it immediately posed as a condition to also build a research and experimentation centre. Thanks to the results of the Centre we are able to supply farmers, in addition to the water, also all irrigation information which leads to a more efficient and economical use of the water, to make the most using the least amount of water."

And the Cer is gearing up for a series of important investments to be able to supply its associates with an even better service: "We ha-



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MASSIMILIANO PEDERZOLI

ve secured funds from the ministry in the amount of 40 million euros - concludes Pederzoli - which will be used for the modernisation of the pumping station on the Po at Bondeno, a station from which hang the fortunes of agriculture in half the region, but which is feeling the weight of its years. Then

we have a vast project for the refurbishment of the coverings along the dykes along the Canale in its oldest tracts, which will allow us to reduce the amount of leakage and continue in our works to extend the channel into the Rimini area, where we have just finished another two-kilometre long section." ■



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WATER PUMPING STATION IN PALANTONE, RIGHT BANK OF THE PO RIVER, SALVATONICA DI BONDENO - FERRARA



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A SECTION OF THE CER IN THE IMOLA AREA



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MOBILE CROSSING OVER THE RIVER RENO OF "VOLTA SCIROCCO", MANDRIOLE DI S. ALBERTO