

Ocrim celebrates 74 years at its '2019 Wheat, Flour and ...' Open Days

by Roger Gilbert, Publisher, Milling and Grain



Cremona city centre



To be invited to spend a weekend in September in Northern Italy is a pleasure that will remain with me throughout many a cold winter month.

And it's apt to recall this highlight of 2019 as we start the New Year knowing that we have to overcome some critical challenges - political, environmental, and industrial - if our industry is to continue producing the food that's needed for our human population which now stands on the threshold of 2020 at 7.8 billion (with 81 million more mouths to feed since this time last year).

Attending the Ocrim '2019 Wheat, Flour and ...' Open Days we were welcomed by Sergio and Alberto Antolini, respectively President and CEO of Ocrim and "in our house" to celebrate the company's 74 years of evolution of the Ocrim brand, within its central offices and factory facilities in the heart of Cremona.

Sergio Antolini said, "It is pleonastic to tell you that it is an immense honour to be the deuteragonist today and to transform our factory into a theatre and stage where you, dear guests are the first actors.

"Here is a place where technology is created, where tradition is lived and where the influence of many and their hands are noticed and given breath. This is a wonderful place where efficiency is the cause and the final outcome the attraction," he told attendees.

He told an attentive audience that his life has been a journey that held many interesting milestones that were important for the company to remember.

"Here is the beginning of our ambitious and far-sighted Milling Hub project which will be a great centre for cereals grinding."

He also referenced the new production site at via Riglio, just on the outskirts of Cremona where one manufacturing facility is now fully functional and a second, neighbouring site is being prepared for construction.

"Our production activities have been expanding with departments dedicated to the manufacture of machinery for storage of finished products. Another goal is the use of robotics and automation in the design, engineering and build of entire mills at our home."

He highlighted the company's titanium application project that has extended the life of rolls by three times, reflecting the uniqueness of Ocrim. Other developments include the BioStone Mill, a machine developed on ancient grinding techniques that can today produce forgotten flours and guarantee the conservation of their original organoleptic properties.

Not overlooked was a reference to the Ocrim Milling School, training students from many different countries in the art of flour and cereals milling and the company's support of the Nairobi children's charity to build shelters based on 'Augeo Legge Pinocchio'.

Mr Antolini says any winning strategy is similar to an athlete running. "The body must be thrown forward and the length of stride is a consequence of imbalance. The legs react to avoid falling to trigger the step. A business's progress into the market similarly with research, development, safety and everything that is relevant to preserving our planet."

First technical session

The '2019 Wheat, Flour and ...' Open Days was an opportunity to show off to invited guests the advances the company is making.

The two-day programme, which attracted some 250 people from around the world, started off with the first of four technical sessions moderated by Marino Scarlino, a former Professor at the White Art University in Turin, Italy. The first session focused on 'Maize Cultivation - Ownership and Use.'

Maize is an important staple food surpassing both wheat and rice in output. It's the world's most dominant crop with over a billion tonnes of production annually. It is a grain that is widely used throughout Africa and Latin America and the diversity in genetic make-up is greater than any other crop species.

Speakers in this session included Massimo Blandino, from the University of Turin addressing the innovations and changes in maize over the past 20 years. He was followed by an insight into maize processing by Dr Marco Galli, chief technologist at Ocrim.

Finally, Massimo Arduini and Rodrigo Ariceaga, respectively CEO and USA sales manager for Molitecnica Srl on Nixamalised flour and its uses.



Above: A single gala dinner dining table for over 200 guests
Below: From left - Sergio and Alberto Antolini, respectively President and CEO of Ocrim

Second and third technical session

Cereals and legumes, their genetics, variety and production attracted two specialist speakers; Matteo Piombino from Pioneer Hi-Bred Italia on Maize and its Supply Chain Opportunities and Stefano Ravaglia the R&D manager at Societa Italiana Sementi on The Food Supply Chain and the contribution made through innovation.

Wheat and the types of flour from dynamic trends in the world market to their nutritional properties occupied the afternoon for attendees. Three presentations cover heat treatments, special flours and world trends and flour and their nutritional properties. Speakers respectively include Fabio Talamo from Vomm Impianti e Process SpA, Fabrizio Baccinelli from Ocrim and Simona Digiuni from Ocrim.



Guests visit the Ocrim factory at its Canal Port

