

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

# GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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## Italy

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### **USDA Under Secretary Scuse's visit to Milan EXPO 2015**

**Report Categories:**

Export Accomplishments - Events

Agriculture in the News

Climate Change/Global Warming/Food Security

Trip Report

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**Report Highlights:**

Under Secretary Michael Scuse offers keynote address at a USA Pavilion event entitled "Agricultural Innovation: Planting the Seeds for a Sustainable Future." The event was held at Milan EXPO 2015 to highlight the importance of knowledge sharing and new technologies in addressing the challenges of climate change and feeding a growing global population

**General Information:****General Information:**

USDA Under Secretary Michael Scuse provided the keynote address at the USA Pavilion EXPO event “Agricultural Innovation: Planting the Seeds for a Sustainable Future.” The event, which was co-sponsored by the U.S. Foreign Agricultural Service and the U.S. Sustainability Alliance, was held at the USA Pavilion at Milan EXPO 2015 on October 9, 2015. Under Secretary Scuse tackled the issue of genetic engineering head-on noting no one production method offers a silver bullet for food security. However, all production tools and best practices need to be encouraged. He noted the moral obligation to make decisions within the context of competing risks: The risk of “not” adopting new technologies also needs to be taken into account when considering the challenges of climate change and a growing population. A panel composed of producers, agricultural input/equipment providers and a representative from USDA’s Agricultural Research Service described new trends in the agro-food sector and in R&D, highlighting the importance of knowledge-sharing and new technologies in addressing the above-mentioned global issues.

**Agricultural Innovation: Planting the Seeds for a Sustainable Future.**

On October 9, USDA Under Secretary Michael Scuse provided the keynote address at an event held at the USA Pavilion co-sponsored by the U.S. Sustainability Alliance and the U.S. Foreign Agricultural Service. The event, to which representatives from the agri-food sector, EXPO Pavilion Commissioners, non-profit organizations, and U.S., Italian, and EU officials, were invited, featured an expert panel representing farmers, equipment and input producers, and public institutions. It highlighted innovative trends in global inputs, equipment and agricultural practices designed to address the challenge of producing enough food, fiber and fuel for a growing population, while conserving natural resources. Under Secretary Scuse noted “all countries must be willing to provide an environment that facilitates sustainable development. This includes progressive, science-based policies that enable the creation and commercialization of innovative products and technologies.” He explained that the United States is doing research to improve agricultural productivity by creating crops that better tolerate drought, disease, pests and salinity; studying pre- and post-harvest technologies to reduce crop losses; and looking to understand the factors that go into nutrition in order to provide a better, safer, healthier diet for future generations.

Under Secretary Scuse acknowledged that this is a complex challenge and that Milan Expo offers a useful venue to discuss global food security and climate change, and how innovation and trade are critical in this dialogue. He noted that different countries will take different routes, but he also clearly stated that the policies of one country or countries should not take away the choices of another country or its citizens, especially in the developing world, where the impacts of climate and food insecurity are felt most.

Specifically, he stated “the cultural preferences of some consumers in wealthy nations shouldn’t impede access to safe and affordable foods by people in poorer nations or limit the ability of their trading partners to export agricultural products that the science says is safe.”

The U.S. Sustainability Alliance, represented by David Green, provided a general overview of why innovation is so critical. Mr. Green talked about the [U.S. Sustainability Alliance](#) and the role of innovation in sustainability. Mr. Green emphasized that approximately 98% of U.S. farms are still family owned, so sustainability is not just a principle, but a necessity to maintain the investment for future generations.

Laura Batcha and Laura Foell participated in a panel providing the agricultural producer’s perspective. [Laura Batcha](#) is CEO and Executive Director of the [Organic Trade Association](#), an umbrella organization uniting and representing more than 8,500 organic businesses across the \$39 billion sector, including farmers, ranchers, dairy farmers, manufacturers, distributors, retailers, certifiers and regional farming organizations. She explained how the organic sector continually looks at new practices and technologies to improve production within the regulatory parameters. [Laura Foell](#), Chairman of the [U.S. Soybean Export Council](#) and a soybean and corn grower from Iowa, offered first-hand experience about how she has made use of new tools to improve profitability, help with land conservation, and avoid serious losses from climate variability. She described very specific eras in innovation, noting the single most important leap in technology was actually the tractor. Ms. Foell gave concrete examples of how technology and innovation go hand in hand in order for a farm to function efficiently.

Luigi Coffano Country Lead for DuPont Pioneer Italy and Paolo Andreone, Head of Marketing & Communication Manager Italian Market for New Holland focused on the newest developments in inputs and equipment from improved software/trapping for pest management to low emission tractors that run on energy inputs available at the farm (bio-methane). Both Andreone and Foell commented on how big data and precision agriculture tools, including drones, field monitors, and satellite weather maps, are now being employed by more than 94% of U.S. farmers.

Sally Schneider, the Agricultural Research Service’s Deputy Administrator for [Natural Resources and Sustainable Agricultural Systems](#) concluded the panel discussion by talking about the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s research and development agenda. She described the work being done on soil and water conservation, waste management/waste reduction, and nutrition as well as other important developments that will contribute to greater agricultural productivity. She asked the audience to imagine a future which integrates big data and new technologies to inform best agricultural practices and noted the ARS researchers are tasked with expanding their horizons to think big.

### **Pavilion Visits and Padano Technology Park**

On October 8, Ambassador Phil Reeker provided an extensive tour of the USA Pavilion describing the messaging and policy contributions, as well as the concepts behind the food scape. While at EXPO, Under Secretary Scuse took the opportunity to visit the Israeli, UN Pavilion Zero, and German Pavilions, which also featured innovation and sustainability as themes. Under Secretary Scuse offered

comments on many of the themes featured in the USA Pavilion, such as nutrition and health, technology, innovation, and American culinary excellence. He also visited the Future Food District COOP supermarket of the future. The COOP supermarket employs robotics and sensor panels featuring nutrition, allergen, product handling, country of origin, and carbon foot print information on the products for sale.

On October 9, 2015, Under Secretary Michael T. Scuse paid a visit to the Padano Science and Technology Park (PTP) to learn about the latest innovative agricultural research being conducted in Italy and to see advanced agricultural technology being employed at the associated “Agriculture of Tomorrow” demonstration field and “Cascina Baroncina” experimental farm. The Under Secretary was accompanied by AMS Administrator Anne Alonzo as well as the U.S. panelists for the EXPO Agricultural Innovation event. PTP Managing Director Gianluca Careno, Mayor of Lodi Simone Uggetti, and Lodi Chamber of Commerce President Carlo Gendarini welcomed the delegation. Simone Uggetti, the Mayor of Lodi stressed that PTP operates in cooperation with the Faculties of Veterinary Medicine and Agricultural Science of Milan University and public and private research organizations located in Lodi, creating one of the main European centers for agricultural technology.

Alessandra Stella, PTP Chief Scientific Officer presented an overview of the PTP, which has developed more than 90 national and international research and development projects (including 11 draft genome sequences), provides services to over 100 companies, and has a network that extends to over 40 countries, reaching more than 500 research institutions and 650 businesses. PTP also supports the creation of new enterprises through its incubator and business accelerator Alimenta.

Stefano Biffani, PTP Geneticist and Biostatistician introduced the PTP ‘Dairy Farm’ project, focused on sustainable dairy farming. He walked the delegation through their experimental farm which incorporates a variety of technology and practices to address animal welfare issues while improving product safety and quality at lower costs. The Lombardy region has one of the highest concentrations of dairy producers and is also home to many Italian geographic indication protected products like Parmigiano Reggiano and Grano Padano cheese.

Camilo Gianinazzi, Chief Executive Officer of the International Plant Analysis and Diagnostics (IPADLAB) presented his startup, which provides services and products for the detection of plant pathogens. One application for his company’s product is potentially less expensive field testing with rapid results that might have implications for certification.

Silvia Rapacioli, Chief Operating Officer of BiCT Srl introduced her start-up focused on the development of competitive and sustainable industrial processes, aimed at producing enzymes, peptides, secondary metabolites, and active pharmaceutical ingredients (API) obtained either from natural sources (plant, animal and microorganism) or through recombinant DNA techniques.

Bruno Garavelli, Founder and [Chief Executive Officer](#) of Xnext presented his start-up aimed at identifying the chemical composition of materials (food, waste, drugs) and their molecular density. The applications range from security relating to intentional contamination to quality conformity and

food safety.

Riccardo Geftter Wondrich, PTP Project Manager introduced the Agriculture of Tomorrow Demonstration Field, a 12,000 square meter (3 acre). The demonstration field, which is a collaboration amongst the private sector, research community, and local institutions, included corn, rice, soybean, sorghum, processing and fresh tomatoes, apple orchards, strawberry, lupines, and other crops. It was purposely planted on sloped marginal land characterized by scarcity of water, lack of electricity, and poor availability of agricultural inputs to prove that even neglected areas can be turned into valuable crop fields. The core project technology is irrigation efficiency through low pressure drip lines connected to solar powered water pumps.

Andrea Galli, Director of the Fodder and Dairy Productions Research Centre welcomed Under Secretary Scuse to “Cascina Baroncina”, a demonstration farm to install and present innovative technologies for both precision farming and improving the efficiency of livestock and dairy production. Confagricoltura Lombardy hosted a lunch at the experimental farm. Antonio Boselli, President of Confagricoltura Milano-Lodi-Monza Brianza expressed strong support for the TTIP negotiations, hoping that the United States and Europe will soon reach an agreement. Confagricoltura is Italy’s second largest farmers union. Its farmers cultivate 40 percent of Italy’s agricultural area and produce 45 percent of Italy’s agriculture and forestry output, valued at \$55 billion. Confagricoltura members generally are the larger Italian farms. Confagricoltura recognizes the importance of local, traditional Italian products, while also taking a more progressive approach towards biotechnology. Under Secretary Scuse reiterated that progress on U.S. market access issues is needed if the U.S. agricultural community is going to support the TTIP agreement.

Under Secretary Scuse commended PTP for the cutting edge work being done in agriculture and food sectors, bio-economy, and life sciences. He also noted that as food demand increases and land availability decreases, farmers need to improve the efficiency of the process to get the maximum yield from every square meter. Under Secretary Scuse discussed how U.S. farmers have also experienced great success by employing new precision farming research and technologies. He talked about the role of innovation in addressing climate change challenges and hope for continued transatlantic cooperation to tackle this important topic.

**Print/Online Media**



## U.S SUSTAINABILITY ALLIANCE AND UNDER-

**SECRETARY SCUSE:** Rai Expo published the [video interview](#) to Under-Secretary Scuse and David Green



done at the

USA Pavilion during the U.S. Sustainability

Alliance event. The Facebook page of specialized magazine [AcomeAgricoltura](#) posted a long wrap-up teaser on Under-Secretary Scuse's program at the Expo. The complete article will be published in the December issue of the magazine. The teaser quoted Under-Secretary Scuse: "The cultural preferences of some consumers in wealthy nations shouldn't impede access to safe and affordable foods by people in poorer nations or limit the ability of their trading partners to export agricultural products that the science says is safe." Under headline "Big Data And Robotics: The Future Of USA Agriculture" online media outlet [TopTrade Informatica](#) published an article on Under-Secretary's event at the USA Pavilion focusing on the role of big data, robotics and innovation in the future of USA agriculture.

## October 12, 2015 Sustainability Event at Expo

Media outlet: Agronotizie (online) [Link](#)



Online agriculture media outlet [Agronotizie](#) published an article on the Sustainability event at the USA Pavilion with a video interview with Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Service [Michael Scuse](#) (in English with subtitles in Italian). The interview quoted Under Secretary Scuse on future challenges in agriculture and on GMOs. "The challenges we must confront are dramatic [...] We will need to double food production by 2050 in order to be able to feed a world population of more than 9 billion people. And we must do this in a changing environmental context while trying to preserve the natural environment." And on GMOs: "I do believe that if an innovation brings benefits without creating any sort of problem that innovation should be included in the options available to farmers. We cannot turn our back on science, nor follow only consumer's trends if we want to guarantee enough food to 9 billion people." Panelists Laura Foell, David Green and Laura Batcha were also quoted.

### **October 10, 2015 Visit to the Lodi Techno Park**

Media outlet: Il Cittadino di Lodi (print edition p. 24)

Link to .pdf: [Link](#)

Headline: From the United States to the Techno Park



LA VISITA Alcune immagini della visita del sottosegretario degli States

Media outlet: Confagricoltura official website

Link: [link](#)

There was a short news piece referencing U/S Scuse visit to the Technology Park and meeting with Confagricoltura Board Member Boselli.

Media Outlet: Lodi local web TV

Link: <http://www.videonotizietv.it/?p=20229>

The Lodi local web TV Videonotizietv.it published a photo of Under-Secretary Scuse's visit to the technological park mentioning the fact that he visited the park's pavilions staying longer at those dedicated to the food sector.

#### **SOCIAL MEDIA:**

Regarding social media, in addition to the real time coverage of the event on Oct 9, we launched the AgroNotizie online article that went out yesterday evening on both Facebook and Twitter.

<https://www.facebook.com/USConsMilan/posts/10153354984617933>

<https://twitter.com/USConsMilan/status/653580764030836736>

<https://twitter.com/agronotizie/status/653537928354791425>

The article was also posted by the Twitter account of Agronotizie:



[US Consulate Milan](#) Retweeted



**AgroNotizie** @agronotizie · 22h

[View translation](#)

Big data e robotica nei campi. La parola d'ordine negli Usa è innovazione [bit.ly/1MrCHsp](http://bit.ly/1MrCHsp)



[View summary](#)



**US Consulate Milan** @USConsMilan · 19h

#BigData and robotics in the fields: the keyword in the #USA 🇺🇸 is innovation! #agtech [youtu.be/4NgswfM8Lxc](http://youtu.be/4NgswfM8Lxc) #wfd2015

USA Pavilion 2015, Foreign Ag Service, Dept. of Agriculture and 7 others



 **U.S. Consulate General Milan**  
Published by Anna Chiara Sai [?] · 19 hrs · 🌐

Innovazione tecnologica e scientifica: sono queste le direttrici che guideranno lo sviluppo dell'agricoltura USA nei prossimi dieci anni. Allo [USA Pavilion at Expo Milano 2015](#) a [Expo 2015 Milano](#) si è parlato di precision farming, big data e OGM, ma anche di biologico e di salute dei consumatori.  
via [AgroNotizie](#) ➡ <http://ow.ly/TiDuz>

[U.S. Department of Agriculture](#) [The U.S. Sustainability Alliance](#) [U.S. Department of State](#)



**Big data e tecnologia, la nuova rivoluzione agricola made in Usa**  
<http://agronotizie.imaginenetwork.com/rubriche/expo-2015/2330> - Agricoltura di precisione, robotica, Ogm, big data e attenzione ai consumatori: il padiglio...  
YOUTUBE.COM

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Valerio Civitella, Miguel Perez, Lorenzo Munari and 4 others like this. Most Recent ▾

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 **AgroNotizie** Lo staff vi ringrazia per la condivisione. Buona giornata!  
Unlike · Reply · Message · 👍 1 · 19 hrs

Finally, the following article was posted on AGRA Press:

## AGRA PRESS

### U.S. UNDERSECRETARY SCUSE AT EXPO MILAN. SUSTAINABILITY: INNOVATIVE PRODUCTS AND TECHNOLOGIES MAKE IT POSSIBLE

Milan, October 9, 2015 – This afternoon the **Under Secretary for Farm & Foreign Agricultural Services, [Michael Scuse](#)** delivered the keynote address at the event "Agricultural Innovation—Planting the Seeds for a Sustainable Future," supported by the USA pavilion organizers, the United States Department of Agriculture, the American Chamber of Commerce in Italy (AmCham), and the U.S. Sustainability

Alliance.

The event, which took place at the USA Pavilion at Milan EXPO, highlighted innovative trends in global inputs, equipment and agricultural practices that will help address the challenge of producing enough food, fiber and fuel to feed more than 9 billion people by 2050, while conserving natural resources. As Under Secretary Scuse noted “all countries must be willing to provide an environment that facilitates sustainable development. This includes progressive, science-based policies that enable the creation and commercialization of innovative products and technologies.” The United States is doing research to improve agricultural productivity by creating crops that better tolerate drought, disease, pests and salinity; studying pre- and post-harvest technologies to reduce crop losses; and looking to understand the factors that go into nutrition in order to provide a better, safer, healthier diet for future generations.

This is a complex challenge and the participants in today’s program highlighted how food and events like the Milan Expo have the power to bring people together to discuss important themes such as global food security and climate change, and how innovation and trade are critical in this dialogue. The Under Secretary acknowledged that different countries will take different routes, but explained the policies of one country or countries should not take away the choices of another country or its citizens, especially in the developing world, where the impacts of climate and food insecurity are felt most. He stated “The cultural preferences of some consumers in wealthy nations shouldn’t impede access to safe and affordable foods by people in poorer nations or limit the ability of their trading partners to export agricultural products that the science says is safe.”

**David Green**, U.S. Sustainability Alliance, Senior Technical Advisor, talked about the [U.S. Sustainability Alliance](#) and the role of innovation in sustainability. Sustainability is all about process improvements and innovation is at the heart of these changes. Innovation has taken U.S. agriculture from subsistence farming in the 1930s to a global food producer today.

**Laura Batcha** and **Laura Foell** provided the farmer’s perspective. [Laura Batcha](#) is CEO and Executive Director of the [Organic Trade Association](#), an umbrella organization uniting and representing more than 8,500 organic businesses across the \$39 billion sector, including farmers, ranchers, dairy farmers, manufacturers, distributors, retailers, certifiers and regional farming organizations. She explained how even the organic sector is looking at new practices and technologies. [Laura Foell](#), Chairman of the [U.S. Soybean Export Council](#) and a soybean and corn grower from Iowa, offered first-hand experience about how she has made use of new tools to avoid serious losses from climate variability and increased her productivity.

**Luigi Coffano** Country Lead for DuPont Pioneer Italy and **Paolo Andreone**, Head of Marketing & Communication Manager Italian Market for New Holland focused on the newest developments in inputs and equipment from improved pest management trapping and software to the use of big data in precision agriculture.

**Sally Schneider**, the Agricultural Research Service’s Deputy Administrator for [Natural Resources and Sustainable Agricultural Systems](#) concluded the panel discussion by talking about the U.S. Department

of Agriculture's research and development agenda. She described the work being done on soil and water conservation, waste management/waste reduction, and nutrition as well as other important developments that will contribute to greater agricultural productivity. She explained that this critical scientific research provides important tools for addressing the global challenges of climate change and a growing population and it's important to share the knowledge on best practices and encourage new technologies.