



PRESS NOTE

The Artichoke Economy: Development Opportunities

Mayor Salvatore Geraci: “A Designation for the Cerda Artichoke”

Palermo, April 19, 2024 – With over two hundred producers, including companies and small farmers, generating an estimated turnover just above 20 million euros. The thorny artichoke from Cerda is the most widespread cultivar in an area of over 700 hectares cultivated with artichoke fields, stretching from the hills that introduce the territory of the Madonie to the northeastern coast of Palermo. That ancient territory, already occupied by the Greeks, which extends from the river Himera towards the Torto valley, with fertile soils and normally abundant underground water resources. A historical production, established for over a century, which has seen many generations of entire families dedicate themselves to this cultivation, creating over time a true small district of the Cerda artichoke. The artichoke productions in Sicily – a strongly identity-linked vegetable for some production areas of Sicily, not only Cerda, but also Niscemi, Menfi, and Ramacca – represent an opportunity, especially for the new generations who must find, in their birth territories, economic sustainability and better living conditions. The focus is on the ability to streamline the supply chain, mainly active on fresh and just harvested products, involving also the restaurant sector, which has chosen to specialize in this precious vegetable, creating a real gastronomic specialization. Betting on the Artichoke is more than legitimate, not only to affirm the inspiring principle desired by the Sicilian parliament in defending the productive specificities and agri-food biodiversity of the island but also responds to a precise parliamentary legislative act of the Sicilian Regional Assembly which establishes an ad hoc Foundation and assigns attention and resources to the enhancement project. *“This territory can attract investments, expertise, and innovation in the Artichoke supply chain, – emphasizes the mayor of Cerda, Salvatore Geraci, as well as a member of the Sicilian Assembly – it can expand its scope in multiple directions, preserving and enhancing this extraordinary product – versatile in the kitchen because it can be prepared in a thousand versions – reaching new markets and new outlets, especially for the transformation of the artichoke into its many variations”.* A potential that the territory unanimously recognizes within reach and looks with great confidence at the possibility that Cerda, also in relation to the programming planned for Sicily, European Gastronomic Region 2025, can interpret that leading role that today belongs to it, together with Sicily's excellences, forming a strategic alliance to generate stable tourist flows all year round, opening the territory to those travelers of Taste and Culture who between Palermo, Cefalù, Bagheria, Castelbuono, and Cerda can experience an immersive experience among beauty, good food, and authentic and identity-based lifestyles. *“We are engaged on several fronts, – concludes Mayor Salvatore Geraci – we know the*

potential of the thorny artichoke from Cerda, and we will do everything to enhance it, economically, culturally, as well as in its image. We are convinced that the time has come to grant the territory, the producers, the families of Cerda, a protection and enhancement tool, the IGP (Protected Geographical Indication) of the Cerda Artichoke, by adopting a shared and respected production specification. The excellence is such that it demands this opportunity for growth and further development of the industry, including the restaurant sector that thrives on it”.

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