



## **Export to the Middle East: the labelling machine that helps Italian food SMEs**

*DHL Global Forwarding has equipped its Pozzuolo Martesana hub with an advanced, specific machine that labels fresh products for Arabic-speaking countries*

Italy's trade with the 22 countries of the Arab League (Middle East and North Africa) is strongly growing: in 2016 alone, turnover reached 70 billion euros. A significant example is represented by Saudi Arabia: between 2009 and 2015, Italy's exports to this Gulf State increased by 112%, exports to the Emirates by 64% and exports to Bahrain by 22%. A SACE study predicts an average annual growth rate of Italian sales in the region of between 2 and 4% by 2020.

In the period between 2007 and 2017, the value of Italian agri-food exports worldwide rose from 22 to 41 billion euros. Yet, despite having the highest number of quality DOP/IGP/STG products (818 products including Wine&Food in 2017), our Made in Italy exports are only in fifth place in Europe, behind Netherlands, Germany, France and Spain. The Netherlands, which has only 34 products with designations, is in first place with an export turnover of more than double that of the Italian food industry<sup>1</sup>.

Among the reasons for this gap, there is certainly the peculiarity of the Italian entrepreneurial fabric, characterized by small and very small companies (only 1.7% has more than 50 employees) and a low propensity to internationalization (exports represent only 20%). Italian food companies, especially small ones, do not have enough numbers to justify some essential investments to expand their exports: among these, the investment in machinery for labelling in Arabic. To support the expansion of companies in this sector that want to ship to Middle Eastern countries, DHL Global Forwarding has equipped itself with a specific and very advanced machinery for Arabic labelling at its hub in Pozzuolo Martesana.

Specifically, in the Pozzuolo Martesana warehouse, two processes related to the food products labelling are carried out: the manual printing and display of the label in Arabic for food use, in line with the regulations of the recipient Countries with the indication of the ingredients, the name of the manufacturer and the importer; the laser inkjet printing of the production date, batch and expiry date of the product. These operations are carried out in the temperature-controlled area on each individual package: the pallet arrives in the warehouse, products are depalletized and each box is opened by personnel trained according to HACCP procedures to handle the primary and secondary packaging, and finally, boxes are placed on a conveyor roller. The label is supplied by the importer, and then calibrated and printed by DHL Global Forwarding.

This process is mainly used for fresh food products (fresh pasta, cheeses, cured meats, yogurt, sauces) destined for large-scale distribution and travelling by plane, so starting from the moment the pallet arrives in the store, the labeling/printing process must be completed in a few hours. Products are mainly destined for Countries in the Middle East and the Gulf Area (including Abu Dhabi, Jeddah, Riyadh, Doha), an area undergoing strong development in terms of food imports.

*"Several factors inhibit the approach of Italian excellence to very high potential markets such that of the Middle East: a great fragmentation of the production system, the pulverization of supply due to Italian biodiversity, but also the preference for neighboring markets such as that of the European Union. As DHL Global Forwarding, we have adopted a pragmatic approach to the problem, providing small to medium sized food companies with added value through advanced machinery, which allows us to guarantee correct*

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*labelling to companies that would not be able to provide internally due to lack of sufficient volumes. In this way, we allow a much larger number of SMEs to approach extremely interesting Middle Eastern countries, where demand for agri-food products is becoming exponential"* Mario Zini, Country Manager DHL Global Forwarding, says.

### **Technical specifications**

The plant consists of an automatic inkjet printing system with variable speed motorized transport with infeed roller conveyor, a rotating table for the collection of marked products and an industrial printer. The three-phase motor with adjustable speed for the synchronization of the working cycle and the transport rings suitable for the food environment with dimensions 400 x 1000 mm, allow to print up to 30 thousand labels per day, thanks to a printing speed of up to 12 ips (300 mm/sec). The labels are fully customizable and include Arabic characters, as well as Chinese, Vietnamese, Thai, Korean, Greek ones.

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