



# FOOD MANIFESTO

THE CHARTER OF VALUES FOR THE FUTURE OF FOOD

*From the living heritage of Italian cuisine to the regeneration of global food systems*

## WHY NOW: A HISTORIC CROSSROADS FOR FOOD SYSTEMS

*We are living in a time of radical choices.*

The global agrifood system is under unprecedented pressure: climate crisis, food inflation, geopolitical instability, biodiversity erosion, and epidemics of chronic disease. At the same time, awareness is growing that food is not merely a commodity: it is identity, landscape, health, social cohesion, and intergenerational justice.

Italy, cradle of the Mediterranean Diet and of Italian cuisine as an intangible cultural heritage of humanity, and home to FAO and WFP headquarters, has both the responsibility and the opportunity to exercise a new kind of leadership: not simply to promote its own model, but to place it at the service of global transformation. This trajectory also reflects the pioneering vision of Slow Food, which 40 years ago had already shown the world the path toward food that is “good, clean and fair” as a key to rethinking the entire food system.

Today, however, this heritage coexists with widespread food-related distress. The “food discomfort class” includes producers squeezed between rising costs and unsustainable prices; territories that safeguard knowledge and biodiversity yet struggle to remain alive; and educated, creative young people, full of aspirations for fair work in the food system, who nevertheless struggle to find the space and resources to make those aspirations real.

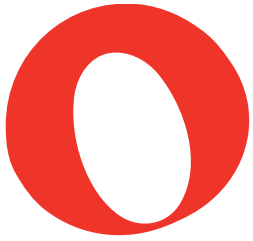
It also includes consumers immersed in an apparent abundance that, in some places and contexts, promises well-being but too often delivers chronic illness, frustration, and a sense of powerlessness in the face of climate and social crises.

This distress is not the sum of individual problems: it is the symptom of a system that has separated the economic value of food from its ecological, social, and cultural value. The Charter of Values for the Future of Food was created to give voice to this tension and turn it into a shared strategic choice: bringing food back to the center of a project for prosperity, justice, and regeneration.

In this context, the Italian agrifood sector—led by the trade fair system through CIBUS and TUTTOFOOD, with the involvement of institutions and the main European organizations—can move from being a commercial showcase to becoming a strategic architect of the transition: a place where products are not merely displayed, but where values, commitments, and shared standards are negotiated.

## FROM AN ECONOMY OF FRAGILE ABUNDANCE TO AN ECOLOGY OF WHAT IS ESSENTIAL

Over recent decades, the food system’s implicit promise has been: more choice, more variety, more convenience.



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The result has been a form of “fragile abundance”: growing promotions but declining resources, caloric surplus but widespread malnutrition, narratives of well-being coexisting with food insecurity, inequality, and supply-chain precarity.

Contemporary critical thinking shows us how many of our promises of well-being are built on collective fictions: compelling stories that do not always translate into real well-being for people and places. Unless we act, the gap between the narrative of the food system and its material reality—climatic, social, and health-related—will continue to generate distress, distrust, and conflict.

This is why we need a new grammar of food, one that puts the following back at the center:

- the planet’s biophysical limits;
- the dignity of work and of rural communities;
- health as a common good;
- supply-chain transparency;
- the recognition of living heritages—such as the Mediterranean Diet and Italian cuisine—not as nostalgia, but as laboratories for the future.

## LIVING HERITAGE AS INFRASTRUCTURE FOR THE FUTURE

The Mediterranean Diet and Italian cuisine are not merely culinary traditions.

They are complex systems of values that interweave:

- biodiversity and seasonality;
- family farming and rural landscapes;
- conviviality, education, and intergenerational exchange;

- sobriety, care for the body, and respect for place.

Today, we can transform these heritages into a form of “guiding infrastructure” for the European and global food system. Not a self-celebratory narrative about Italy, but a shared platform of values, capable of speaking to:

- farmers and processors;
- retail and food service;
- institutions and regulators;
- research, civil society, and consumers.

## FROM MANIFESTO TO ALLIANCES: THE ROLE OF CIBUS, TUTTOFOOD AND THE FUTURE FOOD INSTITUTE

With the Charter of Values for the Future of Food, the Italian trade fair system—in alliance with the Future Food Institute—aims to:

- name and frame the values that must guide the transformation of supply chains;
- translate those values into concrete, measurable, signable commitments;
- build a clear and credible European coalition that brings together agriculture, industry, retail, research, public health, and civil society;
- activate an international roadmap (European Parliament, TUTTOFOOD, CIBUS, and the leading global trade fairs) that turns the Charter into a recognized steering instrument.

Within this framework, the good practice tested through the Pollica–Costa del Cilento model provides an encouraging pilot.



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## THE CHARTER OF VALUES FOR THE FUTURE OF FOOD

At a time when food sits at the center of climate, health, economic, and democratic crises, we—representatives of agrifood value chains, institutions, scientific communities, and civil society—recognize that it is no longer enough to feed the world: we must nourish the future.

Inspired by the living heritages of the Mediterranean Diet and Italian cuisine, by critical thinking, and by the values expressed by the majority of agrifood enterprises, we affirm that the food system can and must become a force for regeneration: of soils, waters, bodies, communities, and economies.

With this Charter, we commit to transforming food narratives into tangible realities of justice, prosperity, and shared longevity.

### *Pillar 1 – Inclusivity*

#### **Food as a right and a source of dignity for all**

- We recognize food as a fundamental human right, not as a privilege or a mere market product.
- We commit to reducing inequalities in access to healthy, culturally appropriate, and sustainable food, tackling food poverty and waste.
- We promote supply chains that respect the dignity of agricultural and food work, ensuring fair conditions, safety, and inclusion for the most vulnerable communities.

#### **Commitment**

Those who sign this Charter commit to integrating equity and access goals into their business models, public policies, and social responsibility programmes.

### *Pillar 2 – Sustainability and Regeneration*

#### **Beyond “less bad”: food as an ally of the planet**

- We recognize that it is not enough to “reduce impact”: we must regenerate soils, water, biodiversity, and landscapes.
- We support transitions toward agroecological farming, place-based food systems, short supply chains wherever possible, and production models capable of giving back more than they take.
- We embrace the perspective of integral ecology, which links climate, health, social justice, and cultural heritage.

#### **Commitment**

Those who sign this Charter commit to defining and measuring targets for emissions reduction, ecosystem regeneration, and biodiversity protection, in line with the leading international agendas.



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## *Pillar 3 – Safety, Trust and Transparency*

### **From fear to alliance between citizens and supply chains**

- In a context of crisis and disinformation, trust is the food system's true capital.
- We promote high food safety standards across the entire value chain, along with tools for radical transparency on origins, processes, and impacts.
- We believe traceability is not merely a technical compliance requirement, but a pact of shared responsibility among producers, distributors, food service operators, and citizens.

### **Commitment**

Those who sign this Charter commit to improving traceability and communication, avoiding misleading practices and making data accessible and understandable.

## *Pillar 4 – Origin, Quality and Living Heritages*

### **From product to landscape: defending what truly nourishes us**

- We recognize the value of origins: territories, knowledge, and agricultural and culinary practices that have shaped Italian and European quality.
- We defend living heritages—such as the Mediterranean Diet, Italian cuisine, and geographical indications—as cultural infrastructures, not merely marketing assets.
- We support models that reward the organoleptic, nutritional, environmental, and cultural quality of food.

### **Commitment**

Those who sign this Charter commit to protecting and enhancing quality productions rooted in local territories, countering standardization, the exploitation of territorial brands, and the loss of identity.

## *Pillar 5 – Health, Well-being and Longevity*

### **Food as an ally of life across the entire lifespan**

- We recognize the inseparable link between dietary patterns, physical and mental health, and longevity.
- We draw inspiration from models such as the Mediterranean one, which have proven effective in preventing chronic disease and in promoting balance and widespread well-being.
- We promote policies, products, and services that enable healthy, informed, and accessible choices, integrating health into the places where food is produced, distributed, and consumed.

### **Commitment**

Those who sign this Charter commit to considering health impact as a strategic factor in every supply-chain decision, in collaboration with the worlds of research and public health.



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*Food is not just nourishment.*

*It is identity, health, relationships, territory, responsibility, and future.*

*In a time marked by climate crisis, social fragilities, and profound transformations, food becomes the most powerful lever to regenerate the relationship between people, communities, and the planet.*

*Food Manifesto was created to shape a new food culture: more just, more transparent, more regenerative, more human.*

## INCLUSIVITY

Food is a right, not a privilege.

Equitable access to healthy, sustainable, and culturally appropriate food.  
Fair supply chains, dignified work, and protected communities.

*Food as a right and a source of dignity for all.*

## REGENERATION

It is not enough to reduce impact: we must regenerate.

Soil, water, biodiversity, and landscapes are vital capital.

Integral ecology: climate, health, justice, and culture are inseparable.

*Beyond “less bad”: food as an ally of the planet.*

## TRUST

Trust is the true capital of the food system.

Safety and transparency must guide the entire value chain.

Traceability means shared responsibility.

*From fear to alliance between citizens and supply chains.*

## LIVING HERITAGES

Origins, territories, and knowledge generate authentic value.

Living heritages are culture, not merely market assets.

The quality of food is nutritional, environmental, and cultural.

*From product to landscape: defending what truly nourishes us.*

## WELL-BEING

Food, health, and well-being form a single system.

Sound dietary models foster balance and prevention.

The future requires healthy, informed, and accessible choices.

*Food as an ally of life across the entire lifespan.*

**FROM SUSTAINABILITY TO REGENERATION**  
**FROM FOOD SYSTEMS TO LIFE SYSTEMS**  
**FROM PRODUCTS TO THE IMPRINT WE LEAVE**