

# POLICY BRIEF

October 2018

## The future of mussels in Emilia Romagna

Francesca Minarelli, Meri Raggi, Francesco Galioto, Davide Viaggi

On a global scale, China and the EU are the two largest producers of mussels, followed by Chile and New Zealand. Europe supplying over a third of the total production. The overall production of mussels in Europe peaked at nearly 750.000 t/year. The level of consumption is highly variable according to country, but it is mainly concentrated in four countries Spain, Denmark, Belgium and France. Aquaculture is by far the main source of mussels and is responsible for over 90% of total production.

In Italy, the cultivation of mussels is well developed and this species represents 48% of the volume of all farmed marine products. Italy represents the third main producing country with about 65.000 tonnes. Installations of mussels are distributed throughout coast region, mainly concentrated in the part of coast from Porto Garibaldi to Goro.

In Emilia-Romagna (ER), as well as at national level, mussels sudden developed in the 80's, with the advent of technologies related to the "off-shore" implants. In fact, with the spread of the first breeding facilities since the second half the 80's ER has reached considerable technological and productive level. In Emilia Romagna region, the mussel breeding is related to a single species, *Mytilus galloprovincialis*.

In 2014, Emilia-Romagna produced 22.200 tonnes of mussels becoming the first region in Italy for mussel production. Emilia-Romagna has become the location of the most important manufacturing companies equipment's and boats for this activity

This brief has been developed from research conducted as part of the H2020-funded project, Sufisa. The mussel case study in Emilia Romagna represents a satellite case study. Further details are available from the main project website: <http://www.sufisa.eu/>. The document provides some key messages that summarize the main issues arisen from the study and potential policy implications.



ALMA MATER STUDIORUM  
UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA  
DIPARTIMENTO DI SCIENZE E TECNOLOGIE  
AGRO-ALIMENTARI

Viale G. Fanin, 44

40127, Bologna (Italy)

Francesca.mianrelli@unibo.it



This policy brief is the result of research conducted as part of the EC-funded SUFISA project (Sustainable finance for sustainable agriculture and fisheries), H2020 Grant Agreement 635577. Responsibility for the information and views set out in this report lies entirely with the authors.

## Key messages

- The lack of an organization system able to coordinate and manage the trade of the production represents the major limitation.
- Due to the lack of Producer Organizations, the difficulty in commercialization is remarkable. In fact, the main issue for mussel producers is not the production phase but the selling. They lack of commercial skills struggling in placing their product on the market and finding potential client
- Sometimes companies committed themselves into emerging markets, especially abroad in the north of Europe Mussel varieties cultivated in Italy are not very appreciated in most part of northern countries (Netherlands, Sweden, and Denmark) which preferences are oriented toward other mussel varieties. In fact, Northern European countries import mussels from Denmark and Ireland. An option offered is the reintroduction of mussel cultivated in Italy into existing growing of France and South of Spain.
- Italian product suffers from the completion of other countries even if the quality sometimes is lower. Consumers are not educated in the quality recognition of the mussel product and tend to purchase cheaper product. Inform consumers on the quality of mussels would help in protecting local product against competitor from foreign countries.
- Some cooperatives are collaborating with political institution in order to help firms to gain access to convenient form of credit such as bond, insurance. Insurance is not a recognized instrument in this sector because of the lack of reference/information in respect of level of risk and failure cases in this sector



Sustainable finance for  
sustainable agriculture  
and fisheries (SUFISA)  
Horizon 2020

Call: H2020-SFS-2014-2

Topic: SFS-19-2014

