

## **The impact of COVID-19 and the opportunities in Italian Agri-food cooperative sector**

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The COVID-19 pandemic have hardly affected the Agrifood sector causing variable consequences in various chains. A set of crisis drivers can be identified for such a scenario, which span from logistic issues to the reduction of individual income and demand. The reaction of the farmers and food companies also varies showing different capabilities in coping with the crisis. This paper aims at focusing on the effects and the potential opportunities of cooperative food sector in Italy in reacting to the pandemic crisis. In particular, while one may expect that specific patterns of reaction arises in cooperative sector, there is a clear lack of knowledge about this reactions and the potential scenarios. To contribute to the knowlegde about the effects of COVID-19 pandemic, a survey has been carried out in a large, national level organization of cooperative agri-food companies Italy. The inquiry has taken into account the COVID-19 pandemic effects with respect to the volume of the sales, the level of production and the modes of organizations. Based on data gathered from 120 companies, the paper provides a complex pattern of effects in which the possibility of horizontal relationships among the the companies seems to offerts effective opportunities of reaction to the crisis and a basis for a sector competitive advantage.