

Transparency and convenience are key to marketability

By shortening the chain between producer and consumer, SIPO is aiming to restore faith in fresh produce

CESENATICO-BASED salad marketer SIPO has recently launched two new projects in its fresh-cut salad range. The first, *Operazione Trasparenza...e sai cosa mangi* (Operation Transparency...so you know what you're eating), is aimed at boosting consumer confidence in the light of a spate of recent food scares, including BSE and foot and mouth disease.

As part of the new scheme, pre-packed salads will have a barcode, enabling the purchaser to check the history of the product in real time via a dedicated website. The code, which will appear on bags of Saponi del mio Orto salad, has around 15 points of reference, providing the consumer with access to as much information as he needs.

"Since the project was launched, our website has received around 200 hits a day," explained SIPO director Massimiliano Ceccarini. "By establishing a link between the end-user and the producer we are strengthening the confidence of the

consumer and, consequently, increasing the marketability of the product."

The second new project, *Shake & Eat*, is aimed at the catering sector and, is being trialled in bars and fast food outlets along the coast between Venice in the north and Bari in the south.

Unveiled for the first time this year, the product is a mixture of different fresh salad leaves, which contains a sachet of dressing to be 'shaken' over the salad and a fork, so it can be eaten on the hoof. Packs also contain advice on additional products which can be added to enhance the flavour of the salad, including tuna, mozzarella and parmesan.

"We are targeting three main

consumer groups," said Mr Ceccarini. "Firstly, people with frenetic lifestyles who seldom have time to prepare food themselves; secondly, single

consumers; and finally, those who are concerned about their health and like to eat well."

Initially, some 1m bags of *Shake & Eat* are to be rolled out along Italy's west coast and the company hopes that by next year, the product will be available throughout the entire country.

Throughout July and August, SIPO will be running full-page adverts for the *Shake & Eat* range in lifestyle magazines, including *Donna Moderna*, *Silhouette*, *Star Bene* and *Donna in Forma*.

In addition to its own brands, SIPO provides ready-to-eat organic salads, herbs, and vegetables for Apofruit's *Almaverde Bio* label.

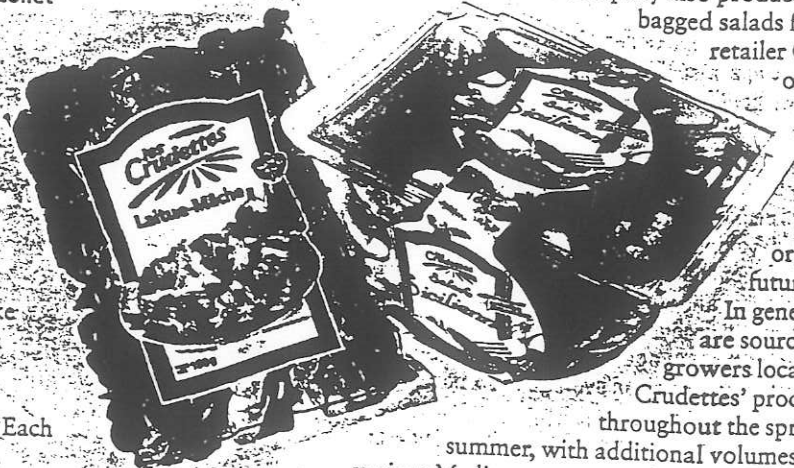


Les Crudettes

O All the fresh-cut salad products marketed by Les Crudettes, lettuce hearts and mixed leaf selections remain the most popular, according to Géraldine Collet from the company's marketing department.

Les Crudettes recently launched three new salads - a 300g bag of iceberg lettuce, a mixed pack of butterhead and lambs lettuce, and a combination of lambs lettuce and frisée fine - and a range of new snack salads is currently in the pipeline.

"These will contain products like ham, cheese, eggs and tuna, which will be packed in separate compartments to retain their freshness," explained Ms Collet. "Each pack will also contain a fork and a dressing made of fine vinegar and oil."



In addition to its own brands, Les Crudettes in France and Belgium and Tallo Verde for the Spanish market, the company also produces organic bagged salads for French retailer Carrefour's

own-brand label and is exploring the possibility of creating its own organics range in future.

In general, salad items are sourced from growers local to Les Crudettes' processing facilities throughout the spring and summer, with additional volumes coming from various Mediterranean suppliers at other times, or in case of bad weather.