

## Letters/Opinions

## My visit to Italian farm show: 'fantastico'

**T**HE leaning tower of Bologna, Italy, attests to a bygone age when engineers didn't quite get it right. But visiting the EIMA International farm show in that same city in November, I found machinery engineers from that nation are on a far more solid foundation.

This is a massive indoor show in so many buildings that I got lost more than once amid glittering exhibits, including special energy and innovation displays.

If you've never been to a European farm show, EIMA is a good choice for first-timers who want to experience the rich tapestry of tractors and combines that foreign competitors provide to the world market.

While the specific date for the next EIMA event isn't set (check [www.eima.it](http://www.eima.it)), it will once again be held in November in Bologna for 2009.

This is a way to truly taste the international farm equipment and service menu. While exhibits included representation from the U.S. and other nations,



## Our Say

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it is the Italian industry that absorbs much of the 25,000 models of agricultural technology. About 30% of the exhibits were non-Italian.

Impressively, Italy's machinery business is bigger than I knew, representing an 8.3 billion-euro market (at press time the euro-to-dollar ratio was 1-to-1.37). That's revealing if one thinks a nation like Italy cannot be a major player in the global machinery market. Encouraging for Italy, as well as the rest of us, is that the industry is expected to post a 9.7% increase in sales value in 2008 — a factor mirroring a strong world market.

Italy's role as an international equip-

ment competitor is strong, with its tractor exports up 24% last year, and other equipment posting an 8.7% gain.

## Global market

A strong surge in exports drives the Italian industry to become even more aggressive globally, so expect to see more competition on all fronts, including field crops, orchard and vine equipment, and livestock products.

Working to support the advance on foreign markets is Italy's UNACOMA manufacturers association, which helps firms expand internationally. "Our efforts are directed at providing solutions to meet customer requirements," says UNACOMA's Guglielmo Gandino, managing director.

Foreign farm shows not only provide a glimpse of what other nations are turning out in terms of new equipment, but also allow visitors to sense the scope of agriculture abroad. After attending many of our domestic shows, and this one foreign event, my apprecia-

tion for the momentum in international equipment and services is enhanced.

One place to go next month for a taste of foreign machinery is the SIMA show in Paris Feb. 22-26. For more, visit [www.simaonline.com/en/index.htm](http://www.simaonline.com/en/index.htm). Or, try the Hanover, Germany, farm AgriTechna show on Nov. 10-14 ([www.agritechnica.com/828.0.html](http://www.agritechnica.com/828.0.html)).

While our home farm shows, such as Farm Progress' 2009 show Sept. 1-3 in Decatur, Ill., or the Tulare, Calif., event Feb. 10-12, bring to the U.S. a bounty of foreign equipment displays, heading abroad and visiting counterparts of our big-show events will truly broaden your sense of the magnitude of what the world market has to offer.

Rubbing elbows with the Italians not only left me with a sense of the dedication to quality and customer satisfaction that manufacturers and dealers in that nation exude, but also amplified my realization that we are not alone when it comes to sophistication in ag machinery and services.

## Obama brings us hope for a more united America



## THINKING OUT LOUD

By THAD BOX

**O**N election day, I walked out of a polling place with a young, smiling Hispanic man. "It's the first time I voted," he said.

"Congratulations," I replied. "Welcome to 'We the people.' I think Mr. Obama will make a great president."

"I hope so," he said. "I would like to get it right my first time."

So would we all. We individualistic Americans put our faith in a young man few had heard of four years ago. At the 2004 Democratic convention, he said: "For alongside our famous individualism, there's another ingredient in the American saga: a belief that we are connected as one people."

That ingredient has been with our country from its beginning. Our founding fathers wrote: "We the people in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity..."

At that time, we-the-people did not include those who were black. But for the last four years, a young black man has told us over and over again that we are indeed one people. And we have selected him to be our president.

## Historic irony

A black family will soon move into the White House, a house built using slave labor. For the first time in decades, there will be small children playing in that house. These little girls, along with their mother, descended from a slave named Robinson who was freed by a little-

known Illinois lawyer who was then our president. We elected the girls' father, another skinny lawyer from Illinois, as president by an impressive majority of both the popular vote and electoral college.

Analysis of that vote shows Mr. Obama led in most every category of we-the-people: white, black, Latino, young, men, women, urban, suburban, rural. Only people over 65 failed to give him a majority.

Even with his impressive win, there are many people who remain mistrustful of Mr. Obama.

He said: "To those Americans whose support I have yet to earn ... I hear your voices, I need your help, and I will be your president, too."

From the time this young man stepped onto the national stage, he has preached that the power is in the people, and told us that if we are united, anything is possible.

He calls on us to reclaim the American dream and reaffirm that fundamental truth: "That out of many, we are one. And to those who tell us that we can't, we will respond with that timeless creed that sums up the spirit of a people: Yes, we can."

We-the-people are changing. I live in Utah, one of the most remote, uniform and monolithic states in our country. But today about a third of our schoolchildren have brown or black skin, and speak a language other than English. I don't know how long that young Hispanic man I met has been an American. Or if he knows that "Yes we can" originated with Cesar Chavez and agricultural workers. But he is now part of we-the-people. The American dream is his dream. It is my dream. Si se puede.

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