

The Urban Exodus of Young Italians

Roberta Cutillo (April 25, 2019)



In a reversal of typical migration patterns, young Italians are moving away from cities and returning to the countryside to take up jobs in agriculture-related fields.

Historically, people have migrated from rural areas to cities, where they hoped to find more employment opportunities and a better quality of life. However, young Italians are inverting this trend, as a growing number of men and women under the age of 35 decide to leave their city lives to go work in the countryside.

This phenomenon has apparently been slowly developing during the past decade. Statistics produced by [ISMEA](#) [2] (the National Institute for Agricultural and Food Market Services) reveal that the number of young people moving to the countryside to undertake a career in agriculture-related fields has been steadily augmenting over the last 10 years.



Certainly, Italy's stagnating economic situation, which has led to the rise in youth unemployment, has caused widespread frustration and disenchantment amongst young generations. This is the very reason most of them have resorted to going to seek opportunities abroad. But this "urban exodus" shouldn't be understood as the latest desperate attempt by young people to cope with the general lack of future prospects.

These young men and women are not simply fleeing cities with idealistic fantasies of reconnecting with nature. In most cases, they are making planned, sensible decisions. Students are now choosing to pursue an education in the agriculture sector and according to the Ministry of Agriculture the quantity of agribusinesses, many of which are managed by people under 30, increases each year.

There are several factors that render a move to the countryside a sensible and sustainable professional decision for young Italians. For one, Agriculture is one of the country's most subsidized sectors, and the Italian government supplies various financial incentives and other forms of economic aid to those working in this field.

The steadily growing [slow food movement](#) [3] and the general tendency of consumers becoming increasingly interested in purchasing organic, local, and artisanal products, also provides a great opportunity for those wishing to launch new small agricultural businesses.

And since most of those involved in this phenomenon are educated, usually overqualified, young people, perhaps with some previous professional experience, they bring their own knowledge, skills, and fresh perspectives to the industry, which hopefully will lead to an influx of innovation that will benefit not just this sector but the Italian economy as a whole.

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[1] <http://ftp.iitaly.org/files/countrysidejpg-0>

[2] <http://www.ismea.it/istituto-di-servizi-per-il-mercato-agricolo-alimentare>

[3] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slow_Food