

**IASA – INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED SCIENCE FOR AGRICULTURE PRESENTED AT BF SPA’S HEADQUARTERS IN JOLANDA DI SAVOIA (FERRARA, ITALY)**

*IASA is the first international doctoral school and research and higher education centre entirely dedicated to agri-food systems, with the status of a Higher Education School with Special Autonomy;*

*IASA was established by the Italian Ministry of University and Research (MUR) and promoted by BF SpA;*

*IASA operates as a real Living Lab, offering young researchers an integrated classroom-and-field learning model;*

*The PhD programme in Advanced Sciences for Agrifood Systems will start in November with the 2026/2027 academic year, offering scholarships and free accommodation at the Jolanda di Savoia Campus.*

*Jolanda di Savoia (Ferrara, Italy), 25<sup>th</sup> September 2026* – Today, the presentation event of **IASA – Institute of Advanced Science for Agriculture**, the first international doctoral school and research and higher education centre entirely dedicated to agri-food systems, with the status of a Higher Education School with Special Autonomy, was held at the headquarters of BF SpA in Jolanda di Savoia. IASA was established by the Italian Ministry of University and Research (MUR) and promoted by BF SpA.

The following took part in the presentation event: Federico Vecchioni, Executive Chairman of BF S.p.A.; Elisa Trombin, Mayor of Jolanda di Savoia; Pier Sandro Cocconcelli, Rector of IASA; Laura Ramaciotti, President of CRUI – Conference of Italian University Rectors and Rector of the University of Ferrara; Sabrina Saccomandi, Director General of IASA; Matteo Lorito, President of the National Centre for Agricultural Technologies (AGRITECH) and Vice President of ANVUR; Vincenzo Colla, Vice President of the Emilia-Romagna Region, with responsibility for Economic Development and the Green Economy, Energy, Vocational Training, Universities and Research.

The concluding remarks were delivered by **Senator Anna Maria Bernini, Italian Minister of University and Research**.

Through higher education, research and technology transfer, IASA aims to foster talent and scientific knowledge by developing advanced solutions designed to promote sustainable, safe, resilient and inclusive food systems on a global scale.

IASA’s mission is strengthened by its **full alignment with BF SpA’s long-term international strategy, pursued through its subsidiary BF International**. BF International represents the main enabler for the deployment of the human capital trained by IASA, in line with the strategic guidelines of the Mattei Plan for training and international cooperation. In this context, IASA plays a key role in **training highly qualified human capital capable of operating on a global scale in the adoption of agri-technological innovations, the sustainable management of natural resources and the development of resilient production chains**. In this way, it contributes to food security in terms of both security and safety, rural innovation in agri-food systems,

climate resilience and inclusive growth through strategic partnerships, capacity-building initiatives, technology transfer and cooperation with local and global stakeholders.

*“Innovative agriculture is one of the major strategic challenges of the future, because it brings together food security, sustainability, competitiveness and the ability to manage technological transformations. Addressing it requires research and knowledge, but above all new skills capable of bringing together different fields of knowledge and disciplines. This is where we need to invest: building an ecosystem in which universities, research institutions and businesses work together, transforming innovation into concrete solutions for more modern, competitive and sustainable agriculture”,* thus stated **the Minister of University and Research, Anna Maria Bernini**.

*“IASA, because of the strategic value we attach to knowledge, represents a cornerstone of the BF SpA project,”* said **Federico Vecchioni, Executive Chairman of BF SpA**. *“Knowledge, in fact, has neither temporal nor physical limits and represents an element of continuity for our project in the years to come,”* he continued. *“Through IASA, we are contributing to the education and training of the future leadership of global agribusiness, providing new generations with a reliable tool to make their dreams a reality”,* concluded **Federico Vecchioni**.

*“IASA was born from the awareness that the major challenges of our time, from climate change to increasing pressure on natural resources and the food insecurity affecting many areas of the planet, require a profound transformation of agri-food systems. We must be able to produce more and better, ensuring food safety and quality while reducing our environmental impact and increasing the resilience of supply chains. Addressing these challenges requires developing new knowledge, investing in research and training a new generation of researchers capable of working across disciplines, bringing science, technology, businesses and local communities into dialogue”,* **Pier Sandro Cocconcelli, Rector of IASA**, emphasised, adding: *“IASA was created precisely with this objective: to create an environment in which scientific research can constantly engage with real-world problems and in which innovations can be rapidly transformed into concrete solutions. IASA’s model, which integrates classroom-based education, laboratory research and field experimentation, aims to help bridge the gap between where knowledge is produced and where it needs to generate impact.”*

Located at the heart of BF SpA Group’s industrial agri-livestock hub, the Jolanda di Savoia Campus (Ferrara) is an innovation hub and a modern multifunctional facility designed for **advanced postgraduate education**. Thanks to the presence of the experimental agricultural farm, covering more than 5,000 hectares, IASA operates as **a real Living Lab**, offering young researchers an integrated “classroom and field” model in which **fundamental research merges with practical experimentation and applied research**.

The Campus provides classrooms, fully equipped scientific laboratories, co-working spaces, multimedia and video-recording rooms, an auditorium, offices and meeting rooms, as well as accommodation facilities with more than 150 beds and cafeteria services. An integrated range of services will also support students throughout their education and research activities, including assistance in finding accommodation, cultural, sports and recreational services, access to libraries and databases, guidance and mentoring for PhD students, language support and internationalisation services, including mobility, exchange and visiting programmes.

IASA’s offering, based on an interdisciplinary approach, rests on four pillars: scientific innovation, with knowledge grounded in data and research; sustainability, through environmentally, economically and socially responsible agricultural and food models; collaboration, connecting universities, research institutions, businesses and local communities; and concrete impact, transforming scientific knowledge into applicable solutions and addressing the global challenges of food security, climate change and supply-chain resilience, with a particular focus on Africa.

IASA's academic offering focuses on advanced scientific and educational programmes integrating agri-business and agri-tech. The first PhD programme, in **Advanced Sciences for Agrifood Systems (42nd cycle)**, starting in November with the 2026/2027 academic year, will train high-level researchers and professionals capable of independently designing and leading research and innovation programmes applied to agri-food systems. The PhD programme lasts three years and provides 22 positions, including **12 scholarship-funded positions (8 of which are reserved for candidates from African countries)** and 10 industrial PhD positions. Upon completion of the programme, participants will have the opportunity to undertake field research activities at BF International's BFuture Farms.

**For further information:**

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**BF SpA** is a holding company listed on the Milan Stock Exchange. Through its subsidiaries, the company operates across all sectors of the agri-industrial and livestock supply chain, as well as in education and training: from the selection, processing and marketing of seeds (through S.I.S. Società Italiana Sementi S.p.A.), to the ownership of the land from which 100% Made in Italy agricultural products are obtained (through Bonifiche Ferraresi S.p.A. Società Agricola, Italy's largest agricultural company by Utilised Agricultural Area (UAA), and BF Agricola S.r.l. Società Agricola), through to their processing and marketing (through B.F. Agro-Industriale s.r.l.), either under its own distribution brand, Le Stagioni d'Italia, or in partnership with the leading retail chains. The company is also active in the marketing, production and provision of services and products for agricultural operators (through Consorzi Agrari d'Italia S.p.A. and its subsidiaries). Furthermore, through its subsidiary BF International, the Group operates in more than 42 countries. Further information is available on the website "[www.bfspa.it/](http://www.bfspa.it/)".