

Giuseppe Pellizzi (Club of Bologna, Nov. 9, 2012)

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Thanks to the 2nd world war my parents moved from Milan to a family farm, 60 km far away. As a consequence I grew helping farmers through manual operations and using simple horse drawn farm implements. At that time a steel wheel tractor was only used for ploughing and for drawing a grain binder, while threshing was carried out with a tractor driven machine on the farm courtyard.

In the fifties my family went back to Milan, but agriculture and farm machinery remained in my mind. So, when at the beginning of the 5th year of my university studies in mechanical engineering I realized that among the optional subjects there was “Agricultural Mechanics”, I decided to follow it, even if it was not foreseen in my study curriculum.

At mid November 1961 I was one of the few students following the first university lesson, as an official professor, of Giuseppe Pellizzi. During the course we visited farms, a manufacturer and the Verona Agricultural Machinery Show in March 1962, as EIMA did not exist at that time.

After taking my degree and spending a few months in London to improve my English, in November 1963 I won a scholarship and began my career under the guide of Pellizzi. At that time his English was poor, as at the high school during the fascism German was the preferred foreign language to be taught. So, as a young engineer, I began immediately to accompany him abroad as an interpreter.

He had a strong character and was extremely determined. All this was probably due to his teen experience, when he spent a few days in jail during the last year of the world war. as the Pellizzi family had hosted some partisans in their farm close to Reggio Emilia.

When Pellizzi began to work at the then Institute of Agricultural Mechanics of the Milan University, the activity was close to zero, after 40 years of inefficient directors. With his strong will, hard work and a political capacity he succeeded to transform our former institute into the most productive and successful agricultural machinery institution in Italy, with different pupils spreading around Italy to other universities.

At work, Pellizzi was a dictator, controlling all the activities going on and not accepting independent activities (for this reason my personal relations with him were often not so easy). On the other side he was a very hard worker, spending very often in the Institute even 7 full working days per week. His leaves and holidays were limited to a couple of weeks per year and I remind that, back from an August fortnight in the island of Elba (the one of the first exile of Napoleon) he was telling me that – to avoid his wife reproach – he was compelled to work in the toilet.

Another point I admired in him was his capacity of concentration. Whether his activity was temporary broken by a student, a phone call, a guest, he was immediately able to restart his work at the broken point.

He has been also able – since the beginning of his activity - to establish international contacts through OECD, CIGR, EurAgEng, etc. But I think that his masterpiece has been in 1989 the foundation of the Club of Bologna, for which he took an inspiration from the Club of Rome, that in the 80's was famous all over the world for its discussion on the future depletion of oil energy. He proposed his idea to Unacoma, and here we are after more than 20 years of successful activity.