



GEORGOFILI WORLD

Newsletter of the Georgofili Academy

THE FIRST ITALIAN EXHIBITION

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The Agricultural Exhibitions were started during the Grand Duchy of Tuscany as a result of an 1838 proposal by the Georgofili, and were held periodically.

After Italy's unification, Ricasoli's provisional government, with a special law, decreed that an "exhibition of Italian products" be held in Florence. All this notwithstanding the Expedition of the 1000 was in progress and Rome and Venice were not yet united.

The Georgofili's counsel was decisive. With their successes at the Universal Expositions of London (1851) and Paris (1855) under their belt, they were already preparing for the next one in London (1862).

The task of bringing to fruition that demanding Florentine event was entrusted by royal decree to a 28-member committee with Cosimo Ridolfi, the Georgofili Academy's very own president, appointed to its chairmanship.

The works to carry out the exhibition hall (112,000 m²) in the area of the historical Leopolda Railway Station (Porta al Prato) were diligently carried out as soon as that station was transferred to Santa Maria Novella. A large internal garden was also created, set up by the Tuscan Horticultural Society.

The exhibition was inaugurated by King Vittorio Emanuele on 15 September 1861 and remained open until 8 December. It was a great success, also because it was enlivened by the strong spirit of the Risorgimento and the desire to gauge the fledgling nation's capabilities.