



Ressort: Politik

## Inauguration of WOW Agrifood Museum in Siena

Rome, 12.03.2026 [ENA]

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) continues its commitment to fostering innovation and sustainability in agrifood systems with the recent inauguration of the WOW – University of Siena Museum on Agrifood. Held on March 11, 2026, the event brought together leaders, researchers, and students to celebrate the opening of a new space dedicated to exploring the future of food and agriculture.

The WOW Museum, developed in close partnership with FAO's Food and Agriculture Museum and Network (MuNe), marks a significant expansion of FAO's efforts to engage the public in understanding the complexities and opportunities within agrifood systems.

Located in Siena, Italy, the WOW Museum stands as a testament to the power of collaboration between cultural heritage and scientific innovation. Housed at the historic Palazzo Bandini Piccolomini, near the famed Piazza del Campo, the museum was conceived by the University of Siena's Santa Chiara Lab, an interdisciplinary center renowned for driving innovative projects.

The institution's experiential approach invites visitors to delve into the evolution of agrifood systems, offering immersive spaces and digital tools that showcase solutions developed by Italian researchers and companies. This not only highlights the importance of sustainable choices but also provides a unique educational experience for all ages.

The FAO Director-General, QU Dongyu, attended the inauguration and underscored the essential role museums and universities play in connecting culture with innovation. He emphasized that such partnerships are vital for engaging communities and partners with the future of food and agriculture. "Museums invite us to step inside that knowledge and experience it firsthand," QU Dongyu stated.

"When universities and museums come together, they create something powerful, a dynamic platform for dialogue, participation and collective imagination."

This collaborative vision is at the heart of FAO's MuNe, which was inaugurated on October 16, 2025, during FAO's 80th anniversary celebrations. Supported by the Italian Government and designed as a place for exploration, MuNe encourages curiosity, knowledge-sharing, and reflection on how food and agriculture shape not only daily life but also communities and our shared future. Through art, cultural diplomacy, and innovative learning experiences, MuNe has become a central hub for advancing FAO's mandate and fostering greater public engagement in sustainable food and agriculture.

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The partnership with the WOW Museum offers new opportunities to reach diverse audiences and deepen public engagement. Both museums strive to inspire visitors to consider the environmental and social challenges facing agrifood systems, and to promote joint action for their transformation. Importantly, the FAO Director-General highlighted the role of young people as not merely visitors but as active co-creators of the future, stressing the need to involve students and young innovators in shaping more resilient and sustainable food systems.

As the WOW Museum joins FAO’s MuNe network, the collaboration sets the stage for enhanced knowledge-sharing, greater participation, and a renewed focus on collective imagination.

Together, these institutions are forging a path toward a more sustainable and inclusive agrifood future, demonstrating how cultural and scientific partnerships can drive meaningful change in society. Siena, Italy – The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) today took part in the inauguration of the WOW – University of Siena Museum on Agrifood, a new space dedicated to agrifood systems and their future, developed in close dialogue with the FAO’s Food and Agriculture Museum and Network (MuNe). The opening also marked the inclusion of the WOW Museum into FAO’s MuNe’s network, building on earlier exchanges on museum design and ways to engage the public around food and agriculture.

This perspective closely aligns with the vision behind FAO’s MuNe, which uses knowledge, art, cultural diplomacy and a learning experience to spark curiosity and encourage knowledge-sharing, helping people better understand FAO’s mandate, the importance of sustainable food and agriculture, and reflect on our shared food future.

FAO’s MuNe, made possible with the generous support of the Italian Government, was inaugurated on 16 October 2025 during the celebrations of FAO’s 80th anniversary by the President of the Italian Republic, Sergio Mattarella, and designed as a place where people can explore how food and agriculture shape daily life, communities and the future.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, FAO Director-General QU Dongyu,

highlighted the important role that museums and universities can play in connecting culture with innovation and in helping people and partners engage more directly with the future of food and agriculture.

“Museums invite us to step inside that knowledge and experience it firsthand,” he said. “When universities and museums come together, they create something powerful, a dynamic platform for dialogue, participation and collective imagination.”

In this context, the connection with the WOW Museum offers a further opportunity to reach new audiences and encourage reflection on the role of agrifood systems in society.

“Young people are not only visitors to museums but also co-creators of the future,” the Director-General noted, stressing the

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importance of engaging students and young innovators in shaping more sustainable agrifood systems. Located at Palazzo Bandini Piccolomini, near Piazza del Campo in Siena, the WOW Museum was conceived by the University of Siena's Santa Chiara Lab, the University's centre for interdisciplinary innovation. Designed as an experiential journey, the museum invites visitors to explore how agrifood systems are evolving and to reflect on the environmental and social challenges they face. Through this growing collaboration, FAO's MuNe and the WOW Museum aim to strengthen knowledge-sharing, encourage greater public engagement with food and agriculture, and promote joint action for the transformation of agrifood systems.

The inauguration ceremony brought together alongside FAO, representatives of national and local institutions, including Roberto Di Pietra, Rector of the University of Siena, and Nicoletta Fabio, Mayor of Siena, together with representatives of the Province of Siena, the Tuscany Region and the Siena-Arezzo Chamber of Commerce.

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Redaktion und Verantwortlichkeit:

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