



A question of... skin

How to make the tanning production line greener



Italy is a leading country in the tanning sector with over 60% of production at European level and 17% of world production. The EU has financed different “Life” projects in this sector to make the tanning industry greener by substituting the toxic substances used for the working of leather with natural substances based on waste from the agro-industry and from renewable sources. Enea with its Research Laboratory in Faenza is at the head of the Lifetan Project (Life 14 Env/It/443 Eco friendly tanning cycle) which – starting from the results obtained by five previous Eu projects dedicated to the working of leather – has as its goal, the making of the leather production line more ecological, guaranteeing the companies economically sustainable and high quality production even for the “chromium free” lines. “To obtain the soaking agent for leather - explains Alice Dall’Ara from Enea, the head of the European Lifetan project – we are testing production which uses chicken manure, which is waste from



chicken-raising, while for degreasing and coloring, we are experimenting with substances with a lactose base coming from the making of cheeses”. “For the moment, we are in a testing phase, with the involvement of some Italian companies (Amek, Glycolor, Serichim), but our goal - concludes Dall’Ara – is to soon begin innovative industrial production with low envi-

ronmental impact in accordance with the circular economic model. This should give a push to the sector, creating a Made in Italy production line and new jobs”. The Lifetan Project coordinated by Enea has, as partners, two research centers, Cnr-Iccom in Italy and Inescop in Spain, while the tanning factories involved are Italian Newport and Spanish Tradelda”.