

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

THIS REPORT CONTAINS ASSESSMENTS OF COMMODITY AND TRADE ISSUES MADE BY USDA STAFF AND NOT NECESSARILY STATEMENTS OF OFFICIAL U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

Voluntary Public

Date: 11/14/2013

GAIN Report Number: HU1305

Hungary

Post: Budapest

Government Leads Anti-Biotech Road Show

Report Categories:

Biotechnology and Other New Production
Technologies

Approved By:

Paul Spencer

Prepared By:

Ferenc Nemes

Report Highlights:

Hungary's Ministry of Rural Development is scheduled to repeat its national anti-biotech outreach effort titled 'United for GMO-free Agriculture' again this year. The campaign is aimed at farmers as well as the general public. Tapping into popular sentiment against the use of agricultural technologies, Government and NGO representatives will speak in opposition to the use of genetically engineered crops at eight events to be held from October through December.

General Information:**Nationwide Anti-GMO Road Show**

On October 30, Hungary's Ministry of Rural Development launched the first part of a national road show titled, 'Road Show for GMO-free Agriculture' to inform farmers and the interested public. The road show will travel to eight locations in Hungary, very similar to a campaign in 2012, and is scheduled to wind down in December. A dedicated website has also been created (<http://gmo.kormany.hu> - contains some English language content).

The event format includes an introduction by a high-level Ministry official (usually a State Secretary or Deputy Secretary) and the moderator and some of the speakers are typically from the Ministry's Strategic Department (the Bio-diversity and Gene Preservation section). Other speakers are from non-governmental organizations opposed to the use of genetically engineered crops (referred to as GMOs – which are constitutionally banned in Hungary). Finally, a specialist from the National Food Chain Safety Office explains the mechanics of genetic modification and testing for GMOs in laboratory samples. The events close with excerpts from anti-GMO films with titles such as “Increasing doubts” and “Among farmers.” The events are being held at community cultural centers and schools. The first road show event is at the Apagy agricultural vocational school in eastern Hungary. Gyula Budai, a State Secretary at the Ministry of Rural Development is expected to open the first session of the Road Show.

Hungary annually imports several hundred thousand tons of GMO soybean meal as animal feed but does not itself grow any genetically engineered crops.

(Agricultural Counselor Comment: Anti-biotech sentiment runs high in Hungary and events like this are not unusual. What stands out is the government's direct role in financing and organizing a nation-wide effort that leads public discourse even further away from science-based regulation of agricultural technology. End comment.)

For more information, please see GAIN report [HU1303](#).