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## Hungary

**Post:** Budapest

### **Government Sponsors Road Show Criticizing Use of Technology in Agriculture**

**Report Categories:**

Biotechnology - GE Plants and Animals

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**Report Highlights:**

Hungary's Ministry of Rural Development has launched a national outreach effort titled, 'United for GMO-free Agriculture,' which is aimed at farmers and the interested public. Government and NGO representatives are speaking in opposition to the use genetically engineered crops at eight events held in November and December.

## **Nationwide Anti-GMO Road Show**

In November, Hungary's Ministry of Rural Development launched a national road show titled, 'United for GMO-free Agriculture' to inform farmers and the interested public. The road show will travel to eight locations in Hungary and is scheduled to wind down in December. A dedicated website has also been created (<http://gmo.kormany.hu>).

The events share a similar format and include 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 come from non-governmental organizations opposed to the use of genetically engineered crops (referred to as GMOs – which are 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 universities and national park auditoriums.

The first road show event was held at the agricultural research center in Godollo and was attended by over 100 people, many of whom were students from nearby St. Istvan University. Only three members of the audience identified themselves as farmers. At this event, Gyula Budai, a State Secretary at the Ministry of Rural Development, spoke against the use of GMOs and outlined the "preservation of agricultural resources and water base of the country" as the core of the long term strategy for Hungarian agriculture.

(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, in effect, leads public discourse even further away from science-based regulation of agricultural technology.)

For more information, please see GAIN report [HU1201](#).