



USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agriculture Information Network

Template Version 2.09

Voluntary Report - public distribution

Date: 4/27/2005

GAIN Report Number: HU5006

Hungary

Agricultural Situation

Hungarian Prime Minister Sacks Ag Minister Nemeth and Nominates Graf

2005

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Report Highlights:

At an April 25th meeting of the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP), Prime Minister Gyurcsany announced the removal of Imre Nemeth, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development and nominated Jozsef Graf as the new minister.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Vienna [AU1]
[HU]

At an April 25th meeting of the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP), Prime Minister Gyurcsany announced the removal of Imre Nemeth, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development and nominated Jozsef Graf as the new minister.

At a press conference, the Prime Minister praised Minister Nemeth for his success in positioning Hungarian agriculture well in the EU Common Agricultural Policy and establishing the Agricultural and Rural Development Office (Hungary's EU paying agency) by the second year of Hungary's EU membership. However, he noted that Hungary needs an agricultural manager and not an agricultural politician during the last year before next year's national elections. The Prime Minister stressed that he expects the new Ag Minister to handle the administration of farmers' applications for EU programs and the grain intervention system more smoothly and to harmonize relations between farms and the food-processing sector. The previous handling of EU farm program applications resulted in broad based farmer demonstrations in Budapest and throughout Hungary in February and March of this year (see GAINS report HU5005). Minister Nemeth was successful in reaching an agreement with the demonstrators. However, public sentiment is that his lack of vision led to his removal.

The Prime Minister noted that the new Minister should change the Agriculture Ministry's administrative structure, organizations, and managers if needed.

Short Bio of Mr. Jozsef Graf

Jozsef Graf was born at Mecsekszabolcs (Baranya County) on October 18, 1946. After completing secondary education, he enrolled at the Agricultural College at Kormend and graduated with a degree in mechanical engineering in 1968. Between 1968-1975 he was an agricultural engineer in several agricultural cooperatives. From 1975, Mr. Graf held different (Socialist) party positions in his native Baranya County. He held top managerial positions in agricultural cooperatives and agribusiness firms.

During the mid-1990s privatization process, Graf became a 27% shareholder of a large agricultural corporation (Szabadszentkiralyi Agricultural Co.Ltd.) and later a shareholder in the "national flagship" Agricultural Corporation at Boly.

Since 1994, Jozsef Graf has been a member of the Hungarian Parliament (Hungarian Socialist Party) where he served on the Agricultural and Audit Committees.