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Agriculture/ Food / CEE / Soya

Newly founded Danube Soya Association presents ambitious program at its congress in Vienna on 5th and 6th September 2012

Danube Soya - Creating a Sustainable and GMO-free Protein Supply for Europe

Soya is one of the major challenges for a sustainable and independent European agriculture focussing on regional strengths. To meet this challenge effectively, a wide coalition of stakeholders in the beginning of 2012 founded the new **Danube Soya Association**. The independent and pan-regional association aims to systematically empower the cultivation of non-GMO soya in the Danube region – with a joint production standard and a comprehensive certification program for its regional origin and non-GMO production. At the Soya Symposium 2012 "**Danube Soya - Creating a Sustainable and GMO-free Protein Supply for Europe**", the new program, its manifold quality aspects and its agricultural and economic impulses to the region will be introduced for the first time. Participants will have ample opportunity to discuss the far reaching goals of the initiative and its impacts on the region.

More than 300 high ranking guests from all Danube countries – from Bavaria to the Black Sea – will participate at the conference, which will be held in the Vienna Agricultural Exchange on September 5th and 6th. International keynote speakers such as the former European Commissioner for Agriculture Franz Fischler, the biologist Christine von Weizsäcker and leading politicians, business people and NGOs from the Danube region will get together and assess the potential and opportunities of the Danube Soya program.

Conclusion and highlight of the conference will be the joint **Danube Soya Declaration**: a catalogue listing the necessary political commitments, the demands to research, farming and market strategies and the necessary requirements for accompanying certification programs. The Danube Soya Declaration shall be signed by the participants of the symposium and will form the basis for the project's success.

Opinion Leader Event

Organised by the Austrian Soya Association, the Danube Soya Association and ARGE Gentechnik-frei, the event is under the auspices of the Austrian Federal Minister of Agriculture Mr. Niki Berlakovich, the Austrian Federal Minister of Health Mr. Alois Stöger and the European Commissioner for Regional Policy Mr. Johannes Hahn. The state of lower Austria, the state of upper Austria, the state of Burgenland, the state of Bavaria, the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences of Vienna and the organic farmers platform BIO Austria are partners of the Soya Symposium 2012. In addition to the Austrian Ministers, the Agricultural Minister of Lower Austria Mr. Stephan Pernkopf, the Bavarian Minister of Agriculture Mr. Helmut Brunner and other leading politicians of Danube countries will also attend the conference.

The Symposium offers different sessions on individual subjects, including reports on the situation of Soya growing and processing in the various Danube countries and discussions on how to turn the program into success in the regions' food, feed and meat programs. The conference will also host the first international workshop of European Soya breeders. In the evening of September 5th, "ARGE Gentechnik-frei", the Austrian labelling platform for GMO-free food products, will celebrate its 15 years anniversary with an evening program including food and music from the Danube countries.

Please find the complete program under: www.donausoja.org/symposium-english



Quality Soya from the Danube region: Regional, Profitable, GMO free, Sustainable

"Soya has been an integral part of the human diet for more than 3000 years. It is also an indispensable part of animal feed. Currently Europe imports more than 35 Mio. tons of soya products every year. Due to increasing consumer demands for GMO-free products, already around 7 Million tons of these imports are GMO free Soya; at higher prices than regular Soya. This offers an important economic opportunity for the Danube Region that we will only manage to tackle in a joint effort. The challenges are big, but the chances for success have never been greater than today," says Matthias Krön, Chairman of the Danube Soya association, founded in Vienna in January 2012.

"Europe's dependency on imported soya for feed has become alarming. Europe basically imports all its soya from North and South America; however, much of this is not produced in a sustainable way. In the common interest of our continent we have to sincerely address this issue. Self sufficiency seems to be a distant goal, but the Danube region offers excellent conditions for soya growing. With a joint and increased investment into seed growing, agriculture, quality control and processing we can be successful", says Matthias Krön.

Due to the beneficial climate and geographic conditions for soya cultivation, the Danube countries are already Europe's largest soya producing countries; with a high potential for additional soya cultivation. According to estimates of the Austrian Chamber of Agriculture, soya cultivation in the Danube region can be expanded to about 5 million tons during the next five years.

Through increased investment in seed development, infrastructure in the Danube region, processing and logistics, the Danube Soya project can bring substantial opportunities to Central European agriculture. Danube Soya will be produced regionally, will be subject to a strict certification program and will be fully GMO free, with sustainable production requirements. At the same time participation will be made possible to all interested parties in the Danube region with realistic and market oriented requirements.

"We already see a lot of interest in Danube Soya, from major European feed and food producers as well as from large European retailers," says Matthias Krön.

At the Danube Soya Symposium stakeholders from the Danube region will start to set a new course for Europe's protein supply.

Registration: www.donausoja.org/symposium-english

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