HUNGARIAN UNIVERSITY OF
AGRICULTURE AND LIFE SCIENCES

MATE 2030

Empowering the Future: A Dynamic University in Motion

MATE 2030

A message from the Rector

Radical changes in the agricultural sector are once again placing agriculture at a strategic level. Today, in an unpredictably changing climate, we need to provide enough food for a growing global population, which is why a green transition and technological innovation in this sector is essential. By creating the MATE 2030 Roadmap, in line with the world's leading agri-industries, we are seizing the opportunity of the challenge.

MATE, through its predecessor institutions, has inherited a tradition of more than 200 years of Hungarian agricultural higher education. It combines the Georgicon tradition dating back to the 18th century, the legacy of Samuel Tessedik in Szarvas, the one and a half century old horticultural education in Buda, the 80 years old agricultural university in Gödöllő, the colourful tradition of the Kaposvár and Gyöngyös campuses, and the network of agricultural researchers of the National Agricultural Research and Innovation Centre. These institutions have become centres of excellence in Hungarian agriculture throughout the ages, and their impact has not stopped at the university walls.

In addition to agricultural and food sciences, the expertise of our staff includes fundamental research in the natural sciences, applied economics, engineering development, as well as art and pedagogical education. We believe that this cross-disciplinary approach can bring new answers to unprecedented challenges.

As a pioneer in the region, we have developed a new university model that combines excellence in science universities with embeddedness in applied universities. Our aim is to be a university of action, actively shaping the path of the rise of Hungarian agriculture. Furthermore, to be the bridge between the international scientific cutting edge and Hungarian farmers and industry.

Within the framework of the MATE 2030 strategy, we have set our goals until the end of the decade to seize the opportunities offered by the historic upgrading of agriculture and related sectors as the leading agricultural university in the region. To this end, I invite the citizens of MATE and our partners from all fields of science and business to join us.

Dr. Csaba Gyuricza
Rector

2024. February

The mission of MATE

Empowering the Future:
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The mission of MATE 2030 is to seize the opportunities presented by the increasing importance of agriculture and to actively shape the rise of Hungarian agriculture as a university of action.

To be a bridge between the international scientific forefront, the Hungarian farmers and industry, in order to bring the most advanced knowledge to every corner of the country and open new horizons for rural development.

State of affairs

Present challenges and opportunities

The environmental, social and economic problems caused by **climate change** are posing **unprecedented challenges to agriculture**. We are at a historic moment, because with the **right responses and tools we can ensure food security and sustainable farming** in the long term, both locally and globally.

In line with international trends, **Hungarian agriculture is facing significant transformations and opportunities**, which it can successfully exploit by building on its traditions, strengths and innovation capabilities. In addition to favourable natural endowments, such as the quality of the soil and the significant water resources, **Hungary's food security self-sufficiency also offers outstanding opportunities**. However, environmental challenges also affect the Carpathian Basin, and the drought damage in 2022 warns that adaptation is inevitable. The concentrated land tenure structure creates opportunities for increasing productivity and for increasingly large-scale agricultural investments, thus facilitating the uptake of precision technologies and sustainable approaches in domestic agriculture.

Despite the improvement in productivity, there is a need for further, more dynamic increases in efficiency and competitiveness in agriculture.

A major challenge for Hungarian agriculture is the **lack of skilled labour, which limits the opportunities for knowledge-intensive farming**. In addition, the age structure is unfavourable – more than a third of Hungarian farmers are over 65 – which makes it **crucial to attract a young generation of skilled farmers.**

The new generation of Hungarian farmers needs to channel new energy, knowledge and attitudes into the domestic sector. In comparison with the EU trends, there is currently a low level of cooperation between farmers, which often results in an unfavourable negotiating position. In addition to industry know-how, essential skills such as management skills, digital literacy and language skills will enable the future generation of farmers to adapt to a changing environment of innovation, changing production conditions due to climate change and technological innovation.

The language skills and open-mindedness of a skilled young generation are the basis for competitiveness on the international market and for the inflow of the latest technological advances.

Agri-technological development will also bring positive changes in terms of increasing the population retention capacity of the countryside, making agricultural careers and rural life more attractive and accessible to young people.

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MATE's strategic goal is to turn the climate adaptation challenges of the Hungarian agricultural sector into economic opportunities, to enable social mobility and to promote environmental balance. Our ambition is to create a unique regional knowledge, practice and societal cooperation in the Carpathian Basin that will give Hungarian agriculture a new momentum to compete globally.

To achieve this goal, we are putting the university's role on a new footing: we want to shape the direction of change, not follow it. **Our aim is to make MATE the leading agricultural university in the region,** a professional stronghold of East-Central Europe that successfully channels regional expertise into the international academic mainstream.

We want to become a dynamic knowledge centre, combining the cutting-edge results of international scientific discoveries and technological innovations with the traditions of Hungarian agriculture and the expertise of our farmers, thus creating a competitive economic advantage for our country.

By fostering collaborations, we identify new focus areas, practices and tangible solutions to the challenges of climate change, thereby **increasing the resilience and global competitiveness of Hungarian agriculture**. By opening the doors of the university, we aim to contribute directly to the sustainability of Hungary and the economic strength of rural areas, beyond the classical academic activities.

Our aim is to raise a new generation of the country's most talented young people who see agriculture as a long-term vocation, who see its social, environmental and economic dimensions in a new, comprehensive system, who see its future as an opportunity and who are determined to make it a reality.

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To achieve our vision, we have defined our tasks in the following five points:

1. Educating the future generation of agricultural leaders
2. Innovative knowledge generation in the Carpathian Basin
3. Strengthening knowledge-intensive agriculture, enhancing national competitiveness
4. Making an impact to build a green future
5. Uniting the agricultural community, promoting rural-urban cohesion

Educating the future generation of agricultural leaders

Strategic Development Plan

MATE is taking a leading role in the education of the next generation of farmers, including the targeted recruitment of talented students, the development of innovative teaching methods and student services that meet generational needs, and the creation of digitally advanced campuses. In addition to the **MATE leadership training**, we pay particular attention to creating an inclusive educational environment for our students from diverse backgrounds.

More than ever before, the future generation of farmers will need to acquire skills such as **technology awareness, innovation receptiveness, sustainability awareness, global outlook and strategic planning to ensure their ability to adapt to future challenges.** To address environmental challenges, openness to new approaches and the ability to harness knowledge from the global frontier is essential. Keeping up with technological advances requires not only basic digital skills but also the ability to apply automation and artificial intelligence.

MATE graduates will bring this knowledge to the domestic and international agricultural sector, contributing to the development of solutions suited for both national and global levels.

Our goals

- Leading-edge, personalised education and career guidance through digital and data-driven student services.
- Recruiting a broader student base into the agricultural career field through regionally outstanding interdisciplinary and skills-development training while retaining excellence.
- Extending academic and internship exchanges with the world's leading agricultural universities, so that our brightest students can exchange knowledge with the global leaders.
- Collaborating with the most prominent national and international partner companies to provide innovative approaches to practical training and thereby increase the value of our graduates.
- Providing 21st century leadership skills through the University's flagship courses and the Future Leaders Programme, which our graduates can use to contribute to the innovative strength and competitiveness of Hungarian agriculture.
- Strengthening mentoring approaches and practices in the University's pedagogical workshops and teaching community, to support talent and serve individual student needs.

Innovative knowledge generation in the Carpathian Basin

Strategic Development Plan

Based on the local specificities and environmental characteristics of the Carpathian Basin, **our University is creating unique and internationally competitive know-how.** We identify new areas of scientific research that not only provide solutions to local challenges, but also contributes to the modernization of agriculture with valuable innovations at international level.

MATE's broad disciplinary coverage provides opportunities for interdisciplinary synergies that offer unique value propositions both in Hungarian higher education and in the global academic sphere. In addition to the scientific links within the institution, a key objective is to collaborate with the best national and regional universities in the fields of engineering, medicine, informatics, economics and social sciences.

These extensive collaborations and joint projects are the basis for the region as a whole to increasingly benefit from the dynamically evolving life sciences to address global societal challenges.

Our goals

- Strengthening a vibrant, international research community through MATE's Flagship Research Groups, which are the University's premier scientific laboratories and establish interdisciplinary links at the highest level.
- Attracting Hungarian experts working in leading institutions abroad as well as international experts through Flagship Programmes.
- Ensuring a research-focused career path, so that top academic colleagues can focus more of their working time on their research.
- Ensuring the supply of agricultural research through a coordinated research supply programme to identify and support outstanding talent.
- Supporting the careers of emerging researchers in the region through a dedicated Research Excellence Programme.

Strengthening knowledge-intensive agriculture, enhancing national competitiveness

Strategic Development Plan

Our university promotes the development of digital technologies, automation solutions, data analysis techniques and artificial intelligence used in agriculture, **increasing the technological innovation and national economic competitiveness of Hungarian agriculture through strong industrial cooperation.**

The key to the future of Hungarian food security is the development of a knowledge-intensive agriculture, in the creation of which MATE plays an indispensable role. The university's research and innovation activities cover the entire supply chain, which **contributes greatly to the development of the knowledge capital needed for national self-sufficiency**. As a national university of agriculture with a nationwide reach, MATE has outstanding links to the domestic agricultural sector. This high degree of embeddedness provides an excellent incubator for the **creation of an agri-innovation ecosystem with national strategic relevance**.

MATE aims to be a key innovation hub in the region, with its industry-ready knowledge, strong domestic and global network of contacts and digital infrastructure.

Our goals

- Providing a platform for innovation and business activities as a catalyst for increasing Hungarian agricultural development and food security self-sufficiency.
- Establishing Hungary's first science and innovation park specialising in agricultural innovation, climate protection and green transition, led by the university.
- Introducing a career model and incentive scheme for research staff to support innovation with industrial cooperation and business potential.
- Identifying and channelling the practical use of agricultural and environmental research innovations into the sector through the university's priority research focus areas.
- Expanding the university innovation ecosystem services through the most competitive national, EU and global RDI funding.

Making an impact to build a green future

Strategic Development Plan

In 2023 our university was ranked by the Times Higher Education as on of the top 100 universities doing the most for achieving the Zero Hunger Sustainable Development Goal. We are building on this ambition as part of our action-oriented university programme.

The expertise of MATE researchers in a range of fields enables us to approach sustainability at the highest scientific level. Our staff is developing and applying locally designed solutions, while at the same time sharing and applying academic knowledge to a wide range of communities. In this way, alongside their fundamental teaching and research activities, they contribute to making the importance of agriculture more widely understood and to enhance its social prestige and image.

In order to have a direct impact, **MATE is placing more emphasis than ever before on extending its knowledge beyond its doors**, whether it is public policy advice, training and services for domestic farmers, sustainable agricultural practices, ensuring national food security, or landscape and environmental initiatives.

Our goals

- Developing a nationally available agricultural-focused training and further education system focusing on areas such as agrotechnology, data-driven and precision agriculture, robotics, new forms of production, sustainability and agroecology.

- Reaching out to and shaping the attitudes of actors outside the agricultural sector in the context of lifelong learning and urban agriculture.

- Channelling university agricultural expertise into the business and productive sector through the university's own business and agricultural extension service.

- Providing accessible, but professionally high quality educational and awareness-raising university initiatives on the university's website and campuses.

- Developing the university infrastructure in the context of the green transition, to set an example and transfer practical knowledge.

Uniting the agricultural community, promoting rural-urban cohesion

Strategic Development Plan

Our university is committed to supporting the development of rural regions and building a broad social partnership for sustainable agriculture and environmental balance.

The challenges of rural Hungary – depopulating small villages, fewer economic opportunities and the social problems that go with them – reflect global trends. However, successful international regeneration programmes organised around agriculture (e.g. the knowledge-intensive Dutch or the innovation-based Israeli agricultural model) show that the economic opportunities created by the emerging agricultural sector can be channelled into the development of rural regions on a large scale. Following global practices, the **MATE 2030 programme considers it of the utmost importance that the Hungarian agricultural community, with its colourful diversity, fully benefits from new solutions and that as many stakeholders as possible are on board with the agrarian transformation.**

MATE wants to play its part in helping to ensure that all farmers have the conditions necessary for high quality and high yields, secure livelihoods and opportunities for economic advancement. This requires knowledge transfer on a scale that goes beyond the core activities of the university and is accessible to all open-minded farmers. By opening the doors of the university and **organising the national agricultural community**, we want not only to make cutting-edge knowledge available, but also to strengthen the interaction, dialogue and cooperation between the various groups in the agricultural community.

The key to the development of the domestic agricultural sector is a strong agricultural community, thus increasing the population retention capacity of the countryside. Through its social and community organising activities, **MATE aims to actively contribute to making the rural agricultural sector more attractive to producers.**

Our goals

- Establishing a professional platform between the different actors in the agricultural sector to ensure full engagement.

- Increasing the rural retention and competitiveness through digitalisation and the channelling of cutting-edge agricultural technologies.

- Strengthening the university and wider agricultural education alumni communities, who will be ambassadors of the valorising agribusiness in the country and the region.

- Monitoring the agri-community, providing them with career, training and exposure opportunities to keep up with cutting-edge knowledge after university.

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