

## **Biomass Conference**

The Hungarian Biomass Association held its 6<sup>th</sup> Biomass Conference between March 6 and 8, 2003 in Sopron co-hosted by the Faculty of Energetics of the University of West Hungary (Sopron) and the Environmental Management and Ecoenergetics Consortium (Almásfüzitő).

János Horváth managing director of Go-Montan Ltd. co-ordinator of the Energy Forest project, and dr. Gábor Solti, management expert of the project attended the conference.

On the first day of the conference lectures were delivered on

- future of utilisation of renewable energy sources,
- prospects of energy production and consumption in agriculture,
- energy crops and their utilisation,
- cultivation and utilisation of energy grass,
- production and utilisation of biogas,
- perspectives of biofuels,
- planning and financing of energetic exploitation of biomass,
- main environmental impacts of biomass heating.

As regards our Energy Forest project the lecture delivered by professor Béla Marosvölgyi of the Faculty of Energetics at the University of West Hungary on the possibilities, limits and tasks of energetic utilisation of wood, as well as the one delivered by L. Pintér and J. Tóth on the production of electric power based on wood at the Borsodi Energetics Ltd. operating the Borsodi Power Plant, - were especially useful. The latter was about converting certain blocks of an existing Hungarian coal-based power plant deemed to be shut down to wood-heating. This conversion procedure would be in partial fulfilment of the existing European requirement according to which 4% of the current Hungarian power supply should come from renewable energy resources.

Although there is a potential for increasing utilisation of alternative energy, both lecturers and speakers emphasised the lack of legal framework for planting and exploiting energy forests. Good intentions, will and technical background are all in

vain, if there are either no appropriate laws permitting the cultivation of plants, arable land and forestry, or such laws are ambivalent.

Following the lectures participants introduced their companies. When Mr. János Horváth took over he introduced briefly our Energy Forest project. His presentation was followed by a lively discussion.

On the second day of the conference, the group consisting of nearly 50 participants visited “Energie spar”, a showcase of energetics and environmental technologies held in Wels, Austria, with the guidance of dr. Jenő Kovács, president of the Hungarian Biomass Association. Inside the 25 lobbies of the expo-ground visitors could find and study a wide assortment of energy-saving building construction technologies, solar energy and wind power equipment, and a selection of boilers developed for wood pellet fuel.

The visit to the fair provided a good opportunity for exchanging ideas, informal conversations and bringing the participants together.

Consultations took place on the third day of the conference.

The conference was a very important event for our germinating biomass sector and helped us understand better the tasks lying ahead in connection with the accession to the European Union.

In the European Union planned tasks of forest management – taking into account the principle of subsidiarity – was defined in Helsinki at the Conference of Ministers in 1993. There is an article in that treaty fostering research of energetic and industrial utilisation of wood.