



## NATIONAL AUTHORITY FOR TRADE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

### PRESS RELEASE

**Large national strawberry inspection of the NATCP has been completed - half a thousand items did not pass, even the “fake strawberries from Lajosmizse” failed**

**Strawberries have been the focus of increased attention for four weeks: the National Authority for Trade and Consumer Protection (NATCP) and the government agencies under its professional control inspected a total of 512 batches at 479 locations nationwide. The checks which covered the entire commercial range found that one in ten products had a problem. By the end of the operation, the authorities had imposed fines of nearly 3 million forints and several procedures are still ongoing.**

One of the best known domestic production areas for strawberries is Lajosmizse and its surroundings. The local fruit already has a name on the market - many people are looking specifically for “strawberries from Lajosmizse”. Unfortunately, it is precisely for this reason that every year strawberries of other origins - mainly Romanian - are tried to be sold as Hungarian or even as ‘lajosmizsei’. This season too, inspectors have found several such cases, fraudsters can expect heavy fines.

It is important to know that Romanian strawberries are usually much cheaper than their Hungarian counterparts, which is often a reason why they are so popular. Buying wisely is therefore key: foreign fruit is usually of a different variety, colour, shape and packaging. Hungarian growers typically use interchangeable 5 kg wooden crates, while Romanian strawberries come in plastic crates and Spanish, Greek or Polish strawberries come in smaller, single-use packaging.

The national campaign, coordinated by the NATCP covered the whole range of retailers from hypermarkets and supermarkets to street stalls and temporary outlets. The inspectors checked not only the quality and origin of the fruit but also the hygiene conditions.

About a fifth of the lots inspected were of foreign origin - roughly in line with market rates. However, the proportion of problem lots was 10%, i.e. one in ten samples did not comply with quality, traceability or labelling rules. This is higher than what is usually measured by experts for fruit and vegetables.

There were no quality problems with either domestic or foreign goods, although in the latter case the origin was often not indicated or was misleading. The most common errors were incomplete labelling, such as failure to indicate the quality class or lack of traceability. Four lots had to be destroyed as a result. Almost 3 million forints in fines were imposed and several procedures are still ongoing.

Dr Lilla Németh-Weingartner, President of the NATCP, said: “Fruit and vegetable inspections will continue after the strawberry season our aim remains the same: to ensure that consumers have access to safe, high-quality produce in shops and markets.”

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National Authority for Trade and Consumer Protection

