

10 years, 50 issues, 1,000 thoughts we have shared with you

By some amazing coincidence, this summer, we are celebrating several anniversaries. Ten years ago, we published the first issue of our corporate newspaper EkoNiva-News.

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Product from Savino on the German market

Savinskaya Niva has supplied the first lot of organic peas and buckwheat to Germany.

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On par with Europe!

EkoNiva-Tekhnika's clients have learnt about the latest trends in the farming business.

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1,000 thoughts we have shared with you

By some amazing coincidence, this summer, we are celebrating several anniversaries. Ten years ago, we published the first issue of our corporate newspaper *EkoNiva-News*. Since that time, we have published 50 issues of the newspaper and 1,000 articles.

Everything started with a modest 8-page newsletter. Now the newspaper has become more like a journal, it is published in the Russian and English languages. Over the 10 years of its existence, *EkoNiva-News* has become a double prizewinner of mass media contests in the farming sector. We have never avoided discussing sensitive issues. We have published interviews with interesting people and dedicated a great number of articles to improving fieldwork efficiency.

When I was addressing the readers in the first issue, I expressed hope that our newspaper would become

the information guide in their work. I hope this is exactly how it has worked out, and we really are of some use to you. At least, I have never heard any negative feedback, only kind words. Therefore, even when it was financially challenging for us to continue publishing the newspaper, we still kept on doing it. I have come to realise that the newspaper can tell more about *EkoNiva* and agriculture in Russia than any presentation or speech. Among the main characters of our issues were both simple workers and VIP persons, our partners and clients. We appreciate the support of those who work in cooperation with our newspaper, those who have welcomed our journalists on their farms, sent photos to us and participated in our contests.

This year, we have launched a new informative project. The *Academicians* newspaper tells the children about

farming in simple words. We consider it very important to popularise the farm work and the rural way of life and simply explain where bread and milk come from.

I would like to thank the editorial board of our newspaper — *EkoNiva-Media* information agency and wish these creative people new ideas so that our newspaper could always be interesting, topical and useful to the readers.

I think among our readers must be those who have been reading our newspaper since the very first issue. If you still have it, please, call the editorial office or send us a photo. It will be a pleasant surprise for us, and you will receive an award as the most devoted reader of our newspaper. We are looking forward to meeting you again at the pages of *EkoNiva-News*!

Stefan DUERR,
President of *EkoNiva* Group



Money and projects must come together

Nikolay Podguzov, Deputy Minister of Economic Development, visited a modern dairy in Verkhny Ikorets village, Voronezh oblast.

This was Mr. Podguzov's second visit to EkoNivaAgro. First time, he had toured the production facilities of the company together with Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev two and a half years ago. Mr. Podguzov recalls his impressions of the cutting-edge herd management systems with pleasure. The present visit was arranged in order to check the efficiency of the Investment Projects Support Programme based on project financing. Forty-two projects were selected for financing within the framework of the programme, three of them – in Voronezh oblast. Among the selected projects was EkoNiva's dairy for 2,800 head, launched last December. The total investment amount, including purchase of cattle, reached 1,265 million rubles, of which 1,006 million rubles was granted as a loan by Rosselkhozbank. Aleksey Bykov, Director of the Voronezh Office of Rosselkhozbank, was also present at the meeting. He confirmed that the bank intends to continue its cooperation with EkoNiva.

'The economic situation in the farming sector is largely determined by the activity of big agricultural holdings', highlighted Aleksey Bykov. The Deputy Minister saw the modern housing facilities and the milking parlour, discussed production questions with the management and tried the 'Academic Milk' from the Academy of Dairy Sciences. Nikolay Podguzov explained that currently, the Investment Projects Support Programme is being modified so that it could use the resources of non-governmental pension funds in order to make the money and investments projects come together, as the Deputy Minister put it. The updated programme can be launched by autumn. 'Visits like this allow us to see that business in the regions is developing well and that there are people, obsessed with their work in a good sense of the word, who implement such projects', emphasised Nikolay Podguzov. 'I am very happy that we have an opportunity to support these projects and Voronezh oblast.'

By Svetlana WEBER

Innovations are prompted by farmers

JCB loaders have been working in Russia for over ten years. Farmers admit that these machines are absolutely indispensable. The chief executives of JCB have met those who use the fruits of their innovative ideas every day.

The JCB group visited EkoNivaAgro (Voronezh oblast). The company has 50 JCB machines of different modifications.

The guests from Great Britain — John Smith, Agriculture General Manager, and Ian Pratt, Managing Director JCB Loadall — as well as Andrey Solovyev, Managing Director Russia & CIS at JCB, and his deputy Svetlana Petrova visited several dairies.

'JCB machines load feed, transport bales, help to clean cow barns and perform construction works, says Dmitry Korendyasev, Director of EkoNivaAgro-Vostochnoe. 'They are also in very high demand in crop production due to their versatility and durability. We have a machine which has done 20,000 engine hours.'

'It is very useful to see how our machines work on the farm', says Ian Pratt, 'to hear the opinion of the people who operate them and get to know more about the Russian farming sector. We have seen that it is rapidly developing.'

The feedback from farmers prompts the innovations which we implement into our machines.'

The guests from JCB visited EkoNiva-Chernozemie's service centre and EkoNiva-Tekhnika's headquarters in Detchino (Kaluga oblast). The visitors from Fliegl headed by Joseph Fliegl joined the group in their tour.

The representatives of the two companies visited the service centre, discussed the perspectives of further cooperation, observing that the Russian market is one of the key markets for both companies.

By Yulia SALKOVA and Olga ATANOVA





'Academic Milk' from our sweet cows

A new processing plant of the Academy of Dairy Sciences has started its operation in Voronezh oblast.

The processing plant is located in Shchuchye village, several kilometres away from EkoNivaAgro farms. The milk is delivered for processing straight from the cows.

The plant already produces pasteurised 'Academic Milk'. The production lines for manufacturing a wide range of dairy products: kefir, sour cream, cottage cheese with different levels of fat content and yoghurt with natural fillers, — are ready to be launched. The plant will produce 22 tonnes of ready dairy products daily under the brand of the Academy of Dairy Sciences.

The key production strategy is based on using exclusively natural components.

'It might sound strange but due to the excess of adulterated dairy products in the country, I want to emphasise that our dairy products are made exclusively of milk and all the flavour fillers contain only fruit and sugar', says Aleksandr Belyaev, Head of the Processing Division. 'EkoNiva produces 460 tonnes of milk per day only in Voronezh oblast. These production volumes put the use of palm oil and other vegetable oils out of the question. It makes sense to provide people with fresh and healthy

milk from the Voronezh cows!'

Today, both large supermarket chains and small shops prefer selling local products. The buyers also show more trust to the products produced in their native regions.

'Our plant in Voronezh oblast has opened the doors of many shops in the region', says Denis Shipilov, Head of Sales of Dairy Products Department of the Academy of Dairy Sciences. 'Now our products will always be on the tables of the residents of Voronezh!'

By Yulia SALKOVA



Product from Savino on the German market

Savinskaya Niva has delivered the first lot of organic peas and buckwheat to Germany.

Thirty tonnes of buckwheat were supplied to Prima Vera Naturkorn GmbH. The company

is engaged in processing and supplies its products for baby food production. Ten tonnes of peas were delivered to Marktgesellschaft der



Naturland Bauern AG. The German clients were very happy with the quality of the products.

Another German company showed interest in organic beef of Savinskaya Niva. The HiPP baby food is well known all over the world. Russian mothers also had an opportunity to appreciate its quality. Currently, the companies are discussing supply of 15 tonnes of beef to HiPP processing facility in Kaliningrad oblast. Savinskaya Niva started organic production in 2012. The company grows organic cereals, pulses and fodder crops on 3,000 ha of land and produces organic beef (1,200 head of cattle).

'All products are certified in accordance with EU 834/2007 standards and StO Agrosafia standards', says Anatoly Nakariakov, Director of the farming operation.

By Olga ATANOVA



The bread and milk of hospitality!

Vladimir Gorodetsky, Governor of Novosibirsk oblast, visited Sibirskaya Niva. The Head of the region visited the fields of the enterprise and its own milk processing plant.

Vladimir Gorodetsky, accompanied by Stefan Duerr, President of EkoNiva, and Sergey Lyakhov, Head of Sibirskaya Niva, assessed the prospects of the future harvest right in the middle of the field, where the modern tractors were operating.

'The sowing campaign in Maslyanino district has been well prepared on

all fronts, including high-productive machinery, high quality seeds and fuel inventories', says Vladimir Gorodetsky. 'The sowing work is going well. If the weather is favourable, everything will be finished on time, which allows us to hope for a good harvest'.

Stefan Duerr told the Head of the region about his plans for development of the

dairy in Penkovo village. Ultimately, the company is considering increasing the capacity from 1,800 to 5,000 head of dairy herd. Sergey Lyakhov added that along with the development of the dairy in Borkovo village, it would enable the company to increase milk production significantly: from 100 tonnes to 280 tonnes per day.

Vladimir Gorodetsky visited the milk processing plant of Sibirskaya Niva, which provides the residents of the region with fermented milk products under the Academy of Dairy Sciences brand. The plant produces milk, cottage cheese, sour cream, snezhok (sweet liquid product made of fermented milk) and butter. In the long term, the company is intending to increase the processing volume and build a processing plant with a capacity of 300 tonnes per day. Vladimir Gorodetsky supported this ambition, underlying that Sibirskaya Niva has all it takes to succeed.

By Anna BORDUNOVA



For the benefit of the people

EkoNivaAgro (Voronezh oblast) became a laureate of two awards at the same time. The company received the Kindness City Resident award in the Devotion nomination and the award of the High Social Efficiency Organisation all-Russia contest.

The company received the second prize for participation in resolving social issues of the region and the development of corporate charity. Out of 319 participants, 40 companies received awards.

'We have been operating in the region, on the territory of over twenty villages,

for about fifteen years', says Aleksandr Rybenko, Director of EkoNivaAgro. 'We cover all areas of life: from individual assistance to those who need help to overall development of infrastructure. This policy was initiated by EkoNiva's President, Stefan Duerr. We share his views and we are happy that the company is expanding both in the areas of production volumes and social activity, simply speaking — helping people.'

The areas of social activity of EkoNivaAgro are much more numerous than its production activities. Among them are health care, assistance with medical treatment to employees and members of their families,

assistance to veterans and disabled people, support of educational, medical, sports and cultural institutions. The company also provides individual support to talented young people and people experiencing difficulties in life, encourages spiritual life of the rural residents and promotes patriotic education of the future generation. Only in 2015, the company spent 32 million rubles on charity.

'We can feel a powerful feedback', says Valentina Shevtsova, Deputy Director for Social Relations of EkoNivaAgro. 'Young people come and stay to work and live here. People come from other villages and even cities. This promotes the birth rate in our region!'

By Yulia SALKOVA



Asia is getting closer

Anatoly Artamonov, Governor of Kaluga oblast, and Ms. Thai Hyong, Head of TH True Milk concern, visited the headquarters of EkoNiva-Tekhnika in Detchino (Kaluga oblast).

The largest dairy producer in Vietnam (500 tonnes of milk per day) is planning to start operating in Russia. The company is going to launch a dairy production site with its own feed centre, milk processing and retail chain and develop vegetables growing. The planned investment volume for developing a herd of 152,000 cows amounts to 900 million dollars.

In Vietnam, the company intensively uses John Deere machinery and intends to continue using this brand in Russia. That is what inspired the Vietnamese dairy producers to visit EkoNiva, the largest John Deere dealer in Russia.

The Vietnamese guests liked the biggest service centre in Europe equipped with the latest technologies. They toured the production facilities and the spare parts storage facility. Ms. Thai Hyong was pleasantly surprised when she learnt that EkoNiva is not only a farm machinery dealer but also the leading milk producer in Russia. This prompted new topics for the conversation: the guests and the hosts discussed milk production costs and other economic aspects.

Stefan Duerr told the guests that Kaluga

oblast had created all the necessary conditions for investors, who can actually feel the support of the governor.

‘Appearance of a new big player on the Russian milk market is good in every respect’, says Stefan Duerr, President of EkoNiva. ‘It will help to solve a problem of milk deficiency and significantly revitalise the Russian market.’

Several days later, the Ryazan office of EkoNiva-Tekhnika was visited by representatives of Charoen Pokphand Group (CP Group) from Thailand and

BannerDairy — Banner Infant Dairy Products from China.

The companies are planning to invest approximately 1 billion US dollars into the construction of a dairy in Ryazan oblast. This will be a complete production cycle: farms for 80,000 head, 40,000–60,000 ha of land for crop production, a feed mill and a processing facility. The investors are looking for a reliable supplier of farming machinery. The guests from Asia were under a powerful impression after the visit to the service centre. Currently, they view EkoNiva as their potential partner.



By Svetlana WEBER
and Yulia SALKOVA

A European vision

Farmers from Austria visited farming operations of EkoNiva in Kursk, Voronezh and Kaluga oblasts.

The farm tour started with the visit to the headquarters of EkoNiva-Tekhnika Holding in Detchino (Kaluga oblast). The farmers went through one of the largest service centres in Europe and saw cutting-edge equipment for farming machinery maintenance and repair. After a detailed examination, the Austrian delegation set off for Kaluzhskaya Niva.

Not even the bad weather could cool down the genuine interest of the foreign visitors, and the group headed for the robotic dairy. The guests were interested in everything: the volume of milk produced, the cattle feed, the milk price. The price issue was the most burning one.

‘The current situation is really complicated’, says Johannes Draxler. ‘Milk prices have decreased by 30%. Today, all European Union countries experience oversupply of milk.’

The guests continued exploring EkoNiva’s territories in Zashchitnoe operation, Kursk oblast. The group visited the thrashing-floor and toured the grain storage facilities and the seed production plots.

EkoNivaAgro (Voronezh oblast) became the terminal point of the tour. At the modern dairy in Verkhny Ikorets, the Austrian guests watched the process of artificial insemination. After that, they visited EkoNiva’s milk processing facility, which is

being prepared for production of the first dairy products.

The Austrian farmers completed their visit to EkoNiva convinced that it is absolutely essential to develop economic partnership between our countries.

‘For Europe, the sanctions are a real disaster’, concludes Johannes Draxler. ‘If somebody from Brussels or the President of the European Union were with us during this visit, I am sure they would change their opinion on the sanctions dramatically.’

By Olga ATANOVA





Opening a door with many locks

How is the farming sector feeling under the sanctions and countersanctions? What has been achieved and how to enhance the governmental support efficiency? These topics were discussed by the leading players in all areas of the farming market at the Agricultural Forum of Russia.

Anatoly Kutsenko, Director of the Department of Economy and Governmental Support of the Ministry of Agriculture of Russia, considers that the embargo is a unique chance, which has allowed increasing the internal production volumes. Some industries such as pig farming, poultry farming, oil crops processing and sugar industry have achieved significant results.

'Today, our key objective is not just to substitute the imported goods. It is essential to make our products competitive and affordable to the buyers', emphasised the representative of the Ministry of Agriculture.

In order to achieve more solid results, it is vital to attract investments into the sector. Therefore, subsidising of investment loans will be the priority measure of governmental support. The export issue was mentioned in the presentations of many speakers. In particular, Maksim Basov, Co-owner of Rusagro and Sergey Mikhailov, Director General of Cherkizovo, believe that export of pork and poultry into the countries of South-East Asia along with measures for enhancement of the internal demand, will help to stabilise the market which experiences a certain oversupply of these products. However, it is not easy to reach external markets. As Sergey Kutsenko put it, it is a door with many locks. Firstly, no one is waiting for us behind it, we have to push harder ourselves. Secondly, it is essential to harmonise the veterinary regulations, which will take a long time.

However, there is some forward movement, which means there is a chance. We did manage to start import of grain into China at the end of last year.

The participants of the Forum discussed the quality of domestic products. According to Maksim Protasov, Head of the Russian Quality Control System, Russian people spend 49% of their income on food, therefore, they are trying to buy cheaper products. Processors understand this and attempt to decrease their production costs, sometimes at the expense of quality.

Stefan Duerr, President of EkoNiva Group, presented a different vision of this problem. Adulterated products affect not only the consumers but also the producers of milk because they will never be able to compete with palm oil products.

'No subsidies will be able to help the dairy industry unless the government takes strict measures against the use of palm oil', says Stefan Duerr. 'For us this is a "to be or not to be" question, a *cri de coeur* of

dairy producers. Some time ago, there were some steps forward but now everything is stagnant again. Maybe that is why the unprecedented governmental support measures did not bring the expected result?'

The measures against the use of palm oil are still in the process of agreement at the governmental authorities. Establishment of special labelling and introduction of changes into the technical guidelines require time. As a well-known politician said, delay in this case might be tantamount to death.

In the context of discussion dedicated to the situation in the Russian farm machinery industry, Konstantin Babkin, President of the Novoye Sodruzhestvo industrial union, observed that the governmental policy in this area is getting friendlier, however, he expressed concern regarding the subsidies for domestic machinery for the second half of this year and for 2017. In his opinion, it would be good if the government financed representation of our machinery at foreign trade shows in order to support export.

At the conclusion of the discussion, almost all the speakers unilaterally resolved that in the context of the sanctions, the farming industry has made a considerable step forward. However, in order to ensure considerable growth, it is essential to work hard on efficiency, keep up the governmental support level and access external markets. Present-day Russia has more to offer than just oil and gas.

By Svetlana WEBER





Argentina-Brazil: efficient simplicity with Olympic calm

The week spent by Stefan Duerr and his daughter Barbara in South America was crammed with events: touring farming operations in Argentina and Brazil, participating in The Owners Forum, visiting the Olympic Arena in Rio! Stefan Duerr shared his impressions with the readers of our newspaper.



In Argentina, you understand straightaway that you are in an agricultural country: you can go tens of kilometres along the road, and all you see is cattle, cattle, cattle. Until recently, they had about 65 million head of beef cattle. However, due to the policy of the former President, Cristina Kirchner, only half of the cattle has remained. During the term of her office, she became the main enemy of the agricultural sector: huge export duties were imposed on agricultural products and export of beef was totally banned. The internal demand in the country is not really high, and the market is quite cheap. I have no idea how they managed to survive in these conditions. Agricultural producers in Argentina connect their hopes with the new President. Currently, export of beef has been reinstated and the export duties on wheat, corn and soy have been decreased by 30%.

Argentinian farmers gather two harvests every three years. Agricultural production is organised with incredible simplicity. The producers do not aspire to high crop and milk yields (although we think that their

in sausage-shaped plastic bags. The milk price is 14 rubles per litre. This is not much, but still tolerable.

A typical farm in Argentina is not larger than 2-5 thousand ha but there are some big farms reaching about 500-800 thousand hectares. The infrastructure of La Palma province, which we visited, is quite weak, worse than in our rural areas. The roads are practically nonexistent. Speaking of the roads: if the waiting time at the toll road payment point exceeds five minutes for any vehicle, the toll bar lifts and all the vehicles pass free of charge. I wish our toll roads had the same system!

In Brazil, farming is a little better developed. We visited a very advanced farming operation with cutting-edge machinery. The operation has been implementing no-till for over 20 years. This system seems to be efficient for them.

Working with contractors is quite popular in Brazil. Almost none of the farmers have their own farm machines; they contract machines for all kinds of fieldwork. People are also hired for the season. As a rule, a 30,000-hectare farm has three full-time employees; the others are hired for seasonal works. Subsidies are granted only for made-in-Brazil machines. If you want to get a loan at 7.5 %, buy domestically produced machines, and if you prefer imported machinery, take commercial loans, which are even more expensive than in Russia.

The employment and labour law in Brazil is very strict, and there are heavy fines for violations. Argentinians are more afraid of the Labour Inspection Authority than we

are of the police, the tax authorities and the public prosecution office all together. After this trip, I realized that we should look at production costs even closer. Right now, EkoNiva spends on production much less than other farming enterprises but looking at our South American colleagues, we understand that there is still room for costs reduction and efficiency improvement.

In Rio de Janeiro, we visited the Olympic Arena in the company of the mayor of the city. I was amazed: the Olympic Games start in two months, and nothing is ready yet. I would be very nervous, but the mayor was cheerful and happy, he did not look in the least concerned. We came to the cycling track and saw that the preparations have hardly started. I asked the mayor, 'Are you sure you will make it on time?' The mayor responded, 'I don't know'. Then I said, 'What are you going to do?' — 'We'll come up with something!'

It is hard to believe that they will be able to do everything on time. The construction workers are taking it easy, they work while dancing salsa. The underground station leading to the stadia will be launched only next February. I said, 'But the Olympics are in August'. 'I know' we'll come up with something', answered the mayor with a smile.

They have an absolutely different mentality. They do not care about the external appearance. The airport in Rio is old and dingy, like the Voronezh airport before reconstruction. At first, I thought that we arrived in the internal flights terminal but it turned out to be the international airport. They do not give a straw. They look at the situation in this way: we are doing the Olympics for ourselves, not for the world. If you do not like it — do not come.

Recorded by Svetlana WEBER

yields are high). The most important thing is to reduce costs to achieve maximum efficiency. For example, they do not store feed on concrete platform like we do, they just put it on the ground. The grain is stored





On par with Europe!

What are the main trends in the farming sector of Europe, what will be the hottest topics in agriculture tomorrow and, most importantly, how are the most reliable tractors produced — learnt a group of EkoNiva-Tekhnika’s clients.

Over 30 largest farmers of Russia visited DLG Field Days 2016 in Germany. On the way to the largest crop production trade show in Europe, the clients visited the John Deere production facility in Mannheim (Baden — Wuerttemberg). Over 130 John Deere 6 Series tractors roll off the conveyor of the factory every day. This is one of the most state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities in the world — the farmers had an opportunity to see it with their own eyes during the tour.

Of course, the guests were impressed with the scale and immaculate precision of the assembly lines. Each machine on the assembly line has a special checklist, which states all the parts to be used for the assembly. This checklist serves as some kind of a technical passport, which guarantees assembly precision and identification of all tractor parts in the future.

Peeping into the future was not the less interesting. The hosts demonstrated the use of 3D-imitation to the guests. With its help, John Deere engineers create a full-size virtual model of a unit, which does not exist in reality yet. This helps a lot in creating an ergonomic and comfortable machine and estimating its abilities beforehand instead of

adjusting an existing model, which has come off the conveyor already.

The guests stayed at the John Deere tractor testing station longer than planned. At the station, the new models are tested on special dynamic stands, which reproduce the toughest operating conditions. This ‘assault course’ prepares the machine for years of fieldwork within one day.

‘The John Deere factory impressed us with its capacities’, says Aleksandr Kamenev, Deputy Director of Collective Farm n.a. XX Congress of the Communist Party of the USSR (Novosibirsk oblast). ‘We have two John Deere 8 Series tractors, one assembled in Europe and the other — in Russia. Besides, we have four straw walkers of the same brand. One of them has already “celebrated” its 10th sowing campaign. I have no complaints about the machines. I haven’t given much thought to it — the machines work without problems and that’s all I need. This tour made me realise how much work and intellect has been invested into these machines! Everything is very precise, accurate and intelligent! John Deere really deserves respect!’

Next day, the Russian group was welcomed by the sun and rain at the



DLG Field Days trade show near Hassfurt (Bavaria). The largest trade show of Europe occupied over 45 ha. The farmers visited demonstration plots and booths of the leading seed producers such as IG Pflanzenzucht, DSV and Strube.

‘This is my third visit to this trade show’, says Aleksandr Kondakov, Head of a farming enterprise (Tambov oblast). ‘I am proud to say that our farmers have managed to achieve a lot within the past few years. Previously, all the demonstration plots at this show used to make a great impression on me, and I listened open-mouthed to the recommendations of seed producers. Currently, the farmers from our group have mastered a lot of the technologies and varieties demonstrated here and they could give a couple of good pieces of advice to the producers themselves, especially with regard to the peculiarities of crop production in our country. Of course, there is still a lot to learn, but this time I would like to admit: we are quite on par with Europe!’

By Yulia SALKOVA





Targeting efficiency!



AgroVyatka Expo traditionally opens the new agricultural season. Despite the bad weather, the booth of the Kirov branch of EkoNiva-Tekhnika welcomed its guests with warm atmosphere, hot tea and attractive sale offers.

Aleksey Kotlyachkov, Minister of Agriculture of Kirov oblast, welcomed the guests of the event:

'The efficiency of agriculture depends on new technologies and modern machinery. It is nice to see that every year AgroVyatka opens new horizons for the farmers.'

This year, the farmers were especially interested in the special financial offers for machinery purchase. EkoNiva told them about the attractive terms of John Deere Financial program. For example, it is possible to buy John Deere combines in leasing at zero appreciation! The advance payment for different models varies from 30 to 35% for a 3-year leasing period. The JCB Finance campaign is also on. Any JCB 500 telescopic handler

can be purchased in leasing at 3.33% appreciation. The advance payment is 49% for a leasing period of 13 months.

The John Deere 8335R, the most popular tractor in the region, stood out at EkoNiva's booth. Those who had not had such a tractor yet, unanimously claimed that this machine has no rivals in terms of capacity and cost efficiency.

After the exhibition, the guests continued the conversation in the new service center. The farmers said many warm words. Vladimir Sevryugin, Head of Zarechye enterprise, thanked EkoNiva for the regular trainings.

'EkoNiva pays attention to skill improvement of both its employees and the farm specialists', says Vladimir. We have held a number of workshops

dedicated to different technologies. The company's specialists went to the fields with us and gave us some practical tips which are always valuable to us. They helped us to choose high-productive seeds and machinery for our conditions. As a result, our yields improved a lot!

In its turn, EkoNiva awarded its partners diplomas and memorable gifts. For example, Vladimir Sevryugin received a Focus on Efficiency certificate of honour for implementation of new technologies. Oktyabrsky stock-breeding plant was awarded for loyalty to John Deere brand. Nikolay Kharkin, Head of Sredneivkino farming enterprise, received a Loyal Partner letter of recognition for his constant support of the company's endeavors.

By Anna BORDUNOVA

The financial squad

Representatives of the Financial Department of John Deere from the USA, Europe and Russia visited EkoNiva.

Business was not the only topic discussed during the visit. John Deere representatives wanted to get a deeper insight into the Russian farming sector, see the machinery and technologies in action and assess the prospects of development of farming in Russia.

The guests visited two enterprises in Kaluga oblast: Kaluzhskaya Niva (one of EkoNiva's farming operations) and Remputmash. Both farms are engaged in dairy farming and buy John Deere machinery under leasing programmes. The financial experts were pleasantly surprised by the high level



of agricultural production and technical inventories as well as the results achieved by the companies.

The farmers shared that they are satisfied with John Deere leasing programmes, which look very attractive in comparison to other banks and leasing companies. Nevertheless, one of the key topics of the meeting was how to make the leasing programmes even more affordable to Russian farmers. In this regard, the partners discussed an opportunity to use fixed prices in rubles, which would be a very attractive option for our farming enterprises.

By Svetlana WEBER

Dreams come true!

This year, EkoNiva and JCB celebrate the 10th anniversary of cooperation. As both companies state, the best gift for them is the loyalty of their clients and partners. Aleksandr Kotlyarov, Head of a farming enterprise in Tomsk oblast, congratulated the companies on this special date and purchased a JCB 531-70 telescopic handler for the new season.

Svetlana Petrova, Deputy Director of JCB in Russia, solemnly presented Aleksandr with the keys to the new telehandler. She congratulated the farmer on purchasing the machine under JCB Finance leasing terms and pointed out that she was happy that more and more farmers had been choosing JCB machinery lately.

'It is very important for us that the farmers trust our machines', says Svetlana Petrova. 'Their trust is proved by the fact that despite the challenging economic situation, the previous year became a record year for our company: the market share in the agricultural handlers segment exceeded 56%. For the first time in Russia, we sold over 450 machinery units, the major part of them were telescopic handlers.'

Aleksandr Kotlyarov stated that he had

been dreaming about this handler for a long time. He went to various exhibitions with EkoNiva, talked to JCB specialists, and thoroughly examined the machine's technical specifications. Moreover, his colleagues gave very good feedback on the machine! The managers from EkoNivaSibir helped Aleksandr to make this choice. They advised the best telehandler model, which perfectly suited the technologies used at the enterprise.

'Currently, this machine is an excellent assistant on our farm as well', says Aleksandr proudly. 'As soon as it was delivered from the service centre



of EkoNivaSibir, I sent it to work! Now it is the main machine used for preparing grain for storage.'

By Anna BORDUNOVA

Demo ride across Siberia

It has become a good tradition in EkoNiva to hold machinery demonstration shows in different regions of Russia.



These events are very popular among farmers because they have an excellent opportunity to try the machine on their farm before buying it. This year, the first demo ride of JCB handlers started in the Siberian region! The most popular JCB 531-70 telescopic handler has been tested for durability. This machine showed all its potential on ten farms in Novosibirsk and Kemerovo oblasts. The enterprises created the toughest conditions for the handler so as to test it in accordance with the strictest rules. The 'jury' assessed its manoeuvrability, versatility, cost efficiency and performance.

The test-drive started at Irmen

stock-breeding plant. It is a leading milk producer and processor in the Siberian region.

'Within a week, this handler performed various livestock farming activities', says Alexey Burkhovetsky, Chief Sales Manager of EkoNivaSibir. Loading, unloading, feed distribution or manure disposal caused absolutely no problems for this machine, it managed to perform all the operations with 100% success.'

The JCB 531-70 also fitted in well on Krutishinskoe farm (Novosibirsk oblast).

'I have only good feelings after the testing', says Yakov Bakhman, Director of the enterprise, 'we've never had such a good machine on our farm before'.

By the way, currently, it is possible to purchase a JCB handler in leasing at zero appreciation! This unique campaign was launched in May 2016.

By Anna BORDUNOVA



themselves.

'The innovative solutions and unique technologies developed by Fliegl fascinated the farmers', says Dmitry Kostev, Head of Sales Department of EkoNiva-Tekhnika. 'For example, they liked the Fliegl Tracker system of full-cycle harvesting with Beacons sensors and the FWS Weighing System, which allows tracking the grain all the way from the field to the warehouse.'

The farmers also appreciated the VARIO SENS system of organic fertiliser application control for ADS and ASW trailers as well as the FST system for liquid manure distribution. The FFC system of organic fertiliser application rate control and the Fliegl Manure Sensing system for fertiliser content control were also very popular with the farmers. The agricultural producers also had an opportunity to visit the company's manufacturing facility and the Fliegl AGRO-Centre spare parts storage facility.

By Anna BORDUNOVA



A feast of innovations

This year, dealers and farmers from four continents — Europe, Asia, Africa and America — gathered at the Field Day hosted by Fliegl Agratechnik-2016 in Muhldorf. It seemed that all the four seasons also decided to test the durability of Fliegl machines.

The latest novelties and the time-proven machines from Fliegl were showcased at the field demonstration under the joint effect of successive snow, rain, sun, storm and wind. Mr. Josef Fliegl, founder of the company, welcomed the guests.

'The Field Day has become a good tradition for Fliegl', says Josef Fliegl. 'I'm happy that every year, more and more farmers from different countries are choosing our machinery. It gives us an incentive to develop new ideas

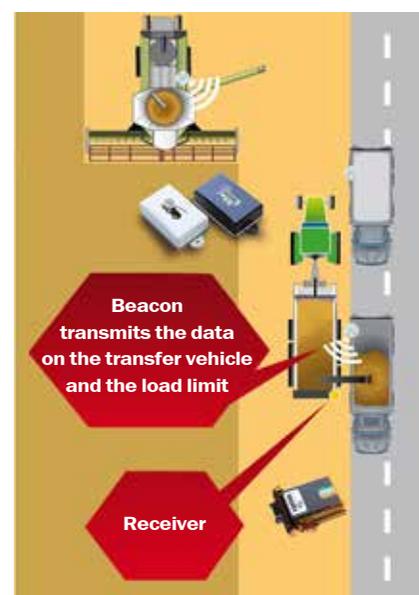
and technical projects.'

The company presented an almost full range of machinery. The farmers could see the versatile Fliegl ASW push-off trailer, the three-side unloading tipper, the farm trucks, the liquid manure spreaders, the platform trailers for rolls and bales transportation, the mounted implements, the transfer augers and belts as well as the Woodking Classic saw and brushes in action. Many guests had an opportunity to try the machinery and test its multiple capacities by

Total control

Fliegl launched a new Fliegl Tracker system into the market. This is a beacon-based Bluetooth vehicle detection system. Beacons are small, lightweight, waterproof, battery-operated and independent of onboard electronics and power supply. They are suitable for every vehicle regardless of its brand.

which combine harvester it is loaded and in turn — which truck it is loading on. Previously, such association has not been legally reliable and could not be documented sufficiently. Fliegl Tracker has filled this gap. This innovation allows tracking the grain all the way from the field to the elevator.



Fliegl Tracker has won the Bluetooth Breakthrough Awards 2016 in Las Vegas. The tracker proved to be number one out of more than 300 submitted Bluetooth innovations that received the award. Last year, Fliegl Tracker was awarded the DLG (German Agricultural Society) silver medal for this innovative solution.

Mounted on combine harvesters and trucks (for road transportation), Fliegl beacons allow to clearly identify each harvesting vehicle.

The transfer vehicle equipped with the Fliegl Weighing System FWS serves as the key connecting point. Via communication between the beacon and the antenna, it can detect from



Going large

Russkoe Pole farming enterprise (Novosibirsk oblast) was established in 2012 and almost immediately became a client of EkoNivaSibir. Within the four years of successful cooperation, the company has grown a lot and it has ambitious plans for the future. The investment project of Russkoe Pole was recognised as the largest in the Trans-Urals area!

The company is building a dairy for five thousand lactating cows, the total investment volume exceeds eight billion rubles!

'This is not an easy task, but it is feasible', says Denis Rolheiser, Engineer of Russkoe Pole. 'Construction of the first stage of the dairy started already in December, 2014 in Marshanskoe village. The current capacity of the dairy is 2,500 cows. The first stage includes two milking parlours, four cow barns for 600 head each, four facilities for young stock for 750 head each, roads and 13 silage bunkers with a capacity of 5,000 tonnes each. Currently, the dairy has about 1,500 dairy cows. In March, the farm received one large batch of Holstein-Friesian cows from Hungary, in April – the second one. The animals are doing perfectly well, the batch which arrived in March has started calving already while the calves from the April batch are expected in July.

'Holstein-Friesian breed combines high qualitative and quantitative performance parameters', explains Aleksandr Morozov, Herd Management Specialist of the company.

In the nearest year, the company is planning to increase its herd by another 1,000-1,500 cows and complete the construction of the elevator with a storage capacity of 32,000 tonnes. The company already operates a grain handling facility with a capacity of 30,000 tonnes. Russkoe Pole also possesses its own storage and repair facility, which can hold 112 machinery units and 149 trailed implements.

The farming enterprise takes regular soil preservation and melioration measures, including application

of fertiliser and implementation of precision farming systems. The total arable land area of the enterprise exceeds 30,000 ha. The company uses conventional tillage practices and grows oats, wheat and peas. John Deere machinery helps to perform the toughest tasks.

'We have been working with John Deere since the very beginning', says Denis Rolheiser, 'and are planning to continue working with this brand'.

Currently, the farm possesses approximately 45 units of self-propelled machines and probably the same number of 'green' trailed implements. Russkoe Pole is clearly not going to stop at these numbers.

'We keep up to date with all John Deere innovations', adds the engineer, 'and if we can afford the machine, we surely add it to our fleet. We buy machines from EkoNiva because they offer the best service. We are happy with the people's attitude to their work and the clients'.

Big future for ambitious plans! Russkoe Pole has already provided about 200 work places to the residents of the region. There is no doubt that this number will keep growing. The company is very attentive to the needs

of its staff. High class accommodation is constructed specially for them. The houses and flats are handed over on a turnkey basis, fitted with built-in home and kitchen appliances. Three



20-apartment buildings and seven cottages for specialists have already been commissioned. The average market value of the apartments is 2.5 million rubles. Employees with 20 years of

service obtain the accommodation free of charge. The company invested 284 million rubles of its own funds into construction of houses, roads, power supply lines and water systems. Veniamin Borshev, Director of the company, believes that this policy brings its fruit.

'In order to attract young people to the rural areas and employ qualified specialists, we need two components: a competitive salary and worthy accommodation', says the Director of Russkoe Pole. 'We provide both, and people appreciate this! Together, we build a world-class farming enterprise.'

By Olga ATANOVA





EkoNiva-Chernozemye in cooperation with JCB and Michelin held a test-drive, unconventional in terms of contents and unique in terms of scale. The agricultural producers witnessed demonstration of flagship loader models and saw with their own eyes that good farming machines are not a flight of fancy but a tool for saving costs.

Not a flight of fancy but a tool for achieving results

The event commenced with touring EkoNivaAgro's largest dairy in Verkhny Ikorets village.

'We are holding the test-drive in the actual production environment', says Ivan Vorobyov, Executive Director of EkoNiva-Chernozemye, 'which makes the versatility, reliability and ease of operation of JCB machines much more obvious'.

Five machines are employed at this 2,800-cow dairy. They prepare and handle forages, remove manure; they were also involved in the dairy construction works.

'In 2015, the share of agricultural JCB loaders on the Russian market was 56.4%', comments Svetlana Petrova, Deputy Director General of JCB Russia, 'due to the fact that our machines meet the needs of any farm'.

Over ten JCB loaders were presented to the guests. The demonstration began with a JCB 155 Powerboom radial lift mini skid steer. Despite the small size, the machine's capabilities are colossal. With a rated operating capacity of 703 kg, it is a compact assistant in warehouses and livestock facilities. A wide range of attachments (over 20 items) enables it to be engaged in cleaning the territory. The JCB 155 also has a side entry.

At the site with JCB 403 and JCB 406 front loaders, the guests practised 'snaking' and moving loads on a quite limited area of 25 sq.metres. The farmers are certain now that the machines are very manoeuvrable and compact. The articulated steering design of the JCB 406 ensures an easy-to-use sideshift, which is perfect for moving bales.

The JCB 434S wheel loader, efficient for silage clamping, also aroused a great interest. It will come in handy not only for putting up forages, but it can also remove

snow, handle manure and grain and spread organic fertiliser.

Further, the visitors moved on to telescopic handlers. There are 25 of them in the JCB lineup. The JCB 531-70 (lift capacity — 3.1 tonnes, lift height — 7 metres) is the most popular. With the development of livestock farming, the demand for big models is increasing: JCB 536-70 (lift capacity — 3.6 tonnes, lift height — 7 metres) and JCB 550-80 (lift capacity — 5 tonnes, lift height — 8 metres).



'We have five operating loaders', says Dmitry Matuzov, Head of Yug United Production Site of Detskoselsky Corporation. 'They are indispensable

in both crop growing and livestock farming. One loader is engaged at the oil plant where it ships 500 tonnes a day and tackles the job excellently. No loader of another brand can work as efficiently and productively. Yes, JCB products are in a higher price bracket than the equivalent equipment, but we realise that it is not a flight of fancy, but a tool for achieving high results.

Michelin, the leading tyre manufacturer, demonstrated the Ultraflex technology. 'Tyres are as important for a tractor as boots for a football player', notes Anatoly Guro, Director of Michelin Agricultural Tyres in Russia. 'Our tyres with flexible carcass have a larger footprint, which protects your soil from compaction, improves yields and performance and saves fuel.'

The fuel efficiency was validated by an experiment.

The experimenters simulated performance of an operating John Deere 7830 (205 hp) tractor with a trailed implement fitted with gauges. The first run was with conventional tyres (front — 600/65 R28, pressure — 1.7 bar; rear — 710/70 R38, pressure — 1.7 bar), the second run — with Michelin Ultraflex tyres (front — 600/60 R30, pressure — 0.6 bar; rear — 710/60 R42, pressure — 0.8 bar). The Michelin tyres showed a better result in identical conditions with 14.3% lower fuel consumption.



'I really enjoyed the test-drive; everything was practical and intelligible', shares Aleksandr Yevstratov, Director General of Nizhnekislyaysky

Beetseeds LLC. 'We have already considered buying Michelin tyres, and now we are positive about our intention.'

In conclusion, the loaders gave a tremendous show. The machines performed all the elements with ease and elegance, in the end, one of the 'yellow lords' presented a lady-participant of the test-drive with a red rose. Even after that, the hosts had more surprises in store — the guests participated in a quiz game, the top awards of which were a tour of JCB factory in Great Britain, a set of Michelin tyres and a discount on JCB machinery and services from EkoNiva-Chernozemye.

By Yulia SALKOVA





In search of the perfect variety



Climatic conditions of the most of Russian regions require careful selection of winter wheat varieties for growing.



Rozkishna



Astet

It is necessary to take into account quite stringent winter conditions: wide fluctuations in temperature from critical freezing to above-zero values and vice versa, insufficient snow cover, ice crust and stagnation of melt water underneath it.

In the spring-summer growing season, the crops are affected greatly by air and soil droughts. Relative air humidity, as a rule, decreases in June—July, when the kernel is shaping and ripening.

In dry years, particularly if drought sets in after a severe winter, the yield — as compared to that in optimal years moisture-wise — falls dramatically (from 19.2 to 82.5%).

Besides, the climate features of a number of Russian regions often promote the development of pathogenic microorganisms in winter wheat biocenoses, such as powdery mildew, brown rust, root rot, leaf blotch, fusarium head blight, dust-brand and covered smut, and virus diseases. Damage of crops caused by snow mold (*Fusarium nivale*) has gained ground leading to a drastic drop in yields in such years.

It is noteworthy that many varieties created lately and recommended for growing in certain regions of the country fail to meet all the requirements of agricultural production. In the years with severe winters, most of them thin

out reducing the yields or die out on a large scale. Besides, they suffer from drought, disease and pest damage to a large degree.

Thus, the search of highly-adaptable winter wheat varieties with high genetic yield potential positively reacting to the best growing practices and capable of preserving a high lower yield threshold in adverse conditions remains a pressing issue.

There are no ready-made forms which would combine high winter hardiness, drought tolerance, resistance to other stress factors and high crop yields at the same time. It is known that there is a negative correlation between winter hardiness and yield. Varieties with high winter-hardiness are often lower-yielding, and high-yielding varieties of intensive type are not winter-hardy enough.

However, plant breeding experience shows that the negative correlation of these traits is not absolute and the optimal combination of winter hardiness, drought tolerance and performance is possible. A number of domestic and foreign varieties with principally new traits have been created over the last decade, the best of them are commercially produced by EkoNiva. The company grows a wide range of varieties for different target use: semi-



intensive varieties, such as Skipetr, suitable for low-input technologies and sown after the worst preceding crops, intensive varieties, such as Lgovskaya 4, MV Nador and MV 37-14, which can realise their full yield and grain quality potential on rich soils without losing resistance to adverse weather conditions; and universal varieties like Biryuza or Rozkishna. They have an increased resistance to biotic and abiotic environmental factors, which makes it possible to obtain stable high yields by crop years.

Such varieties have a good ability to resist the cold during the autumn period. One of the indicators of a high cold resistance is the content of

soluble carbohydrates (sugars) in plant tillering nodes. Plants have been found to overwinter better if they have a high sugar content in autumn and efficiently use it up during the winter. A positive role of carbohydrates in the regrowth of winter wheat in spring has also been revealed. At the beginning of overwintering, Skipetr, Rozkishna, Lgovskaya 4, Biryuza stock up around 38-42% of sugars in dry matter, and 26-28% is preserved by the end of the winter period, which gives evidence of their efficient use and a significant energetic potential of the plants before the beginning of spring regrowth. They fall into the above-average and increased winter

hardiness group.

Varieties of semi-intensive type, such as Skipetr, and of universal type, such as Rozkishna and Biryuza, are eco-friendly, have stable yields by years, are able to use a medium level of power inputs per unit of output and possess a comprehensive resistance to biotic and abiotic environmental factors. They are medium-height varieties characterised by increased growth rates in autumn and intensive regrowth in spring, which enables the plants to use the insignificant moisture stock in autumn and melt water in spring efficiently after non-fallow predecessors.

By Andrey ZVYAGIN, Seed Production Agronomist of Zashchitnoye LLC

German quality with Russian temper



In 2016, EkoNiva is starting a major winter wheat breeding project on its seed-producing farm in Zashchitnoye, Kursk oblast, in partnership with IG-Pflanzenzucht. Participating companies are Saatzucht Streng-Engelen and Saatzucht Bauer Biendorf.

The German partners visited Shchigry district to discuss the further plan of action, see how winter wheat breeding project is developing and assess how well the varieties of German genetics had overwintered. Tatiana Vorontsova, IG-Pflanzenzucht Commercial Director for Eastern Europe, was pleased with what she saw, taking into consideration that the past winter was most atypical for the region with soil temperature at the depth of the tillering node going down to -4 °C only, i.e. there was no winter survival differentiation observed among winter hardiness groups, so it was impossible to evaluate the resistance to low temperatures this winter.

'I believe high winter hardiness is very important for Central-Black Soil region', states Berthold Bauer, Manager

of Saatzucht Bauer Biendorf. 'Together we will work on improving this trait.'

To fully integrate the German plasticity and yields with Russian winter hardiness in the process of developing a new variety, the Saatzucht Bauer Biendorf specialists will use the seed stock bred in Zashchitnoye as parental forms for hybridisation and will send only the second generation back. The partners have come to conclusion that this is the only way to attain effective results.

'We have seen remarkable fields', summarises Tatiana Vorontsova, IG-Pflanzenzucht Commercial Director for Eastern Europe, 'therefore we are looking forward to our further fruitful cooperation.'

By Olga ATANOVA





High breeding of varieties and ideas!

Crop production experts of EkoNiva-APK visited DLG Field Days in Germany, held near Hassfurt (Bavaria). They equate these several days to a year of extension course.

This year, plant breeding and seed production, rather than agronomy, were the priority for the company's leading specialists at the trade fair. EkoNiva has been one of the top three largest field crop seed producers in Russia for a long time.

However, time and the seed market dictate their terms, which are becoming increasingly stringent.

'Competition in the seed farming segment is growing alongside the customers' demands', says Yury Vasyukov, Director of EkoNiva-Semena. 'This is what prompted us to develop our own varieties. We invest a lot of time and effort into searching for the best crops, but we do not hold any rights to them in the end. Today, we have one winter wheat variety admitted for the state trial, four more varieties are being prepared for submission. Also, a big winter wheat breeding project in cooperation with IG-Pflanzenzucht, a German association, is underway.'

The specialists of EkoNiva visited the IG-Pflanzenzucht booth, saw the plots with different crops. In total, the group visited over 25 booths of seed growing companies, showing interest in a lot of topics, from cereals to the grasses used for cow bedding. They also visited the booths of agricultural machinery manufacturers.

The guests observed that the precision farming applications were the primary trend of the trade fair. The specialists got particularly interested in the weed scanning system employing infrared sensors, as well as isolation of fertility areas and carrying out agrochemical analysis via space image interpretation.

They also noted that the tablet version of precision farming applications for machine operators was one of the highlights of the trade show. This know-how has already been introduced on some of EkoNiva farms with the help of the NivaControl system.

At the end of the trip, the specialists of the Crop Production Division visited

Saatzucht Bauer GmbH & Co KG, a plant breeding station in Niedertraubling, Bavaria, and a part of IG-Pflanzenzucht Association. Together with Berthold Bauer, CEO, the group discussed the plans for the future. The guests also toured the plots with diverse varieties



of winter and spring wheat, barley and oats, and had an insight into the company's breeding techniques.

'We always come to Field Days in Germany for ideas', says Roman Ratnikov, Deputy Director General for Crop Production in EkoNiva-APK. 'This year, we have obtained plenty of unique information on both production and new varieties.'

By Yulia SALKOVA





Dairy farm as a holiday destination!

Either the international policy has prompted the new alternatives or the Russians understood that grass is not always greener on the other side of the fence. The Turkish shore is no longer the only possible dream for many people. Currently, Russian tourists tend to be more and more inclined to spend their holidays without leaving Mother Russia. If they want some exotic impressions, they go to a dairy farm not on safari.

The Russian tourism industry experts think that agricultural tourism has an enormous potential. Even now, there is a great variety of places where you can 'try on' the rural way of life such as eco-villages or petting farms. Tourist agencies arrange various culinary and folklore trips as well as special tours in which tourists combine rest and farm labour. At the moment, such tours are possible only in certain regions of the country.

Seeking new interesting places for rural tourism, an interregional 'expedition' AgroEcoTourism of Russia 'landed' in EkoNivaAgro (Voronezh oblast). The group consisted of tour operators, journalists, photographers, marketing managers, experts of tourist and information centers and volunteer tourists.

First of all, the members of the 'expedition' visited the Academy of Dairy Sciences' dairy farm in Zaluzhnoe (Liski district). It turned out that the expert crew had already heard about this project. Within the past three years, over 10,000 Russians have visited the Academy. The talk about the dairy has spread across many other regions.

Accompanied by Christine Frank, Head of the Academy of Dairy Sciences, the guests toured the modern dairy farm

for 1,800 cows with free-stall housing system. The rotary milking parlour was a place of specific interest. The guests were also interested in the process of forage preparation. And of course, the sweetest moment — the meeting with little calves followed by a lot of photo shoots and selfies.

The guests visited the monument of the Shchuchye bridgehead, which was later called the Stalingrad of Liski. The narrative of the Great Patriotic War, the occupation and the local history was continued in the Museum of Local Lore, History and Economy in Shchuchye village (Liski district). While driving to the museum, the experts stopped for a minute to admire the snow-white church of the Nativity of the Holy Mother of God. The members of the 'expedition' also visited the meadows of the beef project of EkoNivaAgro near Novaya Gran village (Liski district). On the way, the car got stuck in the muddy washed-out road. This point of the programme gave the tourists so much fun that the crossover was set free from the mud in a couple of minutes! The experts of the tourism industry jokingly said that this 'agrisafari' should be included into the main programme of the tour.

An amazing spring sunset above the Don



concluded this beautiful day. The guests watched it from the steep slope of the river called the Shpil by the local residents.

'We liked the genuineness and the sincerity of everything that we saw in EkoNivaAgro', says Ekaterina Shapovalova, Head of AgroEcoTourism of Russia project. 'It is a true farming production site, not just a reconstruction for the tourists. Besides, here one can see all the modern technologies gathered in one place. It would be very interesting for our compatriots to visit this enterprise and debunk many myths about the underdevelopment of agriculture.'

By Yulia SALKOVA



Focusing on practice



The Spring Academy of Livestock Farming for agricultural students takes place for the third time and is valued by future professionals for intensive training and big volume of the most advanced knowledge.

This year, best sixteen students from Kursk, Voronezh, Oryol, Kostroma, Saratov and Rostov-on-the-Don took part in it.

The training was held at EkoNivaAgro's facilities. There was a theoretical class from crack of dawn till lunch and practical training from lunch to dusk, every day of the week. The students experienced full immersion into a number of professional areas: herd management, breeding, heifer

and fresh cow management, prevention of cow diseases, formulation of diets and many other topics under the supervision of EkoNiva's leading specialists.

The instructors are pleased with the students' increasing interest in the farming industry and their future careers in particular.

'The time has flired so fast, I haven't even noticed it', says with excitement Marina

Titova, a 4-year student of the Kursk State Agricultural Academy and a future herd-manager and breeder, 'I have been to other farms, but we were never allowed even to come near the cows, we were supposed to learn only by watching, opposite to the Academy of Livestock Farming which puts focus on practice. This training is unique, as it provides a lot of knowledge and motivates to work in agriculture.'

By Yulia SALKOVA

Creativity is always welcome, even on a dairy farm

Elena Khandoshko, a young manager of Sibirskaya Niva's dairy farm, proves the idea by her own example. She manages Sibirskaya Niva's dairy for 1,800 head with expertise and also takes an unconventional approach to her job.



The second award in Danone's National photo contest 'Young Specialist on Our Farm' is an eloquent confirmation to that. The participants were assigned to make a creative photo on a farm, present themselves and describe their job. The specialists from various Russian regions competed in creativity. Then, the Milk Purchasing Department of Danone Group

in Russia picked three winners that had provided the most interesting shots.

'I was happy to take part in the contest', shares Elena Khandoshko. 'The idea behind my picture is to convey the goal of my work — optimisation of the 'man-cow-milk' chain. Now, we are doing our best to improve milk yields and quality and facilitate people's labour by means of state-of-the-art

technology and cow comfort.'

Elena shot the moment when she was checking on her own how comfortable her cows feel in the stalls.

Elena decided to share the prize from Danone (a 50% discount on a training course in the Dairy Business-Academy) with her colleagues: they visited trainings on herd nutrition and reproduction.

By Anna BORDUNOVA



Talents should be helped!

‘Talents should be helped, as mediocrities will shoulder their way through’ — EkoNiva considers these famous lines by poet Lev Ozerov very relevant to farming. Everyone who comes to work in this quite challenging industry with interest, passion and innovative thinking should be helped.

EkoNiva finalised the results of the 5th contest within the frameworks of EkoNiva-Student Grant Programme. About 200 students from 28 Russian agricultural universities applied for the contest and provided their research papers. Then, twenty-six talents were shortlisted, and seven of them became the awardees.

The final tour took place at two production sites of EkoNiva. The shortlisters in Agricultural Mechanisation defended their projects at the Service centre of EkoNiva-Tekhnika in Detchino (Kaluga oblast), and the contesters in Agronomy arrived at EkoNivaAgro’s farm (Voronezh oblast).

‘This year, the general level of students’ research is much higher than in previous years’, remarks Mikhail Solovyov, 1st Deputy Director of Kaluzhskaya Niva and a member of the Expert Board, ‘There’s a number of truly ingenious research projects and efficiency improvement

ideas in both Agronomy and Mechanisation sections. I’m delighted to observe that this generation studies not for a diploma only but for their own knowledge and skills in order to grow into well-qualified agricultural specialist. Good for them!’

Indeed, if you study just for appearances’ sake, you will hardly be able to design a new type of a seed roller like Aleksey Zakharov, a 4-year student of the Penza Agricultural Academy, did. His invention enables modern planters to distribute



seeds with extra precision and without damaging them, for which Aleksey was awarded the 1st prize in the EkoNiva-Student contest.

‘This contest proves that my

invention can be useful and that I should go on with this’, shares Aleksey. ‘As of today, it’s already been patented and successfully tested. The roller has also drawn attention of our local Penza radio manufacturing plant, which also produces planters. I’m grateful to EkoNiva for this programme and the opportunity to visit the most state-of-the-art service centre in the world — EkoNiva-Tekhnika’s facility



in Detchino and the robotic dairy in Kaluzhskaya Niva.’

Tatiana Dolbilova from the Kuban State Agricultural University offers to fight root rot by applying organic fertilisers and including

alfalfa in the crop rotation. Such a strategy is rather unconventional for Krasnodar area, but quite effective, which impressed the Expert Board. As a result, Tatiana was awarded the 1st prize in Agronomy.

‘I became aware of the EkoNiva-Student programme at our university’s site’, says Tatiana. ‘I was curious to hear modern farming specialists’ opinion on my work. Thank you for considering my project as relevant and viable. I think it’s a unique programme, as the students are treated here as accomplished specialists, which inspires us to keep on studying and working.’

By Yulia SALKOVA



Health is this summer's top trend!

Voronezh residents welcomed the summer at the Healthy Voronezh Feast! The atmosphere of the feast in Alye Parusa park seemed to impel everybody to put on sneakers and go to the Terrainkur!

After a good workout, it is nice to have a healthy and tasty snack! That is when the treats from the Academy of Dairy Sciences came in handy. The milk booth, where the Academicians treated the guests to cool milk and sour cream

was no less popular than the capoeira and Zumba dancing floors!

On the lawn in front of the Academy of Dairy Sciences booth, the little guests set records in basketball, ring throwing

and other contests together with Girl Polya! The Academicians prepared colouring books and plaster molding kits for the younger guests and for those who prefer 'quiet sports'.

As always, the photo area overseen by welcoming Cow Marta and Zhu-Zhu Bee was very popular. The youngest guests liked the characters of the Academy very much. They took pictures with the Academicians, gave them hugs, offered their friendship and were very reluctant to leave! The parents, in their turn, did not hurry them. While the children were busy, the parents had a chance to drink another glass of milk!

'I think, health will be a top trend this summer, judging by the number of guests', says Marina Voskoboynikova, a fitness fan and a mom with 14 years of experience. 'It is wonderful that the event promotes both sport and healthy eating. It is impossible to be fit if you eat fast food! I am trying to eat clean and I buy the Academy of Dairy Sciences products with pleasure. My children and I absolutely love the taste! And my children are very hard to please! The products seem to charge you with energy! It is for a reason that the Academy is the main sponsor of the food court today!'

By Yulia SALKOVA

Little guests on a big farm

Almost every day, little guests visit the cows at the biggest robotic dairy of Kaluzhskaya Niva in Boldasovka village where the Academy of Dairy Sciences holds regular tours.

Elementary school students of school № 45 of Kaluga have long dreamt to visit the robotic dairy and see where the cows are housed and how milk is produced. The first question asked by the children - 'Is it real milk?' — became the limelight of the tour.

'Of course, it is real and the most delicious milk!' assured the specialists.

In order to receive this delicious milk, the cows are fed a healthy and balanced ration, housed in the most comfortable conditions and milked carefully at robotic parlours. In their turn, the cows produce high-quality milk to thank the specialists for their good attitude. The children also visited the calves in their hutches. One of the newly born calves got an affectionate nickname Borya from the third-graders who wanted to feed him a carrot. However, the specialists of the dairy explained that the newly

born calves can drink only colostrum - the first milk produced by the cow after calving. The calves drink about 6 litres of colostrum in the first hours of their life.

The little guests pointed out that the cows for some reason get scared when the children come close to them. In fact, the cows' eyes work like a magnifying glass: things seem bigger

to them than they really are.

Fascinated by the stories told by the guides, the students did not want to leave the dairy, but later they decided that the cows needed some rest and promised to return once again to see how Borya the calf is growing!

By Anna BORDUNOVA





The future of business at the Academy of Dairy Sciences

Within the framework of the events associated with Wilhelm Stoll's Award, the organisers arranged a tour of farming operations of Voronezh oblast for school students. Fifty best students of 9-11th forms visited the dairy of the Academy of Dairy Sciences in EkoNivaAgro.

Wilhelm Stoll's Award was established in Voronezh last year. Any businessman can become a laureate of this award, the main thing is that his/her business must be efficient not only from the economic but also from the social point of view.

This year, the session turned into a true 28-day festival including various events not only for entrepreneurs but for all Voronezh residents as well. The programme of the festival included interactive games, business picnics and tours for children and adults.

This versatility is quite understandable: Wilhelm Stoll was not just an entrepreneur; he was a well-known innovator, patron of arts and philanthropist.

The children listened to the story of Wilhelm Stoll's life at the pavilion of the Academy of Dairy Sciences drinking the 'Academic Milk'. Wilhelm lived in Voronezh province since he was two years old and until the end of his life. He had barely turned thirty when he opened a repair shop, which gradually grew into a large farm implements factory. The factory produced ploughs, harrows and even equipment for

power stations and cinema! Before the revolution, the 'German from Voronezh' was well known not only in Russia but outside its territory as well. The warehouses with Stoll's machinery were located all the way from Warsaw to Vladivostok.

Residents of Voronezh respected Wilhelm Stoll for his intensive charitable and social activities. For example, the first bicycles were brought to Voronezh by Wilhelm Stoll.

Inspired by the example of the most famous German from Voronezh, the children set off on a tour of one of the modern dairies of EkoNivaAgro. The young guests saw how the useful product is made, learnt why the cows like to ride on a merry-go-round and met the specialists of the dairy. Most of all, the children liked the calves. The teachers in their turn seemed to be as much fascinated as the students.

'It is wonderful that the organisers of the event managed to catch the interest of those who are yet to choose their future

profession', says Elena Tunikova, teacher of Zaluzhnoe Comprehensive School. 'At the moment, they have only a vague idea of what they want to do. Such trips help the students to make their career choice.'

During the tour, the children learnt a lot about EkoNiva and its president Stefan Duerr, who came from Germany over twenty years ago and established his business in Russia. When the young guests heard the story of the company, they immediately called Stefan Duerr Wilhelm Stoll of our times.

'This trip has dramatically changed my opinion of agriculture', says Karina Oleynikova, student of Kamenka Comprehensive School. 'Farming is not just manure, rusty machines and milkers in blue gowns. Modern farming means cutting-edge computer technologies, super modern machines and young specialists managing a whole dairy. This is very interesting!'

At the end of the event, the guests were invited to a festive lunch from the Academy of Dairy Sciences and a business game. In this game, the children had to apply the knowledge received at the dairy. Judging by the genuine enthusiasm they displayed in the process, their interest in the price of breeding cattle and milk production profitability, one can have a strong hope that in the future, there will be more businessmen in the farming business!

The Academy of Dairy Sciences also took part in the Big Lunch event organised within the framework of Wilhelm Stoll Award. The big Lunch was



the final stage of the business game in which every participant could open his/her own street cafe within one week. The Academy of Dairy Sciences came to support the participants, entertain the guests of the event and, of course, treat the residents of Voronezh to fresh yoghurt, kefir and milk as well as Easter cakes from its own bakery as the Big Lunch took place on Easter eve.

By Yulia SALKOVA



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**2 July
Tambov Field Day**

Venue: Rasskazovskoye LLC, Tambov oblast
Organiser: Department of Agriculture of Tambov oblast

**8-9 July
Bryansk Field Day**

Venue: Bryansk oblast, Educational Experimental Plot of Bryansk State Agricultural University
Organiser: Department of Agriculture of Bryansk oblast

**12-15 July
Russian Field Day**

Venue: Altai area, Pavlovsk district, Prutskoy, Siberian AgriPark.
Organiser: Ministry of Agriculture of Russia

**16 July
International Day of Potato Field**

Venue: Tula oblast, Venyov district, Urusovo, ZHAK Farming enterprise
Organiser: Grimme in cooperation with John Deere and EkoNiva

**28-29 July
VolgogradAGRO**

Venue: Volgograd oblast, Novaya Anna district, Grishinykh LLC
Organiser: Administration of Novaya Anna district of Volgograd oblast, Volgograd Farmer Regional Organisation n.a. V.I. Shtepo, Volgograd Expo Exhibition Centre, Grishinykh LLC

**4-5 August
Saratov-Agro. Field Day 2016**

Venue: Saratov, Experimental field of Yugo-Vostok Agricultural Research Institute,
Organiser: Sofit-EXPO Exhibition Centre, Government of Saratov oblast, Yugo-Vostok Agricultural Research Institute, Vozrozhdenie Farming Cooperative of Saratov oblast



16 July

EkoNiva-Tekhinka looks forward to seeing you at the International Day of Potato Field



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