



Early start in agriculture!



Finding a good specialist has always been a challenge for farming enterprises. EkoNiva has found a solution to what seemed to be an eternal problem: the company raises its own employees. To train a qualified specialist, the employer should start working with school students, support them during their university years and create the necessary conditions for them at the start of their professional activity. Learn more about the revolutionary recruiting methods of EkoNiva on pages 3, 7, 20, 21, 22.



Rolf Zuern: family values in business

Interview with the owner and managing director of Zuern Harvesting



Field Days 2018 were held in many regions of Russia

EkoNiva's team took part in all important events of the summer



Contents



At the negotiating table
EkoNiva sets foot in Altai.....**4**

A lasting impression
Guests from Argentina and Switzerland paid a visit to EkoNiva.....**5**

Field-based meetings
EkoNiva-Semena at summer trade fairs.....**6**

Expert advice
Michael Papadi, a specialist of RWA, visited Zashchitnoye plant breeding enterprise.....**7**



Rolf Zuern: family values in business
Managing Director of Zuern Harvesting speaks about his professional achievements, agricultural market and relationship with EkoNiva.....**8,9**



A healthy meal
A seminar on forage harvesting and fodder preparation.....**10**



Popular telescopic loader!
Who is the lucky owner of the JCB 531-70 telehandler?.....**11**

Reviewing hot events
The eventful summer of EkoNiva-Tekhnika.....**12,13**

Willi Drews reveals secrets
Ultra-shallow soil tillage.....**14**

Powerful machines for professionals
John Deere 2018 Field Day took place in Krasnodar area.....**15**

Over a thousand guests from around the world
Potato Russia 2018 Field Day.....**16**

Effective cost management
Fashion Farmer trade show gathered around 400 visitors**17**



Russia's organic food market receives a boost
The President of Russia Vladimir Putin has signed the new law on organic production.....**18**



Dairies in Germany
Learning advanced herd management practices from German colleagues.....**19**



Beneficial holidays
Participants of student team MOST rise up to the challenge**20**

Future skilled workforce
Participants of student team Vavilovets gained insight into the world of agriculture.....**21**



What do leaders talk about?
Stefan Duerr took part in the Russian Educational Youth Forum Terra Scientia.....**22**



From megacity to farm
The Academy of Dairy Sciences brings joy to children.....**23**





Listen to the young

The young are our future, there is no denying it. They share their inexhaustible positive energy with the world, which is great. Yet, I believe that the key to efficient operation for any successful company is the balance of two essential components: dynamic young employees and experienced specialists. I am convinced that we should pay more attention to what the young say and maintain an open and trustful relationship with them, even though it can be hard at times. They can openly tell you the things, which you would probably not hear from anybody else. Unfortunately, I often observe that top managers and high-rank officials of my age are dismissive of young people's opinion. That is bad. We must bridge the generation gap because the vision of young people is extremely important. Of course, the demands and the lifestyle of young people today differ from ours — the world keeps moving on. My life is

completely different from my parents' lifestyle, not to mention my grandparents' way of life. Our children are not the same, they say. That is the way it should be because life is constantly speeding up.

If we want young people to come and work in the rural areas, we must provide them with the same benefits as the ones available to their peers in the city. First of all, they must have two days off per week. One would say that in the Soviet time farm workers had no days off at all. To be honest, I do not think that this approach is right. It should not be like that.

Close communication is another important factor in working with young people. What is the right way to build relationships in a team? Any proactive young person aspires to self-fulfilment. Enthusiastic people are eager to take responsibility. They might make mistakes, but they will work towards their goal and eventually achieve it. Some mistakes can be forgiven. We all know that the one who

does not make mistakes makes nothing.

Young people today have a strikingly different mentality. Unless the government realises it as soon as possible, there might be serious problems. The main issue in Russia nowadays is that a lot of talented high-potential young people want to leave the country. Why? We must give it serious thought.

Very often, young people are dissatisfied with the social environment and living conditions. Another reason is that they sometimes cannot find an opportunity to fulfil themselves in their country. They believe that they will be able to achieve their goals abroad. Unfortunately, in many cases, it does not work out but when young people realise they have made a mistake, it is too late to change anything. It is our task to let them know that their country needs them and provide everything necessary for them to succeed.

*Stefan DUERR,
President of EkoNiva Group*



Stefan Duerr, President of EkoNiva, has signed a three-party investment agreement with the Acting Governor of Altai area Viktor Tomenko and the Head of Talmenka district Sergey Samsonenko.

EkoNiva Sets Foot in Altai

The investment project will be implemented in Talmenka district bordering on Novosibirsk oblast, where EkoNiva has already established itself. This area has been chosen as the construction site of a dairy for 3,000 head. The estimated investment volume amounts to 3 billion rubles. The construction site allocated for the project is 3.5 km away from Talmenka village. The company is planning to use 5,000 ha of land for feed production.

'I was happy to accept the invitation to enter the region', says Stefan Duerr. 'This

morning we set off to have a look at the site right after the plane landed. I really liked the conditions. I even think that we could build two or three dairies here instead of only one stipulated in the agreement.'

Every facility provides over 100 jobs in livestock and crop farming. Furthermore, the milk output will be 100 tonnes per day.

The regional government emphasises that EkoNiva is a socially responsible company. It builds accommodation for its employees, maintains village

infrastructure, supports schools, nurseries, and social organisations in the regions of its representations. Besides, it offers a good salary to its employees.

'We are pleased to welcome such a reliable investor in our territory', says Viktor Tomenko, 'We will provide governmental support in the form of property tax reimbursement. I consider it essential for our region to attract new investors which will contribute to the taxable base and provide jobs for the local residents.'

By Svetlana WEBER

Genuine admiration

On 16 August, EkoNivaAgro conference hall welcomed the representatives of machinery manufacturing companies and research institutes of Argentina. EkoNiva's specialists told the guests about the intricacies of working process organisation to ensure high yields in the local climatic conditions.

Afterwards, the visitors went on a field tour to examine the soil and crop quality.

'It is evident that the crop rotation process is very well-organised', comments Vicente Gudelj, Head of Academic Projects on soil fertility of the Natural Agricultural Technology Institute (INTA). 'The yields are amazing despite the insufficient precipitation in the area.'

The extensive machinery fleet of EkoNiva immediately drew attention of the machine manufacturers.

'It is evident that both the management and the specialists enjoy their job', comments Nestor Cestary, Executive Partner of Cestari company engaged in direct sowing machinery manufacturing (Buenos Aires). 'The company makes considerable investments into the development of its machinery fleet.'

Visitors from Switzerland studied EkoNiva's dairy production experience on 24th August at V. Ikorets dairy.

'On approaching the facility, I noticed the exemplary condition of the fields and the farm premises', says Richard Aebi, LebensArt Fund board member (Bern, Switzerland). 'And of course, I am astonished by the immense scale of operation, immaculate organisation of production processes at such a large scale and the cutting-edge technologies in use!'

Ramon Schenk, Deputy Director General for Livestock Production, held a tour of the facility.

'I have never seen anything like that before', says Andreas Aebi, member of the National Council of Switzerland. 'The animals are kept in excellent conditions, a proper breeding programme is in place. There is nothing like that in the USA, Canada, or Germany.'

By Aleksandr KUTISHCHEV





Business diary

The working days of Stefan Duerr, EkoNiva Group President, are planned to the minute. Within the past month, he held a number of important negotiations with the heads of the regions in which EkoNiva's enterprises operate.



In the conversation with Aleksandr Gusev, Governor of Voronezh oblast, Stefan Duerr discussed further opportunities for milk processing expansion and the development of organic production of crops, beef and milk. Besides, he informed the governor that two dairies, in Bobrov and Liski district, are ready to be launched.

In the meeting with Nikolay Lyubimov, Governor of Ryazan oblast, EkoNiva's President talked about the implementation of the investment project.

'The investment projects will allow continuing the efficient development of

dairy livestock farming, our strategically important areas of activity, increasing milk production significantly — up to 80 thousand tonnes per year only at the first stage — and creating 170 new jobs, which is especially important for rural areas', says Nikolay Lyubimov.

Stefan Duerr thanked Nikolay Lyubimov for his support and observed that the construction of the dairy in Pitelino district is close to completion. EkoNiva has purchased cattle for the dairy and completed the fodder harvesting campaign.

Stefan Duerr mentioned that EkoNiva is considering the expansion of the project by

means of constructing a milk processing plant in Aleksandro-Nevskiy district.

In Kursk oblast, Stefan Duerr discussed the possibility of construction of a dairy with Aleksandr Mikhailov, Governor of Kursk oblast. The governor praised the efficient work of EkoNiva and promised to support the initiative.

'The company has a perfect reputation in Kursk oblast', says Aleksandr Mikhailov. 'This is explained by EkoNiva's success in agricultural production and the level of salary, which is higher than the average regional level.'

By Darya DENISOVA

Horses bring peace

A unique project, 'Titans on the Race Track' has been launched in Germany. Heavy draught horses put to the carts are bound for the tour of friendship.

This unusual ride was organised by Brueck Association of Sports and Heavy Draught Horse Breeding and supported by Ekosem-Agrar, mother company of the Russian holding EkoNiva.

Horses bring peace! With this motto, the participants of the ride will tour through the cities of Europe. The route passes through Poland, Kaliningrad, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia and finishes in Velikiy Novgorod. The organisers of the ride want to act as ambassadors of friendship. The participants believe that understanding must overcome hatred for the benefit of free and peaceful Europe. The heavy draught horses are truly special. They are distinguished by a friendly temper, a huge withers height, unlimited strength and the love for work. That is why these animals have become the main symbol of the ride.

Nine carts with 18 heavy draught horses are ready to set off for the tour. The first stop will be at the Brandenburg Gate — the architectural monument in the centre of Berlin, where the tour participants will meet the local residents and politicians. All in all, within 12 weeks, the horses will cover the distance of 1,200 km. It is planned that the participants will bring the 'Peace Bell' to Velikiy Novgorod, where it will be installed in one of the churches.

By Darya DENISOVA





Innovative and practical

By visiting the innovative Field Day in Lipetsk oblast, organised by BASF in partnership with EkoNiva-Semena, any farmer could acquire considerable knowledge in agriculture.

The experts of EkoNiva-Semena know how to improve the crop quality and receive impressive yields. As a proof, they presented high-yielding soybean varieties at the company's booth.

'We started our cooperation with BASF last year,' says Evgeniy Kucheryavenko, Deputy

Executive Director of EkoNiva-Semena. 'Soybean inoculation has recently become one of our main activities. At the Field Day, we present two soybean varieties: Tourmaline and OAC Prudence.'

Willy Drews, Doctor of Agronomy, expert and advisor of EkoNiva, told about

soybeans growing technology and soil preparation practices.

'Variety Tourmaline is well suited for growing in the climatic conditions of Krasnodar oblast. As for Prudence, this high-yielding early-maturing variety ripens well on the soils of the Central Black Soil Region providing an opportunity to sow winter wheat afterwards,' emphasises Willy Drews. 'It is important to observe all technological standards for soil tillage and sowing. Our cooperation with BASF allows us to inoculate soybeans with nitrogen-fixing bacteria and pretreat the seeds. This makes the process of soybeans growing more professional and high-tech. Inoculated seeds have a significant advantage since the inoculant has a long-term effect, which allows us to keep the interval of more than a month between seed processing and shipment to farming enterprises.'

The main goal of the Innovative Field Day was to share as much up-to-date first-hand knowledge with farmers as possible, allowing them to apply it in practice and achieve excellent results. This goal was successfully fulfilled.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO

Field-based meetings

Field Days provide a unique opportunity to share the best agricultural practices and find solutions to the challenges farmers face in their profession. EkoNiva-Semena traditionally takes part in such events.

Not even the heavy rain could stop the farmers from coming to PenzAgroTekh trade show held in Zalesnoye village, Kamenka district, Penza oblast, to gain new knowledge.

'Due to the peculiarities of the current farming season, the attendees of the event were particularly interested in winter wheat seeds', says Aleksandr Novoselov, Sales Manager of EkoNiva-Semena. 'Varieties Lgovskaya 4 and MV 37-14 are Penza farms' favourites.'

These are intensive varieties of soft winter wheat with high lodging resistance in rich soil.

At the Field Day, the current and potential customers of EkoNiva-Semena came to the company's booth to give their feedback, share their experience and look for the new seeds for their fields.

Agro Alliance Plavskoye (Plavsk bistrict, Tula oblast) is a regular customer of EkoNiva-Semena. The company has been purchasing seeds of cereal and leguminous crops for several years.

'We grow Jackpot peas, Margaret barley and Max oats on our 4.5 thousand ha of land', says Igor Zaytsev, Deputy Director General for Crop Production. 'We are happy with the quality of the seeds.'

At Tambov Field Day in Chicherino village, Tokarevka district, EkoNiva-Semena traditionally presented the best seeds for the attention of the guests of the exhibition.

Shcherbakov farming enterprise (Gavrilo district, Tambov oblast) has been buying the seeds of winter wheat and peas from EkoNiva-Semena for five years. The company is pleased with the results and eager to try growing something new.

'I am considering growing chick peas', shares Aleksandr Shcherbakov, Farm Manager. 'The price of this

crop is currently very attractive.'

EkoNiva-Semena offers two varieties of chick peas: Privo 1 and Golden Jubilee. They are quite popular with farmers and perfectly suitable for the climatic conditions of Tambov oblast.

The field-based agricultural exhibitions are growing more and more popular year by year. They provide a unique opportunity for farmers to learn about progressive innovations, establish new contacts and make the right decision for the benefit of the future yields.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO





The best knowledge and experience for future colleagues

An unparalleled educational project AgriClass was launched on 1 September. The project was developed by EkoNiva and Voronezh State Agricultural University in alliance with three schools from Voronezh oblast.

The key objectives of the project are to give an insight into modern agriculture to 10th-form students, tell them about the ins and outs of professional farming and the career prospects in agriculture.

AgriClass programme is developed for two academic years. The students will attend lectures and practical classes every Saturday. The disciplines include livestock and crop farming, milk processing, agricultural machinery and equipment, land use, and economics. The professors and assistant professors of VSAU will provide the students with academic knowledge, while EkoNiva's specialists will demonstrate how the scientific achievements are implemented in the production process.

Aleksandr Pichugin, VSAU Agronomy Department Dean, and Vyacheslav Ionov, EkoNivaAgro-East Deputy Director, told the students about the project on the Day of Knowledge.

'AgriClass programme is developed with a focus on biology, physics, and other subjects students need to know in order to enter the Agricultural University', says Aleksandr Pichugin. 'VSAU professors will organise optional classes in veterinary, agronomy, and economics. Simultaneously, boys and girls will put their knowledge into practice in EkoNivaAgro.'

According to Vyacheslav Ionov, the main goal of the project is to show the

students the endless opportunities of modern agriculture, to let them know that the successful development of this area will bring benefit to both the country in general and every young specialist in particular.

'To continue the efficient development of agriculture, we are in urgent need of young specialists possessing comprehensive up-to-date knowledge', emphasises Vyacheslav Ionov.

It should be mentioned that with EkoNiva's support, an AgriClass in Novosibirsk oblast has been functioning successfully for three years. A similar project in Kaluga oblast will be launched at the end of October.

By Viktor BARGOTIN

Visit to maize fields

Michael Papadi, a specialist of RWA, visited Zashchitnoye plant breeding enterprise (Kursk oblast). The purpose of the visit was to provide advice and on-site monitoring of maize hybridisation.

Recently, maize has been gaining popularity, with its production area expanding further north and east due to the development of new genetics. Thus, Russian farmers face a very important, yet a difficult choice: which plant breeding material to opt for — Russian or European? According to farmers, the bottom line is good quality and high yield. 'We are in a partnership with Austrian company RWA for F1 maize hybrid production for the Russian market', says Yuriy Vasyukov, Executive Director of Zashchitnoye. 'The hybridisation takes place in Russia, which is of particular significance in the context of import replacement policy. Then, the quality of

the seeds is controlled in Austria, which also speaks in favour of the product.' Grizzly maize hybrid, in particular, has high cold hardiness which allows growing the crop in the regions previously considered unsuitable for maize production.

'We have been growing the innovative Grizzly maize hybrid since 2016', says Andrey Zvyagin, Head of Plant Breeding and Early-Generation Seed Production Department of Zashchitnoye. 'Having started from a pilot plot of 1.5 ha, we have gradually expanded to the current 120 ha. This year's result looks promising.'

Zashchitnoye is fully equipped with state-of-the-art tools required for both field

works and post-harvest conditioning of hybrid maize seeds. On behalf of RWA, Michael Papadi advised the agronomists on the hybridisation technique. According to Mr. Papadi, the F1 hybrid looked particularly good in Kursk fields.

During the stay, the Austrian expert also visited the trial plot in Zashchitnoye, where other hybrids from RWA were undergoing trials. The hybrids with the best performance will take their rightful place in the innovative line-up.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO





Rolf Zuern: family values in business

Rolf Zuern, Managing Director of Zuern Harvesting, a charismatic man with an amiable smile and shiny eyes, welcomed us at the company's booth at DLG Field Day in Germany. The long-time friend of EkoNiva answered our questions about work and life with enthusiasm and sincerity.

How did you see your own future when you were a child, what did you dream of?

I grew up in a village in the south of Germany with employed population of 1,000 people. When I was a boy, I wanted to become a professional soccer player like almost all of my friends. Later on, after I started learning to play the guitar, being a Rock Star seemed to be very attractive. Unfortunately, my talent was not sufficient for either of the two.

How did you start your company, what did you plan then and what have you achieved by today?

Actually, the company was started by my great-grandfather in 1885 as a blacksmith shop. He handed it over to my grandfather and from there to my father. Unfortunately, my father died too early at the age of 52 when I was 15 years old. In the following years my mother managed the company together with some experienced employees. She did a tremendous job in bringing the company through tough times. The company had approximately 20 employees at that time. I remember

her working full time, hurrying home to cook for the family and even for some seasonal workers and taking care of her garden in the evening. Still today, at the age of 88, she spends some hours at the company every day. I am very thankful for what she has done.

I worked in the company alongside with school and studies. At the age of 25, right after finishing the studies, I became the managing director. We had two locations and 20 employees. One of my first tasks was to close one location. Today we have 250 employees in two separate businesses operating at 12 different sites. On the one hand, we are a John Deere dealer in the south of Germany, on the other hand, we are a manufacturer of cutting platforms for combine harvesters and also a manufacturer of special equipment for the seed industry, especially the so-called plot combines.

Your Company has been operating for several decades. Obviously, the continuity of generations is of great importance to you, why?

I am running a family business which is more than 130 years old.

My predecessors had to take care of the family and the company during world wars, economic crisis and various challenges self-employed businessmen are facing day by day. It is my own ambition to develop this company further but also the feeling of responsibility to my ancestors and my descendants.

I believe that certain family values such as respect, honesty, support can and have to be maintained also in the business environment. At the same time business has to be profitable to exist and to grow. In my opinion, there is no contradiction in this at all. On the contrary: long-term success can only be based on such values. Maybe this is the major differentiating factor between generation-old family businesses and other companies: the long-term nature of any decision and evaluation.

In your opinion, what personal qualities help to work in the agricultural business?

The focus is on a long-term relationship with fellow-workers, customers, suppliers, banks and other parties; honesty, modesty, persistence (if you cannot make



Rolf Zuern and EkoNiva team



it this time, try to make it again and again), curiosity and innovation.

You have been doing your business successfully in Russia for a long time. Based on your experience and observation, do you think Russia will ever become a major player in the global farming business? If yes, what conditions are required for it to become possible?

Russia already is a major player and it will continue to become even more successful. The size of the country, soil quality and the economies of scale due to the large farm structures provide a solid ground. Your innovative farming companies and the strong political support will make the best out of these favourable conditions.

We have a different situation in Germany. German farmers feel that their work is underestimated by the politicians and the society. Of course, there are EU-subsidies but at the same time there is a growing mistrust especially regarding the environmental effects of agriculture and the conditions of livestock farming.

What are the most promising and high-potential agricultural activity areas in Russia in your opinion?

I guess this question has to be approached from a market perspective: the highest potential is in the areas with the highest demand. By focusing on high-quality milk production, EkoNiva surely is on the right track.

Even though it currently is a tiny segment I am curious to see the development of organic farming in Russia. The growth rates of this sector in Western Europe are enormous.

You have professional and personal relationships with EkoNiva. What do you like most about EkoNiva's strategy? What most prominent and valuable qualities of EkoNiva can you define?

My first encounter with EkoNiva was almost 15 years ago. If I look at EkoNiva's development over this time period, it feels like being in a time capsule. Very few companies are able to grow at a comparable speed. In a way it reminds me more of Google or Amazon than of any other company in the so-called "old economy" (actually, this term is not fit at all for the dynamic world of agriculture). But — and this is most important — the owner and the management team have always had their feet on the ground.

Stefan Duerr is a visionary leader who makes things come true.

He is result- and performance-oriented but always treats people with the same respect, no matter if it is a high-rank politician or a fellow-worker in the dairy barn.

The main reason for success is the strong team of employees from the management to field workers. Many of those colleagues have a long tenure and consider themselves to be co-entrepreneurs, working for the best of the company which in the long run is the best for themselves as well.

There are hard times in agricultural business just like in any other businesses. What helps you personally to deal with the tough times in business?

This question is serious and funny at the same time. Whenever I am in Russia, I hear people talking about "crisis". Either about the current one or about the next one to come. Of course — as we say in Germany — trees do not grow into heaven, but it seems to be part of Russian culture to always live in fear of the next downswing. The risky thing is that this could become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

But you are right, there are ups and downs in any business, maybe to a larger extent in the cyclical agricultural industry. We have just had two not very favorable years in Germany and Western Europe because of the very low commodity prices between the middle of 2015 and the middle of 2017. And if I look at myself, it seems that it unconsciously affects me more than in the past. Maybe one gets more sensitive over the years.

My personal reaction is to try to stay calm and rational, to work hard and to take the right decisions together with my team.

Do the best you can and put the rest into God's hands. That is the best thing you can do.

And keep in mind that the magnitude of all problems is relative. Hopefully, you have a family and friends who are in good health. That is most important.

Sooner or later, any business faces the



question of how to develop further on. What are your plans for the company?

Except for the last two years and 2009, my company has always been growing within the last 20 years. Of course, we work on continuing with this growth path. Growth, if it is a profitable growth, keeps the business agile, creates



new opportunities for the employees and is a positive challenge for myself. There are several ideas and plans to grow in the dealership as well as in the manufacturing business.

Rolf, what do you consider your greatest achievement in life and what are you proud of most of all?

This is easy to answer: it definitely is my family and children.

What is your life motto? What rules in life do you always try to follow?

I like the idea of life-long-learning. It keeps you humble because you realise that there is so much you do not know about and at the same time it gives you self-confidence because you know that you can always learn and develop.

What is your inspiration and the source of energy and strength?

Inspiration can be manifold. Reading a good article or book, running through a nice landscape and definitely meeting inspiring people.

A source of energy in business is surely mastering a task and achieving success.

Spending time with family and friends and knowing that there is more to life than what we can see and prove scientifically is definitely a deep source of inspiration and energy.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO



A healthy meal

Specialists of EkoNivaSibir conducted a seminar on forage harvesting and fodder preparation in Sibirskaya Niva. Representatives of small and large dairy farming enterprises from Tomsk and Novosibirsk oblasts had an opportunity to see that feeding is one of the key components of professional herd management, and reliable machines make this process easy and precise.

There is a saying that our health is at the bottom of the plate we eat from. The same is true for animals. Their health is determined by the feed quality and housing conditions.

‘A well-balanced ration increases milk yields’ says Sergey Batartsev, Chief Agronomist of Sibirskaya Niva. ‘Our task is to produce delicious and healthy crops for our growing herd, harvest them on time and prepare feed for the cows.’

This year, Sibirskaya Niva is planning a significant herd increase. Before the end of the year, the company will put into operation a dairy for 6,000 head. The heifers purchased in Europe are currently being shipped to the new dairy. Besides, the company operates a dairy for 2,500 head in Borkovo village and a dairy for 5,000 head in Penkovo village. The growing cattle population requires a significant expansion of the fodder production area.

‘To compare, last year we had to procure 50 thousand tonnes of fodder in dry matter’, continues Sergey Batartsev. ‘This year, due to the herd increase, the demand has grown to 110 thousand tonnes. We have developed a special fodder production program to cope with our task successfully. Besides, we have

increased our forage harvesting and fodder preparation machinery fleet.’

The acquisition of new machinery made it possible to create two forage harvesting fleets with the capacity of up to 3.5 tonnes per shift each.

‘Each forage harvesting fleet includes mowers, forage harvesters, rakes, tedders, tractors for packing and dozers’, continues Sergey Batartsev. ‘All equipment is powerful and reliable.’

The participants of the seminar saw the process in action.

‘We were able to observe the fodder preparation process and discuss the most advanced feeding practices’,

says Aleksandr Zuev, Head of Sales Department of EkoNivaSibir. ‘We saw the operation of self-propelled mowers, in particular, John Deere W260 machines with disc headers and conditioning rollers in the fields. These mowers are equipped with improved 6.8-litre 260 hp engines.’

The reserve capacity of these machines allows working efficiently at the speeds of up to 23 km/h, which increases productivity significantly. The harvested material passes through the conditioning unit in order to ensure uniform return of moisture. The steering system of the mower is equipped with the built-in AutoTrac automatic driving system, which serves to reduce the operating costs and makes the operator’s job easier.

‘The next important harvesting tool is the unique RT 1220 rake produced by ROC’, continues Alexander Zuev. ‘The key benefit of the machine lies in the fundamental difference from the traditional rotary rakes. The machine features independently operating pickup tines and conveyor belts. The material is gently picked up to the conveyor belt, which makes a neat bale and places it on the left or the right side of the machine.’

Careful harvesting and transportation of feed enables farmers to preserve the leaves even in the hottest weather. The machines are available in the working width from 3.8 to 12.2 meters. One unit can cover up to 100 hectares per shift. The main distinguishing feature of this machine is that it allows reducing losses.

Every farmer knows that the cow’s milk is on its tongue. The specialists of the farm formulate balanced rations for animals and follow a strict feeding and milking routine. The results speak for themselves: the dairies of Sibirskaya Niva produce more than 180 tonnes of high-quality milk per day. The farm has all it takes for successful operation: the powerful and reliable equipment and the qualified employees who love their work.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO





Farmers are on track with JCB!

A telehandler is a truly indispensable tool at any farming enterprise, as agricultural works require a lot of effort, time and resources. Knowing this full well, the management of Krutishinskoye farming enterprise in Cherepanovo district, Novosibirsk oblast, acquired a JCB 531-70 telehandler three weeks ago.

The JCB 531-70 is widely recognised as the most popular telescopic handler. The model is in great demand, which is supported by the fact that the JCB 531-70 telehandlers account for approximately 80 percent of all telescopic loaders operating on the farms of Siberian region.

'The JCB 531-70 is versatile, it can cope with different tasks at agricultural enterprises', says Aleksandr Burmak, Sales Manager of EkoNivaSibir. 'The telehandler facilitates working processes, whether in livestock farming, crop production, construction or general works. It makes any task feasible.'

Modern farmers particularly appreciate this telescopic loader due to its versatility, the outstanding power of its engine, high lift capacity and excellent stability on uneven ground.

'We have been dreaming of purchasing such a high-quality powerful piece of machinery for our enterprise for a long time', says Nikolay Gomer, Machine

Operator of the enterprise. 'Three years ago, we did a test drive and fell for the machine right away.'

The purchase of the longed-for JCB telehandler by Krutishinskoye enterprise was not completed in a day. In fact, the process took up several months. However, when the loader finally arrived, the joy was all the greater for having waited so long.

'In comparison with our old equipment, which we previously used at the enterprise, the JCB telehandler is certainly in a league of its own', shares Nikolay Gomer, 'due to its comfortable air-conditioned cab, automatic transmission and a single lever controlling all the major functions. It feels so good, that you do not feel like leaving the cab.'

Even during the high season, the operator's work on the JCB 531-70 telehandler is more of a pleasant activity than a burdensome duty. It is not for nothing that the model is considered the most popular in the Russian market: it offers clients numerous advantages.

'The maximum lift height is 7 m and

the lift capacity is 3,100 kg. Besides, it features an automatic transmission and a comfortable and safe cab', shares Aleksandr Burmak. 'The telescopic handler is equipped with a boom stabiliser, which prevents the load from scattering from the bucket when moving over long distances and extends the service life of the boom.'

Besides, on Krutishinskoye enterprise's request, the telehandler was additionally equipped with a hydraulic outlet for coupling to the trailer-truck. Despite its modest size, the machine easily tackles the majority of agricultural tasks.

'The telehandler is a multi-purpose machine', says Nikolay Homer. 'We use it for all kinds of works: handling of hay, feed, grain, humus, calcareous earth and so on.'

The JCB 531-70 telehandler was designed to ensure long uninterrupted operation. Durable components were used in the assembly of the telehandler, which is particularly valued by the workers of Krutishinskoye farming enterprise.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO



In the spotlight

Field Days 2018 took place in many regions of Russia fostering new ideas and daring solutions. In the world of agriculture, which is often associated with the technologies of tomorrow, businessmen always need to keep pace with the latest advancements. EkoNiva's team could not miss the opportunity to take part in all the important events. Our journalists have come up with a review of this summer!



First run in Voronezh

EkoNiva-Chernozemye unveiled the intellectual John Deere S760 grain harvester at Voronezh Field Day.

'The new machine features the weighing system which can be installed directly inside the combine hopper. It provides a real-time record of the harvested material in kilograms,' says Dmitry Baskakov, EkoNiva-Chernozemye Sales Department Manager. 'Besides, the machine demonstrates excellent performance on slopes.'

Kaluga field masters

The John Deere 6195 M and the John Deere 8320 R tractors were presented at Kaluga Field Day. They have already earned the clients' trust with their power and durability. The new John Deere 8400 forage harvester with the maximum capacity of 540 hp was among the novelties displayed at the event. The next item on the list of the new

developments was the JCB 541-70 Agri Pro telescopic loader.

'The JCB 541-70 Agri Pro has been demonstrated to farmers for the first time', says Artyom Konoplyov, EkoNiva-Tekhnika Kaluga branch Brand Manager. 'It is the world's first telehandler with the DualTech VT hybrid transmission.'

Kostroma Bestsellers

The John Deere 7830 became the flagship of the Field Day in Kostroma oblast.

'The John Deere 7830 is the bestseller in the 7 Series product line', says Aleksandr Naumov, Vladimir branch of EkoNiva-Tekhnika Sales Manager. 'It is a reliable piece of machinery with the engine capacity of 205 hp. It has

been tested on many farms and has earned a good reputation in the fields. In combination with the four-metre Vaderstad Rapid sowing unit, it is a perfect solution for sowing cereals.'

The John Deere 6175 M also demonstrated its advantages.

'The John Deere 6175 M is one of our novelties unveiled in 2018', continues Aleksandr Naumov. 'The machine is characterised by a higher power density. It is equipped with navigation and precision farming systems. Besides, the tractor enables operators to work with cultivators, planters and combines with the track following precision of 2-2.5 cm.'

The Labourers of

Perm oblast

This time at AgroFest 2018, the dealer showcased two yellow-black farm labourers: the JCB 531-70 AGS and





the JCB 155 with attachments.

'We had been considering the purchase of a skid steer loader for a long time', says Nikolay Sotnikov, Senior Machine Operator of Niva farming enterprise. 'We are engaged in livestock farming and it is very important to us to have versatile reliable machines. Therefore, we approached the purchase of a new loader seriously and had considered several options before we chose the JCB 155.'

Hot Summer in Ryazan

At the Field Day in Ryazan oblast, EkoNiva-Tekhnika displayed the machines of such brands as John Deere, JCB, Vaderstad and Fliegl. Nikolay Lyubimov, Governor of Ryazan oblast, attended the event. He paid a visit to EkoNiva's booth and pointed out that the company is the major and the most reliable supplier of agricultural machinery

in Ryazan. Local farmers also were frequent visitors at the company's booth.

'We are not growing complacent with what we have achieved', says Nikolay Mitrokhin, Chairman of Vyshgorod Cooperative. 'Last year, we harvested 20 thousand tonnes of cereals, this season the amount is coming up to 27 thousand tonnes. There is a definite positive development, which is to a large extent attributable to EkoNiva-Tekhnika because the company supplies us with unique reliable machinery, capable of operating in the most challenging conditions.'

'The Field Day of Ryazan oblast is in the first place the platform for communicating with our partners,' says Gennady Nepomnyashchy, EkoNiva-Tekhnika Executive Director. 'We aspire to higher quality standards of our after-sales service that is why Field Day is a strategic event for us.'

Tula musclemen

In Tula, everybody's attention was drawn to the John Deere 9520 R powerful tractor suitable for large farms. The machine demonstrates high efficiency at a reasonable price. The John Deere T670 grain harvester operates promptly and efficiently without damaging the grain or the straw.

'The Harvesting campaign is at its peak in our region', says Vitaliy Kozorev, EkoNiva-Tekhnika Tula branch Director. 'For Tula oblast, the John Deere T670 is a perfect machine which can work in any weather conditions. The harvester ensures excellent grain quality and high throughput capacity at low maintenance costs.'

The Vaderstad Carrier 820 used for high-speed preliminary soil tillage and seedbed preparation became another highlight of the event. Besides, the company displayed the Fliegl ULW 30 transfer trailer, a well-reputed farmer's helping hand. The Grimme SE150/170-60 2-row potato harvester featuring side intake and equipped with a large hopper completed the musclemen team.

Exceptional opportunities in Kirov

EkoNiva-Tekhnika demonstrated the talents of the 8000 Series John Deere forage harvesters, including the 540 hp John Deere 8400 coupled with the John Deere 649 baler. The John Deere W650 grain harvester with the engine capacity of 305 hp was also among the leaders of the demo show.

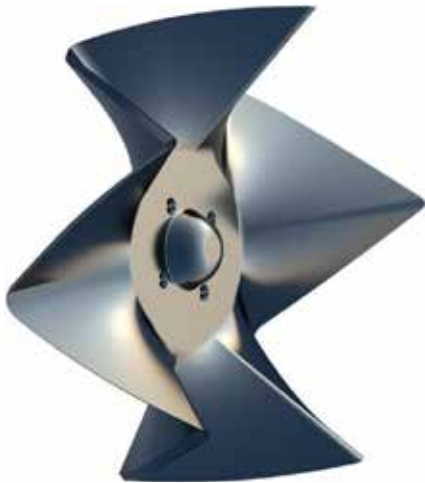
'Our specialists have held excellent machine demonstrations and coped with all the tasks perfectly well', says Sergey Zykov, EkoNiva-Tekhnika Kirov branch Director. 'Our booth has been visited by over 100 people. Several contracts have been signed, which means that our partners will have new reliable machines working in their fields in the new season.'

*By Darya DENISOVA,
Aleksandr KUTISHCHEV,
Viktor BARGOTIN.*





Ultra-shallow soil tillage with CrossCutter disc



On 4 July Vaderstad presented the new solution for soil tillage unveiling the brand-new CrossCutter disc for the Carrier disc harrow at an international seminar in Sweden with the participation of its partners from Germany, Poland, Bulgaria, Canada and Russia. The new machine mulches soil at an ultra-shallow working depth of 2-3 cm.

The new curved CrossCutter disc designed by Vaderstad is unique:

- the working width of the disc is 11.5 cm, which is much larger than the width of any other manufacturer's curved disc;
- the CrossCutter disc can work steadily already at the depth of 2-3 cm;
- the approach angle of 160° is the best solution for working at the maximum speed of up to 20 km/h.

These features allow for intensive ultra-shallow tillage across the field with minimum fuel consumption. The disc is designed to fit the well-known versatile Vaderstad Carrier disc harrow. The discs are interchangeable and available for machines with the cutting length from 3 to 12.5 m.

The shape of the CrossCutter disc ensures cutting any crop residue to smaller particles than with a traditional disc and mixing it into the soil during tillage. This results in faster decomposition of the residue excluding

any problems during the next sowing campaign. Every disc is attached to a separate suspension bracket, which guarantees perfect ground following and pinpoint accuracy. Weeds and volunteer seeds of the previous crop germinate faster in such favourable conditions and it is easy to eliminate them by means of subsequent treatments.

Field trials have proved the incredible efficiency of the CrossCutter disc in mulching undersown crops. The harrow performs well at high speed without clogging on mustard and other green manure crops, chopping them and mixing with the soil.

The Carrier disc harrow with the CrossCutter disc demonstrates excellent results in early spring pre-planting soil tillage. Working depth decrease from 7 to 3 cm reduces vertical ground surface movement to 400 m per hectare. It helps to preserve soil moisture in the top layer and improves germination of small-seeded crops like rapeseed.

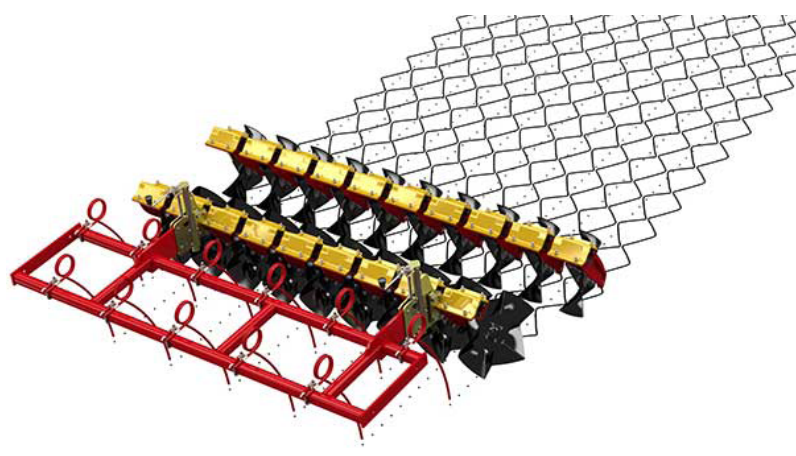
The disc demonstrates excellent performance with minimum fuel consumption at the depth of 2-3 cm at the speed of 15-20 km/h.

The first disc harrow with CrossCutter disc was supplied to Znamenskoye farm, Tula oblast, in 2018. Farm Manager Mikhail Yevlanov is amazed at its performance.

'The machine has proved to be extremely efficient in fallow fields and in fields with crop residue', says Mikhail Yevlanov. 'We achieve high-quality shallow tillage and residue mixing creating a wonderful seedbed. At first, we worked with only one machine, Carrier 8.2 m. Recently we have ordered discs for the second machine with the cutting length of 12.25 m.'

Ryazan and Tula branches of EkoNiva-Tekhnika are planning to hold a number of on-farm demonstration shows of the new Carrier harrow with the CrossCutter disc in autumn 2018 to allow farm specialists to test the efficiency of the new machines in their own fields.

*By Willi DREWS,
PhD in Agronomy, Consultant of EkoNiva.*





Large machines for a large country

John Deere Field Day 2018 was held in Kushchevskaya district, Krasnodar oblast. The leading agricultural producers from all over the country came to see and try out the most powerful machinery in action, learn about the company's maintenance services and the latest technological achievements, and socialise with their colleagues from the farming industry.

The specialists of EkoNiva-Chernozemye came to the event together with their clients from Voronezh oblast. A wide range of John Deere machinery was displayed for the attention of the guests of the event: tractors, sprayers, grain and forage harvesters, tillage and sowing machinery, choppers and cutters. Alongside the well-reputed models, the company presented the latest season's novelties: the John Deere 9570RX tractor designed to deal with the toughest jobs and the line of improved versatile John Deere 6M series tractors, which are ready to compete with their more sophisticated and expensive counterparts. Special focus was placed on precision farming systems. Data is the fuel that drives a profitable agricultural enterprise. John Deere precision farming systems collect and interpret agronomic data. On its basis, specialists draw conclusions, which in their turn help to plan the operational process, increase productivity and reduce costs. 'We keep moving towards precision farming', says Ivan Chernykh, Chief Engineer of Istoki collective farm (Boguchar district, Voronezh oblast). 'Our agricultural machines are equipped with steering and tracking systems. We are willing to advance together with John Deere machinery. We already have a John Deere 455 seed drill and we are seriously considering buying a John Deere 6195M tractor.'

Vaderstad, John Deere's partner, also displayed its tillage and sowing machinery at the trade show. 'We have been using Vaderstad machinery for several years and we are very happy with it', says Vyacheslav Shevchenko, Deputy Director General for production in Pavlovskaya Niva

(Pavlovsk district, Voronezh oblast). On our farm, we have a Vaderstad Carrier 820 disc harrow which works very well. Now we want to purchase a set of discs for it. We have already arranged field trials with EkoNiva.'

Pavlovskaya Niva grows almost all crops characteristic of the Central Black Soil Region on its 52,000 ha of land. The company is also developing livestock farming, and the farm management knows for sure that reliable machinery is the key to success. Therefore, the John Deere's 'green titans' are more and more frequently seen in the fields of the enterprise. There are eight pieces of machinery of this brand on the farm in total, and there are plans to buy more.

'John Deere machinery is a profit-making tool, in the first place. The operating condition of the machinery influences the financial result of the farm', says Vladimir Moiseyev, EkoNiva-Chernozemye After-Sales Service Manager. 'That is why John Deere is developing dedicated maintenance programmes, such as the pre-season machinery troubleshooting service 'Trust the Expert', extended insurance package PowerGuard, service package FarmSight, and lubricant analysis OilScan.'

Detailed information on the new services was available at the company's booth.

On the occasion of the centennial anniversary of the company, John Deere displayed the John Deere AR retro tractor produced in 1935. The guests had an opportunity to take pictures of the rarity and forge coins with the nominal value of 1 Deere at a special smith's shop.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO





Potato fest by GRIMME!

Over a thousand guests from around the world came to take part in Potato Russia 2018, an international potato field day organised by GRIMME in conjunction with its subsidiary GRIMME-RUS. The specialists of EkoNiva-Tekhnika were among the invitees.

Dobronravov AGRO farming enterprise (Chichkovo village, Bryansk oblast) provided its premises for the meeting of potato business professionals. This year has been record-breaking for Potato Russia in terms of the number of the countries represented, as farmers from Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan,

Uzbekistan, Poland, Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands and the USA gathered to exchange their best practices in potato production. Leading agricultural enterprises demonstrated the latest in seeds and fertiliser technologies. Besides, GRIMME, John Deere and other manufacturers held a demo show of machinery and equipment.

'GRIMME has introduced several novelties,' shares Aleksandra Zorina, Head of Marketing Department of GRIMME-RUS. 'The two-row offset trailed bunker harvester EVO 290 is the evolution of the highly successful SE 260 model. The EVO 290 is the most powerful of its kind featuring a capacious 9-tonne bunker. The EVO 290 can be optionally equipped with the patented AirSep separator. SPUDNIK plant introduced a more compact version of the AirSep 991 separator — the AirSep 992, which is equipped with a patented air purification system.'

Traditionally, the specialists of Kaluga, Ryazan and Kirov branches of EkoNiva-Tekhnika attended the Potato Russia 2018 Field Day.

'We do our best not to miss this event', says Lyudmila Zykova, Deputy Sales Director of Kirov branch of EkoNiva-Tekhnika, 'as it is a great opportunity for our team and clients to get acquainted with the latest innovations.'

Besides, this year's entertainment programme included a potato peeling contest and engaging quizzes. Potato Russia 2018 has proved an excellent platform for networking, professional growth and development and corporate recreation.

By Darya DENISOVA

Swift and smooth harvesting!

The specialists of Znamenskoye farming enterprise (Tula oblast), one of the first in Russia to equip the John Deere combines with the new 12-metre 640FD HydraFlex headers, experienced swift and smooth harvesting first-hand.

The new 640FD header features HydraFlex, a hydraulic float system, allowing superior ground following capabilities. The combine operator can hydraulically control the cutterbar ground pressure to match soft or hard soil conditions, even at high speeds. The 640FD header has a unique design with no auger, which ensures active material movement with draper belt and uniform feeding onto the feed drum and into the feeder house.

'The new John Deere 640FD headers were coupled with three combines for harvesting of wheat and barley', says Aleksey Yevlanov, Deputy Director General of Znamenskoye farming enterprise. 'To say that the header did a good job would be an understatement. Since we started using the headers, the performance has

doubled and we haven't experienced any issues with high relative humidity.'

Each combine harvested approximately 500 ha of barley. Thus, the combine worked about 60 ha per day, threshing 300 tonnes of grain.

The John Deere 640FD headers have numerous advantages, such as the robust high-quality reel increasing and optimising material flow across the full width for consistent feeding.

By default, the 640FD HydraFlex Platform returns the reel to the starting position. However, the operator can preselect two different reel positions: one for normal

operating conditions and the other for specific field conditions and harvesting of lodged, vine and dwarf crops.

'To keep pace with the times, our enterprise surely needs cutting-edge technologies, which John Deere and EkoNiva-Tekhnika have provided us with,' continues Aleksey Evlanov. 'There are 16 units of self-propelled and trailed equipment by John Deere in our machinery fleet. In line with the plan to continue upgrading our machinery fleet, we are currently considering the purchase of new 640FD headers.'

By Viktor BARGOTIN





Fashion Farmer boosts economic efficiency!



Fashion Farmer 2018 was dedicated to effective cost management in agribusiness. This year, the field trade show in Vysokoye, Liski district, Voronezh oblast, gathered around 400 visitors.

The unique field event was jointly hosted by EkoNiva-Chernozemye and EkoNiva-Semena, which had gone to great lengths to create a true fest of agricultural knowledge for farmers from all over the country.

The non-exhaustive list of regions participating in the large-scale holiday included Voronezh, Krasnoyarsk, Yoshkar-Ola, Saransk, Saratov, Ryazan, Lipetsk, Penza, Belgorod, Vladikavkaz, Kursk, Tambov, Orenburg and even Georgia. Growers came, first and foremost, to exchange experience in agriculture, find out about the latest developments, take part in modern machinery demo shows, meet and find common ground with partners. The layout of the trade show featured several stations representing major farming systems. And these were not just demonstration areas, but rather comprehensive study sites, including cost-efficiency proof and the analysis of economics for the different crop production systems. The new format event was no doubt highly popular with the attendees. The very subject — effective cost management — added to the topicality. 'We set out to back up the recommended machinery choice in the context of no-till, mini-till and conventional farming system for our clients', says Ivan Vorobyev, Executive Director of EkoNiva-Chernozemye. 'The findings of our 3-year analysis

indicate that the operating costs in agriculture are on a steady rise due to inflation. In comparison, the costs for machinery purchase — if it is reliable and durable — remain fairly constant.'

The company puts to test flagship farming machinery produced by the leading global manufacturers in its own fields and farms, develops and customises existing navigation systems. Furthermore, once EkoNiva decides on a certain product for its own operations, it gladly brings its clients and partners up to speed on the acquired know-how. The latest trend is the use of precision farming systems as one of the key elements of efficient cost management in agribusiness. According to Stefan Duerr, President of EkoNiva Group, precision farming is the future since it offers the possibility to save from 20 to 30 per cent of seeds, pesticides, and fertilisers, while significantly increasing the yield.

Currently, the precision farming project is being implemented at Left-Bank Operation of EkoNivaAgro', says Stefan Duerr. 'In a year or two, the project will be expanded to cover all our farming operations. Unveiled here today was the Tempo precision drill, manufactured by Vaderstad, which has been tested in EkoNiva since last year. I know for a fact that it is second to none when it comes to precision sowing of row crops such as sunflower, soybeans, and maize.'

Effective agribusiness is impossible without modern high-performance machinery. This year's Fashion Farmer once again featured both new and proven farming machines. The new John Deere T670i combine harvester equipped with a powerful 335 Kw (455 HP) engine ensuring exceptional fuel efficiency was among the novelties displayed at the show. The 11,000-litre grain tank unloads at 125 l/s.'

The highlight of Fashion Farmer was the machinery demo show, aimed at giving the farmers a better understanding of the novelties and enabling them to make the right choice.

'EkoNiva-Chernozemye has a competitive edge due to the quality and prompt service, custom-tailored approach, special offers and various machinery purchase options', says Sergey Klimentovskiy, Chief Engineer of Agroservis machinery fleet (Voronezh oblast). 'Having bought machinery from EkoNiva-Chernozemye once, we are not going to stop, and that is exactly why we are here today.'

The guests were impressed with the extensive programme of the Field Day: the delicious dairy products from the Academy of Dairy Sciences — ice-cream being a definite smash hit — helped to breeze through the summer heat, while the varied and interesting concert programme put the attendees in a festive mood.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO,
Viktor BARGOTIN



Russia's organic food market receives a boost

Signing of the new law spelling out the rules for organic production by the President of Russia Vladimir Putin has paved the way for major changes in the Russian organic farming sector.

The bill defines the concept of 'organic produce' and establishes organic production, storage, handling, labelling and sale standards. According to experts, the draft law will come into effect as per



1st January, 2020. Meanwhile, we find out more about important changes to the current law from the pioneers of the Russian organic farming movement.

'Most significantly, the subject matter of the law is in line with the expectations of the organic community', says Oleg Mironenko, Executive Director of the National Organic Union. 'Currently, the amendments make it possible to legalise national and international standards that were previously not binding, help to clear supermarket shelves of fake organic products, identify and force dishonest players using the term "organic" as a disguise — out of the market.'

Anatoliy Nakaryakov, Executive Director of Savinskaya Niva, which produces organic beef as well as organic cereal, pulse and fodder crops, supports his counterparts.

'What is important is that organic producers have been heard and the responsibility for unlawful labelling of products as organic has been introduced', says Anatoliy Nakaryakov. 'But I am also concerned that there will be a lot of counterfeit products. Stringent civic control is required. We need mass advertising of the organic product label for it to be easily recognisable to consumers.'

The blurred concepts in the law have been clearly defined.

'We have accomplished ban on the use of pesticides, chemicals, antibiotics, growth stimulants, hormones and GMOs', says Oleg Mironenko, 'with the exception of the agents the use of which is allowed in organic production by national and international standards.'

Now the law will have clear guidelines for the certifying authorities, as well as the course of action specifying what steps the manufacturer needs to take in order for his products to be recognised as organic.

'At the moment, there is only one certification company that has passed accreditation in Russia', continues Oleg Mironenko. 'After the adoption of the law, any certification company will have enough time for accreditation. Thus, favorable conditions for the emergence of new certification companies in the field of organic farming will be created.'

It is important that the law on organic production will come into effect only in 2020. Thus, organic producers will have enough time for transition.

'The transition period is necessary for those companies which are currently certifying their products abroad', says Oleg Mironenko. 'Their certificates will be valid until next year, and from then on the companies will be able to apply for certification in the framework of the adopted law.'

Savinskaya Niva has already passed certification in compliance with interstate standard GOST 33980-2016 Organic production. Production, processing, labelling and implementation regulations.



'Savinskaya Niva is considering the expansion of organic production', says Anatoliy Nakaryakov, Director of the enterprise, 'we are exploring the option of adding fallow land, which is eligible for certification within the first year of introduction into rotation, according to the rules of organic production. There are plans to develop organic dairy farming in the future. We have got a long way to go.'

By Darya DENISOVA





Practical and ergonomic

A group of EkoNiva's specialists visited dairies in Germany to study advanced herd management practices.

The Russian guests made a tour of Bockhorst AG in Huy OT Schlanstedt and LAPROMA Dielsdorf/Schlossyppach in Thuringia.

The world-famous German efficiency displays itself at the immaculately organised farm premises. Absolute ergonomics is the underlying principle of farming in Germany.

The story of Bockhorst family farm started in 1995. Currently, the farm has approximately 550 cows and heifers. The cattle are housed in free stalls with straw mat bedding and milked by 7 DeLaval robots.

'We were interested in studying this type of housing', shares Mikhail Gurnov, Livestock Production Director of EkoNiva-APK Holding. 'It might suit our dairies in some regions quite well.'

The next stop on the tour was LAPROMA in Schlossyppach. The enterprise currently manages one thousand dairy cows and approximately 900 heifers of Holstein-Friesian breed.

The two cow barns are equipped with an automatic ventilation system and cow brushes, ensuring perfect cow comfort. When the cows are ready to be milked, they walk through the connecting alleys leading to the

milking parlour where 24 cows can simultaneously be milked by robots. It is important to mention that for manure management, the farm uses an anaerobic methane digester.

'There is always something to learn from our western colleagues', comments Mikhail Gurnov. 'The use of methane digesters in Germany is supported by the government. However, in our country, this approach to manure management has not gained popularity so far.'

The ration of the German cows is versatile and nourishing. The main feed components are corn silage and snaplage, haylage, beet pulp, potatoes, rapeseed extrudate, meal and straw, Prograin wheat and mineral additives.

The nutritious ration has a beneficial effect on the yields: the local cows produce 32 litres of milk per day.

'The ration formulation practices implemented on this farm deserve attention', says Mikhail Gurnov. 'However, at our farming enterprises, there are cows which produce 36 and more litres per day. I believe that the success of German farmers lies in the love of work, meticulousness and ergonomics.'

By Tatiana IGNATENKO

The art of breeding

Kaluzhskaya Niva held a contest of AI technicians.

Seven contestants dressed in white coats and wearing sterile gloves lined up ready to get down to work.

Artificial insemination is an art. Each heifer requires an individual approach and must be handled with kindness. 'It is very important to avoid abrupt movements', says Aleksey Korotkov, participant of the contest. 'Each animal has its own temperament. Some cows are easy to handle, others are aggressive. You should approach the cow quietly, pat her on the back, talk to her, calm her down.'

Aleksey Korotkov knows how to make a cow feel comfortable and perform his work successfully. He works as the senior AI technician at Bushovka dairy. Andrey's overall working experience in livestock production is 7 years.

'I grew up in a small village in Tula oblast', continues Aleksey. 'In my childhood, I took care of the horses kept by our family. Later I entered an agricultural college and worked for the local collective farm every summer. Artificial insemination has been performed for over 100 years! The basic principles are the same as in gynaecology. The technician needs to check if the cow is ready to become a mother. In order to do this, he palpates the cow. In case of cervical adhesion, abscess, endometritis or any other health problems, the animal undergoes urgent treatment before AI. If the

cow is absolutely healthy, we fix the cervix and release the semen from the straw into the body of the uterus within 5 seconds. In 36 days, we make a pregnancy check. If the cow is pregnant, we move her to a different group which receives a different ration. Two months before calving, the cow is dried off, she prepares to become a mother. Delivering semen to the ovum is only the final part of the long process. Firstly, the semen has to be frozen correctly and stored in liquid nitrogen at 196 °C. In this condition, semen can be preserved for centuries! We use the semen from the world's best pedigree bulls of Holstein breed. The biological material is delivered in special containers from the USA', explains Aleksey Korotkov.



'Natural insemination can involve spreading of infectious diseases', observes Aleksey, 'while artificial insemination is performed in sterile conditions, it allows us to calculate the exact calving date and receive high-quality young stock.'

By Darya DENISOVA



Beneficial holidays!

Having passed all the semester exams, the hard-working participants of student team MOST packed their suitcases to go to their workplaces at the dairies of EkoNivaAgro. For two months, the students have been gaining experience and acquiring the skills, which will come in handy in their future profession.

The working season of student team MOST at EkoNivaAgro's dairies has begun for the fourth time. Every year, the number of those who want to join the team goes up: this year, 49 students from 19 agricultural universities of the country took part in the project, in comparison with only 35 students last year.

'There are not many agricultural student teams in Russia, that is why we highly value the work of the participants', says Marina Kornilova, an employee of the Central Headquarters of the Russian Student Teams Association. 'The majority of the students have already been to EkoNivaAgro operations, which attests to the fact, that student team MOST accomplishes all the objectives of the Central Headquarters.'

In the framework of the project, the participants of the student team worked on the farm milking, feeding, treating the cows and participating in all herd management processes.

'I had never seen cows in real life until last summer', shares Yulia Akulova, student of Perm State University of Agricultural Technology. 'It was then that I got my first

experience in working with animals, which I loved very much. Within several months, I had learned a great deal. The trust of the specialists filled us with confidence and convinced us that we are on the right track.'

'I was really impressed with the scale of agricultural enterprises of EkoNivaAgro', shares Yekaterina Sukhanova, student of Vyatka State Agricultural Academy.

'Since this is my first visit to EkoNiva's farms, I am looking forward to getting to work as soon as possible.'

MOST is a unique association providing employment for students. Besides, it is engaged in professional training, education and development of leadership and organisational skills of the young generation.

By Viktor BARGOTIN





The participants of student team Vavilovets spent their summer working at the corn hybridisation plot in Shchigry district.

Vavilovets: future skilled workforce

Freshers of Kursk State Agricultural Academy n.a. I.I. Ivanov and Voronezh State Agricultural University n.a. Emperor Peter the Great received an opportunity to get their first experience in agriculture and earn a decent salary. Due to EkoNiva's pilot personnel project in plant breeding and seed production, the participants of student team Vavilovets were charged with positive emotions. Most importantly, their assistance came in very handy.

Fifty students spent 5 weeks in the field, working hard on the production of F1 Grizzly corn hybrid, irrespectively of the weather conditions, both under the burning sun and in the pouring rain.

'Formation of student team Vavilovets was a joint project implemented by the plant breeding centre, rectors of Kursk and Voronezh agricultural universities and HR department of EkoNiva', says Vitaliy Voloshchenko, founder of the pilot project Vavilovets, Director of EkoNiva's centre of plant breeding and seed production. 'Our main objective is not only to help the enterprise, which is essential in the summer season, but also to stimulate the interest of the students in plant breeding and seed production.'

Currently, the shortage of career guidance and communication between agricultural universities and breeding centres results in a considerable lack of workers in plant breeding. EkoNiva's specialists took the decision to change this situation, so they organised a pilot project for undergraduate students.

'Zashchitnoye farming enterprise was chosen as the base for the implementation of the project for several reasons', continues Vitaliy Voloshchenko, 'but most importantly it is the best facility for learning all the subtleties of plant breeding and seed production.'

Since 2016, Zashchitnoye farming enterprise has been growing F1 Grizzly corn hybrid originating from Austria, currently on an area of over 100 ha. This summer, the members of the student team put their hearts and souls into working in this plot.

Aleksandra Luginina, a sophomore of Voronezh State Agricultural University n.a. Emperor Peter the Great, viewed the participation in the project as the source of invaluable experience.

'The work in the corn field was definitely not easy for us,' shares Aleksandra Luginina. 'However, whatever the work, it is less challenging as long as your friends support you. Besides, the specialists filled us in on the specifics of plant breeding and seed production. They also shared their best practices with us. Unfortunately, it is virtually impossible to gain such knowledge and experience simply attending lectures at the university.'

Aleksandra's friend from the student team, Olga Ivakhnenko, a student of Kursk State Agricultural Academy n.a. I.I. Ivanov, had striven to become an agronomist, however, getting a hands-on experience in corn hybridisation made her consider taking up an academic career in plant breeding and seed production in the future.

'We were impressed with the sheer scale of work', shares Olga Ivakhnenko. 'It was

obvious, that it would take a lot of time and effort. We removed corn side stems and tassels, which is very important for the production of F1 Grizzly corn hybrid.'

It took the students approximately an hour and a half to get one row done. Depending on the weather conditions, the students spent from 6 to 10 hours a day in the field. The work provided food for thought, so the participants of student team Vavilovets had time to think about their future occupation, as some of them would become veterinarians, herd managers or agronomists, and maybe someone would dedicate their life to plant breeding.

Yuriy Vasyukov, Executive Director of Zashchitnoye, thanked the participants of student team Vavilovets for fruitful work and offered them further cooperation next year.

According to Yuriy Vasyukov, an intellectual product, such as a variety or a hybrid, is the ultimate achievement in agriculture and the thing of the future.

The stay concluded with an extensive and informative tour of the enterprise and a festive concert, prepared by the participants of student team Vavilovets themselves. Each member of the team received a memorable gift, and the top performers were awarded certificates for a trip to St. Petersburg, including the visit to All-Russian Institute of Plant Genetic Resources n.a. N.I. Vavilov. This month, the students are going to see the office of Nikolay Vavilov and his unique, world-renowned collection of seeds of agricultural crops with their own eyes.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO



The leader's speech

On 7 August, the Russian Educational Youth Forum Terra Scientia held Dialogue on Equal Terms event.

At the forum, Stefan Duerr, President of EkoNiva Group, and Aleksey Andreyev, Managing Partner of Depot WPF and Co-Founder and Co-President of Association for Russian Branding Companies, spoke before the young audience. What could bring together two successful businessmen from such different industries? The answer is the cooperation on milk processing project.

The speakers with different approaches to leadership, but common creative passion for their businesses shared the experience of building production and communication processes in Russia, elaborated on the importance of open business and efficient HR management and gave a lot of valuable tips to the young specialists. Stefan Duerr even sang a few lines by a popular Russian duet when he was asked about his favourite song, which was quite a surprise for the audience.

In his speech, Stefan Duerr pointed out the difference in business management in Russia and abroad. According to him, doing business in Germany is like playing basketball: the rules are extremely strict, the slightest pushing is considered a foul. Meanwhile business in Russia is like ice-hockey: the rules are established, but you can play a bit rougher.

'The sad thing about Russian business is that it cannot embrace the idea of somebody else's success, accept that it is a win-win situation: in Europe, if your partner earns three rubles while you earn a ruble, you are fine with it. For some reason, Russian business community is dominated by the idea that you can feel successful only if your partner is far behind you, which is a win-lose strategy. That is the attitude that should be changed.'

Stefan also remarked that Russian employees are generally more motivated and enthusiastic than German workers:

'A Russian worker will wake up at 6 o'clock on Sunday if needed. In Germany, workers will give you a number of strong arguments why they cannot sacrifice their well-deserved day-off. Moreover, Russian people are more likely to find an unconventional solution to any problem and are very flexible in ever-changing environment. That is why, people are the main asset of the company. A Russian employee is result-driven, not process-driven, therefore there are simply no insoluble issues in Russia.'

The students were excited to learn that EkoNiva's door is always open for young specialists. To Stefan's mind, it is them that induce the development of the company and fill it with passion and innovative ideas.

'Agriculture is an interesting and progressive industry. Over 700 students had internships on our farms last year. The most talented and promising of them were offered a job afterwards. In 2018, we expect to receive more than a 1,000 students', Stefan noted proudly.

To conclude his presentation, the President of EkoNiva Group gave a few useful pieces of advice for the young generation, 'Don't focus on grades, but never stop learning. Develop your logical thinking and speak at least one foreign language. Always challenge yourself with the question why you are doing

something this way, not differently. Have the knowledge of the most important economic parameters and processes in your business. Learn to be a leader.'

Aleksey Andreyev continued the discussion remarking that he draws sheer inspiration from the ever-altering world around him, where it is necessary to be a bit of a dreamer: if the world keeps on changing, you need to find time for dreaming.

The speaker commented, 'Paraphrasing a famous line: do believe, do fear, do ask. We are part of society. When people ask for something, communication takes place, personal features manifest themselves in the process. We can learn from each other only when we are open and we share. Fearlessness is a good feature, but ratio of cautious leaders to fearless ones is 50:1, i.e. generally, fifty leaders are careful and only one is a daredevil.'

The overall discussion was immensely interesting and productive. It was an awesome opportunity for prospective businessmen, entrepreneurs and politicians to ask Stefan Duerr and Aleksey Andreyev burning questions face-to-face. Today, these young people are trying to figure out what it takes to become a successful leader, which means that our country can expect glittering future full of glorious victories and achievements.

By Anna PALAGUTINA





From megacity to farm

In the past few years, it has become a good tradition for the students of the Sunday school at the Assumption Cathedral (Odintsovo district, Moscow oblast) to visit EkoNivaAgro.



It took the little travellers nine hours to arrive at the farm. However, the guys were not bored during the ride, they were sharing their dreams about future. It turns out the young generation puts high priority on education and self-development.

This is exactly the mission of the Academy of Dairy Sciences – to broaden children’s outlook. After the farm tour, the guests were notably more informed about cows, calves and the operational processes and grew fond of dairy products. Everybody enjoyed tasting yoghurts and other treats by the Academy.

Fyodor Kotenev, an 11-year old student of the Sunday school, shared his plans for the future, ‘I would like to build my own dairy farm one day. Right now, I would bring one of your cows to my summer house gladly. I would milk her, take good care of her and treat her to delicious feed. If you invite me to work here one day, I will be really happy to come.’

Lyubov Kondratyeva, Director of the Sunday school, was also deeply impressed, ‘It’s the fourth time we have visited this marvelous place together with the students. Of course, it is the rotary at the milking parlour and little calves that fascinate my pupils most of all. When

back at home, they tell their parents about them with great excitement.

Setting off for the trip for the first time, we had no idea what was in store for us. But upon arrival, we were astonished at how hospitable and open the workers were and how clean the farm was. Now, visiting the farm is a privilege our students have to earn.’

Do not forget, dear reader, that if you also dream of touring EkoNiva’s modern dairy, all you have to do is sign up for the tour, and you are guaranteed an unforgettable day in the open air that will benefit both your health and your soul.

By Anna PALAGUTINA



Foodie weekend

Voronezh has held a gastronomy festival dedicated to the birthday of City-Park Grad, the favourite shopping centre of the Black Soil Region residents.

The guests and participants of all ages found something to occupy themselves with at the event. They savoured local specialties and treats, took part in fun contests, visited the fair of the leading food producers and enjoyed a lot of other surprises.

The Academy of Dairy Sciences treated their guests to natural dairy products from EkoNiva’s farms. The company representatives were excited to hang out with the little guests and their parents, tell them about the unique opportunity to tour a cutting-edge dairy farm in Zaluzhnoye and observe how milk is made with their own eyes. By the way, anyone including you, dear reader, can go on such a tour.

To celebrate Grad’s birthday, the event hosts arranged a

lottery of valuable prizes and amazing souvenirs. Meanwhile, the Academy characters were spreading positive energy and emotions incessantly, infecting everyone around them. They were firing up the dance floor, posing for photos giving lots of hugs to children, their parents and grandparents. In one word, the Academy of Dairy Sciences made this foodie weekend an event to remember.

By Anna PALAGUTINA





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17-20 September
WorldFood Exhibition
 Venue: Expocentre, Moscow
 Organiser: ITE Group of Companies

26 September
Launching of Sugonovo dairy
 Venue: Sugonovo village, Ferzikovo district, Kaluga oblast
 Organiser: EkoNiva Group

9 - 12 October
AGROSALON 2018
 Venue: Crocus Expo Centre, Crocus City, Moscow
 Organisers: Russian Association Rosspetsmash, Union of German Machine Builders VDMA

10 - 13 October
Golden Autumn
 Venue: Prospekt. Mira, 119, VDNH, Moscow, Halls 75, 69
 Organiser: Ministry of Agriculture of the Russian Federation

24 - 26 October
KazAgro
 Venue: Korme Exhibition Centre Astana, Kazakhstan
 Organiser: ExpoGroup International Exhibition Centre

30 October - 1 November
AgroExpoSiberia
 Venue: Temp Sports Centre, Barnaul
 Organisers: DLG RUS, IFWexpo Heidelberg GmbH

7-9 November
AgroSib 2018
 Venue: Novosibirsk Expocenter, Novosibirsk
 Organiser: ITE Siberia

13-16 November
EuroTier 2018 International Trade Show
 Venue: Hanover, Germany
 Organiser: German Agricultural Society DLG

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13-16 November

EuroTier 2018 International Trade Show.
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