

## Entering the Chinese market

Dairy products from Russia  
hit export markets

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## Keep on climbing!

EkoNivaSibir has become an  
official John Deere and Vaderstad  
dealer and opened new service  
centres in Altai area

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## The right kind of bees!

30 million of leafcutter bees  
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at EkoNiva

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## Stefan Duerr: 'Who else but Russia'

In a few years, Russian dairy producers will saturate the domestic market, so it is high time to think where to head for. Export to Asian and European countries opens a new pathway to success. Brooking no delay, EkoNiva has started off by turning its focus to China. At the end of June, the first lot of dairy products was supplied to the Celestial Empire. Its market has an enormous potential. Moreover, today it has become even more dynamic than before the coronavirus pandemic. The Chinese strongly believe that dairy produce boosts the immune system and helps people to stay healthy even in the most challenging conditions.

What does Russia have on offer? We can break into

the Chinese market with commodities like milk powder and whey powder. However, a good discount will be required for the first sales, hence this group of goods will bring a lower profit margin. Of course, we could export UHT dairy products to China as other exporters do. But we can do much better – supply branded products – curds, quark and yoghurt – with an extended shelf life of up to 30 days. This is an indisputable competitive advantage. Exporters from Europe and New Zealand ship their goods by sea and it is impossible for them to supply products with such a short shelf life. Only Russia can meet this challenge!

We have a railway connection between

Novosibirsk and Beijing. Trains cover this distance within just 4 days. Recent market research has indicated that the main criteria Chinese customers consider when choosing dairy products are quality and freshness – and that is what we can deliver. It is very good that Russian dairy produce has gained a good reputation in China. The Chinese believe that the harsh climate, rich nature and vast expanses of land allow our cows to produce exceptional milk with a very special taste and great nutritional benefits that make people strong and healthy.

However, the task is not as easy as it seems. There still remain a few challenges. First, even though China is our neighbour, the freight rates

are many times higher than those imposed for European countries. Our German colleagues send a container of dairy products by sea for 1,000 euro, and we, being much closer, – for 3,500 euro. Another issue is certification costs. We have spent 500,000 rubles, while German exporters pay only 30 euro per batch. Export expansion calls for improving logistics and reducing certification costs, which will ensure a competitive edge for Russian products and allow us together with the Russian Export Development Centre and the Russian Export Agency to enter the world markets and create a good image of Russian milk.

Stefan DUERR,  
President of EkoNiva Group



## Entering the Chinese market

EkoNiva has shipped the first lot of UHT milk in the amount of 22.5 tonnes which is expected to arrive in the People's Republic of China (PRC) in mid-August.

The delivery is carried out by sea to the Port of Dalian, the second largest container transshipment hub in

mainland China. In the future, the company is going to expand its dairy produce export to China – the Chinese market offers a

huge range of opportunities, and the consumption of milk is constantly increasing.

'When it comes to our strategic goals, developing external markets is especially important to us', states Stefan Duerr. 'In a few years' time, Russian milk producers will fill the gap between demand and supply in the domestic market. So, it is necessary to consider the possibility of entering new markets already now not only with exchange-traded commodities, but also with branded dairy products. Proper brand positioning, understanding of the consumers' mentality, preferences and needs as well as their attitude to goods imported from Russia are instrumental in success. In general, the image of Russian products in China is positive.'

The plans to tap into the Chinese market have long been afoot: EkoNiva's representatives attended specialised trade fairs, held negotiations with the companies distributing Russian goods in the PRC and conducted an in-depth research on the regions with the highest consumption rate of dairy

products in the country.

'Our branded dairy products are going to be sold in the cities of northeastern China – Heihe, Suifenhe (Heilongjiang province), Dalian (Liaoning province) and Shanghai', comments Ildar Rakhmatullin, Leading Export Manager of EkoNiva-Produkty Pitaniya. 'We offer UHT milk under EKONIVA brand with the fat content of 1.5%, 2.5% and 3.2% packaged in 1,000 ml cartons. The first pilot shipment will enable us to analyse the logistics process and enter large Chinese chains, including online trading platforms. We are also going to negotiate with our contractual parties on the future deliveries and the possibility of product range extension as 500 ml and 250 ml milk packaging is in demand in China.'

At present, EkoNiva milk processing plant in Anna district, Voronezh oblast, is the only one accredited to export goods to China. Other production sites of the company are currently undergoing certification.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO

## Even more efficient!



The popularity of smart farming is definitely on the rise! EkoNiva and Cognitive Pilot launch a service network for intelligent agricultural machines.

Cognitive Pilot (Russian subsidiary of Sberbank and Cognitive Technologies Group) and EkoNiva have signed a three-year cooperation contract. Cognitive Pilot specialises in the development and implementation of artificial intelligence systems for self-driving vehicles. In the

framework of the contract, EkoNiva will be responsible for the promotion and sales of the Cognitive Agro Pilot autonomous driving system, its installation, adjustment and servicing on the territory of 35 regions of the Russian Federation. Cognitive Pilot has already launched training programmes for EkoNiva's technicians. Within three

years, thousands of self-driving vehicles will be equipped with the new system.

'I am sure that cooperation with Cognitive Pilot is the right decision for us', says Bjoerne Drechsler, First Deputy Director General, EkoNiva-Tekhnika Holding. 'Automation of agriculture and implementation of cutting-edge technologies allow farmers to eliminate the human factor and errors which usually cause significant losses. Cognitive Agro Pilot controls the movement of agricultural machines. The AI software collects images from the video camera, processes the information, identifies the machine position, plans the path and transmits the necessary commands back to the machine.'

Cognitive Agro Pilot ensures safe operation even in challenging weather conditions without using GPS. The computer vision system identifies obstacles, including metal items and stones, on

the path. Bjoerne Drechsler underlined that the new intelligent system will boost the machine efficiency without supplanting human labour.

'The operator will still adjust the machine and control it in the field', says Bjoerne Drechsler, 'and the artificial intelligence will help to avoid losses and achieve high yields.'

Stefan Duerr, EkoNiva Group President, thinks that modern technologies will help the company to attract young specialists.

'People need an interesting job and a decent salary', says Stefan Duerr. 'We want young people to feel enthusiastic about coming to rural areas and working there. State-of-the-art machines and intellectual technologies will help to attract new qualified employees and improve production processes allowing the company to save costs and increase revenues.'

By Darya DENISOVA

# Precedence to plant breeding and seed production



EkoNiva's activity in Kursk oblast was discussed in the course of a videoconference attended by Roman Starovoyt, Governor of Kursk oblast, Stefan Duerr, President of EkoNiva, and Yuriy Vasyukov, Regional Director for Kursk oblast.

EkoNiva Group is one of the key investment partners of Kursk region. Its seed growing enterprise Zashchitnoye operates on the territory of three districts: Shchigry, Solntsevo and Belaya.

At the moment, the company has turned its focus towards constructing a plant breeding and seed production centre.

'Seed industry has great potential', says Stefan Duerr. 'Last year, we produced

45 thousand tonnes of certified seeds. The commissioning of the plant breeding centre will enable us to expand the production volume to 70-75 thousand tonnes of seeds per year.'

EkoNiva is one of the major seed growers and suppliers of cereal and legume crops in Russia. The sales turnover in 2019 exceeded 1.2 billion rubles.

'Over the last 5 years, average annual seed sales have increased by 35 per cent', says Yuriy Vasyukov. 'For this reason, a modern plant breeding centre is indispensable to us.'

Within the framework of the project, the seed production capacity for controlled storage and cleaning is going to be increased by 35 and 40 thousand tonnes per year, respectively. The construction site is located in Titovo, Shchigry district. The project has been partially financed from the company's own resources. The extension of target lines of credit

has been recently approved by Rosselkhozbank.

'By the harvesting campaign 2020, a controlled storage facility and a temporary seed cleaning line - both with the capacities of 20 thousand tonnes of seeds per year - will have been commissioned', says Yuriy Vasyukov.

The Plant breeding and seed production centre is scheduled to start operating at full capacity in 2023. Plant breeding work is part and parcel of the process. For the company, plant breeding is another way to diversify its business activity allowing it to reach a new level of intellectual production. This year, two varieties of in-house breeding have been included into the State register of plant breeding achievements. Another three varieties are currently undergoing state trials.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO

## Current affairs in Severnaya Niva

Stefan Duerr, President of EkoNiva Group, has visited Severnaya Niva where he had a number of business meetings with the local authorities.



The first stop on Stefan Duerr's route was at the construction site of Naratly dairy in the Republic of Tatarstan. In the course of the visit, the President of EkoNiva Group met Marat Zyabbarov, Minister of

Agriculture of Tatarstan, and gave him a brief tour of the facility.

The new dairy Naratly is designed for 3,550 head of milking cows and 5,100 head of young stock. EkoNiva is planning to launch the unit in late May.

Besides, the construction of Semeno-Makarovo dairy in the Republic of Bashkortostan is nearing completion.

At the meeting with Ilshat Fazrakhmanov, Minister of Agriculture of the Republic, the head of the company announced that the facility will be fully operational already in autumn, while its official opening is going to take place after the lifting of the quarantine measures.

Stefan Duerr also visited the new operation within Severnaya Niva located in Klyavliino district, Samara oblast. The construction of a dairy with the capacity of 3,500 head of milking herd with the overall investment volume of four billion rubles is going to commence there in the near future.

In Orenburg oblast, Stefan Duerr signed a cooperation agreement with Aleksey Komarovskikh, Director General of A7 Agro. The daily shipments of around 30 tonnes of raw milk from Kurskaya Vasilyevka dairy to the processing plant of A7 Agro started on June 1, 2020.

Wrapping up the business trip, Stefan Duerr held a video conference with Denis Pasler, Governor of Orenburg Oblast. In the course of the session, Stefan Duerr and Denis Pasler discussed the pressing issues and the prospects of dairy processing in the region.

'Companies such as Severnaya Niva are the development trendsetters in agribusiness', says Denis Pasler, Governor of Orenburg Oblast. 'We must work for the good of the residents of the region: provide them with employment, social guarantees and stability. In this regard, Severnaya Niva is a role model and plays no small part in the success of the entire region.'

By Viktor BARGOTIN

# Pushing back the boundaries



The president has set a broad objective for the Russian farmers – to expand agricultural exports. The national agricultural sector mainly sells wheat, barley and corn abroad. Rye, oats, soy beans and lentils are also growing in popularity. The market

capacity is enormous, and the varieties of EkoNiva-Semena are in demand.

‘We strive to personalise our customer experience’, says Vladimir Chirkov, Executive Director of EkoNiva-Semena. ‘It is important to understand

The success of the future yield largely depends on the seed quality – experienced farmers know it for a fact and pay a lot of attention to seed material. With EkoNiva-Semena, it is easier for them to make the right choice. Today, branches of the company are established in all the federal districts of the country.

what crop will produce a high yield on each individual farm. Establishing new branches all around the country will help us to pursue this strategy.’

In 2019, 40,000 tonnes of seeds of various crops were supplied to the farms all over Russia, from Kaliningrad to the Far East. Farm business in each and every region has its own needs in terms of climatic and economic conditions. EkoNiva-Semena has a product range to meet the demand of both large agricultural holdings and small-scale enterprises.

‘Agricultural sector today is a high-tech industry with a bright future’, continues Vladimir Chirkov. ‘The science of plant breeding has advanced dramatically, and we want every agricultural producer to benefit from the latest scientific achievements. Our aim is to listen to the needs of our clients which will help us to improve the agricultural production process and the plant breeding strategy for the good of our customers.’

By Tatyana IGNATENKO

## Dairy Wonderland

EkoNiva opens new brand shops for natural dairy products fans.

Last month, EkoNiva’s 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> shops were opened in two districts of Kursk (Central district and Railway district).

‘This is a milestone event for us’, says Yuriy Vasyukov, Regional Director of EkoNiva-APK Holding for Kursk oblast. ‘Kursk oblast is so to say EkoNiva’s birth place. In 1991, a German student Stefan Duerr came here to undertake an internship and write his graduate thesis. It is a great pleasure that finally we have our brand shops in the home region where EkoNiva has been operating successfully for many years.’

Little Nikita, a great fan of fermented drink Snezhok, came to EKONIVA brand shop with his aunt. His morning starts

with milk, porridge, cherry or strawberry yogurt and, of course, his favourite Snezhok. Nikita has his own idea of the milk production process.

‘Tasty milk can only be produced by happy cows’, explains the seven-year-old milk expert. ‘These cows are grazing on the milky islands of Wonderland. They enjoy their life and produce delicious wholesome milk. My favourite dairy product is Snezhok. It is so yummy!’

Another ‘milky island’ of EkoNiva opened in Odintsovo at O! Podvorye shopping mall. The brand shop offers 68 dairy products, which have already become very popular with the residents of Odintsovo.

EKONIVA fan shop at Molodezhniy Park, Maslyanino,



Novosibirsk oblast, offers both high-quality dairy products and toothsome dishes, including baked pudding, curd fritters, omelette, milk shakes and many other wholesome treats. The guests enjoy large portions at a reasonable price.

EkoNiva has also opened a kiosk selling its dairy products in Bobrov, Voronezh oblast, with a view to opening the second one soon.

‘We have made a great step ahead by opening new points of sale’, says Irina Nechayeva, retail Trade Department Manager, EkoNiva-Produkty Pitaniya. ‘By the end of 2020, we are planning to have as many as 50 of them. Our dream is to provide the entire country with wholesome dairy products!’

By Tatyana IGNATENKO



## Cow is at the heart of a dairy

Altai Prodovolstvennaya Company's executives and herd managers have paid a visit to Sibirskaya Niva farming enterprise. EkoNivaSibir organised a tour aimed at experience exchange.

The visitors gained insight into the key technological solutions at the facilities. In the course of the meeting, the Sibirskaya Niva specialists gave a detailed tour of Penkovo dairy – a modern free-stall facility for 5,000 head of highly productive imported Holstein cattle. The dairy features a rotary milking parlour. Cutting-edge technologies enable the

company's cows to produce over 9,000 litres of high-quality milk per lactation.

'We have come to Sibirskaya Niva because it is a benchmark enterprise', says Aleksandr Balakov, Director of the holding. 'First and foremost, we are interested in its economy and production marginality.'

Top managers of Altai Prodovolstvennaya

Company enquired about the components of the cattle diet. Mixed grass haylage, maize silage, concentrates, alfalfa – only high-feed-value ingredients are served to the feed bunk of EkoNiva's cows.

Reliable equipment plays a key role in an efficient feeding routine. BvL feed mixer wagons are indispensable at Sibirskaya Niva facilities – they chop,

mix, meter and deliver forage to animals. The units can hold up to 10 tonnes of TMR and mix 18 batches a day. All the machine maintenance points are easily accessible and do not require complicated servicing. The representatives of Altai Prodovolstvennaya Company studied the machines with a keen interest – they are considering replacing their fleet of mixer wagons with new imported ones. With BvL machines any dairy farm runs like clockwork.

'The cow is at the heart of operation at Sibirskaya Niva', emphasises Aleksandr Balakov. 'Everything is geared towards enabling the cows to consistently produce delicious and wholesome milk. I am all in favour of EkoNiva's approach.'

The visit resulted in an agreement on internship for the employees of Altai Prodovolstvennaya Company at the facilities of Sibirskaya Niva whose specialists are always open to effective cooperation and ready to share their professional expertise and know-how.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO

## High-profile visit!

Acting Governor of Kaluga oblast Vladislav Shapsha has visited EkoNivaTekhnika-Holding dealership located in Detchino village, Maloyaroslavets district, and two dairies – Ulanovo and Gusevo – in Kaluzhskaya Niva.

All precautions to ward off COVID-19 have been taken: the guests are wearing face masks (an indispensable part of our wardrobe now), the temperature has been measured with a non-contact thermometer. All done, it is time to take a tour of the facility.

'The service centre saw its first clients in 2013', says Gennadiy Nepomnyashchiy, CEO, EkoNivaTekhnika-Holding. 'Today, this is the largest John Deere dealership centre in Russia and Europe. State-of-the-art technologies, professional service and a sophisticated spare parts storage facility for appr. 60,000 items enable us to offer exceptional after-sales support.'

'Immaculate order and discipline at the workshops impress me the most', says Leonid Gromov, Minister of Agriculture of Kaluga oblast. 'It is hard to believe that large farm machines are serviced here.'

'Exactly! It reminds me of a machinery museum', agrees Vladislav Shapsha.

The high-tech equipment allows experienced technicians to conduct even the most complicated repair works.

'A 15-year-old John Deere harvester is being refurbished here now', shows Gennadiy Nepomnyashchiy. 'It has operated for 30,000 engine hours. As you can see, the unit has been practically taken apart. Our specialists will breathe new

life into the harvester, prolonging its service life for a decade!'

The next point en route is Ulanovo dairy for 2,800 dairy cows and 4,000 head of young stock. The daily milk yield here is 80 tonnes.

Later, Vladislav Shapsha and Leonid Gromov inspected the new Gusevo dairy. The construction works here started in the second quarter of 2019. Currently, two barns for 1600 head have been launched. The dairy houses 2,549 head, including 1,344 milking cows producing 34 tonnes of milk per day. When the facility reaches its full capacity, the daily milk output will exceed 100 tonnes. 'The dairy is for 3,300 milking cows and 8,000 head of



young stock', comments Aleksey Savenkov, Deputy Executive Director for Production, Kaluzhskaya Niva. 'The construction works are to be finished in August. By then, 140 new employees will join our team.'

Before leaving, Vladislav Shapsha promised to assist with the road construction near Gusevo dairy. He wished EkoNiva specialists good luck and wrote encouraging words in the guestbook.

By Darya DENISOVA



## Keep on climbing!

As the saying goes, 'Every mountain top is within reach if you just keep climbing'. EkoNivaSibir always moves forward, acting as a trailblazer for its partners and clients.

Two new branches of EkoNivaSibir – in Barnaul and Biysk, Altai area – have opened for their first customers. EkoNiva, the largest John Deere dealer in Russia, offers Altai farmers powerful and reliable machinery. The company started off the business in Altai area on the right foot by selling a John Deere 6135B tractor to the Peasant farming enterprise Stil (Pospelikha district, Altai area) within just days after the opening.

'We have been in the market with this model for a long time, says Vladimir Man, Head of the facility. 'At a neighbouring farming enterprise, this unit is already in the 5<sup>th</sup> year of flawless operation. From this machine one can expect excellent performance and overall efficiency improvement. This is our first John Deere tractor and I hope that in the future our fleet will be further expanded with units of the make.'

The management of the enterprise Praviy Bereg (Zarinsk district, Altai area) has acquired its third John Deere 6135B tractor from the dealer. The two previously purchased machines have been working day and night without faults for 3 seasons now. Praviy Bereg is a long-standing customer of EkoNivaSibir – over the years, the enterprise

has purchased 5 John Deere machinery units. Both the dealer and the client find the relationship mutually beneficial.

'The staff of the dealership centre does a great job!', says Yevgeniy Gorbatenko, Director of the enterprise. 'The official launch of a branch office in

is expanding into new regions and look forward to working together.'

The service centres offer a wide range of Vaderstad soil tillage machinery: Carrier disc cultivators, Spirit seed drills and Tempo high-speed planters. They have already gained recognition

continue operating as normal, the spare parts stock is regularly replenished. Our specialists are always at farmers' service to give them a hand in making the right choices on the best machines tailored to their specific needs!'

Providing farmers with cutting-edge solutions, the dealer contributes to a global aim – making agriculture great again!



Altai area will enhance our fruitful cooperation.'

In the spring, two more service centres in Rubtsovsk and Slavgorod, Altai area, also welcomed their first clients.

'EkoNiva is our reliable and long-term partner', comments Yevgeniy Momot, Regional Representative of Vaderstad for Siberia and the Far East. 'We are happy that the company

of farmers from Novosibirsk, Kemerovo, Omsk and Tomsk oblasts.

'Altai farmers have been using Vaderstad equipment for a long time', says Sergey Arsiy, Director of Altai branch of EkoNivaSibir. 'The machines of this make have established themselves in the market and become indispensable farmhands. New branch offices

Our addresses:

- 29, Yuzhniy Proyezd, Barnaul
  - 23/3 Sotsialisticheskaya st., bldg. 3, Biysk
  - 24, Lenina st., Slavgorod
  - 2, Selmashskaya st., bldg. A, Rubtsovsk
- Tel: +7 (3852) 50-76-79

By Tatyana IGNATENKO,  
Darya DENISOVA

# Supporting those in need

Economic fallout from the Covid-19 pandemic hits harder those who have already struggled to make ends meet – low-income families, people with disabilities and pensioners.

As charitable organisations are facing a decrease in the income, EkoNiva has decided to donate more dairy products to charities, orphanages and schools to support local communities. Within two months, the company has provided over 72 tonnes of its produce to 15 charitable foundations and social sector institutions.

‘We are happy to share our healthy products with those who live on a tight budget and really need our support’, says Stefan Duerr, President of EkoNiva Group. ‘Natural milk and dairy products boost the immune system, which is vital during the pandemic.

Unfortunately, people’s income is taking a hit, so every business should take a commitment to aid those in need.’

Yekaterina Zelentsova, Founder and President of The Window on the World Fund, knows firsthand how it feels to be desperate for help. Back in 2011, her fifth child was diagnosed with Down's syndrome at birth. To get lifesaving medicines, the mother applied to 48 funds, however, all her applications were turned down. That is how the idea of the fund emerged, and now its community comprises 1,200 parents confronting similar problems.



‘We aid orphanages and nursing homes. Volunteers also deliver the products to the door so as not to endanger the lives of people we take care of’, explains Yekaterina.

‘Everyone’s favourites are EKONIVA butter, sour cream, whole and baked milk. Actually, some tried freezing the milk to keep it longer and discovered that, when thawed,

it preserves its taste, smell and texture. Now that’s how we check all milk for quality, and this beloved brand always stands the test!’

EkoNiva has taken an important decision to continue helping charities even after the end of self-isolation.

By Anna PALAGUTINA



## Go and join Milk River team!

Full of vigour and enthusiasm, the Milk River team of students from various agricultural institutions streamed into EkoNiva’s dairies on 1 June to start their exciting professional journey in farming.

Milk River team started their working term at Shatsk dairy (Ryazan oblast). The employees of OkaMoloko-Vostochnoye welcomed the students in the opening ceremony.

‘I’m so glad to see that

farming is gaining popularity with students’, says Vladimir Materikin, Director of OkaMoloko-Vostochnoye. ‘We always welcome young specialists to our dairies, provide them with good working conditions and benefits, ensure

their professional growth and comfortable accommodation. I hope these interns will enjoy it here so much that they will return after graduation to be employed.’

For two months, 21 students from eight agricultural

institutions of Russia will work as vets, herd managers, technicians and agronomists. These young people will get invaluable experience in herd management, veterinarian procedures and crop farming. In addition to the practical skills, the students will learn a lot of useful and important information at the lectures delivered by the leading specialists of the holding.

Through the video call, Aleksey Blyumin, Coordinator of Agricultural Teams at the National Student Organisation, congratulated the newcomers on the start of the summer working term.

‘I would like you to learn new skills, make new friends and have the time of your life here’, wished Aleksey Blyumin.

For many Milk River team students, it is their second or third internship at EkoNiva’s dairies – the truth is once you have experienced this, farming becomes your passion for life.

By Viktor BARGOTIN



## A generous Siberian spring

The unusually warm spring 2020 kicks off the growing season early in Western Siberia.

**M**aslyanino district was ahead of all in Novosibirsk oblast to complete seeding this year – before mid-May. Normally, active field work only begins here at this time, however, hot and dry weather set in as early

as in the middle of April and, in late April, the temperature already exceeded 30°C, which is 17-19°C higher than April's average in the region. Of course, farmers headed for the fields without delay.

'While planting, we were

enjoying lots of sun', says Oleg Kutsankov, Manager of Sibirskaya Niva-Maslyanino Operation. 'We started the sowing campaign on 23 April, planted 25,000 hectares in total and did the first cutting of forage crops on 20 May. We've

been working at a record pace this year.'

Siberian farmers are busy with fieldwork every single day and have every reason to expect a bumper harvest this year.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO

## Synergy of science and business



In the middle of last century, Stavropol university was the first agricultural educational establishment to arrange the so-called student farming teams. In the summer, the university teachers and teams of high school students arrived at collective farms and worked on land plots specifically allocated to them for practical farming using agricultural machines and implements provided by the farms. These were the first attempts of agricultural

universities to organise on-site training.

Nowadays Stavropol Agricultural University cooperates with several large agricultural holdings of our country. EkoNiva is one of the university's partners. Since the start of the cooperation, 118 students from Stavropol Agricultural University have undertaken an internship at EkoNiva enterprises. Besides, future veterinarians, herd managers, agronomists and engineers take part in

Stavropol State Agricultural University celebrates the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. This educational establishment has been renamed many times. Having survived the Great Patriotic War and perestroika, the university keeps up the highest education standards.

profession-oriented programmes implemented by EkoNiva. Academy of Livestock Farming and all-Russian agricultural student team Milk Standard (MOST) give students a deep insight into agriculture. EkoNiva Student and ZooVet projects span more detailed agricultural topics and are designed for senior students and graduates.

Traineeship programmes at EkoNiva enterprises boost students' interest in their professions. After the first session, young specialists fall in love with their job and come back to EkoNiva as full-fledged specialists. Today, 28 graduates of Stavropol Agricultural University work at EkoNiva's dairies all over Russia.

'My career started when I joined the Academy of

Livestock Farming project carried out by EkoNiva', says Alyona Gaivoronskaya, a Stavropol Agricultural University graduate, who is now a senior veterinarian at Yelban dairy (Novosibirsk oblast). 'After that I participated in the Milk Standard student team and before graduation I was involved in the ZooVet programme. I am grateful to the teachers from our university for the comprehensive theoretical knowledge and for preparing me so well for the work at EkoNiva's farms.'

EkoNiva Group congratulates Stavropol State Agricultural University on its anniversary and wishes it success in raising qualified employees for the Russian agriculture.

By Viktor BARGOTIN



## Going organic

Since 2012, EkoNiva has been successfully promoting organic farming in Russia seeking to breathe life into the rural areas and provide jobs to the locals. The company is planning to establish a new organic production facility based in Novodugino village, Smolensk oblast, on the premises of Rassvet stock-breeding farm.

As a part of Smolenskaya Niva Organic project, Rassvet breeding reproducer is engaged in organic crop and dairy production.

‘Our farm is located in a historical place with pristine nature’, says Maksim Vanin, Director General of Rassvet. ‘In this area, there is everything for organic crop and livestock farming – fertile soil unspoiled by pesticides, pastures for cows to graze freely, three rivers running close by and a water reservoir.’

The territory of the farm covers over 7,000 hectares. An important step towards setting up an organic production facility has already been made – i.e. Rassvet breeding reproducer has passed the required inspections and obtained organic certification from the KIWA-BCS company proving its compliance with the respective European laws and regulations.

‘We are going to use the fields for growing organic wheat, oats, rye, barley and fodder for our

animals’, continues Maksim Vanin, ‘Certification in conformity with the European regulations opens up new horizons for the enterprise in terms of economic growth and export. Next, we are planning to certify our crop and dairy produce in accordance with the Russian standards.’

Today, a total of 850 head of Sychevskaya cattle including 400 milking cows are kept on the farm. The daily output of 3.7 tonnes of milk is not very high, however, the ambitions are big.

The ultimate goal is to reach 12,000 tonnes of milk per year. To achieve it, plans are afoot to build three dairies for 500 head of dairy cattle. The number of employees is expected to increase by 175 people in the nearest future.

‘Local residents believe that the old farm Rassvet has fallen into decay’, shares Maksim Vanin. ‘It is far from the truth, though. The facility is getting back to life and developing. Fifty-five people work here now. However, we lack specialists like vets, agronomists, milkmaids and machinery operators.’ EkoNiva’s leading specialists are planning to come to Novodugino to train the employees giving them an insight into the workings of the organic production process and, in this way, strengthening the position of the new sector in Russia.

‘It is worth mentioning that Novodugino district is the birthplace of Vasilii Dokuchaev, a famous Russian scientist, geologist and the founder father of soil science’, says Anatoliy Nakaryakov, Director for Organic Production of EkoNiva-APK Holding. ‘We hope that organic farming with its main objective to sustain the soil fertility will become the key priority for this region.’

By Darya DENISOVA

## EkoNiva joins IFOAM

Savinskaya Niva organic farming enterprise has become an affiliate of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM).

IFOAM’s mission is to unite a diverse range of stakeholders contributing to the organic vision. With affiliates in over 120 countries, the international umbrella organisation works towards true sustainability in agriculture, i.e. the facilitation of organic farming worldwide. To date, 14 Russian enterprises have joined IFOAM.

‘The membership enables us to participate in international forums, which means that our

voice in the matters shaping the future of global organics will be heard’, comments Anatoliy Nakaryakov, Director for Organic Production of EkoNiva-APK Holding. ‘The members of the National Organic Union of Russia, the Organic Expert certification body and Russian quality system (Roskachestvo) have also joined the organisation, among others.’

By Darya DENISOVA





## The source of life

EkoNiva-Semena has taken part in the international agricultural exhibition AgriTek/FarmTek Astana 2020 in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan. During the event, several hundreds of guests visited the company's booth and a number of contracts were signed.

EkoNiva-Semena has been working in Kazakhstan for more than 5 years. With every year, its popularity with Kazakh farmers grows. The first sales in 2014 were not very high – about 100 tonnes of seeds. Now the sales volume has increased several times. 'More than 7,000 tonnes of seeds were exported to

Kazakhstan last year. Flexible varieties of European breeding with high adaptive properties are the most popular, for example, winter wheat varieties Licamero, Cornetto, Triso and winter barley varieties Calcule, Margret, Paustian', says Aleksandr Novosyolov, EkoNiva-Semena Sales Representative.

'Licamero is in extremely high demand.

In Kazakhstan, it is planted at the lowest seeding rate – 2.5 to 3.5 million seeds per hectare', continues Aleksandr Tauly-Vostok I K farming enterprise (East Kazakhstan Region, Katon-Karagaisk district) has been growing Licamero wheat variety for two

years. The farm owner is very happy with its performance.

'Licamero demonstrated really high yield last year', says Daulet Mamyр, Director. 'We gathered about 7 tonnes/ha, which is 2 tonnes/ha more than the average yield of other varieties.'

Daulet is considering adding Calcule barley to his crop portfolio. Its average yield last year exceeded 3.5 tonnes/ha.

'Seeds are the source of life', continues Daulet Mamyр. 'Quality seed material ensures a good crop for the farmer, stable jobs for the local people and a good life for the rural area.' Apart from cereal crops, EkoNiva-Semena offers peas (Rocket, Jackpot, Belmondo and Madras varieties), soybeans, which are becoming very popular with the Kazakh farmers, and a wide range of fodder grasses, including Dakota alfalfa, which has a very high protein content (20%) and can be harvested up to three times per season even in dry areas.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO

## Smart farming for smart farmers

EkoNivaAgro keeps on embracing smart farming technologies.



Over the past two years, a number of trials have been carried out within the Lead Farm project initiated by EkoNiva in collaboration with John Deere. We have visited one of the trial fields to see the cutting-edge practices with our own eyes.

'At the moment, we are carrying out a trial seeding of Grizzly maize hybrid developed at Zashchitnoye. The sowing rate for this crop is 80,000 seeds per hectare', says Aleksey Nizkodubov, Chief Agronomist of EkoNivaAgro Left-Bank operation. 'In total,

it is planned to sow grain and silage maize on 2,600 ha. Half of the work has already been done. As part of the project, we are testing the John Deere DB55 Seed Drill featuring the Exact Emerge sowing units. The machine is distinguished by high sowing accuracy at the speed of up to 17 km/h.'

This model is much more productive than its predecessors. One of the new features of the machine is variable rate sowing.

This year, the first half of May was rainy, but the weather has finally improved, and the seed drill has been transported to the field after a pre-sowing adjustment.

'We have created digital maps of all our fields, established electronic boundaries and carried out soil tests within these boundaries', explains Sergey Kapustin, Precision Farming Director, EkoNiva-APK

Holding. 'Now we understand how much potassium, phosphorus and nitrogen is contained in each area of the field and know the exact soil composition. The more we plunge into smart farming technologies, the more data we obtain and the easier it is for us to estimate yield potential of individual areas in the field and make the right decision on the amount of seeds and fertiliser for each area.'

While the seed drill is moving to the other side of the field, EkoNiva's specialists open a seed furrow and evaluate the machine's performance. They are pleased with the results, since the sowing depth and the distance between the seeds are precisely maintained and correspond to the prescription maps.

By Alexander KUTISHCHEV

# Working non-stop

Ryazan branch of EkoNiva-Tekhnika has supplied four John Deere 8335R tractors to Russkaya Agrarnaya Gruppa holding.

Despite the epidemiological issues, agricultural works have to be carried out, so the sowing campaign went just as planned.

‘We must feed the country!’ highlights Aleksandr Shastitko, Head of Administration, Pronsk district. ‘Hopefully, the weather will be good for our crops and we will get high yields.’

Russkaya Agrarnaya Gruppa is the largest holding in Ryazan oblast which unites seven operations engaged in the production of beef, milk, cereals and oil crops.

‘Our cooperation commenced in 2005’, says Sergey Krasavin, Head of Ryazan branch of EkoNiva-Tekhnika. ‘Today, over 50 John Deere self-propelled machines and trailed implements run on our farms, all of them supplied by EkoNiva. Our management has set an objective to upgrade the machinery fleet, so the old tractors will be gradually replaced with their new counterparts manufactured by John Deere.’

The employees of Russkaya Agrarnaya Gruppa have been



familiar with the brand for a long time. During the sowing campaign, the John Deere 8335R tractors became indispensable helpers in the fields working rapidly and efficiently.

‘After the old machinery reached the end of its service life’, notes Aleksandr Tsunayev, Director General of Oktyabrskoye farming enterprise, ‘we replaced it with John Deere tractors which proved to be perfectly reliable and robust.’

By Darya DENISOVA

# Eight undeniable advantages of Bednar Swifter

How to achieve flawless pre-seeding tillage? Specialists of Vladimir branch of EkoNiva-Tekhnika have answered this question during a demo show of the new Bednar Swifter cultivator.

Bednar company is a manufacturer of tillage, planting, fertiliser application and mulching implements. This year, EkoNiva has introduced the Bednar Swifter in Vladimir oblast. The event took place in Vorsha village, Sobinka district, in the fields belonging to Nevskiy farm – one of the most advanced enterprises in the region engaged in dairy livestock farming and crop farming. Its milking herd is 1,800 head and its land bank exceeds 7,000 hectares.

‘Nevskiy needed a good implement for seedbed preparation’, says Anatoliy Sary-Terzi, Sales Representative of EkoNiva-Tekhnika, Vladimir branch.

‘We’ve demonstrated the Bednar Swifter 10,000 running across the area of 50 hectares. This 10-metre cultivator gets a field ready for sowing in a single pass, tilling the soil at the depth varying from 2 to 12 centimetres. It can perform up to 8 operations, which include track loosening, surface levelling,

packing and soil cultivation. What’s more, after turning at headlands, the operator can go on working without adjusting the implement.’

The Bednar Swifter showed an unsurpassed result – an immaculately smooth field surface in one pass only! According to technical experts, not many implements deliver such outstanding efficiency, and it is especially valuable when huge clumps of soil are left on the field surface after the autumn tillage. Moreover,

the machine can be coupled to any tractor with engine power of 320 hp or more.

‘We intended to use the Bednar Swifter for spring pre-planting works’, explains Gennadiy Gordey, Agronomist of Nevskiy farming enterprise, ‘and we were very pleased with it. The machine ran for 10-12 hours a day, removing weeds and levelling the field. In total, it tilled 800 hectares of land. After the field cultivation, planters moved smoothly, and seeds were distributed uniformly. As a result, the crops have sprouted really well.’

By Darya DENISOVA





## Excellent performance with John Deere

How to boost machine performance and labor efficiency? The owners of John Deere machinery know the answer. Elly Group, the largest agricultural Holding in Altai Area, has been using modern machines of the green and yellow brand on its farms for quite a few years now.

One of the Group's enterprises, Novaya Zarya (Novosibirsk region, Krasnozersk district, Orekhov Log village) became the site of the John Deere machinery demo show organised by EkoNivaSibir. The main goal of the event was to train the agronomists and technicians of the company to use the machines to maximum efficiency.

'John Deere has a whole range of solutions for any kind of farm work', says Vladimir Ganzha, EkoNivaSibir Sales Rep. 'As a dealer, we are always ready to help by demonstrating the machine and teaching how to operate it. This demo show was arranged for the specialists of all five enterprises of the Holding. Our main goal was to demonstrate what these machines are capable of and train the operators to use them to their full capacity.'

Elly Group operates in two regions: Altai Area (25,000 ha) and Novosibirsk oblast (40,000 ha). The holding has three grain-handling facilities and needs powerful and reliable machines.

'John Deere tractors are undoubtedly among the best in the world', says Emil Ishmukhamedov, Director General of Elly Group. We have

seen them operate in other countries - farms worldwide tend to opt for these efficient and reliable machines. Since we started using John Deere, each farming season goes off without a hitch.

The machinery fleet of the holding includes over 30 John Deere self-propelled machines: 8 and 9 Series tractors, sprayers, harvesters, mowers and over 10 seed drills. Sophisticated machinery calls for qualified operators. Demo-shows proved to be the best form of training for the company specialists.

'Such shows are gaining more and more popularity in the farming community', continues Vladimir Ganzha. 'In Novaya Zarya, the specialists of the holding had an opportunity to test-drive the machines in the field, ask their questions and

get the answers straight away. We used the John Deere 8370R tractor and the John Deere 730 Air Drill with a 1910 hopper as the showpiece.

John Deere 8370R, tractor is the most powerful 8 Series model with the maximum power of 407 hp, maximum lift capacity of 9 tonnes and hydraulic flow of 227 l/min. The attendees of the demo-show were also impressed by the iTEC Pro system, which resembles a passenger car self-driving system. The computer ensures driving accuracy for both the machine and the implement no matter whether the machine is going straight or turning.

'I like the John Deere 730 Air Drill for ensuring uniform sowing depth', says Emil Dushmanmedov. 'It is especially good for peas –

they germinate uniformly and produce good yields. This year, we sowed them at the depth of 4 cm and three weeks after sowing the roots grew about 5 cm deep.'

For farms using conventional tillage practices, the John Deere 730 Air Drill is the best option. The leading edge of the disc cuts through the residue and removes the weeds thus allowing us to save money on glyphosate. The rod weeder combs out the weeds and levels out the soil. The double-disk openers ensure perfect contour following and uniform sowing depth. The closing wheel closes the furrow after seed placement providing optimal seed-to-soil contact for the best emergence. The seed drill is outstandingly robust and reliable.

'Currently, each seed drill covers the area of 2,800 ha per season', continues Emil Ishmukhamedov. 'However, we know that these machines are capable of much more. In 2017, when we just bought our first John Deere 730 Air drill, we sowed about 5,000 ha! That was a huge load but the machine coped with it perfectly well.'

Elly Holding sent a letter of gratitude to EkoNivaSibir for the excellent training held for their engineers and machine operators. These skills will come in handy in the nearest time. The enterprises of the Holding are planning to purchase some more John Deere air drills.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO





## Potatoes are always in demand!

Specialists of Magro farming enterprise in Dubki village, Nekrasovskoye district, Yaroslavl oblast, know how to reap a high yield and provide the residents of the region with fresh organic vegetables. The key success factors are hard work, crop care and reliable machinery.

Farmer Vladimir Moskvichev has been engaged in vegetable farming for 20 years. When he started his business, he worked 300 square metres of land. Today, his enterprise produces the most popular plants – potatoes, cabbages, beets and carrots – on 90 hectares of land.

'We don't grow other plants because it takes more effort', explains Vladimir Moskvichev, Head of Magro farming enterprise, smiling. 'Everything comes and goes, but people want to eat all the time. Our vegetables

on this farm very much. The customers' first choice is variety Vineta. According to Vladimir Moskvichev, last year, the yield was high – over 2,000 tonnes. However, unlike some years ago when the farmers were driven by mere enthusiasm and did a lot of manual work, today they use smart Grimme machinery to harvest potatoes.

'I remember buying our very first combine harvester from a collective farm where it had been written off', recalls Vladimir Moskvichev, 'I assembled it and sent it to the

machines of famous brands supplied by EkoNiva, which facilitated the production process and made work more comfortable for operators. In spring, a new potato planter Grimme GL 410 with a small hopper for 1.2 tonnes was purchased by the enterprise. 'This planter features all the necessary functions to ensure proper operation', shares Vladimir Moskvichev, 'at the same time, it boasts an array of useful options. For example, the electrical shaker of the cup belt allows the operator to easily make adjustments to avoid skips and doubles, while the moving floor of the planting mechanism helps to sieve debris preventing the cups from clogging.'

The special options of the Grimme GL 410 implement perfectly meet the needs of Magro farming enterprise.

'This planter stands out from the rest', says Kirill Tagantsev, Head of Sales Department of Kostroma branch of EkoNiva-Tekhnika. Many of its features facilitate operation and let the machine do several tasks in one pass. For example, the Grimme GL 410 comes equipped with a hydraulic drive of the planting mechanisms which ensures easy adjustment of the

distance between potatoes. It is fitted with a system for potato treatment and microgranular fertiliser placement and has a ridge shaping roller for earthing up the potatoes straight away.'

The Grimme GL 410 gently places tubers at the necessary depth. Cage rollers help to preserve moisture around the tubers. It is worth noting that during the sowing process, tramlines are formed, which are used for further potato treatment to avoid damage to the tubers.

'The machine can perform a number of functions simultaneously', explains Vladimir Moskvichev, Head of Magro farming enterprise, 'for example, planting and treatment of the furrow. The microgranulator supplies a starter dose of a microfertiliser for the plants and helps to implement all required protection measures fighting such insects as wireworms, moths and potato beetles.'

The Grimme GL 410 is coupled to the John Deere 6155 M tractor for operation on the farm.

Precision is very important for the potato production process. For this reason, a navigation system of the same brand has been installed on the tractor. Andrey – Vladimir Moskvichev's son – is in the cab working for the benefit of the family business, too.

'Quite often, on small farms like ours, tractors are operated by the heads of the enterprises', continues Kirill Tagantsev.

'Therefore, the farm owners can try out the reliable and highly efficient John Deere unit, which has already proved itself as one of the most efficient helpers in the world. The John Deere 6155 M has a full-frame design and can be coupled to the heaviest implements and work in the roughest conditions. I especially like the 6.8 litre engine, the proven trustworthy AutoQuad Plus transmission, strong axles and perfect weight distribution.'

Potatoes were planted in May. Vladimir Moskvichev expects a high yield, and in the meantime discusses the plans for the future with his son Andrey and his wife Nadezhda – the people the farmer can rely on in life and at work!



### Kirill Tagantsev:

'This is an extraordinary machine – many options it boasts make the job easier and let the operator perform several functions in just one pass. For instance, the hydraulic drive of the planting mechanisms allows easy adjustment of the distance between the tubers. Among its other notable features

are a system of potato treatment and microgranular placement and a ridge-shaping cage roller for immediate earthing up of planted potatoes.'

are always in demand. For example, five tonnes of potatoes sells within an hour.'

The reason behind this popularity is that many people love the potatoes produced

field. Machinery like that was not fit for normal operation. The unit would break down frequently and it was really annoying.'

Several years ago, the farm started using agricultural



## John Deere tractors fight for a bumper crop

All over the world, John Deere tractors are acknowledged to be exemplary in terms of quality and flawless operation. The management and specialists of Yeliseyev farming enterprise located in Tyoploye district, Tula oblast, have first-hand experience of the excellent performance of the green and yellow machines, which have become indispensable on the farm.

Yeliseyev farm, dating back to 1992, has managed to enlarge the land bank from the initial 50 hectares to over 2,200 hectares.

'Our arable land has increased 45 times', says Sergey Yeliseyev, Head of the enterprise. 'However, we can't just sit back and rest on our laurels – we have to move on further acquiring more fields. We do understand that we won't cope without advanced machinery. For working the soil from one horizon to another, we definitely need robust and user-friendly tractors. Our choice was made several years ago.'

The first John Deere machine, which arrived at Yeliseyev farm in 2011, paved the way for further fruitful cooperation with EkoNiva. Since then, the company has supplied two John Deere 8285R tractors and one John Deere 3810 plough. Last year, the John Deere 6135B joined in.

'I still remember the day when the first tractor was delivered to the farm – the weather was great, and my heart was joyful. I would say, this purchase gave me more confidence about the future, and I'm still content with the machinery fleet we have as John Deere tractors are high achievers and good workers. Our farm has already welcomed three green

and yellow all-rounders – just a triple stroke of luck.'

John Deere 8R Series tractors have allowed farmers to push back the boundaries of field works. The 8 Series models feature the new generation CommandArm control console, a refined hydraulic system and a spacious, low-noise cab. Thanks to the unrivaled output and the torque of the 9-litre PowerTech engine, the machines deliver up to 314 hp.

'The hydraulic system of the 8 Family tractors has plenty of reserve capacity', says Sergey Yeliseyev. 'They are specially designed to outperform in heavy-duty applications. Besides, I can't but mention hassle-free coupling to ploughs and grain trailers. The efficiency of our production has increased significantly. Last season, we bought a John Deere 6B Series tractor to help its counterparts of the 8 Series. The newcomer is an uncomplicated machine that can withstand the hardest loads.'

The John Deere 6135B is fitted with the High-Pressure Common Rail system providing precise control for fuel injection and reducing fuel consumption. The four-cylinder engine of the 6 Series tractors runs faultlessly even in tough conditions. The torque backup of up to 29%

allows the machine to easily transport heavy loads across challenging terrain. The rated power of the tractor is 135 hp, the capacity of the fuel tank is 220 l. In addition to this, the cab boasts a heater, air conditioning and exceptional visibility.

'With John Deere machinery, we save on fuel and lubricants', says Sergey Yeliseyev. 'We work in two shifts without any problems – these all-rounders cope with the given tasks perfectly well. Quality service plays an important role – EkoNiva timely provides us with original spare parts and consumables. The dealer listens to our needs and does its best to help.'

The main goal of the farmer is to get maximum yield, which can be done only through innovative approach.

'Eliseyev is an advanced and promising farm', says Oksana Nasonova, Sales Representative of Tula branch of EkoNiva-Technika. 'In our region, many agricultural producers look up to the enterprise as it sets the trends of John Deere. If its management has made a choice in favour of some model, neighbouring farmers will take a close look at the machine right away.'

In the near future, Yeliseyev farm plans to reinforce the fleet of its powerful beasts by purchasing another John Deere 6135B. Here, they know for sure that a tractor in the field is like a tank in the battle, and the outcome of the fight largely depends on the machine performance!

By Tatyana IGNATENKO





# JCB: driving a dream telehandler!

What is the driving force behind the modern agricultural sector? Every specialist at EkoNivaSibir knows that the industry is moved forward by diligent workers from the Russian rural areas for whom farming is a lifelong passion and a lifestyle.



**H**ard work, persistence, state-of-the-art machinery and equipment, pursuit of constant development are the cornerstones of the long-standing success of Novoye Vremya farming enterprise (Novosibirsk oblast, Cherepanovo district) whose core business is crop production.

'Every day, we handle large amounts of grain in our warehouses', says Vladislav Kundik, Director of Novoye Vremya. 'The loading and unloading operations had been a serious problem for us. We wanted to upgrade our machinery fleet and improve the working conditions for the employees by buying a reliable and highly efficient telehandler. Eventually, in 2008, the enterprise purchased a JCB 535-95.'

Novoye Vremya was one of the first in Novosibirsk oblast to buy a JCB 535-95 loader. The unit is an all-season helper – it handles grain, lifts loads and removes snow in winter. During its 12-year operation, it has done 25,000 engine hours without any major breakdowns. In peak agricultural season, the machine handles not less than 200 tonnes a day. The efficiency of all processes on the farm has grown considerably. Every

operator wants to drive the JCB 535-95, as it boasts a spacious cab with an all-round visibility, an adjustable seat and steering column. In addition, its maximum lift capacity is 3,500 kg.

'The feature we liked the most was its 9.5 metre reach', continues Vladislav Kundik. 'Our premises undergo repairs regularly and sometimes we need to lift loads very high. However, we never rent a crane to do it because we have the



## Gennadiy Sergeyenko:

'A telehandler like this is a dream for any farmer. Loading operations are performed in no time. The machine is three times more productive than its counterparts.'

telehandler. As we would also like to increase the land bank and the production volume, we are already considering buying one more JCB 535-95. With JCB machinery, it is much easier to put these plans into action.'

The specialists of Dubrovskoye enterprise (Tomsk oblast, Kozhevnikovo district) have opted for the JCB 531-70 telescopic handler. The

first unit was supplied to the farm six years ago, while the second one was purchased a year later. The machines have been operating smoothly all this time and have become the pride and joy of the company management.

'We are happy with these telescopic handlers', says Gennadiy Sergeyenko, Head of Dubrovskoye. 'We use them to load silage and haylage and to deliver manure to the fields.'

What's more, the machines help to feed the cows all year long. The JCB 531-70 operates with a grain bucket, a silage fork and a grab bucket crocodile. The last one carefully cuts off silage leaving behind a smooth clamp face which is very important for its storage in the summer as it prevents heating and spoiling which means that its nutritional benefits for the animals are preserved longer.'

The four-wheel steer mode ensures excellent manoeuvrability of the model. The steady and durable chassis the telehandler sits on is designed for the stability of the unit. The functional components of the machine are within easy reach, which makes it possible to carry out repairs on the farm eliminating the need to take the telehandler to a service centre. The maximum lift capacity of the unit is 3,100 kg. Its turn radius is 3.7 m and the boom reach is 7 m.

'The JCB 531-70 unit is indeed every farmer's dream', continues Gennadiy Sergeyenko. 'With it, loading operations are performed in no time. The machine is three times more productive than its counterparts.'

Farmers believe that having a reliable modern fleet of vehicles is not everything. The truly important factor is timely and high-quality after-sales service.

'The machinery should operate, not stand still', states Vladislav Kundik. 'Service plays a decisive role and EkoNiva is the best partner in the Siberian region in that respect. Even more than just a partner – we are a joint team. We grow stronger together and can make our dreams come true!'

By Tatyana IGNATENKO



Alfalfa field crop trials, pollinated by leafcutter bees



## The right kind of bees

World Bee Day is celebrated on 20 May. Yes, these amazing insects have a dedicated holiday. On this day, Anton Jansha, a Slovenian pioneer of modern beekeeping, was born.

The unique seed production project involving bees is in its second year of implementation at EkoNiva. The international holiday coincided with the delivery of a special temperature-controlled air cargo – 30 million of leafcutter bees – to Zashchitnoye, Kursk oblast. Later, a part of them was transferred to Voronezh oblast. The main purpose of the project is cross pollination of alfalfa on an industrial scale.

'Alfalfa is the richest in protein and fastest growing forage crop, yet its seed production is complicated', says Andrey Shtraub, PhD in Agricultural Sciences, Project Manager, 'as it is a cross-pollinated plant and requires insects, particularly wild solitary or honey bees, to reproduce. The issue is that both the style and the stigma are locked inside the flower during blooming. When the insect lands on the flower and tries to open it, the keel petal separates and the stamen, which is under tension, is released with a snap, hurting the insect.

The most widespread pollinators, honey bees, are quite reluctant to visit alfalfa. And even if they do, they collect the nectar from the side, bypassing the whole pollination mechanism to avoid getting hurt. Wild solitary bees, such as leafcutter bees, on the contrary, are not bothered by the tripping flowers and pollinate them with gusto. Canadian farmers have learned to reproduce them specifically for alfalfa pollination. In this country, the technology has been studied only in the course of small trials. The management of EkoNiva made the decision to go ahead with the large-scale project.

In 2019, 5 million leafcutter bee larvae were imported from Canada to Zashchitnoye LLC as part of a pilot project for the first time in Russia. That was the number required to pollinate 65 hectares of alfalfa. This year, the project has been expanded by a wide margin: in Zashchitnoye-Yug, Solntsevo district, Kursk oblast, the striped insects were allocated a 50-hectare

alfalfa field, while in Bobrov, Voronezh oblast, the leafcutter bee project is implemented on an area of 400 hectares.

'Unlike honey bees, leafcutter bees do not cover large distances', continues Andrey Shtraub. 'For this reason, they accept alfalfa readily when it is the closest and most abundant flowering plant. They skillfully open the flower and collect the pollen, thereby pollinating

the nests – long round holes 6 mm in diameter – with cut-out pieces of leaves. The nests are located in special poly blocks. Each tunnel can accommodate up to 7 larvae in individual cocoons. A bee can fill up to four such nests providing each offspring with the precious pollen to feed on.

'In winter, the larvae are harvested from the nests with the help of extracting



alfalfa and bringing significant benefit to the farmers. Based on the results of last year's experiment, the yield increased threefold. In the field, where the leafcutter bees had worked, an impressive 320 kg/hectare of alfalfa seeds was harvested. Unfortunately, the lifespan of female bees is only two months, that of the males is even less. Nonetheless, this period is enough for the bees to leave progeny.

From the very first days of their lives, leafcutter bees strive to perpetuate their species: they construct and line the cells in

equipment, separated from the chaff and into single cocoons', says Andrey Shtraub. 'They overwinter in a chamber where the temperature of +8° C is maintained. Three weeks prior to alfalfa going in bloom, we place them into an incubator, where they are subjected to the temperature of +30° C. There they hatch and are ready to be taken to the fields.'

In EkoNiva, the project is considered promising. Already this year, the alfalfa seed yield is expected to increase significantly.



### Andrey Shtraub:

'The leafcutter bees trip the flower and collect the pollen, thus pollinating alfalfa and bringing colossal benefit. Based on the results of the previous year's pilot project, the yield increased threefold.'



# Silver from EkoNiva

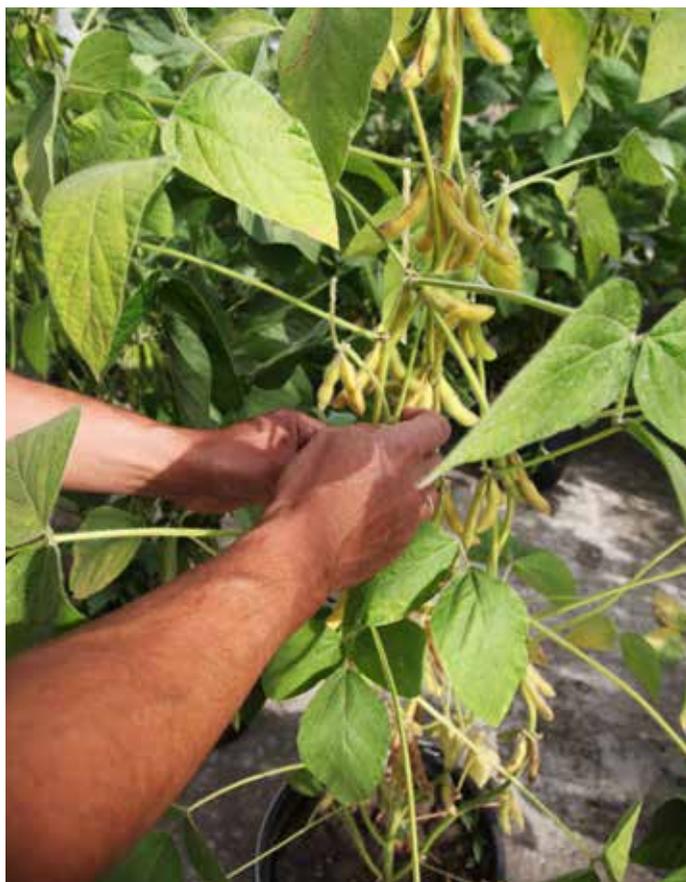
The soybean variety Argenta, EkoNiva's creation, has been included into the State register of plant breeding achievements permitted for use on the territory of the Russian Federation. Following the winter wheat variety Cepheus, EkoNiva registers a soybean variety under the beautiful name Argenta, which means 'silver' in Latin.

The acreage under soybeans is constantly growing in Russia, particularly in the Central Black Soil region. The area under the legume crop here has exceeded 800 thousand hectares. The range of varieties offered on the seed market is quite wide. Over the last decade, 80 varieties were included into the State register of plant breeding achievements approved for the use in the Central Black Soil region. Customers face a hard choice among such diversity. Yet even in this highly competitive environment, EkoNiva has been able to come up with an early season product whose yield is on par with the varieties characterised by a longer vegetation period.

compared to the check variety in the Central Black Soil region amounted to 7 per cent. In Oryol and Tambov oblasts, it was still higher – from 21 up to 25 per cent. The maximum absolute yield was harvested in 2018 at Oboyan and Oktyabrskiy state variety testing plots: 5.04 and 4.63 tonnes/hectare, correspondingly.

In 2019, the cultivar produced a superior result of 3.95 tonnes/hectare at Maloarkhangelsk state variety testing plot. Argenta was the first variety in the early maturity group (000) to produce such a record yield.

The EN Argenta variety is highly responsive to agricultural background, meanwhile ensuring a consistent yield even in poor



It is also notable that the new variety has no dormant seeds even in the years with pronounced heat stress in the pod-fill phase. Early maturity, a high yield potential and increased branching are the main economically useful traits of the variety which will enable it to take a worthy place in the Russian fields.

'Registration of our own competitive high-protein non-GM soybean variety is a strategical foundation for risk management in seed production', points out Vladimir Chirkov, Executive Director of EkoNiva-Semena.

'Moreover, it is an important evolutionary shift to the new development stage when varieties with the most sought-after properties are created in-house. Plant breeding can and should be a kind of activity which is attractive for investment and we want to prove it by our example.'

EkoNiva has recently submitted two more new soybean varieties for state trial in the Central Non-Black Soil region and Western Siberia, the regions where early-maturing varieties are in a particularly short supply.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO

## Vladimir Chirkov:

'Registration of our own competitive high-protein non-GMO soybean variety is a strategical foundation for risk management in seed production. Moreover, it is an important evolutionary shift to the new development stage in our company when critical items, which are sought-after in the market, are created in-house. Plant breeding can and should be a kind of activity which is attractive for investment and we want to prove it by our example.'

'The variety received its name due to the silver white pubescence which imparts to the plants their characteristic hue', says Vladimir Chirkov, Executive Director of EkoNiva-Semena. 'The variety is distinguished by a peculiar combination of traits. First of all, It is a very good predecessor for winter crops. The variety falls within the early maturity group (000) and ripens within 100-105 days. Assuming that the crop is planted on time, this corresponds to late August-early September.'

The official data of the State variety testing commission attests to the high yield potential of the variety EN Argenta. Over the two years of state trials, the average yield surplus as

soil moisture conditions, which is confirmed by the ecological trials held in Lipetsk and Tambov oblasts. Another feature of the cultivar, which is rare among varieties with a short vegetation season, is its increased branching. The new variety is able to produce up to 5-6 side shoots, thus easily compensating for the local stand nonuniformity. This property allows to save the seeds, since farmers often sow soybeans with extra plant density to be on the safe side. Furthermore, increased branching reduces losses in the residue as no pods are located in the lower nodes, only the branches. Besides, the protein content in the kernel in absolutely dry matter is in the 36%-42% range.





## Valuable export commodity

Until early twentieth century, this country was the leader in lentil cultivation and export. After a hundred years of oblivion, export of the crop is coming to the forefront again. EkoNiva also engages in lentil production.

Lentils are the most popular legume crop in terms of taste and nutritional value. It is a major source of protein in many Asian countries. Among its numerous benefits is the ability to preserve the health promoting properties even after being subjected to high temperatures and nutrient richness making it a wonderful substitute for meat and grain in the daily menu.

Lentil seeds contain from 24% to 35% of protein, about 50% of carbohydrates, 4% of minerals and 2% of fats. In addition, it is a good source of B vitamins.

In India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, lentils are not only consumed but also grown in large quantities. However, the volumes are still insufficient to cover the domestic demand. Canada and Australia also grow a lot of lentil. These two countries are the main exporters of the beneficial product.

'Lentils are among the world's most ancient crops and a valuable export commodity', says Vladimir Danielyan, Deputy Commercial Director of EkoNiva-APK Holding. 'The main consumers of lentils

exported from Russia are countries outside the CIS. We have seen a spike in lentil demand in recent years. Despite considerable price fluctuations in the global market, it is a promising and profitable crop.'

Over the last four years, the volume of lentil export has increased twentyfold. The main consumers of Russian lentils are Iran, the Arab Emirates, Turkey, Kazakhstan, Pakistan,



### Vladimir Danielyan:

'Lentils are among the world's most ancient crops and a valuable export commodity. The main consumers of lentils exported from Russia are countries outside the CIS. We have seen a spike in lentil demand in recent years.'

Armenia, Egypt, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Latvia. These countries account for about 90% of total export operations.

The major part of domestically grown lentils intended for export comes from Siberian Federal District (one third of the entire export volume) followed by Southern and

Volga Federal Districts.

EkoNiva-Semena adheres to the principle of providing customers with the best seed material and the best genetics that has passed rigorous selection in the company's fields. The area under lentils grown as a cash crop in the holding amounts to 2,000 hectares. The production is mostly concentrated in Kursk and Novosibirsk oblasts. Plans call for a significant increase in the share of lentils in the cropping plan in the near future.

'In 2019, EkoNiva sold over 2 thousand tonnes of lentils', continues Vladimir Danielyan. 'Our main customers are Pakistan, Turkey, the Arab Emirates. The market capacity

is immense and we have just started tapping into it, but we are working on increasing our market share. The lentil commodity market has the potential to consume much greater volume.'

Lentils are a marketable crop with a high yield capacity. It is perfectly suited for cultivation in cool regions with limited

soil moisture. Lentils are easily adaptive to various soil conditions and an advantageous predecessor in crop rotation. The seeds germinate at 3-4°C, the seedlings emerge on the day 6 or 7.

It is important that the lentils do not accumulate nitrates, toxins and radionuclides which makes it an organic product. Moreover, it enriches the soil with nitrogen and leaves it clear of any weeds.

EkoNiva-Semena offers to its customers the varieties of Canadian breeding: CDC Rosebud, CDC Redcoat and CDC Redbow. The cultivars are capable of reaching the maximum yields in conventional farming systems.

'The varieties produce over 3 tonnes per hectare, which is excellent performance', says Vladimir Chirkov, Executive Director of EkoNiva-Semena. 'Currently, red lentils are in short supply on the global market, which means that the price will grow. Russian agricultural producers should take a closer look at lentils. It is a very promising crop.' EkoNiva-Semena is ready to offer extra services to its customers and provide assistance with selling their lentils abroad.

'The scheme is simple: we supply the farms with lentil seeds and then buy the commercial grain back', says Vladimir Chirkov. 'We export it directly without any intermediaries. We have the required experience in this area. In the immediate future, we are going to optimise our logistics, storage and handling as well as grain pre-conditioning, grading and packaging. It will save us and our customers costs!'

Nowadays, the global lentil market exceeds 3.5 billion dollars. EkoNiva along with its partners has every chance to occupy a fair share in it.

# EkoNiva's gene pool



EkoNivaAgro carried out genomic evaluation of its dairy herd. Out of the 43 Holstein heifers tested at Agroplem laboratory, two were included into the top list of the best Holstein heifers of American breeding.

The high Net Merit index enabled heifers Conny and Monica to enter the top list of the best Holstein heifers of American breeding. Net Merit Index is based on lifelong productivity, health traits and exterior. It allows to assess the potential productivity of heifers. This index is calculated by the USA Council on Dairy Cattle Breeding.

Agroplem laboratory test results revealed that Conny would grow to be a medium-size, well-built and highly productive cow with strong limbs which are a prerequisite for a long life in the herd. As for Monica, she will become a big cow, with a wide chest, a good body depth and a wonderful udder shape. At the peak of their productivity, Conny and Monica can produce over 13,500 kg of milk per

a 305-day-long lactation. If the cows are kept in proper conditions, these preliminary assessments will become a reality.



## Valeria Serebrennikova:

'EkoNiva has been developing pedigree cattle breeding since 2008. The breeding work is aimed at creating a highly productive and healthy herd. The company's main breeds are Holstein, Red-and-White, Simmental and Brown Swiss.'

EkoNiva has been developing pedigree cattle breeding since 2008. The breeding work is aimed at creating a highly productive and healthy herd. The company's main breeds are Holstein, Red-and-White, Simmental and Brown Swiss.

'In our work, we use the semen of breeding bulls of western

genetics', says Valeriya Serebrennikova, Cattle Breeding Department Manager. 'We use both conventional and sexed semen. The main

advantage of the sexed semen technology is that it allows to receive on average 80%-98% female calves. We use sexed semen for the first and second insemination of heifers and cows. It enables us to increase the breeding stock and accelerate the genetic progress of the herd.'

A large share of young stock at EkoNiva's dairies is the result of the company's own breeding work.

'We implement cutting-edge housing, milking and health care practices on all our farms', continues Valeriya Serebrennikova. 'Herd management is performed with the help of such advanced software systems as Selex, Dairy plan, Dairy comp 305 and 1C. Herd managers and vets no longer need to carry their note pads with them and write down the information. All details about yields, fertility, health, cow movement and feeding are consolidated in one place.'

The breeding stock is kept in comfortable conditions. Herd managers take care of cows and control their ration, which consists of concentrates, silage, haylage and feed supplements. EkoNiva grows its own forage crops. The cows' diet is adjusted according to their physiology. Sick animals are treated in dedicated hospital pens.

Conny and Monica are perfect examples of the successful work of EkoNiva's Cattle Breeding Department. These cows have a great genetic potential, and, if the right semen is chosen for breeding, can produce excellent progeny.

'In the future, we are planning to include embryo transfer into our regular practices', shares Valeriya Serebrennikova. 'We will use the most valuable cows in our herd – like Conny and Monica – as donors. Their embryos will be transferred to recipient cows. This breeding technique will speed up genetic progress in the herd. According to the statistics, a cow can give birth to one calf per year. Using embryo transfer, it is possible to get 100 calves per year from the donor.'

By Viktor BARGOTIN



## Find calling and love at EkoNiva

A bouquet of flowers for a woman, a delicious dinner for a man! The young specialists of EkoNiva share with us the secrets of a good mood, professional success and a strong relationship during the quarantine.

After a busy day – hardly allowing any time for even a private phone call – Andrey Leonov and Mariya Udalova are hurrying home. The couple are holding each other's hands tightly. They have missed each other during the working day since they were apart: he – working as Head of Ulanovo dairy, she – carrying out duties

as Deputy Head of Gusevo dairy. Andrey gives Masha a bunch of her favourite flowers. She laughs happily. 'I love white roses!' says Mariya. 'They lift my spirits after the rainy days.'

Mariya Udalova arrived in Kaluga from Kostroma. Her career in EkoNiva started 3 years ago when she was a

student. Mariya has since gone on to become a Deputy Head of a dairy facility.

'EkoNiva provides aspiring specialists with professional development opportunities', shares Mariya Udalova. 'I had done a few internships at the company's dairies before I was appointed a Young Stock Manager. I know full well that

it is a great responsibility and I will do my best to overcome whatever challenges arise.'

EkoNiva has influenced Mariya's life greatly: it was here that she found her professional calling and her love, Andrey Leonov. What is it: a happy coincidence or fate? Masha is from Kostroma, Andrey – from Tyumen, but their destiny awaited them in a place off the beaten track in Kaluga oblast. 'We met during the ZooVet internship programme', recalls Andrey Leonov. 'Masha came across as sociable, positive and very determined, that is why she appealed to me at first sight. Interestingly, we often have heated discussions, for instance, yesterday we disagreed about the cows' body condition scores (laughing).'

All the arguments faded away when Mariya cooks a delicious supper! Her fiancé's favourite dish is fried aubergine. The couple was supposed to get married in April, but the wedding ceremony has been postponed because of the COVID-19 lockdown. Hopefully, this July our lovers will become lawfully wedded spouses, but for now, the focus is on work!

By Darya DENISOVA

## Young and talented!

On 28 March, the winter session of the all-Russian agricultural student team Milk Standard came to an end. Sixty-six students from 13 agricultural universities of our country gained invaluable working experience at 8 dairies and a processing plant of EkoNiva.

Future veterinarians, herd managers, engineers and technologists received the essential hands-on training and got an insight into cutting-edge farming practices.

'The training session at EkoNiva has totally changed my views on the choice of profession', says Veronika Milyutina, a student of Perm State Agricultural University. 'I couldn't imagine that laboratory work at a milk processing factory can be so interesting. I helped the laboratory assistant and carried out physicochemical analysis of milk at all production stages. Of course, I had read about this procedure in textbooks, and learned about it at lectures at the university. However, at EkoNiva, I did it myself for the first time in my life. The instructors were always there

to help me and teach how to do the work correctly. I'm taking home a lot of practical knowledge and experience. Young veterinarians learned how to work with the young stock, treat fresh cows, vaccinate and take blood samples. Herd managers were engaged in

breeding, hoof trimming, feeding and cow movement. Engineers showed their talents and used their theoretical knowledge in servicing and repairing John Deere and JCB equipment.

'All the students demonstrated their best skills', says Konstantin Zinner, Senior



veterinarian of Bobrov dairy. 'I was surprised that first year students were able to integrate into the team so quickly and work so well. As for senior students, we could trust them as if they were our employees.'

During the session, the weekends were no less filled with events than working days. The students organised talent contests and sporting events and attended seminars held by the top specialist of EkoNivaAgro. 'Student teams provide valuable experience to their members', explains Anastasia Chemutova, a student of Stavropol State Agricultural University. 'I've enjoyed my first training session at one of EkoNiva's dairies and I would like to come back for the second one in summer.'

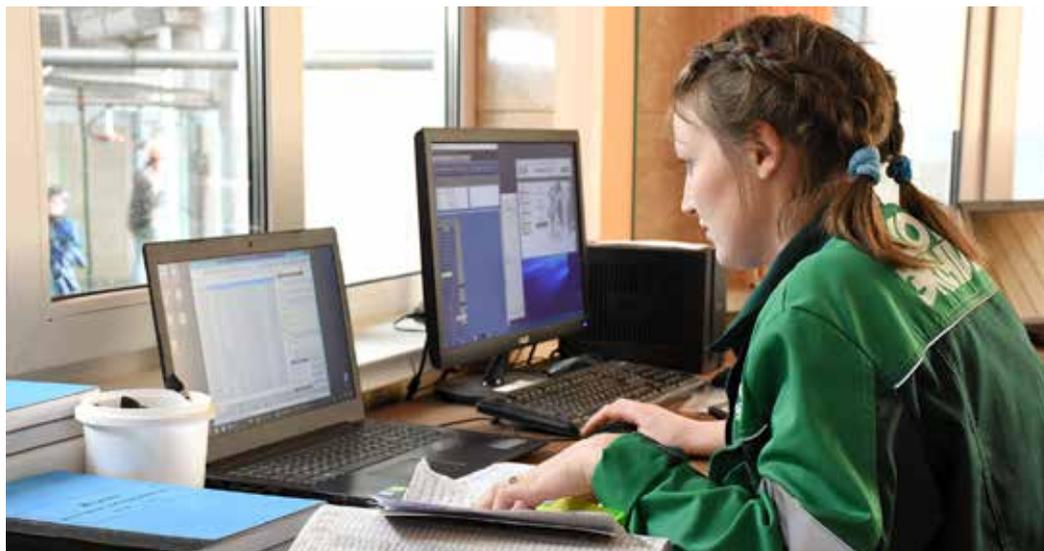
In a few months, young people from the agricultural student team Milk Standard will come back to EkoNiva for the next training session, but first, they need to pass their exams successfully.

By Viktor BARGOTIN

# EkoNiva's Alma Mater

For over five years, EkoNiva has successfully collaborated with Volgograd State Agricultural University which trains students who later become qualified specialists in the industry.

The joint work of EkoNiva and the agricultural university began in 2015. At that time, EkoNiva launched the first Academy of Livestock Farming course and invited the best students doing their degree in the relevant subjects from all over Russia to join in. 'I was among the few lucky ones who were sent to EkoNiva's farms to take part in the educational project', recalls Mariya Kantemirova, a vet at EkoNiva's Livestock Farming Training Centre. 'I couldn't realise then what a unique opportunity it was for me. The leading specialists of the holding – Ramon Schenk, Viktor Pisarenko and Sergey



Kupriyanov – gave us lectures during a week. They shared their experience, which is absolutely vital for young specialists.'

The idea blossomed into a successful cooperation. Later, the educational institution sent other students to do the summer internship in EkoNiva.

'The students of Volgograd State Agricultural University who come to our enterprises have extensive theoretical knowledge', says Rafail Ibragimov, Chief Herd Manager of Nesterovo dairy

(Ryazan oblast). 'Here, the interns acquire new practical skills which complement the information on the subjects they've learned at the university. From the start, the freshers are assigned a mentor who helps to handle difficult situations. Within a few months, young people gain hands-on experience and learn to work on their own.'

Over 300 students from Volgograd university have done their internships at EkoNiva's enterprises during the five-year collaboration. Ninety of them

have come to work for the company.

'Our cooperation creates a firm practical resource base', says Oleg Budtuyev, Deputy Dean for Internship, Biotechnology and Veterinary Medicine Department. 'Although many employers are interested in our students, EkoNiva remains our key partner. We are planning to expand our internship programme and include such areas of activity as farm machinery building and agronomy.'

By Viktor BARGOTIN

## New chapter of sports life

The renovated Sports and Recreation Centre in Severnoye village (Orenburg oblast) has opened its doors to young sportsmen. Severnaya Niva and NivaStroy made a perfect gift for the local sports school – complete refurbishment of the gym.

The last capital repair of the building had been performed more than 30 years ago. Prior to EkoNiva's undertaking, the Sports and Recreation Centre was in an awful condition: the roof was leaking, the walls were covered with mildew, the plasterwork was destroyed, the lighting was not working properly, and some blocks of parquet floor were damaged.

'EkoNiva Group initiated capital repair and redecoration of the local sports and

recreation centre', says Elmir Shaikhutdinov, Deputy Regional Director for Volga region.

'Severnaya Niva provided financing for the project and NivaStroy made this great idea a reality. We replaced the ceilings and removed some of the walls, put in new lighting, laid new parquet flooring, redecorated the locker rooms and the staff room and bought a new volleyball net and basketball backboards.

After the renovation, the junior sports school at the Sports and Recreation Centre in Severnoye



village welcomes its attendants back. A wide variety of activities is available to young sportsmen: unarmed self-defence, basketball, volleyball, etc. By the way, volleyball teams of players born in 2004 and 2005 have won gold medals at oblast competitions after training at the renovated gym.

'Severnaya Niva employees and their family members play volleyball at the sports centre

several times a week', summarises Elmir Shaikhutdinov. 'The newly refurbished gym serves as an additional motivation for taking up sport, that is why the number of volleyball enthusiasts among our employees is growing. It is great that sports can unite people. Now, children and adults in our village have started a new chapter in their sports life.'

By Viktor BARGOTIN

# Following Vavilov's example



The student team Vavilovets has arrived in Zashchitnoye. During the summer months, the students of agricultural universities from across the country are going to gain experience, acquire practical skills in plant breeding, learn the basics of seed production and crop protection.

Launched three years ago, the project has proved to be an important part of the training program for the young specialists who may become future employees of the holding.

Zashchitnoye is the best site for learning the ropes of plant breeding and seed production. The mentors generously share their expertise and skills with the interns.

'We want young people to come to work for us as agronomists or seed growers after graduating from universities. Who knows, maybe one day one of them will become a plant breeder', says Vitaliy Voloshchenko, the mastermind behind the project and Director of Plant Breeding and Variety Maintenance Centre of EkoNiva-Semena. 'Our principal task is to grant them an opportunity to better understand and get the feel of the profession.'

Andrey Ulanov from Kursk oblast has dreamt of working in agriculture since he was a child. He enjoyed helping his mum with growing vegetables in the garden and cherished a dream of becoming a professional crop grower

one day. Tomatoes were the boy's particular favourite. One time, he grew a giant tomato weighing almost a kilo in his vegetable patch. He was very proud of his success and gladly treated the family to the delicious tomato. Currently,

At first, I couldn't make up my mind. Later, the dream solidified itself as a wish to feed people with delicious natural products made from the crops grown in the Russian fields. I want to be proud of working in the agricultural sector. Now, I

### Andrey Uglanov, participant of the Vavilovets project:

'My dream is to feed people with delicious natural products made from the crops grown in the Russian fields. I want to be proud of working in the agricultural sector. Now I know for sure, I will grow grain because grain makes bread and bread is the staff of life!'

the young agronomist is more interested in winter wheat: the crop rotation of this cereal is the subject of his thesis paper. 'Since my childhood, I've been dreaming of helping people', says the intern. 'But how?

know for sure, I will grow grain because grain makes bread and bread is the staff of life!' Sisters Galya and Lida Trofimov from Altai area are experienced participants of the Vavilovets student team



project. Last year, the ladies demonstrated excellent results and were awarded a trip to the All-Russian Institute of Plant Genetic Resources n.a. Vavilov (VIR) in Saint-Petersburg. This year, they arrived at Sibirskaya Niva with the goal of staying there as full-time employees.

'We carry out variety trials of various crops: canola, ryegrass, clover, maize hybrids', says Galya. 'We study the process of hybrid sowing and cultivation. Agronomy is my calling, although as a child, I dreamt of being a veterinarian and treating animals. Now, I am going to produce healthy and delicious feed for EkoNiva's cows which is equally important as feed has a direct impact on health.'

The Trofimov sisters are inseparable: wherever they go – to classes, training sessions or work – they go together. The girls also have a common professional dream – to develop a new unique variety capable of producing a record crop in the challenging climatic conditions of Siberia. They are sure that they can acquire the necessary knowledge in EkoNiva. In the framework of the project, the trainees learn to take on all the challenges pertaining to farming.

'The guys are showing genuine interest. And that's what matters', says Sergey Kulinkovich, Deputy Director of the Plant Breeding and Variety Maintenance Centre. 'I honestly believe that Nikolay Vavilov and his ideas are alive as long as his followers continue his work.'

The project has now expanded to new regions. In addition to Zashchitnoye, the young specialists are learning the tricks of successful agricultural production in Severnaya Niva and Sibirskaya Niva. This year, students from Chuvashia, Bashkiria, Perm area, Belgorod, Voronezh and Kursk oblasts have joined the Vavilovets team. They are all different but what unites them is the common love for their native land and the desire to contribute to the development of agriculture.

# Honouring the memory of our fallen heroes



On the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Victory Day, veterans, workers of the Home Front and all those who fought so bravely to give us peace could not hide their tears and emotions when accepting congratulations.

Stefan Duerr, EkoNiva Group President, and employees of EkoNivaAgro (Voronezh oblast) visited the places of military glory in Liski district and laid memorial wreaths on the graves of the soldiers fallen in the woeful Second World War. Even though the coronavirus lockdown precluded the company from arranging a meeting with veterans as usual, 1,200 gift hampers and flowers were delivered right to their doors. Besides, EkoNivaAgro built a new fence and repaired a porch for Semyon Zemledeltsev, a veteran from Sukhaya Beryozovka village, Bobrov district, and helped Vera Shchekunskikh, NizhneMaryino village, Liski district, who served on the

Home Front during the war, to get her home connected to gas supply.

Sergey Lyakhov, Regional Director for Siberia, laid flowers at the Great Patriotic War Memorial in Maslyanino village, Novosibirsk oblast. A day earlier, following the established tradition, EkoNiva provided financial aid to the local veteran community.

The specialists of Kaluzhskaya Niva brought dairy treats to the veterans and congratulated them on the Victory Day. Pelageya Korolyova used to be a guards senior lieutenant of medical service. This year, the veteran has two important dates to celebrate: the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Great Victory and her own 100<sup>th</sup> birthday! All residents of Ustinovka village, where Pelageya has

been living all her life, love and respect the veteran. She joined the army on the second day of the war, 23 June, 1941 as a head nurse at the 210<sup>th</sup> medical regiment on the Western Front. She fought in the 50<sup>th</sup> army that liberated Kaluga from the Nazis. The battle for the city is forever imprinted on her mind – she dragged wounded soldiers off the battlefield on a shelter half across the frozen Oka river. Having lived through the dreadful battle of Stalingrad, Pelageya Sergeevna was awarded a medal for combat services. The memories of the victorious spring of 1945 spent in Koenigsberg will stay with the veteran for a lifetime. When the war came to an end, Pelageya Korolyova went back to her native village and kept on working as a nurse in Aristovo.

The commemorations of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary also took place in Kursk oblast. The employees of Zashchitnoye farming enterprise visited war memorials in all the

villages of Shchigry, Solntsevo and Belaya districts to pay homage to the fallen soldiers. Moreover, twenty aged dwellers – war-affected children, workers of the Home Front and veterans of labour – received financial aid and flowers from the company. They could not hide their tears as the most important gift on 9 May for them is attention and understanding that their toil and efforts are still remembered and highly appreciated.

Stefan Duerr congratulated the public: 'On this special day, I want to wish all people on earth a peaceful sky above their heads. I would like to express eternal gratitude to the wartime generation and wish a long life and good health to everyone who contributed to the victory over fascism.'

By Viktor BARGOTIN,  
Tatyana IGNATENKO,  
Darya DENISOVA





Stefan Duerr,

## 'Milk boosts your intelligence!'

Milk improves your intelligence and knowledge is more important than marks!

As a father, a farmer and EkoNiva Group President, Stefan Duerr is plugged into what's happening in kids' lives now, wishing them every success down the road. He was the creative mind behind the new advertising campaign for the dairy products under the EKONIVA brand.

The company launched the new advertising campaign in April. The key message of the commercial is that the high-quality produce is an excellent opportunity to show your children you love them. Children really need parental love in stressful situations, such as before or during exams.

'Sometimes parents think that it is necessary to hire a whole lot of tutors and buy more textbooks', says Stefan Duerr. 'But, I strongly believe that parental love and a glass of wholesome milk will do just as good a job!'

Mr Duerr's statement is confirmed by the recent studies which have shown that milk comes second in the list of products boosting intelligence and improving brain function. As for parental love, it can do wonders!

When Stefan studied at school, his parents kept no cows on their farm.

'My neighbour, a dairy farmer, used to treat me

to fresh and tasty milk', says Stefan Duerr. 'My first experience of working with cattle was during a student internship, when I helped to milk 50 cows every day for 4 years. It was then that I realised that it was something worth dedicating a life to. At the same time, I was also keen on studying, so I managed to stay on top of things. Now I encourage my children to pursue knowledge, rather than chase marks. In Germany, I have never seen anyone make fuss about children's preparation for exams. In Russia, the whole family is engaged in the process: the parents go through all the trials and tribulations together with their offspring, eager to help them in every possible way. But when you come to think of it, a supportive family and proper food for the brain are no less important for acing an exam.'

The Moscow creative agency The Clients helped to turn the idea into a commercial. The plot revolves around the importance of a warm relationship in the family. And, of course, treating your loved ones to a glass of tasty milk is the best way to show affection.

'Every task set by EkoNiva is a challenge', says Aleksandr Bozhko, Creative Director of The Clients. 'Parents and children

get extremely anxious about exams. Sometimes, even decades later, adults have nightmares about this period of their lives. However, this topic is rarely covered in marketing environment. The very fact that EkoNiva did not shy away from taking up the topic is indicative of the strength of the brand set to change the rules of the game among counterparts. This applies not only to the marketing communication, but also to the quality of produce. More than that, this advertisement proves that EkoNiva keeps abreast of the pressing issues in the modern family.'

The participation of a real cow in the advertisement was an express condition.

Everything must be real! EkoNiva has 100,000 cows and each one of them could be a star. Following auditions, a Holstein-Friesian cow from Kaluga dairy, called Docha was chosen. Docha was transported onto the set by truck accompanied by specialists from the farm.

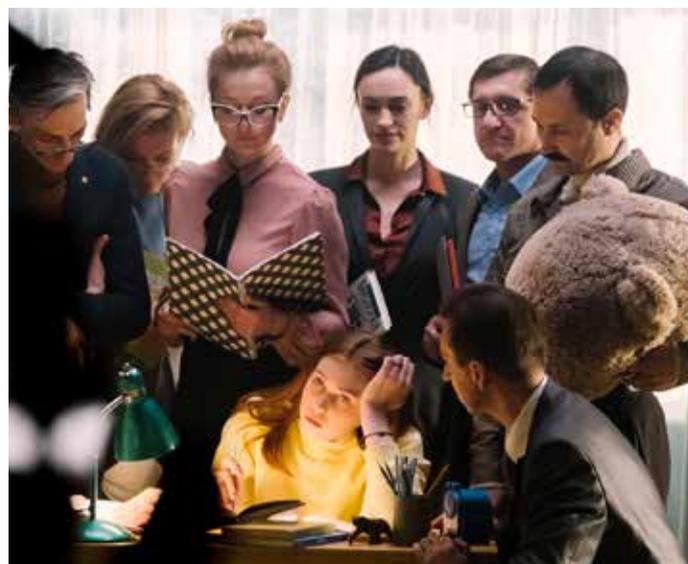
'This November, Docha will be 6 years old', says Roman Kolochkov, Chief Veterinarian of Aristovo dairy farm. 'She is the most affectionate, understanding and calm cow I have ever seen. Docha likes to interact with others and enjoys being gently stroked. I'm happy that she has accomplished her task successfully!'

After filming, Docha safely returned to her cow shed where she was taken care of and milked. Now Docha feels good which is of relevance as she is due to calve for the fourth time soon.

In the advertisement, Stefan Duerr tells the story about parental love and milk and the role both play in helping teenagers to cope with difficult tasks.

'When you have a strong and united team of professionals - there are 14 000 employees in our company - the president can do whatever he likes', says Stefan Duerr. 'For instance, now I am taking part in the filming of advertisements in which I say to the buyer from the TV screen: "EkoNiva milk from our fields for your health".'

By Anna PALAGUTINA



# Virtual reality



Due to the coronavirus situation, EkoNiva has put on hold its dairy tours in Voronezh and Kaluga oblasts. On the bright side, though, now milk lovers can visit one of the farms without leaving home.

EkoNiva is delighted to welcome everyone to 360-degree video tours of Ulanovo dairy in Kaluga oblast. Within five minutes, you will visit various locations: calf hutches, sheds and feedlots for older calves, cow barns, a feed centre and a rotary milking parlour. The dairy, which is home to more than 6,000 cows and calves, including 2,800 milking cows, invites guests to make exciting discoveries about farm life.

‘For us, online tours are a unique opportunity to tell multiple consumers what a long way milk goes before

getting onto their table’, says Stefan Duerr. ‘Set out on a journey to our farm from the comfort of your home, drink milk and stay healthy!’

To join the online excursion, go to the Register for Dairy Tour section on [ekoniva-moloko.com](http://ekoniva-moloko.com) or the official EkoNiva Moloko YouTube channel. As soon as the epidemiological situation is back to normal, EkoNiva will be happy to reopen its farm doors to longed-for guests. There are still lots of exciting discoveries to be made!

By Maria POLETAEVA

# Delectable and healthy!

Driven by this principle, EkoNiva has introduced new products with unique properties.

The new ingredients of EKONIVA Fitness Line drinking yoghurts with a high protein content are seeds with exceptional characteristics. The yoghurt with sour and sweet cherries now has chia seeds in it, while the strawberry variety can boast vitamin-rich rhubarb and flax seeds. Another product in the line – yoghurt with red currants, traditional Russian berries – has been supplemented with exotic amaranth seeds.

‘Wholesome natural products can be delectable’, says Anastasiya Kalinina, Brand Manager of EkoNiva-Food. ‘This is the idea we were guided by when creating the new yoghurt flavours. The seeds became the cherry on the cake which completed the taste of the highest quality milk and the health benefits of fruits to make up a delicious blend. Each kind of seeds is an investment in human well-

being and beauty. The entire range came out brilliant!’

The milk composition and the fat content of the yoghurts has been combined to ensure better absorption of microelements, dairy protein and calcium. Besides, low lactose levels and the presence of fibre make them suitable drinks for people with lactose intolerance.

New flavours have also appeared in the product line of EKONIVA quark desserts with a fat content of 5%. These treats with tender frothy texture due to which they simply melt in your mouth have always been hard to resist. Their new variants with peach, apricot, cherry and sour cherry pamper drinkers with a double portion of pleasure benefitting their health through protein in an easily digestible form, vitamins A, E, D, K, B-group vitamins, nicotinic acid, amino acids and many other wholesome ingredients which will take



care of your body while you are indulging yourself. It goes without saying that the quark desserts do not contain any artificial flavourings, colourings, stabilisers or preservatives.

Another special product under EKONIVA brand for pre-school and school children – ultra-heat-treated milk with a fat content of 3.2% – has been launched onto the market.

Absolutely microbiologically safe milk in an aseptic packaging has a long shelf life when stored unopened at room temperature. The product boasts a guaranteed pure milk taste and a whole lot of vitamins and microelements, essential to a growing body.

For the fans of the

traditional Russian cuisine, the company has launched latte-like coloured ryazhenka fermented drink with a delicious taste and a full pack of healthy properties. To slow cook it, fresh milk is left to simmer in a stove for hours on low heat, which accelerates the speed of protein breakdown facilitating digestion and consequently the absorption of B, C, PP-group vitamins, calcium, phosphorus and amino acids – all the good things our body can get from it. The high standard fat content of 4% helps to deliver the taste of baked milk best of all.

Join EKONIVA dairy fan club!

By Svetlana WEBER

# Standing out in a crowd

EkoNiva's farms are a home for over one hundred thousand cows, among which there are truly outstanding animals.



## TV stars

Cows Marta and Docha have starred in EkoNiva's commercials with none other than Stefan Duerr. Primped by special groomers, the bovine beauties performed perfectly well, coming up to the highest expectations of the director and the camera man.



## True master of cuddles

The most affectionate cow in Sibirskaia Niva is a beauty with the self-explanatory name 'Laska' (tenderness in Russian). Radiating pure gentleness and warmth, Laska puts her head on the veterinarians' knees and devotedly looks in their eyes, thus helping them to relieve stress after a long hard-working shift.



## Our pride

The first-place award went to the cow from EkoNivaAgro nicknamed Champion. During 7 lactations, she has given 100 thousand litres of milk!



## Farm big boss

Cow Mamka is a natural-born leader at Gusevo dairy, Kaluga oblast. She manages the herd on the voluntary basis, early in the morning getting the bovine ladies together for milking. No chance to skip the gathering – in short order, Mamka will make it clear who runs the barn!

## Super Mum

Malva – an experienced mother from Zashchitnoye farm – has given birth to 11 calves within 12 years. On 19 August, the farm heroine is celebrating her birthday.



## Rare Bird

Being distinguished by the rare coat colours, Lucky could shine in the sequel to 101 Dalmatians. While her unique beauty patiently bides its time, the cow happily takes a ride on a milking rotary and delights everyone with excellent milk yield.

22-24 July\*

### All-Russian Flax Field Day

Venue: fields of Siberian Institute of Agriculture and Peat, Okolitsa park located at 1A, Sadovaya St., Zorkaltsevo village, Tomsk oblast  
Organiser: Ministry of Agriculture of Tomsk oblast

13-14 August\*

### Saratov-Agro

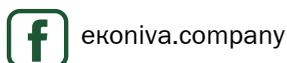
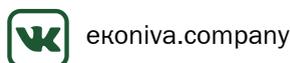
Venue: a trial field beside the bypass road between Solnechniy and Yubileinyi residential districts, Saratov  
Organiser: SOFIT-EXPO Exhibition Centre

20-21 August\*

### Don Field Day

Venue: Federal State Budgetary Research Institution Donskoy agricultural research centre, Eksperimentalniy village, Zernograd district, Rostov oblast  
Organiser: DonExpocentre Group of Companies

\*The events may be postponed or cancelled depending on the epidemiological situation



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**ЕКОНИВА**  
**ЭКОНИВА**

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