

New milestone

A daily output of 3,000 tonnes of milk and new records to come

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Star varieties from EkoNiva

New proprietary cultivars in company's portfolio

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Key to excellent cow performance

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Together we can make a difference

The Paris Agreement guides the international efforts to limit the global temperature increase and fight against climate change. Russia has joined the Agreement and committed to bringing greenhouse gas emissions down to 70% of the 1990 baseline.

EkoNiva has the largest dairy herd in the country. We are well aware that cows produce a lot of methane, but how can we as a company still do our part to be more sustainable?

It is true that the total cattle population in Russia

has decreased from 20 million to 7.9 million head, in less than 50 years, and there is no significant growth observed at the moment. Nevertheless, being a responsible producer, we strive for greater sustainability and efficient manure management to minimise the carbon footprint and negative effects on the soil. The manure from our farms is ultimately applied to the fields as organic fertiliser at variable rates. Besides, we are working on a project to build a biogas plant to

be able to generate 'green' electric power. The first plants will be launched on one of our farms in Moscow oblast. All the initiatives are part of the sustainable development strategy our company has devised based on the principles of responsible environmental management and farming.

However, the point is that agricultural producers alone cannot affect the greenhouse gas emission status in Russia. It is crucial for all the industries, irrespective of the political lobby, to commit to climate

protection proportionally to their contribution to global warming. Otherwise, just like it was after Russia acceded to the WTO, it will be the agricultural producers that suffer the most negative implications and the highest loss.

Only by joining our efforts, we can make a difference and preserve the environment to ensure happy and healthy life for future generations.

Stefan Duerr,
EkoNiva Group President

3,000 tonnes of milk per day

On 2 February, EkoNiva hit another milestone: 3,000 tonnes of milk per day. Being a flagship milk-producing company in Russia since 2014, the company has also gained a strong position among the top 5 global milk producers in the past few years.

EkoNiva's story of success started with launching the first dairy farm for 1,200 cows in Voronezhoblast on 1 September 2007. In 2017, the daily milk yield reached 1,000 tonnes, in 2019 – 2,000 tonnes. Today, EkoNiva has 41 modern dairy farms and a dairy herd of over 105,000 cows at locations in 13 regions of Russia.

Stefan Duerr believes that EkoNiva owes its rapid development to the continued support of the government and financing by Russian Agricultural Bank and its success – to the expertise of the team.

'Our specialists are the key to company's achievements', says Stefan Duerr. 'I'm grateful

to EkoNiva's team for their skills, perseverance and hard work.'

Milk quality, which depends on cow health and comfort, comes before its quantity for the company.

'Our new dairy facilities are like five-star hotels', states Ramon Schenk, Deputy Director General. 'Our cows have a lot of space, very comfortable beds, tasty forage and can enjoy fresh air at outdoor exercise lots. And when they eat balanced rations, feel well and are taken such a good care of, they produce delicious premium quality milk.' Besides, EkoNiva puts a special focus on improving the herd genetics and uses the semen from the world's best bulls for breeding.

Consequently, the average milk yield has gone up to 28 kg per cow per day, thus reducing production costs per litre, which is extremely important nowadays considering the limited buying power of the population

Four dairy facilities are expected to be finished this

year. Moreover, EkoNiva will expand its processing capacity and dairy product exports. With the current market conditions and exchange rate, selling to China is increasingly attractive. At the same time, the domestic market is a priority. Therefore, EKONIVA natural dairy products are available at 18,000 shops across Russia.

By Svetlana WEBER



Star varieties from EkoNiva

The winter wheat varieties EN Albireo and EN Taygeta bred by EkoNiva have been entered in the State Variety Register of Plant Breeding Achievements permitted for use in the territory of the Russian Federation.

For over six years now, EkoNiva has been engaged in winter wheat and soybean breeding project based in Zashchitnoye, Kursk oblast. Last year, the endeavour delivered first results: the winter wheat variety Cepheus was approved for use. This winter, EN Albireo and EN Taygeta, also named after constellations, have become welcome additions to the range of varieties bred by EkoNiva.

'EN Albireo winter wheat variety has been entered in the State Variety Register of Plant Breeding Achievements as permitted for use in Region 5, Central Black Soil', states Andrey Zvyagin, Plant Breeder of EkoNiva-Semena.

'It is a mid-maturing variety of intensive type, resistant to lodging. In terms of flour quality, it corresponds to strong (improver) wheats. The yield potential is 12 tonnes/hectare.'

The main distinctive feature of the cultivars is their high winter hardiness. Besides, the varieties respond to high fertiliser input with a sharp productivity rise.'

'EN Taygeta is registered with permission for use in region 5 and 7, Central Black Soil and Middle Volga, respectively', continues Andrey Zvyagin. 'The plants are short-stalked, with average height of 84 cm. EN Taygeta is resistant to major diseases common in field conditions and with

intensive technology applied delivers maximised yield.'

The genetics of the new varieties ensures high and stable yields due to their resistance to stressful biotic and abiotic environmental factors. These include primarily frost and winter hardiness, drought tolerance and resistance to the most common phytopathogens in the field.

'The state registration of the varieties is the result

of many years of hard work', emphasises Andrey Zvyagin. 'No doubt, our new varieties will become popular with Russian farmers looking for a productive winter-hardy wheat variety.'

Six more lines of EkoNiva's breeding are currently undergoing state variety testing and are likely to join the ranks of registered varieties this year.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO



When dreams come true

A longed-for event happened in the lives of 28 employees of EkoNivaAgro: they received the keys to their new homes. The houses were constructed under the Comprehensive Development of Rural Areas programme.

The 2020-2025 state support programme tackles the main problems of the Russian village. It is aimed at making health care, social welfare, education and housing facilities available to the residents of rural areas.

EkoNivaAgro was among the first enterprises to join the project. The company built four types of houses (with the floorspace of 57, 79, 90 or 120 square metres) for its employees. The houses are connected to all utility lines, have a modern interior and are partially furnished. Besides, each house comes with a 7 to 15 square metre land plot, which can be used as a garden, a vegetable plot, or a smallholding.

The investment volume of the project amounted to 60 million rubles, of which 30% was sponsored by EkoNivaAgro.

'I joined EkoNivaAgro a few years ago', shares Vyacheslav Bakhirev, a cow handler. 'After a couple of months in the company, I learned about the programme and decided to apply for it. I was surprised at how fast my application was approved. It was wonderful news for my

family because we had not had our own house and had had to rent one. Now we are going to move to our own four-bedroom house, which comes with a 15-square metre plot of land. I'm so happy, I can hardly believe it!'

After signing tenancy agreements with the municipality, the programme participants received the keys to their new houses. In five years, they will be entitled to buy out the property from the municipality at ten percent of the initial value. If they do it after ten years of tenancy, the amount

will be reduced to 1 per cent. There is only one condition: the employees must continue working for EkoNivaAgro and living in the countryside during this time.

'Participation in the Comprehensive Development of Rural Areas programme is a priority for EkoNivaAgro', says Aleksandr Rybenko, Regional Director for Voronezh oblast. 'We are planning to continue building accommodation for our employees. Thirty-eight new houses will shortly be ready in Bobrov district.'

By Viktor BARGOTIN



Stepping up exports to China

Another lot of UHT milk under EKONIVA brand has been delivered to the People's Republic of China (PRC). The container with 22.5 tonnes of delicious and wholesome milk has arrived at the Port of Dalian. Two more lots of milk with the fat content of 1.5% and 3.2% are currently en route to China.

In August 2020, EKONIVA UHT milk packaged in 1 litre cartons hit the shelves of Chinese retail chains for the first time. The local customer feedback on the products was positive.

'Goods from Russia have a very good reputation in China', explains Zhang Jie, Director of Heihe Eyoujia Import and Export LLC. 'Russian language on the package inspires trust, besides, the price of the goods is quite reasonable – 12 Chinese yuans (approx. 135 rubles – author's note).'

EKONIVA products can now be purchased in northeastern China: the cities

of Harbin and Heihe and the provinces of Heilongjiang, Jilin and Liaoning.

Ildar Rakhmatullin:

As soon as the situation with coronavirus stabilises, we will try railway delivery as it saves time and money and provides a greater flexibility in the SKU range supplied.



It is currently impossible to ship goods to China by railway, so the sea remains the only way of transportation.

'China's General Administration of Customs

has imposed restrictions on the receipt of refrigerated containers via rail-road border terminals due to the current pandemic of Coronavirus', comments Ivan Mostyaev, Deputy Sales Director at RZD Logistics.'

A preliminary agreement on supplying EKONIVA milk by railway has been reached, however the restrictive measures that are currently in

Rakhmatullin, Leading Export Manager of EkoNiva-Food. 'As soon as the situation with coronavirus stabilises, we will try railway delivery as it saves time and money and provides a greater flexibility in the SKU range supplied.'

Following Chinese consumers survey, such products as 0.2-litre whole milk, yoghurt with a shelf life of up to 6 months and milk powder in 0.5 kg packaging show great promise. Up to now, EkoNiva export to the Chinese market has been limited to UHT milk.

'Qingdao Far East Star Trade Development Co., Ltd. has shown interest in our produce', concludes Ildar Rakhmatullin. 'To date, we have agreed on the shipment of 30 lots of milk to the port of Qingdao in eastern Shandong province.'

place on the Russian-Chinese border preclude railway logistics.

'So far, our products have been shipped to China only by sea', says Ildar

By Tatyana IGNATENKO

Plant breeding initiatives



At Zashchitnoye, Kursk oblast, the honoured guests visited the seed processing plant, the laboratory and the seed storage facility.

'We have always wanted to see EkoNiva's production sites with our own eyes and learn about the most advanced practices, especially in seed growing and breeding', says Marat Zyabbarov, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Tatarstan. 'Plans are afoot to create a similar seed breeding facility in our republic, and we know that EkoNiva has a lot to share.'

Zashchitnoye can produce up to 140,000 tonnes of seeds per year. Sorting lines can process seven seed varieties simultaneously. The total seed processing capacity is 500 tonnes per day. EkoNiva has a progressive in-house seed breeding programme. Some of the company's varieties are already included in the State Register: Cepheus, EN Taygeta and EN Albireo winter wheat and EN Argenta soybeans. Several more are undergoing state variety trials.

'We are impressed with the scale of EkoNiva's seed production activities',

A delegation from the Ministry of Agriculture of Tatarstan has paid a call to EkoNiva's production facilities in Kursk and Voronezh oblasts. One of the key objectives of the meeting was getting acquainted with the company's seed breeding activities.

stresses Linar Zakirov, Head of Bugulma Municipal District of Tatarstan, Mayor of Bugulma. 'The breeding programme is excellent! I hope that the company will be just as successful in our Republic. We are happy to have such a large and forward-thinking investor in our region.'

The management of EkoNiva and representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture of Tatarstan agreed to carry out joint work in seed breeding, including variety trials, arrangement of dedicated training programmes for personnel and establishment of favourable regulatory environment.

'More and more farms of the Republic are buying our seeds', explains Yuriy Vasyukov,

Regional Director for Kursk oblast, EkoNiva-APK Holding. 'The initiative on cooperation in seed breeding is also extremely important. This season, our breeding material – soybeans, spring wheat and spring barley – will be tested in the fields of Tatarstan. In autumn, we are planning to carry out the tests for winter wheat varieties.'

After visiting Zashchitnoye, the delegation headed for Voronezh oblast, where Dobrino dairy and the company's cheese-making plant in Shchuchye were the main destinations.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO

High-quality seeds for Tatarstan

TatAgroExpo2021, the largest agricultural exhibition, has taken place in Tatarstan. Over 200 enterprises from 30 regions of Russia and a number of leading foreign companies demonstrated their produce at Kazan Expo Exhibition Centre. EkoNiva was one of the most successful exhibitors of the show.

The exhibition encompassed all aspects related to agriculture: farm machinery, equipment and spare parts, chemicals, fertiliser, seeds, latest scientific developments and products supplied by local farmers.

'TatAgroExpo provides a unique opportunity to form and develop new business partnerships', says Marat Zyabbarov, Minister of Agriculture and Food of Tatarstan, in his opening speech. 'It is an excellent platform to discuss the burning topics of the farming industry, learn about the most advanced

agricultural technologies and obtain useful information for the upcoming season.'

The trade show was very productive for EkoNiva-Semena. The company's booth attracted both local farmers and agricultural producers from the neighbouring regions. In the run-up to the new agricultural season, producers are eager to discuss suppliers' offers and learn about the industry novelties.

'We have been very successful with our seeds in Kazan', says Viktor Prostyakov, Sales Rep of EkoNiva-Semena.



'Tatarstan farmers attach great importance to seed quality. The most demanded crops are spring wheat, barley and peas. They demonstrate impressive performance in the local conditions. Flax, oats and lentils have also been gaining in popularity lately. Farmers are mainly interested in area-specific varieties.'

The state seed register for 7th region lists Max oats, Kanyuk spring wheat, Margret, Laurikka and Eifel varieties

of barley, Rocket and Jackpot peas. The winter wheat variety EN Taigeta bred by EkoNiva has been recently included in the State register of plant breeding achievements. This stress-tolerant variety is a perfect choice for the climatic conditions of the Republic. The company has already concluded several purchase agreements with local farmers.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO

Flying with EKONIVA

EkoNiva-Food has started supplying UHT milk for Aeroflot flights departing from Sheremetyevo airport and to the coffee houses of Voronezh airport. From now on, everyone can enjoy hot drinks with EKONIVA milk during the flight to or from Moscow or while waiting for boarding.

AeroMar, Russia's largest company engaged in food production for air passengers, provides Aeroflot aircrafts with EKONIVA milk. The delivery scope totals 500,000 litres – this will be enough to serve milk on board the plane for approximately one year.

'A few acquaintances of mine have already sent me photos showing EKONIVA milk on a flight attendant's trolley', says Dmitry Rayev, HORECA Sales Manager, EkoNiva-Food. 'We value our

customers' trust, focus on long-term cooperation and guarantee consistently high quality of our products.'

Partnership with one of the largest civil aviation companies is a great step forward for EkoNiva-Food proving that the company meets the highest supplier selection criteria.

'Cooperation with Aeroflot gives us a perfect opportunity to introduce our brand to new consumers and expand the product distribution geography',

continues Dmitry Rayev. 'We are glad that even more people will now have a chance to taste the top-grade milk from EkoNiva's dairy farms.'

In Voronezh airport named after Peter the Great, Mon Baton and Buntaro coffee shops also make delicious coffee drinks using EkoNiva Professional Line UHT milk with a fat content of 2.5 and 3.2 per cent.

By Anna PALAGUTINA



The delicious route

Results of The Russian Routes 2020 national contest have been summed up in Moscow. EkoNiva farm tour project at Ulanovo dairy, Kaluga oblast, became second out of 200 contest participants in the nomination 'Production Facility Tour'.



The application for participation in the national contest was submitted by Kozelsk travel bureau, which had helped EkoNiva to develop the farm route.

'This award has been established within the

international project Hospitable Russia as the first professional accolade in the industry', says Elena Gubareva, Director of Kozelsk travel bureau. 'EkoNiva's farm tour project opens up a unique opportunity to gain an insight into milk production. Families

with children are always happy to visit the farm. It is also important that the tour is accessible for people with disabilities.'

The farm tour project at Ulanovo dairy aimed at promoting dairy products, a healthy lifestyle and

agricultural professions was launched in autumn 2019. EkoNiva welcomes everyone interested in farm life: families, preschool children, school and university students. The guests walk around the farm, watch cows being milked and learn about cow housing conditions. Children especially like interacting with calves and feeding them from a special bottle. Those who wish can ride mini tractors and take part in various workshops. At the end of the programme, the children and adults are treated to delicious EKONIVA products.

'Last year, 5,000 tourists from all over Russia visited Ulanovo dairy', says Svetlana Nepomnyashchaya, Tour Project Coordinator, EkoNiva-Food. 'The New Year quest turned out to be very popular attracting over 1,000 people during the holidays. EkoNiva project team keeps working on new exciting activities for our guests. As usual, we are planning to celebrate Maslenitsa and the coming spring with fun, games and delicious pancakes.'

By Darya DENISOVA



Dairy industry summing up 2020 results

Avoiding a sharp rise in prices for dairy products on the shop shelves was the key topic of the 12th Congress of the National Union of Milk Producers.

Milk producers, representatives of relevant agencies and ministries gathered for an end-of-the-year meeting to summarise the results of 2020 for the union and determine further short-term objectives. Traditionally, the opening speech was delivered by Stefan Duerr, Soyuzmoloko Chairperson.

'Despite the pandemics in the year 2020, the industry continued its successful development', said Stefan Duerr. 'Thanks to the state aid, the demand for dairy produce did not drop but continued growing. At the same time, the raw milk production and processing costs have risen as well. I would like to thank the government for keeping the support measures at these challenging times. I am so glad that the authorities and milk producers have shared priorities and place utmost importance on the prevention of dramatic price hikes.'

Dmitriy Patrushev, Minister of Agriculture of the Russian Federation, stressed that the government continues promoting the development of the dairy industry via a broad range of tools. Last year, more than 28 billion rubles was allocated from the budget for this purpose. The existing support measures will continue in 2021, including subsidies, CAPEX compensation and soft loans.

'As a means of additional support for livestock farming enterprises and milk processors, we have expanded the short-term loan programme', informed the Minister. Starting from 2021, this financing can also be used for the purchase of grain, meal, premixes and aminoacids for feed.

It is worth noting that in 2020, milk production in the country rose by 850,000 tonnes and exceeded 32 billion tonnes, reaching the highest level in the past decade. The milk output per cow broke a record

of 6,000 kg. According to experts, last year saw an increase in curds, butter, cheese and ice-cream production. The volumes of milk powder and fermented dairy products have not changed since 2019.

'We estimate that in 2021, milk production will reach 32.6 billion tonnes. We have all necessary conditions to ensure such growth', emphasised Dmitriy Patrushev,

that sustainable domestic dairy production should account for not less than 90%. So far, it is just a little more than 84%.

Another burning issue which triggered lively debates was food labelling. Voluntary dairy product labelling in Russia was launched on 20 January. Processing companies are preparing to adopt the system. From 1 June 2021, labels on packaging will become mandatory.

Stefan Duerr:

'I am glad that the authorities and milk producers have shared priorities and place utmost importance on prevention of dramatic price hikes.'



high-quality feed and excellent genetics.'

Dairy exports have also grown by a third over the past five years. In 2020, the country sold over \$300 million worth of domestic products, which is 12% more than in 2019. According to the Ministry officials, further efforts should be made to accelerate the progress. However, the domestic market remains a top priority. The Russian Food Security Doctrine states

With this in mind, industry representatives addressed the authorities with a request to consider some additional state support schemes as product labelling will require a total of 12 billion rubles of investment. In their turn, the officials of the Ministry of Agriculture sent a proposal to the government to consider partial cost compensation for the adoption of dairy product labelling.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO



Fostering lean production

Sibirskaya Niva has enrolled in the national Labour Productivity Project. The enterprise is one of the first in the Siberian region to introduce cost saving practices.

This initiative is aimed at boosting labour efficiency at medium-sized and large enterprises in the non-basic materials sector. The goal is to reach a 5% annual performance increase by 2024. Thirty-four companies based in Novosibirsk have embarked on the national project. Sibirskaya Niva was one of the first to join in.

‘Our main objectives to enhance the professional competence of our employees and raise operational efficiency’, explains Ivan Poddubny, Deputy Regional Director of Sibirskaya Niva. ‘With the help of the Regional Labour Productivity Centre experts, we would like to identify our weaknesses and improve the KPIs.’

Penkovo dairy, Maslyanino district, was chosen as the pilot project site. The lean production concept comprises all working processes: from feeding to milk shipment. The company expects to increase milk yield per cow by 10%, step up labour productivity, bring down losses and cut input costs without impairing the product quality.

‘Our greatest challenge is that we deal with cows. Working processes on a dairy farm cannot be postponed or suspended’, says Elena Khandoshko, Nutritionist,

Sibirskaya Niva. ‘Dairy farm processes cannot be postponed or suspended’, says Elena Khandoshko, Herd Nutritionist, Sibirskaya Niva. ‘Therefore, before launching the project on our farm, we had carried out a comprehensive analysis and optimised every process: feeding, moving cows, milking and other routines.’

After successful implementation of the project on Penkovo farm, it will be carried out at other operations of the company.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO

Home-style EuroTier

The largest agricultural trade show EuroTier 2021 has taken place online this year. People from all over the world could participate in the exhibition. All they needed to do was check in on the official website.

EuroTier 2021 held from 9 to 12 February welcomed 1,200 exhibitors, including EkoNiva Group, and over 30,000 guests. Visitors of EkoNiva online booth learned about company’s activities, received links to various useful resources and a list of contacts for further cooperation.

Agricultural specialists took part in the video conference ‘Milk and meat substitutes – a blessing or a

curse for Eastern European farmers’. Stefan Duerr, President of EkoNiva Group, also shared his opinion on the topic.

‘Customers’ attitude to natural products of animal origin is changing for the better’, says Stefan Duerr. ‘The difference between the production cost of milk and its selling price is very small. The main goal of our marketing activities is to make people understand that milk is good



for their health. We believe that natural dairy products cannot be replaced for any substitutes. That is why EkoNiva places a premium on producing natural milk. Cow milk, cheese and fermented dairy products have always been part of people’s ration and they will always be.’

User-friendly online exhibitor profiles, excellent video conferencing opportunities and prompt message exchange contributed to the success of the online version of EuroTier 2021.

By Viktor BARGOTIN

Success technologies

How to prepare machinery for the farming season at no extra cost? That was the topic of the webinar held by EkoNiva-Tekhnika Holding before the start of the sowing campaign. The online platform gathered over 50 clients from all over the country.

The virtual meeting right before the busiest time in the fields was very lively and informative. During the video conference, the speakers shared practical advice on scheduled maintenance and additional services. Besides, they presented programmes designed to optimise the production process.

Special attention was paid to the FarmSight package as preventive maintenance can cut down the overall repair costs significantly. Timely machine diagnostics makes it possible to identify and

eliminate the malfunction without waiting for a major breakdown of an assembly or a system. In addition, clients can order necessary spare parts and materials in advance avoiding extra charge for urgent delivery.

The PowerGard protection plan and the tailored maintenance programme also keep farmers prepared for any challenge. A contract concluded at a fixed price saves extra repair cost in the future.

The online seminar participants learnt about the benefits of the services



provided in EkoNiva's workshops. Large service centres fitted with advanced repair equipment help ensure uninterrupted operation of agricultural machines and a constant increase in the overall farm performance. Repairing machines in the workshop in the winter can save up to 15%.

As part of the webinar, Dmitry Lukin and Igor Gorshkov, Maintenance Department Managers of Kirov and Ryazan branches of EkoNiva-Tekhnika, arranged a live stream of the repairs

right from the workshops. The facilities allow accommodating and servicing up to 15 units of self-propelled machinery at the same time. Along with the basic service package, the company's engineers are always ready to offer the clients extra options such as repair of assemblies, tyre fitting and restoration of openings to their original dimensions.

Efficient teamwork of the machinery manufacturer, the dealer and the client is absolutely indispensable on the cusp of the farming season.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO

Organic business is gaining momentum



Along with its other businesses, EkoNiva is engaged in organic milk production. EKONIVA 2. ORGANIC whole milk hit the shop shelves in 2019. This year, the company's processing plant MosMedynagroprom has produced the first organic UHT milk. Besides, Medynskiy ORGANIC cheese is undergoing the required trials.

The cheese has already been certified by the Russian authorised company Organic Expert. Certification for compliance with the European standards is currently underway. All the organic products at MosMedynagroprom are manufactured on a separate line specially designed

and licensed for organic production. Today, Savinskaya Niva farm, Kaluga oblast, supplies 2.5 tonnes of eco milk, which is processed on a daily basis. EkoNiva is planning to increase this volume to 8 tonnes. The additional milk will be delivered from Smolenskaya Niva organic farm.

'The daily output amounts to 200-240 kg of organic cheese', says Aleksandr German, Director of MosMedynagroprom. 'Medynskiy ORGANIC cheese is made according to an original recipe with organic milk. This semi-hard cheese is distinguished by the light-yellow colour and

a delicate milky flavour. We aim to preserve the natural taste of organic milk, so we do not add any spices or herbs. After the certification procedures, we will start deliveries to the federal retail chains.'

By Darya DENISOVA

A new milestone in cheesemaking



The construction of EkoNiva cheese plant with 60 tonnes of raw milk intake per day is nearing its completion. The first test batch of cheese was made in mid-January.

Once the plant reaches its full production capacity, the daily output will amount to 4 tonnes of semi-hard and 2 tonnes of hard cheeses. Semi-hard cheeses of Dutch and Russian types are made using two major methods. To produce Dutch-type cheese, granular technology is employed – cheese grains are poured into the moulds together with the whey to minimise exposure to external factors. Non-granular technology applied for the production of Russian-type cheese involves draining part of whey, thus the cheese moisture content is reduced and the curd gets more porous and forms holes. The first test batches of semi-hard cheese will have

matured by the end of March. The production of hard cheeses is also underway.

‘Our hard cheese range is of Bergkaese type with a ripening period of at least 3 months’, notes Aleksey Prostyakov, Manager of Shchuchye cheese plant. ‘We use *Brevibacterium Linens*, or red mould, which imparts the unique full-bodied flavour to our cheese.’

To date, the volume of cheese produced is limited to two or three test batches of semi-hard and hard cheese types per day. A team of qualified specialists rigorously monitors the entire production process: they carry out cheese maturity tests, set all the required parameters and

make adjustments on the go. The batches of cheese are kept in maturing rooms fitted with the climatic system by CLAUGER, France. At the heart of the facility lies the equipment supplied by Bertsch, one of the leaders in European cheesemaking industry.

‘Bertsch designs and manufactures complete process equipment solutions of the highest quality’, continues Aleksey Prostyakov. ‘The machinery fully meets our production and economic needs. A Bertsch specialist is currently on site training our employees the basics of equipment operation and maintenance.’

The milk used for cheese making comes from Bodeyevka dairy located near the processing plant. Based on the comprehensive quality evaluation comprising 29 indicators, the raw milk from this dairy is best suited

for cheese production. One of the key benefits cited by the technologists is that it is high in protein and fat.

‘Our requirements for raw milk quality are even more stringent than those of the State Standard for the highest grade product’, comments Karolina Vasilyeva, Head of Milk Quality Control Department at EkoNiva-APK Holding. ‘Some of the milk quality indicators are our know-how, so we can’t disclose all the secrets. The main parameters for our milk are the following: protein content no lower than 3.5%, casein level above 2.6% and fat content above 3.5%.’

The quality of milk depends on a number of factors, some of them not quite obvious. For example, the cow milking procedure. At EkoNiva facilities, the cows are milked in rotary milking parlours without causing much stress to the animals, which makes EkoNiva milk delectable and full of health benefits.

‘Our milkers have been trained to ensure stress-free environment for the cows’, says Karolina Vasilyeva. ‘We continuously work with the staff to ensure consistently high quality of cheese milk at Bodeyevka dairy.’

In a few months’ time, the cheeses will hit the shelves of major retail chains and EKONIVA brand shops, so all cheese lovers will have the chance to taste the high-quality product made from natural milk.

By Viktor BARGOTIN





The wind of change blows from the East

For the first time ever, EkoNiva Group has taken part in Gulfood 2021 in Dubai, the world's largest annual food and beverage trade fair in the Gulf region.

This year, the 26th exhibition became the first international event held offline after the lockdown and gathered about 2,500 companies from 85 countries from around the globe. Under the auspices of the Russian Export Centre, 22 Russian producers participated in Gulfood 2021. Over the five days, the Russian exporters conducted numerous meetings and negotiations with potential buyers.

'The countries of the Middle East and the Persian Gulf show great interest in Russian produce', says Sergey Vologodskiy, Vice President of the Russian Export Centre. 'And it's no wonder as our products meet the highest standards.

In Russia, genetically modified crops are banned and the application of chemicals, fertiliser and pharmaceuticals are under strict control, which ensures the quality and safety of the Russian agricultural produce.'

At the national booth of the Russian Federation, EkoNiva showcased its dairy products – UHT milk, organic milk, cream, butter – seeds and commercial grain.

'One of our primary goals is to expand into overseas markets and the Middle East market, is of great interest', says Vladimir Danielyan, Deputy Commercial Director of EkoNiva-APK Holding. 'At Gulfood exhibition, we've held negotiations with over 70 companies.'

EkoNiva had a productive dialogue with importers and distributors of UHT milk and large retail chains in the United Arab Emirates: Carrefour, Lulu and Spinneys, and discussed major trends in the eastern market, such as an increasing popularity of organic milk.

As compared to livestock farming products, seeds and commercial grain were displayed only by EkoNiva-Semena at Gulfood 2021.

'The guests from Ethiopia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Iraq have showed great interest in our seeds, chickpeas, flax and wheat', continues Vladimir Danielyan. 'Dubai made it possible to present our crop produce and discuss

business opportunities with medium-sized and large traders and processing companies from Turkey, India and the UAE. Among the topics covered, were plans for exporting pulses and oilseeds in 2021 and potential cooperation. We also exchanged views on the global market of commercial grain.'

To retain and strengthen its competitive edge in the foreign markets is one of EkoNiva's top priorities. At this stage, company's objective is to extend the range of exported products and the list of countries importing its products.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO



Simple arithmetic



The enterprise specialises in dairy farming. Its herd size is 5,000 head, 2,600 of which are milking cows, and the daily milk yield is 70 tonnes. The John Deere tractor was acquired for Nagorskoye farm, where it is used with a mixer wagon.

'We've held a few demonstrations of the John Deere 6135B showing the tractor to its best advantage: speed, manoeuvrability and fuel efficiency', says Andrey Bukhtin,

Sales Representative, Vologda branch of EkoNiva-Tekhnika. 'These are the key factors to consider when choosing machinery for a big farm. Experts are sure that the John Deere 6135B consumes significantly less fuel than its counterparts. The all-rounder is fitted with the Common Rail direct injection system, which reduces fuel consumption. It's just simple arithmetic.

If we multiply 365 days by 13 hours of tractor operation,

For the second year in a row, Vologda branch of EkoNiva-Tekhnika has been successfully operating in the region supplying advanced machinery to agricultural enterprises. Ustyanskaya Dairy Company has made its choice in favour of the 135 hp John Deere 6135B tractor.

we get 4,745 engine hours', continues Andrey Bukhtin. 'Multiplied by 1.5 litres of fuel saved per day, this gives us 7.1 tonnes of annual diesel economy. Thus we can save approximately 355,000 rubles per year, and that's on fuel alone'

On Nagorskoye farm, the John Deere 6135B operates 12-13 hours a day handling a number of essential tasks.

'We use the tractor to feed our herd - 3,200 cows', explains Ivan Fialkovskiy, Deputy Director General of Ustyanskaya Dairy Company. 'The tractor pulls a heavy 24 cu.m. mixer wagon using no more than 7 litres of fuel per hour, while its predecessor consumed up to 9 litres. It makes a big difference.

Besides, the machine boasts high manoeuvrability and a small turning radius allowing for quick and efficient operation.'

The excellent hydraulic capacity of the John Deere 6135B enables it to work with any mounted implement. The tractor is easy to operate and ready to cope with the toughest jobs. Moreover, apart from farm work, it tackles various field tasks: soil tillage, cultivation and fertilisation. The management of Ustyanskaya Dairy Company is happy with the purchase. High-tech machines and efficient feeding process will help the company to cut down costs and increase milk yields.

By Darya DENISOVA

Save your time

Specialists of Kostroma branch of EkoNiva-Tekhnika are always there to help farmers! The service technicians can restore worn-out farm machinery parts within just a few hours by means of line boring and overlay welding with the WS2 Compact metal-working unit manufactured by Sir Meccanica. This portable device is designed to repair and restore the inner cylindrical surfaces.

'Farm machinery wears out over time', says Aleksey Kuvatov, Service Technician, Kostroma branch, EkoNiva-Tekhnika. 'The diameter of bushing slits and pin openings increases causing various problems (backlash, part deterioration, parts hitting each other). Our aim is to restore the diameter to its initial size and bring the machine back to its original efficiency.'

'The portable equipment

allows our technicians to perform repairs right in the field and solve urgent issues within just a few hours', explains Dmitriy Fedotov, Engineering and Technical Department Manager, Kostroma branch of EkoNiva-Tekhnika. 'The device identifies the affected areas with pinpoint accuracy, widens the part by boring and fills the opening with metal. After a few passes, we restore the worn-out opening to its original size.'



Previously, machinery owners had to buy a new part or assembly and replace the loose one, which cost them a pretty penny. Now, thanks to the new technologies, EkoNiva saves clients' time and money.

For example, at Yakovlevskoye agricultural cooperative, the service technicians of EkoNiva restored the front axle of the tractor, which had done 14,000 engine hours.

'It took our technicians no more than five hours to fix the problem', says Dmitriy Fedotov. 'The tractor is back to work!'

Currently, the company specialists are working on a loader bucket. It is a challenging and meticulous job as the loader has been operating on Yakovlevskoye farm for over 10 years, but the technicians are sure that after the work is finished, it will be as good as new.

By Darya DENISOVA



Key to success

EkoNiva Group has held a large-scale event dedicated to fodder management for owners and specialists of the largest farms in Siberia at Ogneva Zaimka dairy, Sibirskaia Niva-Cherepanovo.

Every step of the fodder preparation and feed mixing process is important. Specialists develop a detailed plan of the entire process and choose appropriate machinery models to ensure maximum efficiency. At the Fodder Preparation and Modern Livestock Farming Technologies seminar, EkoNiva experts took the visitors on a tour of Ogneva Zaimka. The attendees could see how the feeding and manure removal processes are organised and ask questions about herd management and reproduction. Special attention was paid to farm mechanisation and state-of-the-art machines.

Agronomists of Sibirskaia Niva-Cherepanovo have established a stringent quality control system. The sowing depth, the distance between the seeds and the sowing rate are strictly monitored. To meet the required quality parameters, specialists of the farm use Vaderstad machinery. The Vaderstad Rapid 800C and the Vaderstad Spirit 900C seed drills are engaged in conventional and minimum tillage while the Vaderstad Tempo TPL16 plants row crops. Their distinctive feature is immaculate precision at

a high speed. The working speed of Vaderstad seed drills is 18 km/h, which is higher than any competitor can offer. The units perform a number of operations – seedbed preparation, fertiliser application and furrow packing – in one pass.

Fodder production is an extremely important process. It is essential to select the most efficient machines for each step. The John Deere 8500 combine harvester is undoubtedly a star performer. It is a remarkable machine featuring a hydro-mechanical drive and a system of infinitely variable length-of-cut transmission. Besides, it boasts a superior throughput capacity. The John Deere 8500 is

usually coupled to the John Deere W260 self-propelled windrower which comes with a 5-metre 500R header for fodder crops.

The harvested material must be formed into swaths containing no foreign materials such as sand, earth or stones. The continuous ROC RT1220 merger used at Ogneva Zaimka dairy is the best fit for this job: it collects the material and transports it via the conveyor belt straightaway.

After windrowing, the John Deere 560M baler enters the scene. Its variable chamber produces bales with a diameter ranging from 0.8 m to 1.8 m. The John Deere 560M delivers unparalleled performance. Last season, its output amounted to 500 bales per day with a weight

of 350 kg each! The bale density was three times higher than the general standard.

To chop the bales, Cherepanovo operation uses a Haybuster H1130 tub grinder – the most productive unit in its series with a capacity of 22-25 tonnes/hour. The machine ensures 90% uniformity. The cutting length can be set at a range from 5 to 10 cm.

The final stage of fodder preparation is feed mixing. The farm uses the BvL V-MIX Giant 463S, a 46 m³ mixer wagon with three mixing augers enabling it to feed up to 400 cows in one pass. High-quality metal, overlapping welds and the powerful speed-reducing gearbox guarantee unflinching operation.

Among other products demonstrated to the attendees of the seminar were a Vaderstad RS1020 roller, a Vaderstad NZA1000 seedbed cultivator, a Vaderstad TopDown 500 versatile cultivator, John Deere 6B, 6M, 7R, 8R and 9R Series tractors, a John Deere M962i trailed sprayer and JCB telehandlers.

All the units underwent a tough wear and tear test at Ogneva Zaimka, which proved their 100% reliability. Specialists of the enterprise are sure that powerful robust machinery is the key to success of any megafarm!





Digital reality

In view of the present-day restrictions on social contacts, business webinars held by EkoNivaTekhnika-Holding for its clients have become an efficient means of the longed for information exchange.

The company regularly hosts online meetings inviting the leading experts of the agricultural machinery world, who are always ready to share their experience.

‘Our partners – the manufacturers of modern machines – put forward big ideas for the new era’, says Sergey Skrobkin, Sales Department Manager of EkoNiva-Tekhnika. ‘As a dealer, EkoNiva is eager to support them, provide high-quality service, arm its clients with comprehensive information. The webinar project is our new digital reality. It is aimed at helping farmers understand the agricultural machinery market as well as specialists of large holdings do.’

A feeding system plays an essential part when it comes to cost-effectiveness in milk production. As seasoned dairy

producers say, ‘One should go into this business only with a plateful of wholesome feed and state-of-the-art solutions!’ The fifth webinar attended by famous speakers was dedicated to modern trends in feed preparation.

Cow health and productivity depend on the environment the animals live in and the quality of feed they get. Farmers’ primary objective is to grow palatable and wholesome fodder for the herd, harvest it on time and put it for storage. Crop harvesting machinery plays an important role in the feed preparation process.

Ivan Bayak, John Deere Territory Manager, opened the meeting. He presented the new 8000 Series forage harvester. The unit boasts exceptional performance, excellent quality, cab comfort, reliability, manoeuvrability

and cost efficiency. The series comprises six models delivering from 380 to 625 hp.

‘Proper nutrition guarantees consistent herd health’, says Aleksandr Zernov, Director General of Pottinger. ‘The whole process of feed preparation should work like a Swiss watch to ensure the highest productivity.’

Pottinger offers machines for all basic steps: cutting, tedding, swathing, baling and chopping.

The specialists of ROC company offer effective and profitable solutions for feed preparation.

‘Continuous mergers from ROC are an excellent tool to improve financial and economic results’, says Vyacheslav Kalinovskiy, Director General of ROC RUS. ‘A windrower is one of the key links in a feed preparation chain. An appropriately chosen model preserves the material to maximise its nutritive value.’

The continuous RT1000 merger manufactured by ROC is the most popular product of this kind all over the world. Its major benefits are making large swaths at a distance up to 50 m, ensuring a sufficient volume of material per ridge in fewer swaths regardless of how

late in the season the crop is cut, supreme productivity, fuel economy and sustainability.

The webinar also featured a review of John Deere W200 self-propelled windrowers. In Russia, the manufacturer presented two models of the series – the John Deere W235 and the John Deere W260. The windrowers can be coupled to draper headers and rotary forage headers with a kernel cracker processor.

In the final part of the webinar, Sergey Plotnikov, Sales Department Manager of the Tula Branch of EkoNiva-Tekhnika, presented the John Deere V461M and Willi Drews, Doctor of Agronomy, EkoNiva advisor, updated the audience on the newest crop-specific technologies involving state-of-the-art machinery. The speaker also touched upon the feed quality, its timely preparation and the technical issues of cutting.

Meticulous planning, goal setting and strict control are essential for a modern farm. All this becomes much easier with a reliable partner and high-capacity machinery by your side.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO



Key to perfect feed

Preserving the nutritive value of forages and boosting milk yields and profits are targets for any dairy farmer. EkoNiva-Tekhnika specialists now can offer global solutions for achieving maximum milk production throughout a lactation.

Maize silage is an essential ingredient in a cow diet delivering energy to live and grow. Its quality is defined by proper silage management from harvest to feed. As the first step, it is crucial to choose the right combine. So, when it comes to fodder harvesting, the owners of Krasny Mayak farm, Yaroslavl oblast, rely on the John Deere 8500i.

'Our farmland is 10,000 ha', says Vasiliy Finogeyev, Krasny Mayak Manager. 'Annually, we put up around 40,000 tonnes of haylage and 40,000 tonnes of silage using three combines we had on site. At some point, we realised it was time to improve efficiency. So, we optimised the farm logistics and silage compaction and bought a John Deere 8500i. The machine showed excellent performance and we kept to our harvesting schedule.'

Krasny Mayak ranks second in Yaroslavl oblast for milk production. The total herd is 6,000 head including 2,500 dairy cows. Furthermore, the management is planning to build another dairy farm for 3,600 cows.

'Today, the daily output of Krasny Mayak is 80 tonnes', shares Vasiliy Finogeyev, 'We have our own retail chain, and

the quality of the products on our customers' tables starts with the feed quality on the farm. So, providing our animals with quality feed is the priority.'

What makes a perfect feed quality? – Numerous factors: grain maturity, moisture, cutting length, starch and fiber content etc. Kostroma branch of EkoNiva-Tekhnika cooperates with YARVET laboratory to analyse the nutritive value of feed and the particle size.

'Maize silage is widely used in cow diets today', explains Maksim Belokurov, YARVET Lab Manager. 'Its share in the total ration is over 40%. The first parameter that affects milk production is starch content. While for southern regions the standard value is 40%, for our region it is 25-30%.'

Good silage kernel processing ensures proper starch absorption as the kernels are well digested and do not pass out of the cow in the manure. In 2005, US specialists developed the Kernel Processing Score (KPS).

'We were the first laboratory in Yaroslavl oblast to offer a KPS test', continues Maksim Belokurov. 'It determines how well your kernel processor is doing its job. Kernel processing improves starch digestibility of maize silage by breaking

the maize kernel into smaller pieces. If kernels in silage are not sufficiently processed, then it's a waste of money.'

Research shows that the target kernel processing score (KPS) when the crop is harvested should be at least 60%, which means that 60% of kernels passes through a 4.75-mm sieve.

Unfortunately, as little as 20% of samples analysed in the laboratory in 2020 met the requirement.

'We understand how crucial it is to choose a good harvester and adjust the grain processor properly', says Kiril Tagantsev, Sales Department Manager, Kostroma branch of EkoNiva-Tekhnika. 'The John Deere 8500i sets new quality standards in kernel processing. It boasts an unrivalled USA Heavy Duty kernel processor

with saw-tooth rollers and a 32% speed differential. It is perfectly suitable for cutting maize within the length range from 3 to 26 mm – the operational parameter, which can be changed right from the cab. An operator only needs to adjust the inter-roller distance. The settings depend on maize maturity, harvesting conditions and some individual farm requirements.'

Worldwide research has revealed that with the KPS increased by just 1%, starch in manure reduces by 0.15 percentage point leading to additional 330 g of milk per cow. Therefore, if the KPS goes from 40% to 60%, starch in manure drops by 2.25 percentage points and the herd owner gets 740 g more milk per cow. Thus, a thousand-cow farm can earn additional 600,000 rubles a month – a considerable profit everyone can make with the right approach to forage management.

By Darya DENISOVA





The Tempo planter – global front-runner in Siberia

EkoNivaSibir is an official dealer of Vaderstad tillage and drilling equipment in Siberia. This March, Vaderstad has produced its 1,000th Tempo L series planter, which proves that the Tempo has gained ground worldwide. It has enabled farmers to plant crops with unsurpassed precision and at higher speeds.

So far, the development of the Tempo planter has been the largest project in Vaderstad's history. It dates back to 1996, when Rune Stark saw the immense acreage under corn and soybeans in Argentina which had been sown with outdated and incredibly slow planters incapable of maintaining consistent distance between the seeds in the row. For Rune it was the driving force to come up with the concept of a planter offering much greater capacity and better precision than its counterparts. Following extensive research, Vaderstad developed an ingenious solution – a metering system on each row unit solving problems with vibration and lateral tilting. The first Tempo rolled off the production line in 2012.

Recently, Vaderstad drilling equipment has been gaining popularity among the Siberian farmers who know the local climatic conditions very well and, thus, opt for time-proven machinery. They have come to appreciate the dependability and high performance

of the Vaderstad Tempo precision planter.

The new generation high-speed planter Vaderstad Tempo delivers unmatched



precision at twice the speed of traditional planters – 20 km/h – without losing the drilling quality. Farmers all over the world use these machinery units for no-till, min-till or conventional tillage. Tempo performs exceptionally well regardless of the conditions. At the heart of Tempo is the unique seed metering unit, the Gilstring Seed Meter.

'In conventional planters, the seed falls freely through the seed tube from the seed meter down to the soil', comments Aleksandr Latsviyev,

Latsviyev,

or slopes do not affect the precision of the seed metering.'

Vaderstad Tempo enables farmers to plant a wide range of crops: maize, sugar beet, soya beans, sunflower, oilseed rape, cotton and many more. By easily changing the row spacing and machine settings for different crops, Tempo offers high versatility on the farm, which improves the overall efficiency and reduces operating costs per hectare.

'Taking high speed planting to the next level also means addressing the issue of skips and doubles', concludes Aleksandr Latsviyev. 'Plants that grow too close together compete for sunlight and nutrients, which results in uneven maturity and reduced yield. Skips can be caused by external factors, while it is the machine that always makes the doubles. The Tempo ensures uniform conditions for all the plants.'

In 2020 alone, EkoNivaSibir sold over 20 Vaderstad units. This year, the dealer's plans call for increasing the sales several times due to the expansion of its AOR to Omsk oblast and Altai area. Vaderstad machinery is already available in the new regions and is ready to confirm the status of global front-runner in Siberian fields.

By Viktor BARGOTIN



Going smart

State-of-the-art farm machinery is not only about reliability, high performance and cost-efficiency, it is also about sustainability. Bjoerne Drechsler, Deputy Director General of EkoNivaTekhnika-Holding, shared his view on smart farming technologies.

Smart farming rests on the global positioning systems such as GPS and GLONASS and dedicated farm management software based on the geographic information systems. The data collected via these systems is used by farmers for accurate assessment of the optimum sowing density, fertiliser and chemical application rate calculation, crop yield estimation and financial planning.

'It is important to remember that smart farming has a positive impact on the environment due to the reduced use of chemicals', says Bjoerne Drechsler. 'Crop protecting agents can and should be placed with more precision because each plant needs only a certain amount. In the future, our agricultural producers will be able to

cut the use of chemicals down by 90%. In addition to preserving nature, smart farming will help to increase labour productivity and resource efficiency.'

This can be achieved by means of variable rate application of chemicals. Based on this technology, different areas in the field receive a different amount of chemicals. The distribution depends on the expected yield, soil fertility and some other factors such as terrain, soil composition, electrical conductivity and nutrient and moisture content.

'As per today, quite few farmers use variable rate application at their operations', continues Bjoerne Drechsler. 'On conventional farms, chemicals are often applied to the plants that do not

need any treatment. To avoid this, we are currently testing the variable rate technology at EkoNivaAgro, Voronezh oblast. A project team is responsible for studying smart farming and putting it into practice. Our specialists analyse the fields via satellite systems and drones to determine the weedy areas which are to be treated with chemicals. This allowed us to reduce the use of fungicides by 30% without affecting the yield.'

Intellectual machinery is the basis of smart farming. EkoNivaTekhnika-Holding offers the latest solutions and unique self-propelled machines for efficient field cultivation.

'The John Deere R4040i and R4050i self-propelled sprayers are our flagships', states Bjoerne Drechsler.

'These high-tech machines are designed to deliver maximum performance. The carbon fibre booms of the sprayers are six times stronger and several times lighter than their steel counterparts. The boom is corrosion-resistant and can bend without the risk of damage from overloading. It is distinguished by extreme durability and allows for spraying at a speed of up to 28 km/h. Fitted with precision farming software, the smart sprayers remember the treated areas and automatically switch off the spraying sections when passing over them thus reducing the amount of chemicals penetrating into the soil.'

Taking advantage of smart farming solutions, agricultural producers can maximise their financial performance and protect the environment at the same time.

By Viktor BARGOTIN

German yield + Russian robustness

What common ground do EkoNiva and I.G. Pflanzenzucht share? The answer to this question is in the exclusive interview of Stefan Duerr, President of EkoNiva Group, and Franz Beutl, Managing Director of I.G. Pflanzenzucht (IGP).

Stefan, what prompted you to take up seed production and plant breeding?

Duerr: Actually, the roots of our company lie in the seed sector. In 1996, we began importing and multiplying seeds of industrial crops from Germany. Since 2002 we have been propagating malting barley and spring wheat. Thus, seed multiplication has always run alongside and has become an important pillar of our business, but active plant breeding work started just about four years ago.

How did the idea of cooperation with I.G. Pflanzenzucht come about and why is the company your principal partner in seed production?

Duerr: Plant breeding is a long story and the initial investment in equipment is very high. At some point, we were at a crossroads: either quit or do it right. The decisive factor in this situation was a strong partner, i.e. IGP, on our side. The plant breeders at IGP have years' worth of experience, extensive know-how and a wide range of crops and varieties.

Beutl: It was also an important decision for

us. Together with EkoNiva, we have created a unique value proposition: the successful cooperation between Central European plant breeders and a Russian sales company.

What does the cooperation between the companies look like?

Beutl: We have three forms of cooperation. The first and the 'simplest' one, which we started with, is the testing or screening of young material to see whether it is suitable for Russia's climatic conditions. This line of work primarily involves spring crops: wheat, oats, barley, but also soybeans.

The second form is the joint plant breeding programme between Saat-zucht Bauer Group, a member of IGP, and EkoNiva. Our cooperation focuses on winter wheat. The aim is to combine German yield with Russian winter hardiness. In fact, the plant breeding process takes place at two sites. Crossing according to the approved programme is done in Germany, followed by selection in Russia.

Maize hybridization is another line of cooperation. Here we strive not just to find varieties suitable for the Russian market, but also



to bring the hybridisation and seed production to the professional level. It is about combining EkoNiva capacities and our know-how. The project is still in its early stages, but we are on track to success.

What potential does I.G. Pflanzenzucht see in the cooperation with EkoNiva?

Beutl: As a foreign company, we see that the alliance offers us the best potential possible to enter the Russian seed market with Western European genetics. EkoNiva is one of the most innovative agricultural companies in Russia, with a large network and a very good image. Tapping into the market from outside is not easy.

We value the company's openness to new developments and good communication culture. The partnership enables us to directly invest in this business, expand the cooperation and use the synergy effects.

What genetics are you planning to bring to the Russian market and to which regions specifically?

Duerr: The fact is that weather conditions in Russia have been changing considerably over the past few years. The climate in the southern part of Black Soil Region has become much drier, whereas Volga region – previously an arid area – now sees significantly more precipitation. In Novosibirsk oblast, where we didn't use to grow maize at all, the crop fares the best now. The cards

are being reshuffled and it is important to consider the climate change. For this reason, we need very flexible varieties. And together with IGP, we have this ability due to the company's broad and varied portfolio of crops and varieties.

Beutl: The selection of winter wheat takes place in Central Black Soil region, the area with the most fertile soil in the entire country. For other crops the cultivation geography is of course much wider. Soybeans, for example, can be grown virtually everywhere across the country. It is a matter of adapting the maturity to climatic conditions.

What goals do you expect to achieve through the cooperation?

Beutl: The long-term goals include the creation of our own portfolio of high-performance varieties registered in Russia, further professionalisation of seed production and seed quality improvement. We would like to bring more proprietary varieties to the market and jointly expand the distribution. We are going to achieve this through our cooperation on equal terms.

Duerr: With the expertise of IGP and EkoNiva in seed trade, our nationwide distribution capacity as well as the high-performance varieties of joint breeding we are uniquely positioned to become the leading plant breeder and seed producer in the Russian market.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO





Crucial input for a bumper crop

The seeds from the portfolio of EkoNiva-Semena are grown all over Russia delivering impressive results even in Siberia.

The customer base of EkoNiva-Semena is rapidly expanding, and Siberian agricultural producers account for a considerable part of it. The regional specialisation currently breaks down as follows: plant breeding, variety maintenance and basic seed production are concentrated in Kursk oblast, whereas certified seeds are grown in Voronezh and Novosibirsk oblasts. The quality of the sowing material is monitored in the in-house laboratory, thus enabling the company to supply premium-class seeds onto the market.

'We offer the best global and local genetics', points out Valentina Sarayeva, Senior Sales Rep of Sales Department, EkoNiva-Semena. 'We carry out extensive studies of new varieties. Over 1,000 new cultivars and lines undergo trials every year. What sets our varieties apart can be outlined in three key characteristics: a high tillering rate, excellent plasticity and a good yield of top-grade crop.'

The favourite with the Siberian farmers is spring wheat. Of the entire EkoNiva's lineup, the local growers prefer the highly adaptive varieties bred by the French company Secobra – Licamero and Calixo – as well as the German cultivar

Triso. Triso is distinguished by an excellent kernel quality, its maximum yield in production reaches up to 7.0 tonnes/hectare.

Irmen stud farm (Ordyn district, Novosibirsk oblast) has 21,000 hectares of farmland. The sowing material mostly comes from EkoNiva. The company purchases the wheat varieties Licamero and Calixo, the peas Jackpot, the barley cultivars Explorer, Paustian, Margret and Calcule.

Experienced farmers are aware that viable seeds are a crucial input if they aspire to have a bumper harvest.

'High-quality sowing material is a proven way to produce a rich crop, which means that people will have work and the village will live', says Maksim Albert, Chief Agronomist. 'That is precisely what drives us.'

EkoNiva is developing in-house plant breeding. The proprietary winter wheat variety with the beautiful astronomical name Cepheus is suitable for production in Siberia, too.

'The variety is notable for its high adaptive properties, outstanding cold hardiness and superior grain quality', says Andrey Zvyagin, Plant Breeder, EkoNiva-Semena. 'The yield potential reaches 11 tonnes/hectare.'

Another novelty is the soybean EN Argenta.

The variety falls within the very early (000) maturity group and ripens within 100 days, which is particularly relevant for Siberian farmers. EN Argenta displays an intensive type response to soil fertility, thus ensuring a stable yield in the conditions of limited moisture supply. It is characterised by heightened branching, which is a rare trait for a short-season variety. The new variety develops up to 5-6 lateral shoots,

Rosenzweig, Plant Breeder of EkoNiva-Semena. 'We use molecular markers and artificial lighting in our work. We have succeeded in combining early maturity with good performance and a high protein content (38-42%), while retaining the overall plant and lower pod attachment height.'

Currently, the Russian agricultural sector is addressing the issue of reducing the dependency on imported seeds.

EkoNiva-Semena is committed to providing agricultural producers with not only high-quality seeds,



Vladislav Rosenzweig:

The key to expanding the soybeans into the cold regions, including Siberia, is focusing on the genetics of photoperiodic response. We use molecular markers and artificial lighting in our work.

which increases the yield due to offsetting the local stand nonuniformities.

Recently, EkoNiva submitted for state trials two more soybean varieties suitable for Central Non-Black Soil and West Siberian regions. These are the regions with a dire shortage of early-maturing varieties.

'The key to expanding the soybeans into the cold regions, including Siberia, is focusing on the genetic traits of photoperiodic response', says Vladislav

but also consulting, i.e. comprehensive agrotechnology information assuring an abundant harvest.

A specialised training programme, involving webinars, field trips and seminars, is in place. EkoNiva-Semena takes an active part in all major agricultural trade fairs and forums, where each farmer can have their questions answered.



New philosophy

Offering exclusively premium-quality seeds of high-yielding varieties and innovative solutions, EkoNiva-Semena knows how to increase the income from agricultural production. The company has been active in the Russian seed market for 22 years!

EkoNiva's partners know for a fact that sowing material of consistently high quality is a guarantee of a bumper crop. The company supplies Russian farmers with the best global and local genetics which has passed rigorous testing in the fields of the holding. Over the past three years, the production volume of certified seeds has doubled – up to 90,000 tonnes a year.

The plant breeding achievements of primarily local origin chosen based on the results of market demand survey undergo environmental and geographical testing on the premises of Zashchitnoye (Shchigry district, Kursk oblast). The annual number of preliminary trials reaches 600 varieties across 12 crops.

The development of in-house breeding is a priority area of activity. To this end, Plant breeding and variety maintenance centre was established on the premises of Zashchitnoye in 2018. This is the first private centre with a full-scale winter wheat breeding programme in Russia. Moreover, a soybean breeding project was launched in 2019.

'We employ excellent plant breeding and seed production professionals', says Vitaliy Voloshchenko, Director of Plant Breeding and Variety Maintenance Centre. 'Most of them have PhDs in the relevant sciences. The company has a competitive edge over its counterparts due to the high level of technical equipment: modern trial plot

machinery, a greenhouse for effective hybridisation, artificial freezing chambers for winter crops and own laboratories performing the evaluation of chemical and technological properties. The operations at the trial plots are carried out with the use of GPS-navigation.

The company cooperates with Russian scientific and educational institutions in such areas as genetic research, plant breeding and personnel training.

'We strive to conduct our business in line with the new philosophy in plant breeding and seed production', continues Vitaliy Voloshchenko. 'We use molecular biotechnology methods in our work. Yet our key advantage is the ongoing knowledge and technology transfer. We keep in touch with domestic and overseas plant breeders and exchange experience on a regular basis.

Currently, six winter wheat and two soybean varieties are undergoing state trials. The cultivars of own breeding – Cepheus, EN Albireo, EN Taygeta (winter wheat) and EN Argenta (soybeans) – have been included into the State Register. The potential and economically useful traits of the varieties are very high. They are capable of delivering maximum performance at medium energy input per unit produced.

'Our varieties are created in Russia, and they are first and foremost

suited for the Russian conditions', points out Vladislav Rosenzweig, Plant Breeder, EkoNiva-Semena. 'We use our own theoretical developments on variety modelling, genetic diversification and selection methods in hybrid populations in the plant breeding process.'

The plant breeding activity and environmental trials are carried out in three locations, i.e. Kursk, Kaluga and Voronezh oblasts.

'It is critical to know the photoperiodic response in order to optimise the vegetation period and phenological phase ratio', continues Vladislav Rosenzweig. 'It should be highlighted that success in plant breeding is only possible through constant learning, trying out new technologies and moving forward.'

EkoNiva-Semena takes an active part in unlocking the export potential of agricultural produce. The company exports high-quality seeds of field crops to the CIS countries and beyond: Kazakhstan, Belarus, Armenia, Azerbaijan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia and Ethiopia.

EkoNiva is in constant development and search of new ideas and solutions for successful business!

Vitaliy Voloshchenko:

– We strive to conduct our business in line with the new philosophy in plant breeding and seed production. Yet our key advantage is the ongoing knowledge and technology transfer.





New ambitions

EkoNiva-APK Holding Nutrition Department specialists have gathered together at EkoNivaAgro Left Bank Operation, Voronezh oblast, to take part in a training seminar and sum up the results of 2020.

Excellent performance of the Nutrition Department cannot be overrated. Currently, 200,000 head of cattle at company's enterprises are fed nutritious rations formulated by qualified herd managers. High productivity depends on the right diet. For example, in 2017, the gross milk yield of the holding amounted to 298,000 tonnes, and in 2020 – 850,000 tonnes.

At the final meeting, the nutritionists presented their enterprises, shared the progress made, exchanged experience and discussed some common issues.

'The average productivity of one milking cow in the holding is 28.2 kg in 2020', notes Viktor Kosintsev, EkoNiva-APK Holding the Nutrition Department Manager, 'which proves that we

are headed in the right direction. This year, we have ensured enough forage on all our sites – 704,000 tonnes in total, worked out alternative feeding management practices and continued optimising rations.'

OkaMoloko North Operation shows great progress. A few years ago, its farms could not boast high productivity. Aleksey Yurovskikh, Leading Herd Manager of OkaMoloko-North, and his team have done an impressive job: they have streamlined the feeding process, increased milk yields and improved animal welfare. For the success and dynamic development of the enterprise, Aleksey has been awarded the title of the best herd manager of the holding in 2020.

'All our animals are taken overall good care of', says Valeriya Serebrennikova, Manager of EkoNiva-APK Pedigree Department. 'Our agronomists ensure natural and healthy forage grown in our fields. Our herd managers control the proper nutrition and adjust the "menu" depending on the cows' needs. Our veterinarians monitor, check and treat cows if needed. Our breeders use the semen of imported sires to reproduce the herd. Sexed semen is used to increase the breeding stock and enhance the genetic progress of our cows. Well-coordinated work of all our specialists allows for impressive performance and implementation of the most ambitious plans.'

The rapid pace of the digital transformation is another achievement of the Nutrition Department this year. Proprietary software Eko.Feed has been installed on almost all holding's dairy farms. The application optimises the whole process from loading mixer wagons to distributing the feed to animals thus facilitating the work of the staff.

'There is a chief nutritionist at each of our operations', explains Konstantin Kapiturov, Manager of EkoNiva-APK Holding Livestock Farming IT Department. 'Based on the chemical and structural parameters of the ingredients available, this specialist balances a diet and sends it to the relevant farm. There, the herd manager uploads it into Eko.Feed specifying the number of head and the pens. The programme helps to dispense the feed to the mixer wagons in the best way possible, thus optimising the logistics of fodder preparation and distribution.'

One of the long-term plans of the Nutrition Department is to create a server based Eko.Feed version. It will not only process information from individual dairy farms, but also make it accessible for the whole holding.

'Today, we have taken on a lot of tasks', summarises Viktor Kosintsev. 'Next year, we are set on producing 1,000,000 tonnes of milk. Without high-quality fodder, it will be hard to reach this goal. We need to do a good job and our cows need to eat well and have more rest.'

By Viktor BARGOTIN

Passionate learners

Cow foot baths and milk soup for calves! These topics are included in the ongoing professional development programme that helps EkoNiva specialists improve their skills to maximise dairy cow comfort and well-being. This time, a training session for young professionals took place on Gusevo dairy farm, Kaluzhskaya Niva.

The 2.5 - month course implies complete immersion in the profession. The attendees expand their theoretical knowledge and refine their practical skills.

'At EkoNiva, we put the theory we have learnt at the university into practice using cutting-edge technology and equipment', shares Denis Ruzanov, Veterinarian of Gusevo dairy. 'Besides, we get a deep insight into all working processes on the farm so that we could replace each other if necessary regardless of our specialisation. For instance, this week, I am studying herd movement and hoof care, including baths and trimming.'

Denis Ruzanov has been working on Gusevo dairy for six months. He first came to the company as an intern from the Agricultural University of

Volgograd. After graduation, he came back to work for EkoNiva.

'Universities provide general knowledge', says Eleonora Ostrikova, Instructor of EkoNiva Academy of Livestock Farming, Kaluga branch. 'At our training centres, we teach the ins and outs of herd management, speak about the possible challenges our employees can face and explain how to cope with them. Our goal is to show that the performance of the farm depends on efficient teamwork.'

The course programme includes several stages: Practical Training, Bachelor of Herd Management, Master of Herd Management and Business Management Academy.

'We train young stock managers, nutrition specialists and veterinarians', continues Eleonora Ostrikova. 'Particular attention is paid to ration



formulation. The trainees learn how to make milk soup for calves and feed them properly. One of the most important modules is prevention of animal diseases. It is important to remember that strict hygiene standards,

efficient cattle feeding and herd management are the cornerstones of prosperity for any dairy farm.'

By Darya DENISOVA

Every calf needs care

Ravshan Uralov, Herdsman of Severnaya Niva Organic, has 'adopted' a calf rejected by its mother.



For several months, Ravshan has been bottle-feeding a Hereford calf with milk from EkoNiva dairy. Now Mashka, as Ravshan calls his protegee, has grown into a healthy, chubby 6-month old heifer, which has gained more than 300 kg. The heifer has got attached to her caretaker: whenever Ravshan enters the farm, it recognises him by his voice and runs towards him.

'At Severnaya Niva Organic, we treat every animal with utmost care', explains Ravshan Uralov, Herdsman. 'It is essential to ensure good cow comfort on the farm: provide the cattle with proper ration,

eliminate stress factors and diseases. The cattle should be in the conditions similar to their natural environment, that is why our calves and cows are out grazing the pastures all year round except for winter months when they are housed in shelters.'

Severnaya Niva Organic has been operating since November of 2019. The core activities of the company are crop and suckler cow farming. Today, the herd totals 2, 826 head of pedigree cattle – Hereford, Aberdeen Angus and Simmental – including 1,400 head of breeding stock and over 400 heifers.

By Darya DENISOVA



Creating value



Zashchitnoye farming enterprise now houses Specialised Department of Applied Plant Breeding and Seed Production of Kursk State Agricultural Academy.

Kursk Academy opened this unique department in 2020. For the first time in the country, a commercial company has become a production site for an academic project. Zashchitnoye enterprise and the Plant Breeding and Early Generation Seed Maintenance Centre of EkoNiva-Semena serve as a platform for students. There they can get insight into the legal aspects, methodology and processes of plant breeding, which sparks their interest and promotes research in this field.

'The development of plant breeding and seed production is the key to the success of the agricultural sector', says Yuriy Vasyukov, Regional Director of Zashchitnoye. 'It is essential for Russian agriculture to be independent of foreign seed companies. So far, the project is in its infancy, but we are headed in the right direction. Our company, as well as others, needs qualified staff, and we believe that this promising initiative will ultimately provide us with skilled plant breeders.'

Fourth-year Agronomy students of Kursk State Academy learn about plant breeding and seed production carried out by EkoNiva-APK Holding.

'Our key competitive edge is highly qualified personnel and modern facilities', emphasises Vitaliy Voloshchenko, Director of the Centre. 'We are fully equipped with compact machinery for all operations from sowing to

Yegor Ulyantsev, a student:

'Agriculture appeals to me for three main reasons', shares the young man. 'First of all, it means working outdoors – I am absolutely not an office clerk. Secondly, the financial part matters: the farming sector offers good salaries. And thirdly, the career and professional development prospects are truly great.'

harvesting on our test plots, seed conditioning lines, greenhouses, laboratories and warehouses. The Centre implements its own breeding and research programmes and molecular biotechnology methods. We aspire to create something worth for agriculture, which we

strive to get across to young specialists'.

At Zashchitnoye, the students can see the operation of the grain quality assessment laboratory, sorting and preparation lines and lines for seed grain packaging and labelling.

'Such practice-oriented classes provide students with sound knowledge and boost their skills', says Igor Ishkov, Head of the Crop Farming, Plant Breeding and Seed Production Department of Kursk State Agricultural Academy. 'We want future farmers to see actual production with their own eyes and understand the

to pursue their career. One of them is Yegor Ulyantsev, a fourth-year student, who opted for Agronomy studies after his parents.

'Agriculture appeals to me for three main reasons', shares the young man. 'First of all, it means working outdoors – I am absolutely not an office clerk. Secondly, the financial part matters: the farming sector offers good salaries. And thirdly, the career and professional development prospects are truly great.'

Andrey Uglanov, Yegor's friend and fellow student, has dreamt of working in agriculture since childhood. Then he helped his mother grow vegetables in the garden. Now he studies Agronomy, takes interest in genetics and plant breeding and, of course, hopes to breed a unique variety to harvest several crops a year, as, for example, in the tropics.

'Last year, I had an internship at EkoNiva', says the young farmer. 'It gave me the opportunity to gain invaluable experience and vast knowledge. After graduation, I would like to work at Zashchitnoye. So far, I have not made up my mind on my future job, whether it will be Agronomy, Plant breeding or Biotechnology. But I think I will be able to build a brilliant career here.'

By Tatyana IGNATENKO

Strong and generous

EkoNiva-Food sponsors one of Voronezh soccer teams, Reds, established in 2013.

Winner of numerous matches, Reds is a participant of Voronezh Midi Football League and Voronezh Amateur Football League. Currently, it is the longest playing team in the Highest Division of the League. During the period of cooperation with EkoNiva, the team has risen to the second line of A-League twice and won two intermediate cups. In the summer session, which finished in September 2020, Reds became the second out of the four teams in the First Division. Dmitriy Kolesnikov, the backfield, won the Best Backfield award in the summer championship and was included in the combined team of the season.

The players of Reds are inspired to keep on winning.

Reds ended the game with 5-2 victory at the latest match with Inter.

‘Getting into the highest Division is impossible without sponsor’s support’, explains Aleksandr Kuznetsov, the team captain. ‘EkoNiva helps us reach new professional heights. We are very grateful to the company for its trust. It gives us an incentive to keep on moving forward.’

Sponsor support has become indispensable for successful sports teams.

‘We are happy to work with EkoNiva. Healthy nutrition is an integral part of sport training. Our sponsor provides us not only with the required financing but also with delicious and natural dairy products’, says Aleksandr Kuznetsov, captain and founder of the

team. ‘Now football boasts the highest level of media attention. Our jerseys feature the EkoNiva logo, which means more and more people engaged in sport will learn about the high-quality

dairy produce. I am convinced that eating healthy is extremely important for both sportsmen and sports fans.’

By Anna PALAGUTINA



Got puck?

The professional Bobrov hockey club has a new sponsor. Under the wing of EkoNiva, the alumni of the local children’s hockey school develop their talents scoring impressive victories in the 12th season of the National Junior Hockey League.

Establishment of a youth hockey team in 2020 allowed young players from Bobrov to start their professional career without leaving their home town.

‘People are the main asset to our company’, says Ivan Vorobyov, Deputy Director

General, EkoNiva-Food. ‘Our goal is to create comfortable conditions for life and work in rural areas, including a variety of recreational activities for our employees and their children. I am proud to say that EkoNiva supports the initiative of the government aimed at

comprehensive development of the village and does its best to benefit rural communities in every region of its operation.’

Currently, the company covers the all team’s costs, including accommodation, travelling, equipment, nutrition and salaries.

‘Supporting sports teams, we invest in our future’, says Aleksandr Krysanov, chief coach of Bobrov. ‘Our team is a large and close-knit family. We are learning to win together helping each other and improving our skills every day. No matter which career path our players

choose in the future, I am sure their self-discipline and passion for perfection will bring them success! I am also happy to see the employees of EkoNiva play hockey at the Ice Palace. It is an excellent proof that one can always find time for sport, regardless of the workload.

Bobrov team is already demonstrating the first achievements in the 2020-2021 season of the National Junior Hockey League Championship.

By Anna PALAGUTINA



Face-to-face

'Branding & Rebranding' conference held at DairyTech 2021 has served as a platform for the participants to exchange experience in building distinctive dairy trademarks, discuss current market trends and evolution of consumer behaviour.

Vera Mozgovaya, a moderator of the conference and a cofounder of V-Brand marketing agency, names digital transformation, creative packaging and making things simpler for consumers major marketing trends of today.

'Consumers' life keeps on changing every year', says Vera Mozgovaya. 'Information overload makes them stress out. Modern consumers' attention span is as short as that of a child. Brand manager's task today is to communicate a simple message to consumers as quickly as possible to grab and keep their attention.'

More consumers in Russia and abroad opt for wholesome food. According to experts, the pandemic has reinforced this tendency. Now, people strive for a healthy lifestyle and go for natural products.

'Personal branding becomes increasingly popular as a marketing tool at present', continues Vera Mozgovaya. By launching a dairy product line under its own brand in 2018, EkoNiva has taken advantage of the tool.'

Yekaterina Duerr, Deputy Manager of Marketing Division at EkoNiva-Food, spoke about the development of the brand.

'When we had to develop a federal dairy brand for the mass consumer', explains Yekaterina Duerr, 'we chose to keep the name of EkoNiva holding as a brand name. At one point, there was an idea to place fictional characters on the packaging, but then we realised that the image of Stefan Duerr, the company owner and a real person proclaiming his personal responsibility, would be more powerful. So, it is one of the key hallmarks of the brand also



supported by 'Hallo, Stefan Duerr!' feedback program.'

Anybody can send their feedback or question to the President of EkoNiva via WhatsApp – his personal number is on the package.

'Stefan Duerr also got a personal Instagram account to connect and interact with consumers and enhance brand integrity. It was a risky move, but now we are positive it is a great tool to reach out to consumers across the country.'

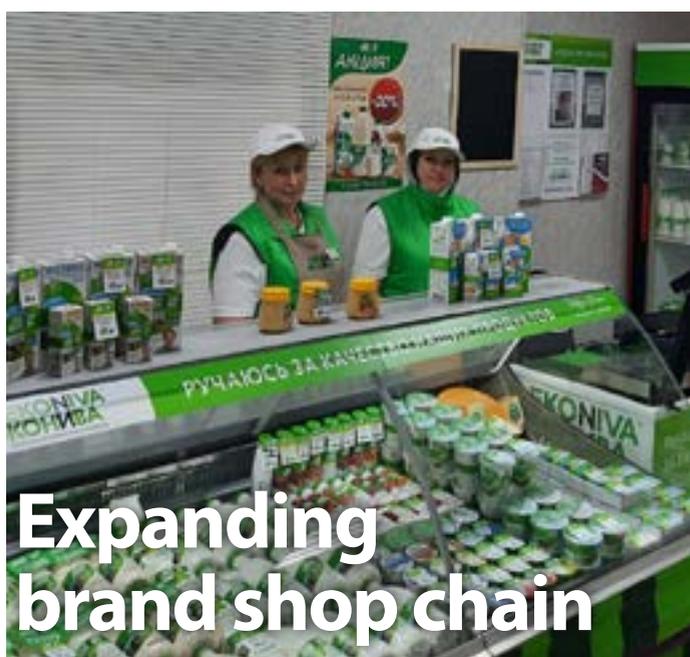
Indeed, EkoNiva is a brand to trust. Consumers share their impressions, taste preferences, ideas for new products and flavours. Sometimes, of course, buyers send complaints about the quality, for instance, if their milk goes sour or the package is damaged. Stefan Duerr immediately forwards such messages to the Quality

Management Department requesting to conduct a thorough investigation, find out the reason and eliminate it. He laughs that he has had to send his selfy a couple of times, as many people do not believe they speak to a real person, not a bot.

'At first, we received only 5-10 messages a day', continues Yekaterina Duerr. 'And now this number amounts to 100-150! It is obvious that people are genuinely curious about the production process and they love EKONIVA products – it is so inspiring. We appreciate our consumers' emotions.'

Anyways, Stefan Duerr always prefers face-to-face communication. That is why he regularly goes live on Instagram to answer various questions, even the tricky ones, in person.

By Darya DENISOVA



Expanding brand shop chain

EkoNiva has opened another brand retail shop – the first one in Ryazan oblast. It has attracted numerous lovers of natural dairy products within a few hours after the opening.

The new EkoNiva shop is located at the central square Aleksandro-Nevskiy town, next to the kindergarten, secondary school, bank office, post office and city hall and other significant facilities of the community.

'The point of sales in Aleksandro-Nevskiy is EkoNiva's 43rd retail shop', says Irina Nechayeva, EkoNiva-Food Retail Department Manager. 'Currently, our retail expands in the regions that are homes to EkoNiva's operations to increase EkoNiva brand awareness and attract more customers. The product range has reached 67 items and includes milk, kefir, yoghurt, quark desserts, sour cream, cheese, butter and others.'

Delicious and healthy dairy products are already available at EkoNiva brand shops in Moscow, Kaluga, Voronezh and Kursk oblasts. Now, Ryazan oblast has joined the list.

'We have been focused on developing our retail sales in these regions', says Irina Nechayeva. 'In February, a new brand shop opened its doors at Maiskiy market in Kursk; another point will be soon set up in Talovo district of Voronezh oblast.'

The number of EkoNiva brand shops is also rapidly growing in Moscow oblast and is already represented in Shugarovo, Odintsovo and Golitsyno towns. Actually, EkoNiva opens one or two units a month in the districts near the capital city.

The company is to expand its brand shop chain to other Russian cities and regions.

Tatarstan, Krasnoyarsk area, the Urals are the next destinations on the list. The company's mission is to make the best natural dairy products available for people all over Russia.'

By Tatyana IGNATENKO



That's my team!

EkoNiva has held a major team-building event for promoters at Ulanovo dairy, Kaluga oblast.

The main objectives of the event were to introduce the participants to the corporate culture of EkoNiva, show them how the farm tours are organised, foster better cooperation and teamwork, unite employees by a common goal, exchange best practices

and identify potential leaders for their development within the company.

The programme included case discussion and team-building activities. The promoters learnt a lot about the working processes on a dairy farm, watched cows

being milked on a rotary and toured MosMedynagroprom dairy plant equipped with state-of-the-art production lines to see all stages of milk processing with their own eyes.

'Our goal was to form a tight-knit team of professionals', says Margarita Logacheva, Training and Professional Development Department Manager, EkoNiva-Food. 'Besides, it was a good opportunity to identify future leaders, trainers and project coordinators.'

It was very important for employees from different cities to feel that they are all part of the big team of EkoNiva sharing common aims and values. The company prefers to have in-house promoters to ensure maximum loyalty and engagement. Some of them feel that they have found their calling.

'I was very glad to meet our brand promoters and brand ambassadors at Ulanovo dairy,' says Stefan Duerr, EkoNiva Group President. 'I was impressed with their talent, vigour and enthusiasm! They enjoy communicating with the customers and helping them choose high-quality products. I am convinced that face-to-face communication has much more effect than any video commercial. We are always happy to share our story and offer delicious dairy produce. EkoNiva team is looking forward to welcoming our buyers!'

By Anna PALAGUTINA

In search of dairy adventures

Members of Samara family car tour club 'The route is planned' have visited Kurskaya Vasilievka dairy, Orenburg oblast.

Dynamic and inquisitive club members often arrange trips to interesting places and explore the cultural and natural sights of Volga region. This time, the travellers went to Kurskaya Vasilyevka in search of dairy adventures.

Regional Director for Volga region Pyotr Dubyanskiy showed the visitors around the farm. The guests saw cow housing facilities and calf hutches, learnt about modern dairy farming technologies and tasted EkoNiva products.

'We have never seen anything like this', shares Vladimir Nikashin, a club member. 'My son was impressed with the milking rotary. Everything is so clean and high-tech; all the processes

are automated. We will be delighted to come again!'

The guests enjoyed the high-quality products manufactured by EkoNiva. All of them brought home gift boxes

with dairy treats.

'I want to thank EkoNiva for the wonderful presents! My parents, who used to keep their own cows, said they had not tasted such delicious dairy products for a long time', says Yekaterina Penkova, a club member. 'The taste and the quality are immaculate! I admire the company employees, who put their hearts and souls into the work.'

Although Severnaya Niva is used to receiving guests – farmers and industry specialists often visit the

enterprise to exchange professional expertise – it was the first family tour arranged by the enterprise.

'It was a new experience for us, and we really enjoyed it', comments Pyotr Dubyanskiy. 'I am very happy that people take interest in dairy farming and want to learn about every step of milk production: from field to shelf. We are looking forward to welcoming new visitors not only from Samara, but also from other cities.'

By Aleksandr KUTISHCHEV



Winter in focus



23-26 March*
**31st International Specialised
 Agricultural Trade Show Agrocomplex 2021**

Venue: 158, Mendeleeva St., VDNKh-EXPO UFA, Ufa
 Organiser: Government and Ministry of Agriculture
 of the Republic of Bashkortostan

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

12-16 April*
**28th International Food Trade fair
 ProdExpo**

Venue: 14, Krasnopresnenskaya emb.,
 Expocentre Central Exhibition Complex, Moscow
 Organiser: Expocentre, JSC

**29 April
 Webinar on Financial
 awareness in agriculture.
 How to apply for federal and
 regional subsidies. Leasing.**

Organiser: EkoNivaTehnika-Holding



12+

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