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Zashchitnoye has celebrated 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary

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EKONIVA is branching out in the HoReCa sector

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## Stefan Dürr: 20 years with love for land and respect for people

Twenty years ago, EkoNiva started its farming business by launching operations in three regions: Kursk (Zashchitnoye), Voronezh (EkoNivaAgro) and Orenburg (Severnaya Niva).

The conditions were roughly the same everywhere: after the collapse of the Soviet agricultural system, collective farms were having difficulty switching to a competition-driven free market economy. Farms headed by strong leaders managed to stay afloat doing their best to keep the assets. Others were literally falling apart. Starting a farming business was not an easy task. Many people were sceptical about my chances of success: a German taking up agriculture in Russia, just think of it! I had to earn people's trust and respect.

As the first step, we imported modern farm machinery and seeds. We had to learn fast, master cutting-edge technology and, most importantly, change people's mentality.

It was very important for the people to embrace a new way of thinking and become proactive.

We started off with crop farming. At that time, we did not even think that one day our company would become Russia's largest milk producer. However, we kept the old cow farms which passed to us together with the land we purchased. I will always be grateful to Viktor Shevtsov, Head of Liski District Administration, for not letting us slaughter the cattle. His position made us reconsider our strategy and put serious efforts into livestock farming to make it profitable.

There were times when I was close to giving it up. At the beginning of the 2000s, things were very difficult. However, in 2005, the government launched targeted programmes to support the industry, which was a good boost for us. We survived the crisis of 2008, left behind the complicated 2014 and are moving on steadily despite the current hardships.

Step by step, we have created a successful and stable agricultural business from scratch. The enterprise in Voronezh oblast is our largest operation land- and herdwise. The facility in Kursk oblast is one of the top seed breeders in the country. The dairy and beef farming business in Orenburg has grown impressively expanding into adjacent Tatarstan, Bashkortostan and Samara oblast.

The success of the farms launched afterwards was largely based on the experience and know-how consolidated by these three pioneers. Today, EkoNiva operates in as many as 13 regions! Diversification allows the company to mitigate the climatic risks and minimise losses caused by drought, rain or frost.

EkoNiva operations are like children in a family – each with its unique character but all united by a strong corporate spirit. Each facility has its own specialisation, growth drivers and experience enabling it to make a substantial

contribution to the Group's total income.

I have recently come across a newspaper with my interview dating back to 2002. When asked if I was pursuing any super-task in Russia, I answered: 'I want to show what your land is capable of if you treat it wisely. I want to prove that farming can be profitable. To make it happen, one just needs to love the land, use advanced technologies, high-quality seeds, proper fertiliser and state-of-the-art machinery'.

Today, I would add one more extremely important component: a close-knit team. It is the most valuable asset at EkoNiva. I am proud of the people who have been with us all these years. I thank each of them for their hard work, expertise and trust. I am very happy that many young people come to work for the company. It makes me confident that the path we started 20 years ago will be continued and EkoNiva will keep on feeding people.

Stefan Dürr,  
EkoNiva Group President

# Green light for EkoNiva's investment in Kursk oblast



Stefan Dürr, EkoNiva Group President, and Roman Starovoyt, Kursk oblast Governor, have signed an addendum to the Cooperation Agreement on the implementation of investment projects in the region.

Three years ago, EkoNiva and the local government announced their partnership to encourage investment in the region aimed at the development of Kursk oblast economy.

At the meeting, Stefan Dürr reported on the current

performance of EkoNiva facilities operating in the region. The Group used its own funds to scale up the production and seed storage capacity. The in-house breeding programmes developed by the company for several years are bearing

fruit: two winter wheat and two soya bean varieties have been entered into the State Register of Plant Breeding Achievements Approved for Use. Developing domestic seed production, the company contributes to the food security of Russia.

In the 2021/22 season, the sales of the Group's seed division reached 2.9 billion rubles (+26% year-on-year). EkoNiva cooperates with small farming enterprises as well as giant holdings in 70 regions of Russia. The company also exports seeds to Belarus, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia and Ethiopia.

Boosting Kursk oblast's investment potential, enhancing the seed breeding sector, creating new jobs and expanding the tax base are top-priority tasks for the local government and business.

The Group's strategy aimed at ramping up its business activities in Kursk oblast was high on the agenda. Plans are afoot to scale up seed growing, establish a logistics centre and a maize grading plant, increase the total land area, launch the Belsakhar sugar refinery plant and develop a retail chain selling natural dairy under the EKONIVA brand.

## EkoNiva – 'Tasty and that's it'!



EkoNiva has signed the contract for the supply of milk to the fast food restaurant chain 'Tasty and that's it'. The relaunched outlets will serve coffee drinks with EKONIVA milk.

'Tasty and that's it' (or 'Vkusno & Tochka' in Russian) is the rebranded McDonald's fast food restaurant chain in Russia. The company plans to resume operation of all 850 outlets in 62 Russian regions by the end of this summer.

'We are glad to continue our work in partnership with Russia's largest fast food chain. We hope that the customers will always enjoy the immaculate taste of top-quality food and drinks made from natural products meeting the strictest quality and safety standards', shares Dmitriy Rayev, HoReCa Sales Manager, EkoNiva-Food.

Currently, the company sells EKONIVA Professional Line milk with a fat content

of 3.2 and 3.5 per cent to the chain's reopened outlets.

'No doubt that our customers have a taste for coffee – one in three cups sold in Russia is made at our locations. The popularity of our coffee drinks hinges on the compliance with all the procedures, the selection of the right blend, the ideal milk to coffee ratio in espresso-based drinks and the impeccable quality of the ingredients used. That's why we are happy to continue our cooperation with one of the largest milk producers in Russia', emphasises Inna Korotenina, Quality Manager, 'Tasty and that's it'.

EKONIVA milk with a fat content of 3.2 and 3.5 per cent has been supplied to McDonald's fast food outlets in Russia since April 2021.



## Wholesome fodder for cows

In-house fodder production is an integral part of EkoNiva's business approach and a cornerstone of the 'From Field to Shop Shelf' principle ensuring excellent health of its dairy herd and superior quality of milk.

The implementation of cutting-edge farming practices and application of state-of-the-art machinery enable the holding to cultivate a variety of cereals, annual and

perennial grasses, pulse and oilseed crops, which are used to prepare nutritious feedstuffs. This season, more than 175,000 ha of farmland is under forage crops. The harvesting

campaign in Voronezh oblast has commenced with winter rye for haylage.

'Providing the cows with quality fodder is of paramount importance to us. With this

in mind, we harvest the crops when they reach the highest protein content and, thus, have the greatest nutritional value. This year's winter rye samples contain 19.4% of protein per 100 g', comments Aleksey Nizkodubov, Chief Agronomist, EkoNivaAgro-Left Bank operation.

Another important forage plant grown in EkoNiva's fields is alfalfa. The first cutting of alfalfa at the bud stage has ensured the highest protein content (up to 25%). The area under the crop harvested for hay and haylage is 68,000 ha, while the prospective amount of feed from it is expected to reach 146,000 mt.

Over 52,500 ha of land is under maize for silage and about 12,200 ha – for snaplage. Other constituents of EkoNiva's feedstuffs comprise maize kernels, soya beans, peas, sunflower, rapeseed, wheat, barley and oats.

By Aleksandr KUTISHCHEV

## Efficient fertiliser dissolving solutions

EkoNivaTehnika-Holding has commenced partnership with NAGRO, a leading Russian producer of complex trace element fertilisers, crop chemical injection packages and liquid fertiliser dissolving units.

Shortly after the conclusion of the dealership agreement on 4 May, NAGRO delivered the first RUKAS automated dissolving units to the service centres of EkoNiva-Tekhnika, EkoNiva-Chernozemye and EkoNiva-Sibir. The equipment is used to produce urea ammonium nitrate (UAN), liquid complex and compound fertilisers (LCF).

'These days, farmers are in constant search of innovative solutions that can be swiftly applied in field. The cooperation between NAGRO and EkoNiva is a considerable step forward towards developing bilateral relations and tapping into the promising domestic agricultural market. It is of particular importance to us that the manufacturing and assembly of RUKAS units has become autonomous as

all the parts and components are made in Russia', shares Dina Alekseyeva, Commercial Manager of Nagro-Vostok trading company.

The RUKAS dissolving units employ an unprecedented patented cold molecular synthesis technology, which is designed for preparing liquid fertilisers with an active substance concentration of 30-40 per cent. Phosphate-potassium liquid fertilisers prepared using this technology are particularly effective due to orthophosphates in their composition. They are promptly utilised by plants, strengthen their root systems, improve humus content in the soil and reduces acidification, which is a common problem faced by many farmers.

'Excessive application of dry granular fertilisers results



in the humus layer degradation since they pull moisture out of the soil. Besides, dry fertilisers are absorbed more slowly compared to the liquid ones. Soil acidification inhibits the life processes of microorganisms, increases the mobility of heavy metals, interferes with the nutrition and retards the growth of cultivated plants', comments Roman Novgorodov, Key Account Manager.

The operation of the RUKAS dissolving unit is adjusted via a digital system controlling the mixing of the required components.

'For instance, it takes the RUKAS 12 a quarter of an hour, which is a minimum preparation cycle, to make 3 tonnes of solution, which corresponds to a daily output of 280 tonnes', continues Roman Novgorodov.

The RUKAS dissolving units with a capacity of 1.5, 3, 6, 12 and 18 t/h are already available for pre-order at EkoNivaTehnika-Holding offices in the Central, Central Black Earth and Siberian regions as well as Mari El and Udmurtia.

By Darya DENISOVA



Daily milk output at EkoNiva Siberian Subdivision exceeded 555 tonnes on 22 May, marking a 16% growth since the beginning of the year. This growth was achieved solely due to the increase in cow productivity ensured by effective teamwork and implementation of modern practices.

In 2021, EkoNiva's farms in Siberia reaped a bumper crop of high-quality forage to produce 232,000 tonnes of haylage and 84,000 tonnes of silage. This amount fully provided the herd with nutritious feed.

All enterprises within EkoNiva Group, including Sibirskaya Niva, employ Eko.Feed – an in-house application designed for

controlling the nutrition of dairy cows. The application helps to balance the feed considering the number and group of cows, their health status, age and other parameters, distribute the feed accurately and on time and track all operational data in real time.

Sibirskaya Niva has a status of a breeding producer of Holstein, Hereford and Aberdeen Angus

cattle. The team has done a tremendous job over the past years. The low-yielding cows have been replaced; the herd has been bred for milk production traits.

ZooVet traineeship project, a corporate school for future herd managers run by EkoNiva, has made a huge contribution to boosting the performance of the herd. In 2020-2021, three groups

of trainees took a course in herd management at Sibirskaya Niva – 17 highly qualified graduates in total. Furthermore, every 6 months, 20 specialists, including regular staff and top managers, take part in various professional development programmes offered by the enterprises based in the Siberian region.

Currently, four modern free-stall dairies operate at Sibirskaya Niva, including a mega farm designed for 6,000 head of cattle. In total, the enterprise has 34,000 head of cattle, thereof 17,000 dairy cows.

'Siberia produces one sixth of all EkoNiva's milk output. In 2021, the subdivision stepped up the daily yields by 25%, which is 33 kg per cow, and since the beginning of this year, the yields have increased by another 16%. We intend to keep working on the performance and will do our best to ramp up the growth rate until the end of the year', says Sergey Lyakhov, Regional Director for Siberian Region at EkoNiva.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO

## EkoNiva partners with Azerbaijan

EkoNiva, the largest dairy holding in Russia, has debuted at Caspian Agro 2022, an international agricultural trade show held at Expocentre in Baku. The company has come to network with local businesses and government representatives and research the opportunities of the republican farming sector. In total, over 100 potential clients have visited EkoNiva's booth.

This year, Caspian Agro marked its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary and gathered around 300 companies from 20 countries. EkoNiva presented its pedigree dairy cattle along with the entire seed portfolio including in-house bred varieties.

'Two years ago, EkoNiva delivered the first batches of spring and winter cereal seeds to Azerbaijan. Our company is just tapping into this market. Caspian Agro 2022 enables us to estimate the needs of local farmers, build business

contacts and thus expand our presence in the region and increase the sales', says Yevgeniy Kucheryavenko, Executive Director of EkoNiva-Semena.

In the republic, crop farming prevails over livestock farming, with cereal production taking one of the largest shares. Sixty percent of arable land is used for growing cereals, in particular, wheat, rice, maize and barley. Recently, the local growers have also developed an interest in soya beans.



'The republic needs high-quality seeds of winter wheat and soya beans. EkoNiva offers highly adaptive in-house bred winter wheat varieties, such as EN Cepheus, EN Taygeta, EN Albireo, our novelties EN Mars and EN Photon along with soya bean varieties EN Argenta, EN Argument and EN Akcent', recounts Aleksandr Novosyolov, Sales Representative of EkoNiva-Semena.

During the trade show, EkoNiva specialists also met owners of local businesses, representatives of Azerbaijan State Agricultural University, Azerbaijan Ministry of Agriculture and other authorities. These meetings resulted in reaching agreements on cooperation and conducting commercial and in-house bred variety trials in the republic.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO



local varieties yield around 3 t/ha', points out Aleksandr Ryabenko, EkoNiva-Semena Sales Rep.

The company is about to launch the trials of its commercial and in-house varieties at the local State Variety Testing facility to make them eligible for inclusion in the register of varieties recommended for sowing in the country. It will help to popularise EkoNiva varieties in Uzbekistan and ensure a wider choice of crops and varieties available to local growers.

The company held numerous business meetings with potential buyers of pedigree cattle at Agritek Uzbekistan 2022.

'At the moment, we have six customers in Uzbekistan looking into purchasing pedigree cattle from EkoNiva. They are willing to come to our dairy farms in the nearest time to see the herd. We expect to export about 3,500-4,000 head to the country', says Viktor Voronin, Cattle Sales Department Manager at EkoNiva-Semena.

Currently, the company is going through the certification of quarantine sites for the cattle batches intended for Uzbekistan.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO

## First-timer at AgriTek

In mid-June, EkoNiva-Semena participated in AgriTek Uzbekistan 2022, an international agricultural trade fair in Tashkent. At the largest exhibition in Uzbekistan, the company presented its portfolio of pedigree dairy cattle and high-yielding varieties.

EkoNiva started active cooperation with Uzbekistan farmers last year. Agriculture is high-priority sector in the country's economy. The farming industry

accounts for over 30% of the gross domestic product, 35% of the human resource and a major share of currency inflow. Uzbekistan boasts favourable climatic conditions for various

crops and uses irrigation systems countrywide.

In 2021, EkoNiva delivered the first batches of soya and winter wheat seeds to local producers. Quality winter wheat seeds are in high demand in the republic as cereals together with cotton occupy over 70% of all farm land.

'The farming season is in full swing in Uzbekistan. The varieties supplied by EkoNiva perform well even this extremely arid year. We are harvesting 4-4.5 t/ha whereas

## Sabantuy in Bugulma

Severnaya Niva Tatarstan, EkoNiva Group, has taken part in Sabantuy – a national Tatar festival dedicated to completing spring fieldwork.

Sabantuy literally means 'a fest of plough' in Tatar and is celebrated in 3 stages. First, in villages, after sowing and then in towns and cities a week later. One more week later, the regional Sabantuy is hosted by the Republic capital Kazan. Sabantuy 2022 in Bugulma featured a farm machinery exposition, food and craft fairs.

At the event, EkoNiva presented the full range of dairy products including the premium 6 and 12-month aged Dürr hard cheese.

The guests could enjoy time with calves and

have pictures at the photo booth. The children received dessert quarks and yoghurts as a gift.

EkoNiva has been operating in the Republic of Tatarstan since 2018.

Dairy and crop production is its core business in the region. At present, the company is constructing Naratly dairy designed for 3,550 dairy cows and 5,100 head of young



stock. The facility includes 4 cow barns, calf barns, heifer lots, a feed centre and a sanitation point.

EkoNiva dairy operation is going to be a significant contribution to the prosperity

growth of Bugulma district and the entire Southeast of the Republic ensuring a sustainable social and economic development of the rural areas in the region.

# Novelties for Volga region

EkoNiva booth hosted business meetings with representatives of more than 60 companies from Saratov, Samara, Ulyanovsk, Kirov, Orenburg, Nizhny Novgorod, Pskov, Novosibirsk oblasts, Tatarstan, Chuvashia, Mari El, Udmurt Republics, Krasnoyarsk, Perm and Altai areas and Kazakhstan.

The company presented demo plots with more than 30 varieties of different crops.

The focus of the exhibition is on winter wheat varieties as autumn sowing is about to start. Therefore the in-house bred winter wheat variety EN Taygeta, regionally adapted to the Middle Volga Region captured the attention of many visitors.

The variety features a short stalk that is highly resistant to lodging and a high number of grains per ear. During state trials at Arsk trial plot in Tatarstan, EN Taygeta delivered a yield increase of up to 1 t/ha compared to the control plot', emphasises Willi Drews, EkoNiva Consultant, Doctor of Agronomy.



EkoNiva-Semena presented trial plots featuring popular varieties from its portfolio and new varieties of its own breeding at AGROVOLGA-2022 exhibition in Kazan.

Over three years, the yielding capacity grew at a rate of 0,52 t/ha annually as compared to the standard productivity of Kazanskaya 560 yielding 0,647 t/ha according to the official statistics of state variety testing in Tatarstan.

To date, more than 25 companies from Kirov, Nizhny

Novgorod and Ulyanovsk oblasts, Tatarstan, Mordovia and Chuvashia have already signed contracts for the purchase of EN Taygeta winter wheat seeds.

Other varieties of EkoNiva also kindled interest in local farmers. For example, the holding negotiated agreements

on the delivery of EN Cepheus winter wheat and soya bean varieties – EN Argenta, EN Akcent and EN Argument. These varieties with short vegetation period are perfect for the climate of Tatarstan and the surrounding regions. However, soya is a new crop for the local farmers, and it requires specific knowledge to successfully incorporate it into the crop rotation.

'Across the region, the most popular products from EkoNiva commercial portfolio are spring wheat varieties Licamero and Triso, barley varieties Paustian, Calcule, Explorer, Margaret and pea variety Rocket which has been in steady demand for many years. The potential productivity of varieties in catalogue is rather high, they yield 5-6 t/ha, which is 15-20% higher as compared to the competitors', says Ilshat Mingazov, EkoNiva-Semena Sales Representative.

In 2021, the overall amount of seeds delivered to local producers exceeded 12,5% of the total sales. EkoNiva intends to increase the sales in the future.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO



On the first day of summer, EkoNiva-Tekhnika Holding and EkoNiva-Chernozemye employees with their family members took a tour around Dobrino dairy and participated in interesting activities on the occasion of two festivals that are celebrated on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June: Children's Day and Milk Day.

The guests interacted with cows and calves, watched how they were taken care of and learned how premium milk was produced and natural products were

made. After a fascinating tour around the farm, the children could drive mini tractors and take a horse-drawn carriage ride. Moreover, the young attendees showed their agility

in an exciting competition and had fun at the festival of colours.

Then, the guests were treated to fresh dairy products. After the

refreshing snack, they planted trees next to the dairy facility on the premises of EkoNiva-Chernozemye service centre. The children helped the adults to decorate the area with catalpa samplings, an ornamental tree with beautiful white flowers.

'It was very unusual to explore the inner world of the dairy facility. We learned the intricacies of modern milk production in an entertaining way. The children were delighted to stroke and feed the cows and have fun outdoors', says Yekaterina Dzhambulatova, Regional Advertising and Marketing Specialist, EkoNiva-Tekhnika Holding. 'The excursion was amazing, tree planting became an important and meaningful ending of the event.'

Who knows, maybe one day our children will work for the company and rest in the shade of a catalpa that they have planted today.'

By Aleksandr KUTISHCHEV

# Addressing needs of southern farmers

EkoNiva team received over 100 guests at the booth, held numerous business meetings and reached important agreements.

'The company is increasing its customer base in the southern regions of Russia. In-house varieties and cereals, pulses and oilseeds from the commercial portfolio are gaining in popularity here. We offer something to meet each local farmer's needs', says Yevgeniy Kucheryavenko, Executive Director of EkoNiva-Semena.

Belmondo, Jackpot, Trendy, Rocket and Madras commercial pea varieties show a great performance in the southern regions yielding 5-6 tonnes per hectare. In general, all pea varieties are excellent preceding crops, that is why local farmers introduce legumes into crop rotation.

Soya beans, chickpeas, lentils, oilseed flax are also generating a growing interest. EN Argenta variety is highly responsive to good fertility and delivers a consistent yield



EkoNiva-Semena has come to Rostov oblast for the sixth time to take part in the Don Field Day. The company presented its pedigree cattle and a crop variety portfolio making a special focus on legumes.

even with low soil moisture. Triumph chickpea variety is adapted to all regions. It features a large calibre, which is especially valued in export crops. Mid-maturing Serpent oilseed flax is also a common choice due to the growing

demand for oilseeds in the Southern Federal District.

'CDC Redcoat lentils show good performance – about 2.4-2.6 tonnes per hectare, which exceeds the productivity of local varieties by 10%. Winter wheat

remains one of the major crops in the southern regions. Drought-resistant and heat-tolerant varieties are the most popular', says Maksim Golovanev, EkoNiva-Semena Sales Representative.

Local growers purchase versatile high-plasticity winter wheat varieties of in-house breeding: EN Taygeta, EN Albireo and EkoNiva's flagship product – EN Cepheus. In the field trials in Krasnodar area last year, EN Cepheus delivered a yield of about 7.8 t/h, which is significantly higher as compared to the average 6.6 t/h across the region.

EkoNiva's pedigree dairy cattle have also earned a good reputation in the south of the country. The company sells heifers of Simmental, Red-and-White and Holstein black-and-white breeds and guarantees that all animals have a high genetic status and are well-adapted to large commercial dairy environment.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO

## Medalists of Kaluzhskaya Niva

The 12<sup>th</sup> Regional Competition for the Best Artificial Insemination Technician and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regional Competition for the Best Cattle Breeder took place on 1 July in Borovsk district, Kaluga oblast. Thirty-two specialists from regional farming enterprises participated in the event. EkoNiva Group was represented by Kaluzhskaya Niva employees.

The contest consisted of theoretical and practical stages. Cattle breeders underwent professional testing, demonstrated their performance, worked with databases and conducted cattle assessment. Representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture of Kaluga oblast, evaluated the skills and expertise of the contestants. Based on the results of the testing, the winners of the two competitions were the

employees of Kaluzhskaya Niva-South Operation: Vasiliy Fisenko, Artificial Insemination Technician, and Evgeniya Ovchinnikova, Cattle Breeder.

'I have been in the profession for twelve years, eight of them – at EkoNiva with a team of experts. This is the first time I have taken part in the competition. I am happy that I have an opportunity to demonstrate my knowledge and experience. Moreover, I gained a victory for my



farming enterprise', says Evgeniya Ovchinnikova, Cattle Breeder at Kaluzhskaya Niva-South Operation.

The winners were awarded diplomas and gift certificates. Soon, they will take more serious tests. Evgeniya Ovchinnikova is preparing for the National Cattle Breeder

Competition, that will be held in 2023. Vasiliy Fisenko will participate in All-Russian Artificial Insemination Technician Competition, which is to take place on 15-19 August this year in the Udmurt Republic.

By Darya DENISOVA



# 20 years of excellence

Zashchitnoye, a plant breeding and seed growing company of EkoNiva Group, has celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The event gathered over 300 employees and guests. Stefan Dürr, Group President, congratulated the colleagues on this occasion.

The highlight of the event was honouring employees working for the company from day one. Thirty old-timers have made a significant contribution to the enterprise development. The company also paid tribute to retired specialists. They heard a lot of warm words from the Group management that day. Numerous honourees come from the whole dynasties working for the enterprise. Apart from heartfelt congratulations and wishes, the employees received certificates of commendation, gifts and watched a show programme.

'Zashchitnoye is the heart of plant breeding and premium seed-growing in our company, the industry leader in the country and the consolidation of enormous experience and expertise of our specialists',

says Stefan Dürr, EkoNiva Group President.

Sergey Starodubtsev, Deputy Governor of Kursk oblast, has also arrived to congratulate the enterprise. He thanked the team for excellent performance and assured it of overall support by the oblast government.

'Zashchitnoye can always rely on the oblast administration. We will continue supporting projects aimed at developing the regional farming sector, ramping up agricultural production, supplying the regional market with food', said Sergey Starodubtsev.

The latest genetics, cutting-edge agronomic practices, state-of-the-art equipment and qualified personnel are the four underlying components ensuring excellence of Zashchitnoye in the industry. It

all started back in 2002 with 2,000 ha of land and only five cereal varieties.

'The whole industry was in havoc suffering lack of competent personnel and equipment. It certainly took time to handle all the issues. Nevertheless, today our team consists of seasoned professionals – hard to find anywhere else', says with pride Yuriy Vasyukov, EkoNiva-APK Holding Regional Director for Kursk oblast.

Today, Zashchitnoye operates on an overall area of 38,500 ha in Shchigry and Solntsevo districts. The farm produces 5 commercial varieties with a high genetic potential. The yield of cereals and pulses

averages 5.3 t/ha. The farm features several seed handling facilities, sophisticated storage equipment designed for 117,000 tonnes of bulk grain and finished goods warehouses that can accommodate up to 12,000 tonnes of seeds in big bags at a time. In 2021, the enterprise produced over 78,000 tonnes of seeds including over 10,000 tonnes for EkoNiva Group's own needs.

Zashchitnoye runs in-house winter wheat and soya bean breeding programmes. The State Register of Plant Breeding Achievements Approved for Use already includes three varieties of soya bean and five varieties of highly adaptive wheat bred by the company. The enterprise is also launching chickpea, lentil, spring wheat and spring fodder barley breeding programmes.

The operation employs over 500 people and pays substantially higher salaries than the average across the region.

At the event, a lot of time was devoted to further plans, which are sure to be implemented. At the solemn finale, the employees together with their children released white doves into the sky as a symbol of peace everybody hopes for as all other challenges the company can meet with its experience and expertise.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO



# New genetics in Zashchitnoye



Zashchitnoye farm has hosted the Field Day organised by EkoNiva-Semena. Over 150 agricultural producers from the Central region of Russia, Krasnodar area, Altai area, Far East, Kazakhstan, and Azerbaijan have visited the event.

At the venue, all attendees had an opportunity to see the trial plots with in-house bred

and popular commercial varieties. In his opening speech, Stefan Dürr, EkoNiva Group President, underlined

that the development of plant breeding and seed growing is one of the company's major priorities:

'We are going to invest our efforts into strengthening our position as a seed growing leader in the country and expand our own breeding projects. I am positive that even in the current economic situation, EkoNiva will continue working efficiently and developing rapidly. Our main goals are to breed high-yielding varieties and produce high-quality seeds to reduce the global hunger.'

EkoNiva-Semena supplies seeds to 70 regions of Russia and exports to 8 countries. Last year, EkoNiva delivered about 80,000 tonnes of seeds and is planning to boost sales this year. The company has everything it takes to succeed: cutting-edge equipment, genetic resources and highly qualified staff. EkoNiva's

goal is to produce globally competitive varieties.

'Agricultural business' mission is to ensure Russia's food security. It is necessary to invest in new technologies and use every opportunity to gain new knowledge and exchange experience. Such events are a great place for our partners to find answers to their questions', emphasises Yevgeniy Kucheryavenko, Executive Director of EkoNiva-Semena.

Modern breeding technologies are used by the company not only in the crop production sector, but also in dairy farming. Sales of pedigree heifers is one of the core businesses of the company. Over 12,000 heifers have been sold to different regions of Russia in recent months.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO

## Novelties at Kursk Korenskaya trade fair

EkoNivaTekhnika-Holding has presented novelties of agriculture at the 11<sup>th</sup> transregional Kursk Korenskaya trade fair that took place in Svoboda village, Zolotukhino district, Kursk oblast.

One of the novelties showcased by EkoNiva was the RUKAS mixing unit, a novelty of NAGRO company. It is designed for mineral fertiliser dissolution via molecular synthesis.

'The Rukas mini plant can dissolve and mix any type of fertiliser at sub-zero temperatures: nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium or sulphur. This unique technology is patented and licensed by the company', says Andrey Kudryavtsev, NAGRO Sales Representative.

Besides the innovative Rukas unit, the booth displayed a Chopstar row-crop cultivator manufactured by Einböck and a Spirit ST800C seed drill by Väderstad.

'The new seed drill is equipped with unique Väderstad SeedEye sensors. They ensure that each square metre of the field is sown

with utmost accuracy. Precise data enable farmers to increase the overall production efficiency', says Sergey Chekhov, Manager of Kursk and Belgorod branches of EkoNiva-Chernozemye.

Besides, Precision Farming Department presented cutting-edge developments. LAFORGE hitches enable easy connection and adjustment of mounted, semi-mounted and attached implements to ensure high-precision operation in the field. The FJ Dynamics autosteering kit can be installed on any tractor. The system delivers high efficiency due to the Mobile RTK signal. Another novelty showcased at the booth was the Stenon FarmLab soil sensor.

'The Stenon Farmlab device helps farmers to control temperature, humidity, acidity, soil texture and nutrient availability',

says Sergey Sidorenko, High-Tech Solutions Sales Representative, EkoNiva-Chernozemye.

Sergey Storozhev, Executive Director of EkoNiva-Chernozemye, highlighted the significance of participation in Kursk

Korenskaya trade fair.

'Every year, we meet with agricultural producers from Kursk and Belgorod oblasts, exchange experience and learn about the needs of farmers. Currently, we are introducing a preventive maintenance system allowing the farmers to carefully plan their orders and us – to deliver the parts and machines on time.'

By Darya DENISOVA



# EkoNiva matching Siberian scale



EkoNiva presented its spacious booth at the Day of Siberian Field, an agricultural industry forum in Altai area. This year, the event featured a record number of participants: over 300 companies and several thousand visitors – agricultural producers from different regions of the vast country: from Samara to Blagoveshchensk.

The Day of Siberian Field is a major industry trade fair in the region. The Group companies have been regular exhibitors at the fair for over five years impressed by its scale and professional level. The exhibition offers a comprehensive range of products and solutions for farming: from spare parts and consumables to cutting-edge machinery and high-yielding seeds. The forum serves as a perfect platform for face-to-face meetings with customers and partners, discussions of discussions, experience and knowledge exchange.

This year, EkoNiva's booth occupying the 900 sq.m. fascinated the guests with space and innovations.

'Every other farmer in Siberia is EkoNiva's customer. The company's service centres have contracts for maintaining around three thousand self-propelled machines and seven thousand trailed implements. Currently, the Siberian operation accounts for about 40% of the Group's total sales. The sales percentage has doubled in the past few years', underlines Gennadiy Nepomnyashchiy, Commercial Director of EkoNivaTekhnika-Holding. The company showcased

various innovations and technological solutions – about 10 self-propelled and trailed units including new brands NAGRO and Arcusin, and long-standing partners Gregoire Besson,

available, see the choice of farm machine tyres and find necessary spare parts. The AMS technologies offering solutions and products for smart farming systems were the highlight of the

## **Gennadiy Nepomnyashchiy, Commercial Director of EkoNivaTekhnika-Holding:**

'Every other farmer in Siberia is EkoNiva's customer. The company's service centres have contracts for maintaining around three thousand self-propelled machines and seven thousand trailed implements. Currently, the Siberian sales share of the Group's machinery dealing holding accounts for about 40%. Mind you, this figure has doubled in the past few years.'

Bednar, Grimme, John Deere, Pottinger, Rauch and Vaderstad.

'Only regular maintenance ensures a long uninterrupted service life. EkoNiva machinery dealing holding has the largest maintenance team in the Siberian region – over 100 qualified technicians. Our partners have a clear understanding why we stand out in the market, and we are committed to strengthening customer loyalty and satisfaction and improving the service level and availability', says Sergey Arsiri, Manager of EkoNivaSibir branch office in Altai area.

At the group's booth, the guests could learn about the maintenance packages

enterprises to renovate their machinery fleet.

EkoNiva-Semena has come to the trade fair to offer its extensive seed portfolio focusing on crops best suiting the needs of Siberian farmers and novelties of its own breeding programme.

'Siberia is a strategically important market for us that accounts for 20% of EkoNiva-Semena's customers and 45% of the holding's total sales. The recent two years have shown a consistent growth of agricultural business in the region. Siberian farmers possess vast land, apply sophisticated agronomic practices and state-of-the-art technologies. Our mission here is to provide them with quality seeds of high-margin crops able to meet local climatic challenges', points out Yevgeniy Kucheryavenko, EkoNiva-Semena Executive Director.

At this year's trade fair, EkoNiva also debuted its pedigree dairy cattle portfolio. Since the beginning of the year, the company has already delivered about 1,000 pedigree heifers to the region. It expects to ship at least another 1,000 by the end of the year and increase the cattle sales next year.

As usual, no attendees left the company's booth without trying delicious EkoNiva dairy products, cheese and ice-cream. The event attended by a lot of guests provided comfortable environment for productive discussions with current and prospective partners. As a result, the company has signed a number of contracts and reached preliminary cooperation agreements.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO



# New tools for efficient business

EkoNiva opened Group's joint booth at Voronezh Field Day 2022, the 15<sup>th</sup> interregional trade fair. The company presented cutting-edge farm machinery of global brands, an extensive range of high-yielding seeds, pedigree cattle and EkoNiva dairy products.

The machinery holding showcased over 20 unique solutions for successful farming business. The dealer debuted a new brand in its portfolio – NAGRO, one of the leading Russian manufacturers of fertiliser and plant chemical mixing units. The FJDynamics auto steer system was the highlight of digital novelties in EkoNiva-Chernozemye's portfolio.

'This system provides high signal accuracy and top brands' functionality at an affordable price. The smart digital solution

includes convenient route patterns and generates operating reports in .shp and .isoxml formats. In addition, one RTK base station can communicate with up to 20 vehicles simultaneously', comments Sergey Sidorenko, Smart Solution Sales Department Specialist at EkoNiva-Chernozemye. Apart from that, the dealer displayed machines from Gregoire Besson, Einböck, Pöttinger, Haybuster, Bednar, RAUCH.

EkoNiva-Semena presented its seed portfolio featuring 63 varieties of in-house and foreign breeding.



At the demonstration plots, the company showed novelty in-house varieties: winter wheat EN Cepheus, EN Taygeta EN Albireo, EN Photon, EN Mars and soya beans EN Argenta, EN Akcent and EN Argument.

The agricultural holding's experts at the booth talked

about the portfolio of pedigree dairy cattle with a high genetic potential for sale.

As usual, the Day of Voronezh Field has served as an excellent platform for business networking and contract negotiations.

By Viktor BARGOTIN

# Breaking new ground

EkoNiva machinery trading holding has signed a dealership agreement with UMG CE, one of the largest construction equipment manufacturers, and arranged the first customer tour of one of the company's production sites in Tver.

UMG CE makes material handlers, motor graders, backhoe loaders, telescopic boom excavators, wheeled and crawler excavators. The product range also includes forestry mulchers, city sweepers,

truck-mounted excavators and snow groomers. The production facilities are located in Tver, Chelyabinsk, Bryansk and Rybinsk. This partnership with UMG CE means breaking new ground for the company.



'We are tapping into a new business – construction and municipal equipment. Considering the import substitution policy, we put emphasis on the best Russian and localised manufacturers like UMG. We expect such equipment as backhoe loaders and telescopic boom excavators to find wide application in the agricultural sector as well. We, in our turn, are committed to render high-quality after-sales service', comments Gennadiy Nepomnyashchiy, EkoNivaTekhnika-Holding Commercial Director.

EkoNiva offers UMG equipment for agricultural, construction, municipal and other sectors in Tver, Omsk and Kemerovo oblasts.

'We see how our construction equipment can be useful in the farming sector. We know EkoNiva as a credible service company possessing substantial resources, workshops and qualified technicians. We are interested in branching out into new areas, especially

the Siberian region and expect great mutual benefits from this collaboration', says Maksim Ivanita, UMG CE Sales and After-Sales Service Director.

During the customer tour of Tver Excavator Factory, the visitors watched main production processes, a demo show and even could operate an excavator. Andrey Nikitin, Chief Engineer of Rumelko-Agro MC, couldn't miss such experience:

'What we've seen here today is an adequate substitute for imported equivalents. The machines are easy to maintain and repair, with spare parts always available, which is important. Stringent production line control ensures low defect rate. We have decided to acquire certain models, which soon should be shipped', says Andrey Nikitin.

In the next few months, EkoNiva is going to present UMG machines at regional industry-specific trade fairs and on partner farms.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO



## Organic market booming

A healthy lifestyle is a dominant trend today. Diets based on organic products are also gaining in popularity. To meet the demand, manufacturers are in need of certified organic raw material producers such as Savinskaya Niva, EkoNiva Group's enterprise in Kaluga oblast.

Currently, the farming enterprise produces organic cereals, pulses and fodder crops on an area of over 900 ha, including more than 400 ha of winter wheat, 242 ha of oat and pea mixture, 160 ha of buckwheat and slightly less than 100 ha of winter rye.

'Russian producers of organic food, such as porridges and cereals, show

a considerable interest in buckwheat', comments Aleksandr Anpilov, Crop Farming Director of EkoNiva Group. 'The same goes for organic spelt and wheat. Spelt has a high gluten content, which is particularly valuable for the baking industry.'

A part of the farm's yield is used for feeding its own dairy herd producing organic milk, which is

processed and sold under the EKONIVA Organic brand.

This year, 2 ha of trial plots have been sown with ultra-early-maturing soya beans and 16 ha – with field beans, which will serve as seed material for further testing and gradual expansion of the trial plot area.

'We cultivate organic soya beans to use it as in-house fodder and for sale', states

Valeriy Gushchin, Manager of Savinskaya Niva. 'Today, there are a lot of organic beef farms in Russia ensuring the demand for soya beans. Since a ban on sowing conventionally grown seeds for the production of organic crops is expected in the nearest years, we are on the right track.'

According to Valeriy Gushchin, the soya bean testing on the farm is scheduled until 2024 as the company considers organic soya bean farming a very promising business.

By Aleksandr KUTISHCHEV

## Youth at Savinskaya Niva

For the first time, Savinskaya Niva has opened its doors for the interns from Oryol State Agricultural University and Kaluga branch of the Moscow Agricultural Academy n.a. K.A. Timiryazev. The organic farm is already running trainings in Agronomy and Veterinary Medicine and soon is going to launch internships for machine operators.

The training is going to take at least two months. If the students decide to continue their internship during the holidays, they are welcome to stay until the end of the summer', says Valeriy Gushchin, Manager of Savinskaya Niva.

Each trainee has a mentor assigned to help and support him. The project goal is to provide students with

a theoretical and technical basis for their future work.

'Today, organic farming is developing at an ever-increasing pace, so I'm excited at the opportunity to get a closer look at all the processes and try my hand at working on a farm. I would be happy to continue working on Savinskaya Niva farm after the graduation', points out Evgeniy Koroteyev, a student at Oryol State Agricultural University.



According to Valeriy Gushchin, the enterprise has a particular interest in attracting young specialists: they grasp the required skills, master cutting-edge technologies and production approaches swiftly, but, most importantly, they are

full of enthusiasm and desire to pursue their professional development. Savinskaya Niva will gladly invite the high-potential trainees to join the ranks of the organic farming enterprise.

By Aleksandr KUTISHCHEV

# Emil Ishmukhamedov: I'd recognise a Siberian in any corner of the world

A purposeful, enthusiastic, sporty leader enjoying simple pleasures – meet the guest of our section, Emil Ishmukhamedov, Director of Elli, a prosperous farmer and grain trader.

The life of a most prominent Siberian entrepreneur is planned down to the last minute for several weeks ahead. However, between sowing and harvesting campaigns, business appointments and trips, he still can fit some time into his tight schedule to spend on his favourite hobbies and on the support of young athletes from his village.

## Where dreams may lead

When I was a teenager, I never dreamt of working in the farming sector. If anyone had told me that I'd own even 1,000 ha of land, I'd have been extremely surprised. I took up agriculture not so long ago, in 2018. Before that, I was engaged in grain trading. Back in my childhood years, I really wanted to serve in the army. I was born in a military town near Orenburg, so officers were a role model for me. I marveled at their discipline, willpower, courage and nobility. So, I enrolled on a military college but had to leave it because of the turbulent and hungry 90s. By nature, I'm a born soldier always following the regime. I lead a healthy lifestyle myself and support young sportspeople from my home village, these are sambo

strive for victories and make their dreams come true. Many of them become champions later and get a head start over sportspeople from bigger cities.

## What makes Siberia strong

The strength of Siberia is derived from its people. They're truly special – hardworking, strong, trustworthy and very kind. I'd recognise a Siberian in any corner of the world – they're amiable, approachable and sincere. I love living and working in Siberia and I consider Altai area my second fatherland. Although the climatic conditions here may not always be favourable, we still deliver decent results.



if you work hard enough, you can't go wrong.'

**Elli LLC** was founded in 2005. The company is engaged in producing, purchasing and selling, storing and processing crops. Its production facilities are located in Novosibirsk oblast and Altai area. Elli sells its products on the Russian market and exports them to the CIS countries and beyond.

- 206,000 t – capacity of grain storages
- 540,000 t – average annual grain turnover
- 76,000 ha – arable farmlands

Our major power lies in technologies and specialists: modern practices, efficient machinery and a diligent team make up the lion's share of

## Farmer's simple joys

I'm a happy person, I enjoy every day and everything that surrounds me. My perfect day would be sunny in the morning, rainy in the afternoon and sunny again in the evening. My personal motto: remain an honest person in any situation, respect your family commitments and meet your obligations at work. I approach the choice of business partners in much the same way. EkoNiva has always been with us and never let us down providing the best machinery, reliable service and high-yielding seeds. We started our business in 2018 with 10,000 ha, now we cultivate 60,000 ha and it's not our limit – next

year, plans are afoot to sow 70,000 ha. Such progress wouldn't be possible if it wasn't for the modern machinery and premium-class seeds delivered by EkoNiva. I wish our partner continuous development, vigour and new horizons.

## Hobby time

I love horses. Communicating with these animals brings me the brightest emotions, always lifts my spirits and makes me feel energised. I have my own stud and an excellent team of professionals helping me to take care of my prancers. By the way, we frequently take prizes in various competitions.

Lately, farming has given me a great deal of positive feelings. I like observing the process and taking part in it. Going to the fields where the work is in high gear cheers me up and gives me a burst of energy. From my point of view, a farmer must keep learning all the time, like any other professional. I am convinced that our farming sector is bound to thrive. Progress and new vistas are what the future holds for us.'

By Tatyana IGNATENKO



fighters and track-and-field athletes. It's nice to see how they grow professionally right before my eyes, how they

success or the final output. There's no room for a mistake as the price might be too high and cost you the harvest. So,



## Training as a company development pillar

In 2019, EkoNivaTekhnika-Holding opened an in-house training centre – one of the company development pillars. The project comprises ongoing skill-building, mentoring programmes and client advisory services.

### Taking care of employees

One of the main aims of the training centre is continuous staff upskilling. The educational project includes trainings, lectures, sharing know-how, business games, performance appraisal, building company distance learning system.

'Team training is one of the key business processes in a modern growth-oriented company. We regularly assess staff performance, draw up corporate educational programmes on professional and management skills enhancement. At the same time, we maintain the company traditions', says Yekaterina Stolyarevskaya, Human Resources Manager at EkoNivaTekhnika-Holding.

The Employee training programme is carried out in 26 regions where the company operates. The classes take place in fully equipped education spaces in the service centres of Kaluga, Voronezh and Novosibirsk oblasts. Both external trainers and holding's specialists with extensive experience work at the education facilities.

'We organise training regularly in every division reviewing staff performance. The procedure includes knowledge and competence

assessment, monitoring progress and tracking achievement. After that, the learners take an exam. Based on their results, participants can get bonuses or earn a promotion', explains Yekaterina Stolyarevskaya.

Training is designed in distance and onsite formats. For three years, over 400 company employees have taken courses in EkoNiva's training centre.

'We have organised remote training on iSpring platform providing access to a catalogue of electronic courses. Now, my colleagues can study and download additional information via the Internet. Moreover, the Alpina online library holding a collection of professional books has been set up for the students', says Natalya Pavlova, Head of Employee Training and Development Department at EkoNivaTekhnika-Holding.

### Bringing in new blood

Another activity the centre is engaged in is training students who may become company employees in the future. As part of career guidance programme in agriculture, EkoNivaTekhnika educates young people from 25 agricultural institutes in Russia.

'Upon a client's request, our training specialists come to farms all over Russia to evaluate employee performance, test their knowledge, provide professional advice to operators, engineers and after-sales service staff. In particular, the courses on loader, tractor and trailed implements settings are in high demand', says Aleksey Savrasov, Service Training Specialist at EkoNivaTekhnika-Holding.

Large Russian enterprises – Dominant, Cherkizovo, AgroEko as well as companies from the neighbouring countries use the services provided by the centre. Representatives of AZKO company, The Republic of Kazakhstan, purchased eighteen John Deere self-propelled units and needed qualified assistance in setting them up and operating.

'At EkoNiva's training centre, I was offered a tailored course quite promptly. The classes were held in EkoNivaSibir service centre in the town of Ob. Andrey Mazaitis, a professional trainer, helped me to get the hang of the machinery operation and encouraged to keep working. I can recommend my fellow tradesmen aiming to preserve their machines, avoid their failure and improve the bottom line of their company to do a relevant course in EkoNiva', shares Maksim Malevanniy, Chief Engineer at AZKO.

Plans are afoot to devise new educational modules and expand the customer base in other regions. In the near future, the company is going to launch a talent pool development project, with the main goal is to build a new management team ready for challenges and raising the bar a touch higher.

By Darya DENISOVA





# Art of potato growing



Andrey Kalinin

How to mitigate climatic risks and maximise potato production performance? This is possible if you have the necessary equipment and know some ins and outs of potato growing.

## Row space of 90 cm and plough substitute

High-power tractors and widened undercarriage systems create significant risks of tuber damaging during fertiliser and chemical application and harvesting. A row spacing of 90 cm is one of the ways to improve product quality. The ridge with 90 cm row spacing has higher volume of loose air-saturated soil providing more stable temperature and lower moisture migration, which ensures a more favourable water regime and a more efficient absorption of mineral fertiliser.

When potato roots penetrate to a depth of more than 1 metre and distribute in a diameter of up to 95 cm, the plant can maximise its genetic performance. Therefore, it is necessary to avoid excessive soil compaction in the root-inhabited soil. For this reason, it is better to use combined and chisel cultivators working the soil to a depth of more than 30 cm. At the same time, it is more reasonable to install narrow tines with a maximum width of 80 mm on the shanks of the cultivator.

## Freezing temperatures help to ... loosen the soil

In winter, the air temperature drops below  $-5^{\circ}\text{C}$  across virtually the entire country, which leads to soil freezing. Subject to the laws of water movement in anisothermal systems, the moisture inside the capillary channels of the soil moves towards low temperatures. Therefore, in winter, moisture moves up the soil profile through the capillary channels

loosening it. None of the most advanced tillage tools can provide fine-grained structure of such high quality. Our studies have shown that after winter the upper layer of soil – where the seed material is placed – decompacted on its own to  $1.1-1.2\text{ g/cm}^3$ . Therefore, as long as the soil has been properly prepared in autumn, there is no more need for spring tillage: just apply fertilisers and start planting. The spring sowing campaign must be carried out with a single unit in

one pass: light tillage with the passive tools installed in front of the coulters, placement of tubers treated as they exit the shaft of the planting machine in the furrows, with additional application of liquid fertilisers and hydrogel granules – to reduce risk of water regime fluctuations – to the planting area. Next, the planter requires special modules for loosening of furrows compacted by the undercarriage plus cage rollers for subsequent ridge formation. When planting potatoes, the Grimme 5-in-1 multitasking combination performs well: the Grimme GF 400 cutter + the Grimme GL 430 potato planter.

Finally, a dredger passes between the rows to create numerous indentations at the bottom of the furrows.

## Precision farming in potato growing

### Danil Kaplenko, Agronomist, EkoNivaTekhnika-Holding

'For a high potato yield, it is necessary to know soil composition. The new sensor technology from Stenon instantly and accurately analyses the data based on GPS points enabling to generate land fertility and prescription maps to perform variable rate fertiliser application. The spreader changing the application rate automatically is a cost-effective solution since it saves expenditures on the input. Based on a prescription map, this device automatically applies different amounts of mineral fertiliser to different areas of the field,' says Danil Kaplenko, EkoNiva-Tekhnika-Holding Agronomist. 'Up-to-date technology makes it possible to apply limestone at a variable rate according to the prescription map, thereby reducing the costs on the product. Modern navigation systems ensure consistent traffic of farm machinery along the same routes throughout the season to minimise plant damage.'



Danil Kaplenko

## Research results of soil conservation

According to the research, the temperature variation in the tuber formation zone with the conventional technology was about  $5^{\circ}\text{C}$ , while the soil conservation measures decreased it to  $3.7^{\circ}\text{C}$ . The latter temperature regime is more stable and less stressful on potatoes. The moisture deposit in this case is 25-30% higher. Loose soil structure and good moisture removal allow harvesting as early as 2-3 hours after 15-18 mm of rainfall.

By Andrey KALININ, Doctor of Technical Sciences, Professor of the Department of Technical Systems in Agribusiness, St Petersburg State Agricultural University



### Note

The Gregoire Besson machines, the Helikrak sub-soilers and the Crossland combined cultivators are effective alternatives to ploughs.



# Crop management

At each stage, from sowing to harvesting, an agronomist is faced with the task of not only achieving high yields of grain crops, but also applying the most effective methods. The set of tools and approaches ensuring the best result is called crop management.

## Biological yield calculation

Crop management is based on optimising the performance of each crop or even each variety. Biological yield is calculated per 1 square metre even before harvest by an agronomist and based on three criteria, that must be counted for each field:



The obtained result in g/m<sup>2</sup> is easily converted into the conventional yield in t/ha by shifting the decimal point two places to the left. For example: 550 ears/m<sup>2</sup> × 30 grains/ear × 40 g (TKW) = 660 g/m<sup>2</sup> = 6.6 t/ha.



## Crop density control

Unfortunately, such parameter as the number of viable grains during sowing (pcs/m<sup>2</sup>) or ears per square metre during harvesting, is often left out by the agronomists. Yet each crop or even a variety has its optimal quantity. For example, for winter wheat it is 550-600 ears per square metre with 30-35 grains per ear. In case of poor grain filling and low kernel weight (35g per 1,000 kernels), the yield can be estimated at around 5.7 t/ha. With good filling and a kernel weight of 44 g, the harvest will reach 7.2 t/ha, a figure worth striving for. Excessive thickening of crops is also harmful. Many farmers assume that if they sow rye thickly, they will reap a good harvest. This is not the case. For maximum yield, it is necessary to precisely stick to the optimal value.

## Tillering coefficient (TC)

Tillering coefficient is another important criterion.

If the sowing takes place in critical conditions with soil moisture deficit, at a late date, it will be low – 1.0-1.5. However, if the conditions are good, especially for winter crops, and the sowing takes place very early, on 25-30 August, into fertile soil, after black fallow or with high doses of fertiliser, the tillering coefficient will be up to 5-6. This is a lot. Such crops will suffer greatly during overwintering from damping-off and snow mold. Excessive tillering is not desirable either. By harvest time, an agronomist should aim for 550-600 and 600-700 strong stems per sq. m of winter wheat and spring wheat, respectively. If there is an excessive thickening, the ear will be small, with low grain content and TKW. The goal is to have more grain, not more straw.

## Stand density optimisation

How is the seeding rate calculated? For example, when sowing spring barley, the desired number of ears is

750 per square metre. With a productive tiller rate of 2.5, TKW of 48 g, a laboratory emergence loss of 5%, a field emergence loss of 15%, the amount of seeds required for sowing will amount to 180 kg,

according to the formula. It is not necessary to sow 250 kg, like many do, because then the field will turn into a lawn. It looks very nice from the cows' perspective, but not for the agronomist.

The formula for calculation of the seeding rate involves the following values:

- **PrE** – the desired number of productive ears before harvesting, pcs/m<sup>2</sup>
- **TC** – tillering coefficient
- **TKW** – thousand kernel weight, g
- **LE** – laboratory emergence loss, %
- **FE** – field emergence loss, %
- **SR** – seeding rate, kg/ha

$$\frac{\text{PrE} \div \text{TC} \times \text{TKW}}{100 - (\text{LE} + \text{FE})} = \text{SR} \quad \frac{750 \div 2,5 \times 48}{100 - (5 + 15)} = 180 \text{ kg/ha}$$

When applying this formula for calculation of the seeding rate, an agronomist considers the optimal stand density for the crop and variety in each specific field, taking into account the tillering capacity of the variety, the preceding crop, sowing combinations, doses of fertilisers and plant protection agents applied.

Consideration of all of the above factors will make it possible to obtain a high-quality crop with predictable expenditures and at a low production cost.

By Willi DREWS,  
Doctor of Agronomy, EkoNiva consultant



# New discoveries in Belarus



EkoNiva-Tekhnika becomes a partner of a Belarus manufacturer of grain drying equipment, seed conditioning lines and feed mills.

EkoNiva-Tekhnika team has visited the BELAGRO 2022 International Specialized Exhibition, which was held from 7 to 11 June in the Republic of Belarus on the premises of Velikiy Kamen industrial park. EkoNiva specialists from Kirov, Vladimir, Kostroma, Yaroslavl oblasts, Perm area and the Republic of Mari El explored the latest trends in crop growing, livestock and poultry farming, modern technologies of material processing, packaging and storing as well as a wide range of agricultural machinery.

Representatives of Polymya Trading Company, the production cluster established by OJSC Borisov Plant Metallist, made a presentation for the Russian colleagues. The company has been successfully developing on the market for over 30 years now. It specialises in designing and manufacturing solutions for grain cleaning, drying and storing, seed conditioning as well as feed production.

Polymya TC represented the M-20 series portable column dryer with the holding capacity of 20 tonnes and the output of 7 tonnes per hour. Dryers of this type have a column shaped plenum

chamber, with ducts for warm air supply.

'The system is designed for drying cereals, canola, sunflower, flax, maize and other crops. The process is fully automated, the equipment makes it possible to carry out high-quality drying with low energy consumption,' says Andrey Lisovsky, Deputy Director for Economic Affairs of OJSC Borisov Plant Metallist.

Also, Polymya TC showcased the SV-150 air cleaner and the SB-12/4 rotary separator (for preliminary and primary cleaning), the KSP-22 grain cleaning and sizing machine, the BT-9 indent cylinder (for sorting grain), the colour sorter (for sorting grain by colour), the gravity separator SP-200 (for sorting grain by specific weight). Special attention should be given to a MUZ-16 multi-purpose grain cleaning machine.

'This is an air screening machine for preliminary cleaning of cereals, legumes, pulses, grasses and other

crops for food and seeds.

This machine has 3 levels of hexagonal sieves, which help to increase its production capacity by up to 30%,'



Maksim Gudukin,  
Executive Director  
of EkoNiva-Tekhnika

continues Andrey Lisovsky, Deputy Director for Economic Affairs of OJSC Borisov Plant Metallist.

After the presentation, EkoNiva-Tekhnika and OJSC Borisov Plant Metallist signed a dealership agreement, according to which EkoNiva is entitled to sell and provide warranty maintenance for agricultural solutions of Polymya Trading Company in Kirov, Kostroma, Vladimir, Ivanovo, Yaroslavl oblasts, in Perm area, as well as in the Republics of Mari El, Komi and Udmurtia.

'At the moment, we offer farmers the MUZ-16 multi-purpose grain cleaning machine and the SP-200 gravity separator, these units are already in stock. We are also accepting applications for the supply of grain drying units, seed cleaning lines and feed mills for 2023', says Ivan Balakhontsev, Head of the Equipment Sales Department at the Kirov branch of EkoNiva-Tekhnika.

By Darya DENISOVA



# Expanding innovative practices



This season, EkoNiva has doubled the percentage of fields sown at a variable rate. The technology is now used in seven more regions: Kaluga, Ryazan, Kursk and Novosibirsk oblasts, Altai area and the Republics of Bashkortostan and Tatarstan – all in all, 15,000 ha.

Variable rate seeding was first tested by EkoNiva in the Black Soil region in 2018 on maize, which is a strategically important crop for milk producers.

'EkoNivaAgro Left Bank Operation, Voronezh oblast, was a pioneer in applying the cutting-edge farming technologies. The location was chosen for the experiment because it had state-of-the-art seed drills, a fleet of harvesters equipped with yield sensors and a large herd. It was necessary for the farm to increase silage production, in the first place

by enhancing plant growing efficiency', says Sergey Kapustin, Precision Farming Director. 'Later, as the fleet was further upgraded, it became possible to employ variable rate sowing for cereals and pulses.'

The experimental stage in the Black Soil Region was finished in 2011 after a careful study of the response of maize to the new method. This season, all maize in the regional enterprise of EkoNiva has been sown at a variable rate depending on the soil fertility in different areas of the fields.

Based on the positive experience in Voronezh, EkoNiva is currently expanding the practice to other regions. Last year, the technology was applied on 6,500 ha, of which 4,500 ha was sown with maize and the rest – with winter and spring wheat.

'Farming operations of EkoNiva are located in different climate zones: from Siberia to St. Petersburg. The recommendations we have developed for the Central Black Soil region do not always work in other areas. For example, the strategy we used in Voronezh proved ineffective for Kaluga oblast. We had to reconsider our approach, try a wider range of application rates and continue analysing yields and financial parameters', comments Sergey Kapustin.

'In Novosibirsk oblast, on the contrary, the method worked very well. We sowed

around 600 ha of maize for silage at a variable rate saving seeds and boosting the yield. We develop precision farming in new regions from scratch. Experiments usually take from three to four years. Our specialists monitor the performance of crops in dry and wet years, develop guidelines for the region and include variable rate sowing into the regular production process after completion of the study.'

This year, EkoNiva has tested variable rate seeding for spring barley, sunflower, oil flax and sugar beet.

'In 2023, we are planning to use variable rate seeding for all of our soya beans. The experiment has been very successful: seed consumption has gone down 25% – from 80,000 seeds/ha to 60,000 seeds/ha – while the yield has risen significantly.'

By Aleksandr KUTISHCHEV



**Sergey Kapustin,  
Precision Farming Director:**

'We develop precision farming in new regions from scratch. Experiments usually take from three to four years. Our specialists monitor the performance of the crops sown at various rates in dry and wet years, develop guidelines for the region and include variable rate sowing into the regular production process.'





# Where big milk comes from

Feed plays a crucial role in milk production directly affecting cow productivity and the income of the farm. In this article, we will tell our readers about the fodder crops forming the nutritional basis of EkoNiva's herd.

EkoNiva has over 110,000 dairy cows producing more than 3,300 tonnes of milk per day. On average, the daily dry matter intake of a high-yielding cow is 25 kg, which corresponds to over 50 kg of feed. Each cow gives more than 30 kg of milk with a fat content of 3.83% and a protein content of 3.38%. Butterfat and protein content largely depend on the ration, which in EkoNiva is individually formulated for each group of cows.

Ninety-seven percent of the required forage crops are grown by EkoNiva in its own fields from the seeds produced in-house by EkoNiva-Semena.

Apart from cereals and forage crops, we also grow soya beans and sunflowers and sell them to oil mills. We take back the meal left after oil extraction and use it as a high-protein feed component. In the same way, we receive molasses from the sugar beets delivered to sugar factories. Molasses improves feed palatability, increases dry matter digestibility and stimulates microbial activity in the rumen', explains Willi Drews, Doctor of Agronomy, Consultant of EkoNiva-APK Holding.

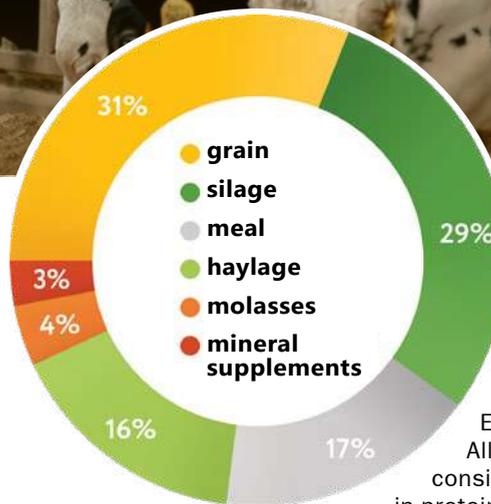
The company uses crops and varieties with an extensive root system producing consistent yields in any climatic conditions, such as alfalfa, which is indispensable for haylage production and if properly ensiled can deliver 21% protein.

EkoNiva-Semena offers a number of alfalfa varieties to cater to the demands of its clients. For example, the variety Victoria is tolerant to a continuous excess water stress (up to 20 days) during spring. One of its major benefits is consistently high seed yield. Alfalfa varieties adapted to the Central, Volga-Vyatka, Ural, East Siberian and West Siberian regions are more frost-resistant.



**Willi Drews, Doctor of Agronomy, EkoNiva's consultant:**

'The blue alfalfa varieties Dakota and Paola feature dense foliage which indicates a high nutritious value as their leaves contain 75% protein. These varieties show a high frost resistance and early germination in spring. Farms located in colder climatic zones will benefit from growing such alfalfa varieties as Victoria, Uralochka and Sarga. All of them have excellent ecological plasticity and ensure from 2 to 4 cuts per season.



OAC Prudence and Tourmaline soya bean varieties along with in-house bred EN Argenta, EN Akcent and EN Argument. All of them are consistently high in protein – 42-44%.

According to EkoNiva's specialists, the quality of haylage directly depends on the time of alfalfa cutting. If alfalfa is cut at the bud stage, the haylage will contain 21.6% protein. However, if the cutting is postponed for a few days until the bloom stage, it will result in a higher fiber level and a 3-4% lower protein content.

One of the most expensive and valuable components in the ration of dairy cattle is soya bean meal because it provides highly digestible protein. EkoNiva-Semena offers the internationally grown

Peas are also rich in protein (22-24%), vitamins and minerals. The average yield of fodder peas exceeds 4 t/ha. The varieties Rocket and Trendy have a low TKW and demonstrate an impressive performance in both trials and large-scale production, delivering over 4 t/ha at a seeding rate of 230-260 kg/ha. Leafless pea varieties are not prone to lodging and are easy to harvest. Moreover, they are the best predecessor for cereal crops. As a rule, peas make up no less than a third of the cow ration.

EkoNiva keeps expanding its seed portfolio. In 2022, five winter wheat varieties developed by the company – EN Cepheus, EN Albireo, EN Taygeta, EN Mars and EN Photon – have been listed in the Russian Register. All of them boast an increased winter and frost hardiness. Last year, EkoNiva varieties survived a severe winter while many others were killed by recurrent frosts and ice crusts and had to be resown by the spring.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO



# Off to a good start



Pupils of specialised Agricultural Classes in Voronezh, Novosibirsk, Kaluga and Ryazan oblasts have finished the academic year. The graduates passed the state exams and are preparing to enter different agricultural universities in Russia.

EkoNiva launched a unique Agriclass project five years ago in collaboration with agricultural universities and schools in the regions. The programme is created for students of 8<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> forms intending to study agriculture and commit their lives to farming. Under this project, EkoNiva cooperates with Voronezh Agricultural University n.a. Emperor Peter I, Novosibirsk Agricultural University and Kaluga Branch of Moscow Agricultural Academy n.a. K.A. Timiryazev.

Agriclass students do advanced studies of Biology, Physics and other subjects required for entering an agricultural university.

Throughout the academic year, university teachers come to the schools to introduce Agriclass pupils into the professions of a veterinarian, an agronomist and an engineer.

At the classes held at EkoNiva premises, the children get theoretical basics of crop farming, sowing technology, engineering and veterinarian medicine supervised by the company's experts

and, afterwards, gain their practical skills working with cows in the barns and cutting-edge equipment – out in the fields and

workshops. Besides, the schoolchildren take regular tours of the company's dairy plants and machinery maintenance centres.



## **Boris Morev, EkoNiva Corporate Academy Manager:**

'The human resource issue is still the most challenging in the Russian agricultural sector. Therefore, collaboration with the top agricultural universities of our country and student internships at EkoNiva enterprises have always been an integral part of our personnel strategy. Nowadays, we are fostering cooperation with secondary schools as well in order to cultivate love for agriculture in teenagers earlier.'

'At EkoNiva, children learn about all aspects of farming: veterinary science, herd management, fieldworks and modern machinery', comments Boris Morev, EkoNiva Corporate Academy Manager.

Apart from the extensive knowledge and experience the students gain at Agriclass, they get extra points added to the state exam score when applying for agricultural universities.

Today, the programme includes 96 schoolchildren. The graduates have already successfully passed their state exams and are preparing to enter different agricultural universities in Russia. In total, over 150 students have finished the Agriclass and 44 of them are now studying farming.

By Viktor BARGOTIN



# Vladimir Frolov: Agriculture is my life and EkoNiva is my second home



Half a century in the industry – from a machine operator to a chief herd manager at an enterprise – is the path trodden by Vladimir Frolov, one of the highly esteemed specialists at EkoNiva.

**N**ow, I am thinking about it with a smile, but back then it was no laughing matter. In the early 2000s, we were standing outside with Aleksandr Nikolayevich Rybenko who managed the Tikhiy Don farm at the time. It was autumn, the ground was dirty and in front of us was a conveyor which was out of order, we had no money and were running out of fuel. Aleksandr and I were discussing whether we would live until the day when we would not need to lock the warehouses any longer, the people would come to work smiling and have decent salaries, the production process would start bringing profit. Those were the dreams which have come true', recalls Vladimir Frolov.

Vladimir Frolov was born in Shchuchye village, Liski district, Voronezh oblast. His father was a herd manager on Tikhiy Don collective farm, while his mother was involved in sugar beet production. After school, he went through all the steps of agricultural education – from college to institute and started his career path on the same farm as his parents.

'In 1975, I was appointed to the position of a farm manager. We had a herd of 1,600 head, including 660 dairy cows. One

cow yielded up to 3,000 kg of milk. At that time, milkmaids partially milked cows with their hands, carried milk in buckets, cleaned the sheds manually, transported feed and hay in horse carts and spread it using spades. Some time later, in the early 80s, the first milking equipment, feed distributors and loaders appeared. Work on the farm was getting easier', continued Vladimir Frolov.

A few years later, Vladimir Ivanovich got promoted to Deputy Director of Tikhiy Don collective farm while continuing his work as the Chief Herd Manager. The farm was a flagship one and always did well, but the perestroika and its consequences took their toll.

'At the end of the 90s, the annual milk yield per cow barely exceeded 1,000 kg. We lacked feed for animals, people were moving to the city, the enterprise was coming to ruin. In an effort to save the farm from demise Aleksandr Rybenko and I went in search of prosperous and responsible investors as far as to Moscow more than once. Unfortunately, only "benefactors", seeking to grab the land and sell it on, came our way. However, we could not let the locals down, we had to make a responsible

choice. In 2002, we met Stefan Dürr. Farmers liked him from the start – he is a straightforward, honest and approachable man. Stefan instantly became a man of the people. Everyone was enthusiastic about the newly founded EkoNivaAgro. We went to other Russian farms to adopt new practices, did internships

formation. We have many young employees. We hire graduates from agricultural institutions. In their eyes, I have always seen the motivation for making our enterprise even better, which has been an inspiration to me', continues Vladimir.

Vladimir Frolov has nurtured a galaxy of highly qualified specialists, who hold senior positions in various branches of EkoNiva today – Sergey Lyakhov, Regional Director for Novosibirsk oblast, Vyacheslav Ionov, EkoNivaAgro-North Operation Director, Valeriya Serebryannikova (Pavlova), Cattle Breeding Department Manager at EkoNiva-APK Holding, Andrey Peretokin, Chief Herd Manager at EkoNivaAgro-Left Bank Operation and many other specialists started their career under Vladimir Frolov's guidance.

'Ten years ago, I retired but could not stop doing the job I love so much and returned to work as a director of the farm where it all began for me. With highly-qualified staff working for the company, I can leave any time being confident about its future. However, I cannot say



**Aleksandr Nesterenko, Director, EkoNivaAgro-Right Bank Operation**

'Vladimir Frolov is a dedicated professional. He is on duty virtually 24/7 365 days a year. He has earned an excellent reputation, everybody – from milkmaids to managers – respect him. He is involved in all social activities at the enterprise and passes on his experience to the new generations of employees treating them like a father.'

in Germany and studied state-of-the-art technologies', continues Vladimir Frolov.

In 2007, the first dairy Shchuchye opened in EkoNivaAgro. By then, old farms had been reconstructed, farmers started using modern imported machinery. The annual milk production per cow went up to 8,000 kg.

'The people who work here have always played the main part in EkoNivaAgro's

goodbye to EkoNiva. Farming is my life and EkoNiva is my second home', concludes Vladimir Frolov.

This year, Vladimir Frolov has celebrated his 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary. On behalf of the company, we would like to congratulate Vladimir, wish him happiness, sound health and a long life, success and many more happy years with EkoNiva.

By Viktor BARGOTIN

# Life worth living



Yegor Gornostayev has had a quarter-century career in one company – Zashchitnoye farm, Kursk oblast. Every day, he takes care of 1,200 cows and calves.

His journey to the profession began many years ago. When Yegor was 10 years old, he adopted a puppy that

had been hit by a car. He brought it home, treated and bandaged its injured paws. The treatment and daily care did the job – the

puppy recovered and stayed at Yegor's home. Then, the boy decided to become a veterinarian, and he fulfilled his dream. Now, he starts each day by inspecting cows and immediately notices if there is something wrong with them.

'If a calf has droopy ears, it means it is sick and needs treatment', says Yegor Gornostayev. 'Calves are not afraid of injections, unlike children, but you have to handle them with love: stroke them and speak softly.'

State-of-the-art technologies make veterinarian's work much easier. For example, ultrasound examination provides the fullest information about the health of a pregnant cow and the foetus, helps to take a timely decision on breeding or culling and increase the percentage of trouble-free calvings. In general, preventive healthcare and efficient herd management are the basis of modern dairy farming.

'Cow comfort comes first. If an animal feels

comfortable to stand and walk, it will eat a lot and produce a lot of tasty milk. We regularly check cows for rumen contractions – to make sure the digestive system functions properly, as good milk comes only from a healthy cow,' emphasises the vet.

As a student, Yegor Gornostayev heard the phrase by Ivan Pavlov, a member of the Academy of Sciences: 'A doctor treats a man, and a veterinarian treats mankind'. Indeed, the profession has a special mission: to protect human health by ensuring animal welfare.

'I'm proud of my profession and feel passionate about animals', continues Yegor Gornostayev. "You have to be a veterinarian to have a life worth living" is my life motto. There's nothing more rewarding than looking into the soulful and grateful eyes of the cow you've cured!

By Tatyana IGNATENKO

## Career prospects

EkoNiva has participated in the student job fair at Agrofestival arranged by Kursk Agricultural Academy.

Today, the holding has more than 130 open vacancies in various segments of agricultural production: cattle farming, crop growing and machine maintenance.

The attendees demonstrated a keen interest in the company: in the first hour of the fair, EkoNiva welcomed over 100 people at its booth and after the event, the company received 45 applications for training and internship.

'Our main goal is to tell the students and graduates about EkoNiva's business and its benefits as an employer,' underlines Viktoriya Polyanskaya, Deputy Regional HR Director at EkoNiva Kursk branch.

'Our company, in its turn, gets an opportunity to create a talent pool for further training, internships and employment,' adds Yevgeniy Bezpалov, Senior Talent Pool Specialist of EkoNiva.

The holding cooperates with 58 Russian agricultural institutions. Each of them holds student job fairs annually and EkoNiva's vacancies never fail to be the most popular.

As for this year's graduates, EkoNiva offers paid traineeship programmes in Veterinary Medicine, Herd Management and Agronomy. The students take a series of crash courses in cattle farming, crop growing and machine maintenance



taught by corporate coaches. Based on the results of the traineeship, the company evaluates the skill level of the young specialists. If a trainee is offered a job upon

completing the programme, he or she is eligible for a salary starting from 50,000 rubles.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO

# EkoNiva fosters corporate sports



The first corporate mini-soccer tournament has been held in Bobrov district, Voronezh oblast. Ten teams from all the subdivisions of EkoNiva operating in the region took part in the event.

At the group stage, each team played four games. The winners and runners-up in the groups continued to compete for the Big cup while the rest of the pack clashed for the Small Cup. The squads of EkoNivaAgro Right Bank Operation and EkoNivaAgro East Operation met in the final. The contenders demonstrated a spectacular face-off with lots of potential goal-scoring situations and beautiful combinations. In the end, EkoNivaAgro East Operation defeated the opponent with a score of 2-0. The bronze went to EkoNivaAgro North-1 Operation.

EkoNiva-Chernozemye and EkoNivaAgro Moloko Voronezh met in the Small cup final.

The match ended in a draw in regulation time, but EkoNiva-Chernozemye took the first place with a score of 3-2 in the penalty shoot-out. EkoNivaAgro Left Bank Operation ranked third.

‘Sports are part and parcel of the company’s corporate culture. It’s a great way to socialise with the colleagues in an informal setting, to get to know each other better. I appreciate it that the company management is so considerate towards the employees’ health and wellbeing’, shares Vyacheslav Prostyakov, Director of Livestock Product Sales Department, EkoNiva-APK Holding.

By Viktor BARGOTIN

## Top 4 leader

Business Champions League, a prestigious football contest held for local companies and enterprises, has finished in Voronezh. The EkoNiva-Chernozemye team, taking part in the tournament for the third time, has come in a good fourth.



Over the course of two months, 16 squads contended for gold medals and the title of the best corporate team in Voronezh.

According to the tournament policy, the teams compete within two groups of eight teams each. The first round is the group stage. The top four teams from each group advance to the second round, play-off. Based on the results of the draw, EkoNiva-Chernozemye was in one group with the teams

of DOM.RF, SE VO Edinaya Direktsiya, SK Vybor, M-Trust, RVK-Voronezh, Komus and Promsvyazbank.

EkoNiva-Chernozemye did not get off to a great start: the team lost the first three matches. However, in the remaining four matches of the group stage, the dealer team didn’t make any blunders and scored the maximum number of points possible – 12. With this score, EkoNiva-Chernozemye came fourth in the group and qualified for the play-off.

In the quarter-final, the dealer squad met with the SE VO Edinaya Direktsiya. In the regulation time, the winner was still not determined, with the teams tied at 3-3. During the penalty shootout, luck was on the side of EkoNiva-Chernozemye. In the semi-final, the EkoNiva team lost to the DOM.RF team with the score of 1-4.

In the match for bronze medals, EkoNiva-Chernozemye faced off against RVK-Voronezh. The players of

the rival team took the first lead, but ten minutes later the athletes of EkoNiva leveled. The second time started with a missed goal into the gates of EkoNiva-Chernozemye, and by the end of the match the players of RVK-Voronezh capped the scoring with another goal to win the gamenot determined at 1-3.

‘It’s a pity that we weren’t able to win the bronze medals of the tournament. All the players did their best, gave 100 percent, showed a beautiful and dignified football. I’d like to thank the teammates for excellent performance at the tournament, and our management – for support and development of sports in the company’, comments Roman Golubyatnikov, a player of EkoNiva-Chernozemye.

Over the entire history of the company’s participation in Business Champions League, this year, the squad has achieved the best result so far, placing fourth. With each season, the standings of the team are getting higher. Next opportunity for the players of EkoNiva’s technical holding to please their fans with championship medals will present itself this autumn.

By Viktor BARGOTIN

# Milk and coffee – perfect match

## Glance into history

EkoNiva is well-versed in milk. In 2017, the company topped the list of raw milk producers in Russia; soon it ranked number three in the world. It is constantly improving the yields and product quality.

EkoNiva's experts are convinced that the quality of raw milk is essential for processing and making a product with necessary parameters. The company is 100% confident of its milk as it grows fodder, raises calves, produces milk and processes it on its own. Stringent microbiological standards, proper milking routine and general welfare of cows take EkoNiva's milk to a new level. Full control over all production stages eliminates failures and ensures the product meeting all the criteria.

'We can fine-tune every step of milk production to achieve the required properties and satisfy our clients' needs', says Karolina Vasilyeva, Manager

EkoNiva Professional Line UHT milk is commercially available in 0.5, 1.5, 2.5, 3.2 and 3.5%, fat range, and Professional Line cream – in 10% fat.

of Milk Quality Control Department for Processing at EkoNiva-Food.

To tailor the milk to coffee-based beverages, EkoNiva's specialists carried out extensive research and analysed the data collected from baristas, coffee machine manufacturers and catering companies to develop the milk suiting the requirements of the HoReCa sector and matching the expectations of the most demanding customers.

## Professional opinion

EkoNiva Professional Line milk has a high protein content – 3.2 g per 100 g, which helps to reach the parameters especially valued by professional



EkoNiva has just recently entered the HoReCa sector launching production of milk for coffee making. In 2021, the company held a 13% market share processing 27.2 million litres of milk. How has EkoNiva milk conquered prestigious coffee houses and restaurants in no time?

baristas – easy frothing, gloss and texture. EkoNiva milk composition ensures perfect froth for cappuccino, latte or any other coffee drink. Nice and dense, it gives not only an excellent taste but also a great basis for latte art techniques – drawing on the coffee surface and decorating it with cinnamon or cocoa powder. Baristas also appreciate the honest volume of 1 litre making the product so convenient for wholesale purchasing and portioning.

'I rank EkoNiva Professional Line milk high by various parameters', says Sergey Mitrofanov, Brand Manager of The Welder Catherine, the winner of

1.5% milk to make latte, the coffee flavour will be more intense. And if we use 3.5% milk, the beverage will taste creamier. Thus, we are equipped to offer our guests different coffee variations.'

The industry experts also acknowledge 10% fat Professional Line cream as an ideal choice for Raf coffee, a drink based on cream, espresso and vanilla sugar tasting like a dessert. Natural honey-like sweetness of EkoNiva cream allows adjusting the drink

In January 2022, EkoNiva Professional Line 3.5% was given 88.5 points and 2 stars out of 3 possible in the Superior Taste Award contest in Brussels.

recipe and reducing sugar added while making the taste creamy and sweet.

Professional Line is available in all federal districts of Russia, from Kaliningrad in the west to Vladivostok in the east, from Murmansk in the north to the Black Sea coast in the south. Numerous large chains like KFC, Shokoladnitsa, Prime Cafe (Novikov Group), Dodo Pizza, Chaihona, Cinnabon, Coffee Like, Bushe Skuratov Coffee, Surf Coffee, Ginza Project restaurants and DoubIB specialty coffee houses have already opted for EkoNiva milk and treat their guests to delicious beverages.

EkoNiva keeps ramping up its HoReCa line distribution and increasing regions of representation notwithstanding the sanctions exacerbated by the withdrawal of foodservice companies from the market. Fortunately, new players are coming to substitute the foreign chains, and they also choose to partner with EkoNiva.

Dubai Brewers Cup 2017, an international coffee-brewing championship. 'The line features milk with fat



contents ranging from skimmed to full-fat product, which enables us to play with flavours. For instance, if we use a low-fat 0.5% or



## EkoNiva sponsoring Fyodor Konyukhov's expedition

World-famous adventurer Fyodor Konyukhov has visited EkoNiva operations in Voronezh for the second time. His itinerary included a dairy farm in Dobrino village and a cheese plant in Shchuchye village. Stefan Dürr, EkoNiva Group President, welcomed and accompanied the dear guest.

This autumn, Fyodor Konyukhov is going to embark on his unique green expedition. The project is the first solo crossing of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans from continent to continent aboard a solar-powered NOVA catamaran.

The project's main goals are to evaluate the microplastic pollution of the ocean and raise public awareness of this problem. The catamaran is fitted with special sea-water filters with replaceable cartridges retaining plastic particles sized from 200 microns. On a daily basis, Fyodor Konyukhov will maintain the filters, pack and mark the samples collected and record the location coordinates, sampling time and readings of the filtered water meter. He will also visually monitor the ocean surface layers for debris and keep a video diary.

Upon arrival, he will pass the samples and video materials collected during the voyage to the Institute of Oceanology n.a. P.P. Shirshova of the Russian Academy of Sciences for analysis and interpretation. The project research will provide data to evaluate microplastic pollution of the southern Pacific area crossed by the catamaran and study further migration paths of microplastics using mathematical modelling.

EkoNiva is a sponsor of the project providing the adventurer with milk supplies for the entire voyage period and promoting the awareness of his ecologic goals on offline and online platforms.

EkoNiva Group is conscious of the farming industry environmental issues. Careful management of natural resources is one of fundamental

elements of the sustainable development strategy that the company devised in 2020 in compliance with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and ESG-standards. In 2021, the Group calculated its farms' CO2 equivalent emissions and published its first sustainable development report. Besides, the company is already working on standards for animal welfare improvement and has decided to draw up a climatic strategy for power and water saving.

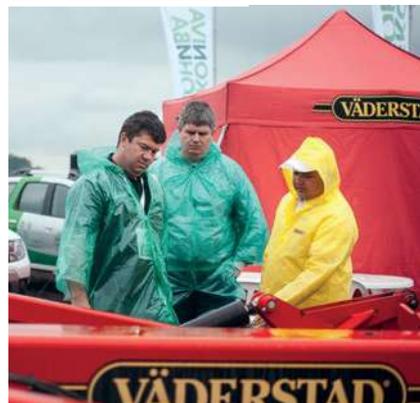
Fyodor Konyukhov came to tour EkoNiva dairy farm and cheese plant together

with representatives of his Nova Project partners – Hevel Group, a producer of solar modules, and Rostselmash Group, the largest Russian of farm machinery manufacturer. The guests saw milk production process and all stages of cheese making. Of course, after the tour, they could taste Shchuchye and Kolybelka semi-hard and premium Dürr hard cheese aged for 3, 6 or 12 months.

In conclusion, the guests visited a collective grave of the Great Patriotic War soldiers and a Local History Museum in Shchuchye village.



# EkoNiva in focus



**31 August - 3 September  
AgroRus 2022 trade show»**

Venue: EXPOFORUM Convention and Exhibition Centre, St. Petersburg, Peterburgskoye sh., 64/1  
Organisers: Expoforum-International, EkoNiva-Tekhnika, LLC

**September  
20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Severnaya Niva**

Venue: Severny district, Orenburg oblast  
Organiser: EkoNiva-APK Holding, LLC



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