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Stefan Dürr: a breakthrough in seed breeding requires skilled staff, cutting-edge machinery and investments.

EkoNiva has been engaged in seed production since the mid-90s. Together with the State Duma, the Federation Council and the professional community, the company took part in drafting Russia's first law On Seed Production. At that time, it was a real breakthrough for the domestic seed industry. The law was effective until the end of 2021.

In 1998, EkoNiva started importing the best plant genetics from Europe: first, potatoes and lawn grasses, then wheat, barley and peas. As soon as the company purchased its own farms, it started seed multiplication. At the same time, EkoNiva was developing cooperation with the most advanced domestic and international seed breeding institutions. Currently, the company works with 32 breeding centres in Russia and abroad.

EkoNiva's subsidiary in Kursk oblast, OOO 'Zashchitnoye', is now one of the top seed breeders in the country. In 2015, it opened its own modern seed breeding centre.

Within 25 years of operation, EkoNiva has become the largest producer of field crop seeds in Russia. The company's portfolio includes 65 varieties of 15 crops. Annual certified seed sales have reached 80,000 tonnes. Five winter wheat varieties and three soybean varieties have been listed in the State Register. The company is working on new varieties of maize, spring wheat, spring fodder barley, chick peas and lentils.

The Russian seed industry is performing well. Domestic breeders have patented a number of good winter wheat varieties and are working on other important crops. Plant breeding is becoming increasingly important, especially now when it is critical to ensure self-sufficiency in essential crops. Specialised companies such as Shchelkovo-Agrokhim (an operation controlled by Krasnodar Agricultural Research Institute) are making a considerable contribution into the development of the Russian seed production.

Unfortunately, not many people dare to engage in seed breeding today. High costs, limited availability of plant breeding and field research machinery and a long payback period make the industry unattractive for business. Plant breeding machinery and equipment are not produced in Russia at the moment, although the demand is quite high. In joint effort with a foreign partner and the Federal Scientific Centre (VIM), EkoNiva is working on a pilot project involving local assembly of a plot harvester using parts produced in Russia and a Belarusian engine (MMZ). However, serial production of such machines requires targeted financing from the government.

Lack of skilled specialists is another challenge for the industry. The profession of a seed breeder is not particularly popular with young people today. It is important to look for talented students and invite them for internship to the leading plant breeding companies to give them an insight into modern practices implemented in Russia. They

will be more willing to dedicate themselves to science when they see cutting-edge facilities and have a chance to gain some hands-on experience at the country's best breeding stations.

EkoNiva puts a lot of effort into forming a talent pool. The company takes part in several initiatives, including the Vavilovets student team and scientific projects implemented in cooperation with the Plant Breeding and Seed Production Department of Kursk State Agricultural Academy and Voronezh State Agricultural University. Besides, EkoNiva specialists hold trainings for postgraduate students of agricultural universities to prepare committed and qualified employees for the company's operations.

Thus, active investment, modern equipment and young ambitious employees will help the industry to make a breakthrough in the nearest time and provide Russian farmers with premium-quality locally-bred seeds.

Stefan Dürr,
EkoNiva Group President

More curds



EkoNiva has commissioned a new curds production facility with a capacity of 10 tonnes per day at the dairy plant in Anna, Voronezh oblast.

The project has been implemented as part of a comprehensive reconstruction programme to be finished in 2024. The total investment is expected to exceed 1.9 billion rub.

Currently, 300 sq. m of the facility is dedicated to an automated curds production plant featuring equipment of domestic and foreign manufacture with the daily output of 10 tonnes of

finished product. Curds with a fat content of 5% and 9% under the EKONIVA brand are packaged into 180 g briquettes and stable bags with a net weight of 300 and 750 g. By the end of the year, a new SKU – 0.5% curds – will be added to the product range.

For the convenience of the staff and compliance with food safety requirements, the premises now feature a new fully equipped office and amenity building; an ice water station using environmentally friendly refrigerant, a new power centre and an improved water treatment system.

Investment in the first stage of plant reconstruction and modernisation amounts to 841 million rub. The second stage is estimated at 1.1 billion rub. The project is implemented with the support of AO Rosselkhozbank.

The second stage of the project implementation will involve expansion of the curds line capacity up to 20 tonnes per day, installation of the milk

and whey drying plant, construction of a new finished goods storage, a boiler room and a high-voltage transformer. Upon completion of the project, at least 54 jobs will be created, 29 of them in the first stage. As a result, the number of employees will grow to at least 263. The comprehensive reconstruction of the facility as well as commissioning of two more UHT milk production lines will allow to increase Anna plant processing capacity to 750 tonnes of raw milk per day by 2025. Before the reconstruction, the daily raw milk intake amounted to 200 tonnes.

EKONIVA dairy produced at the milk processing plant in Anna is supplied to the largest federal retail chains, EkoNiva brand shops. The produce is available in more than 60 regions of Russia. The enterprise is certified to export UHT milk to China and Kazakhstan and regularly ships natural high-quality products to its foreign partners.

By Viktor BARGOTIN

Going East

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia imports over USD 20 billion worth of agricultural products annually, making it one of the top agricultural importers worldwide. According to the data provided by the Agroexport federal centre, this indicator exceeded USD 23 billion in 2021. Russia's share accounted for 3% of the total annual imports. At the same time, Saudi Arabia is the largest exporter of dairy produce in the Persian Gulf and it seeks to diversify its portfolio by offering both domestically produced and imported dairy products.

Therefore, this country's market of agricultural produce, especially high-quality natural dairy and organic products, has substantial growth opportunities.

'The citizens of Saudi Arabia are focused on the quality of food in



EkoNiva Group presented the dairy products at the 39th international trade show Saudi Agriculture 2022, one of the leading specialised events in the Middle East

their diet since it is a long-term investment in

their health. Thus, we see immense potential

for our natural dairy products in this country, in particular semi-hard and hard cheeses, as well as organic milk. I was pleasantly surprised at how local buyers value organic products', said Stefan Dürr, EkoNiva Group President.

During Saudi Agriculture 2022, the EkoNiva delegates held a series of meetings and negotiations with prospective partners and representatives of major local businesses, among them Almarai, the world's largest raw milk producer; Naded, a leading food manufacturer in the Middle East; Lulu, an international hypermarket chain widely represented in Saudi Arabia, and Tamimi, a supermarket chain.

As a leading Russian crop producer, EkoNiva Group also plans to export red and green lentils, peas and chickpeas to Saudi Arabia.

By Mariya IVANOVA

Self-sufficiency in genetic material

EkoNiva and Institute of Cytology and Genetics, Siberian Branch of Russian Academy of Sciences (IC&G SB RAS), have entered into an agreement on scientific cooperation and strategic partnership. The meeting took place at the 9th International forum of technological development 'Tekhnoprom-2022'.

The strategic alliance of EkoNiva and IC&G SB RAS calls for the establishment of a joint genetic and breeding centre on the premises of Sibirskaya Niva operation in Cherepanovo district, Novosibirsk oblast. The scope of the project comprises the construction of a scientific laboratory, a climate chamber, a seed handling facility with the initial capacity of 40,000 tonnes per year and a logistics centre with all

the required infrastructure. At first, 100 hectares of farmland will be allocated for trial plots, with further plans to triple the area in the future. In addition, the project provides for collaborative work of the parties aimed at the improvement of the genetic potential of pedigree dairy cattle and development of joint plant breeding programmes on cereals, legumes, forage grasses and maize. The parties will also engage in



genetic passportisation, marker-assisted and genomic selection, gene editing, maintenance breeding and large-scale seed production of the varieties bred by IC&G SB RAS and EkoNiva.

The main goal of the bilateral cooperation is to ensure self-sufficiency in essential crops and pedigree dairy cattle. In particular,

the project will ensure the availability of high-quality seeds and genetic material for the Urals, Siberia and Far East up to 2030, thus contributing to the implementation of the Doctrine of Food Security of Russia in three key areas: seed production, plant and cattle breeding.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO

New dealership in Kaliningrad



EkoNivaTehnika-Holding has started operating in the westernmost point of Russia – Kaliningrad oblast. Now the company is represented in 27 regions of Russia.

Kaliningrad branch office provides local farmers with a full range of services offering new and used cutting-edge machines of the leading domestic and global brands as well as a wide range of spare parts.

The dealership features four repair stations and

a 375 sq.m spare parts warehouse with a storage capacity of 4,200 units. Machinery maintenance and repair works are carried out by a professional team with years of experience in the agricultural sector.

The branch office has already welcomed its first

clients. Participation in the National Field day, which this year happened to take place in Kaliningrad oblast, gave the company representatives an excellent opportunity to meet local farmers and lay the groundwork for further cooperation. The region specialises in crop farming,

in particular the cultivation of cereals and rapeseed. Farmers rely heavily on high-power modern machinery in their business. About 70% of the machinery employed by the farming enterprises is made by John Deere and requires high-quality maintenance and genuine spare parts.

'Even in these challenging times, we strive for ongoing development and feel confident about our future. EkoNiva-Tekhnika has an edge: 27 years of expertise and a committed professional team. No doubt, our custom-tailored approach will align with our Kaliningrad customers' expectations and we will become partners for many years to come', says Gennadiy Nepomnyashchii, EkoNivaTehnika-Holding Commercial Director.

The holding's portfolio comprises agricultural and specialised equipment of domestic and international brands, including Gregoire Besson, Bednar, Pottinger, Nagro, Rauch, Fliegl, Haybuster, Einböck, BvL, John Deere, JCB and others.

By Svetlana WEBER

Entering new export markets



EkoNiva has started exporting its branded dairy produce to Kazakhstan shipping a pilot batch of UHT milk and cream.

The Group has partnered with Baker Foods, a leading distributor and supplier of raw materials and ingredients for bakery and confectionery production in the republic. The current range presents a traditional line of 1.5, 2.5 and 3.2% fat UHT milk in 1,000 ml cartons

and 10% fat cream in 200 ml packaging. The first 55 tonnes of products was shipped early in summer from EkoNiva's dairy plant located in Anna, Voronezh oblast. The facility is certified by Russia's Federal Veterinary and Phytosanitary Service to export UHT milk produce to the Eurasian

Economic Union countries. The produce is delivered by motor vehicles maintaining required temperatures. The transportation takes up to 10 days. As a result, customers can enjoy all the benefits of milk.

Dairy products figure largely in Kazakh culture and

cuisine. Today, UHT milk is particularly popular with local population – on average, they buy one package every time they go shopping. EKONIVA dairy products are available in the Magnum hypermarket chain, ADK retail chain and other sales outlets in Almaty and Karaganda.

'The proximity to Kazakhstan and smart logistics make it possible for EkoNiva to deliver fresh dairy products in a short time frame. Our immediate plan includes expanding both the range and geography of deliveries to this country', explains Denis Ishmayev, Sales Director of EkoNiva-Food.

EkoNiva Group has been developing export of processed milk products since June 2020. So far, the company has been supplying mainly to China. However, the Group is interested in entering new export markets and continues to tap into the Southeast Asia and the Middle East markets.

By Natalya SHARAPOVA

Ranking high

EkoNiva has gone a whopping 23 lines up and is now ranked 26th, thus showing the most dramatic growth in the rating of the Dairy Intelligence Agency in 2021. The holding has also substantially boosted the processing volume moving up to second place in the ranking. Last year, the company's enterprises increased the raw milk processing by 66.9% up to 144,000 tonnes.

In the spring of 2021, EkoNiva launched a cheese plant in Shchuchye village, Voronezh oblast, with 60 tonnes of raw milk intake per day and the daily output amounting to 4 tonnes of semi-hard and 2 tonnes of hard cheese. The plant produces Shchuchye and Kolybelka semi-hard and premium Dürre hard cheeses aged for 3, 6 and 12 months.

In 2021, EkoNiva sold over 131,200 tonnes of



EkoNiva has made it to the top 30 milk processors in Russia. Over a year, the Group has significantly improved its position in the Dairy Intelligence Agency rating.

finished dairy produce with a range exceeding 70 SKUs, thus surpassing the performance of 2020 by 76%. Over the nine months of 2022, EkoNiva's processing facilities produced more than 72,000 tonnes of milk

products, which is 40% higher than in the same period of 2021. In particular, the production of fresh milk and traditional dairy products – cream, kefir, sour cream, curds, butter, etc. – grew by 40% to 69,600 tonnes,

while the output of yoghurts and desserts including ice cream rose by 22% to 1,841 tonnes and that of cheeses increased 11-fold to approach 600 tonnes.

In the first half of 2022, EkoNiva's processing subdivision started to show operating profit. Such positive performance was achieved thanks to the newly opened EkoNiva outlets and expanding the company's geographical representation. In Q1 and Q2, its products became available to residents of Belgorod, Volgograd, Rostov, Samara oblasts, Krasnodar area, Adygea and Kazakhstan. On top of all, the company continues its active cooperation with the HoReCa sector. For instance, in June, EkoNiva resumed supplying milk to the largest fast food restaurant chain 'Tasty and that's it'.

By Mariya IVANOVA



Siberian cheese

Anatoliy Seryshev, Head of the Siberian Federal District, has paid an official visit to EkoNiva in Novosibirsk oblast. Together with Stefan Dürr, Group President, he toured the operations in Cherepanovo and Maslyanino districts.

The delegation visited the site of EkoNiva's largest investment project – Maslyanino cheese plant. The launch of the plant designed for of 1,150 tonnes of raw milk per day will ensure 400 jobs and quality

dairy products for local community. Apart from fresh and fermented dairy products, the plant is going to produce up to 35,200 tonnes of semi-hard and hard cheeses per year, which is around 100 tonnes per day. Part of

the output will be exported to other countries, for example, to China, already importing EkoNiva products since 2020.

Besides, the project design features a plant producing 90% demineralised cheese whey powder

(Demi 90) with a capacity of 15,840 tonnes per year. Demi 90 is the main ingredient of baby food. The scale and significance of the project are unprecedented in the Russian market and will ensure the market's full self-sufficiency in the principal ingredient for infant formulas.

'Considering the challenges the Russian economy has faced, it is essential to promptly finish the projects completed to a significant degree. It will enable our country to ensure food security and independent sufficiency in critical products as soon as possible and also to ramp up export sales. The implementation of the project will give a big boost to Maslyanino district and the entire south-east of Novosibirsk oblast ensuring sustainable economic and social development of the rural areas of the region', declared Stefan Dürr EkoNiva Group President, after the meeting.

By Mariya IVANOVA



From internship to employment

You are wrong if you think that it is difficult to get an internship in the company of your dream. It is a piece of cake. To make it even easier, Zashchitnoye enterprise, a subdivision of EkoNiva Group, holds Doors Open Days for students of specialist secondary schools. The goal of the event is to give the students insight into the actual production processes and the scale of operations and offer them internship and further employment opportunity.

EkoNiva has various time-proven training programmes for young specialists in all its regional subdivisions. The programmes are largely

aimed at searching and choosing the most talented students for prospective employment. Around 1,000 students of agricultural universities and schools

annually take internships on EkoNiva farms; many of them join the team later after graduation. Thus, in the past five years, various regional subdivisions have

employed 840 former interns. Competitive salary, professional growth and career opportunities are what makes EkoNiva attractive for young specialists.

Zashchitnoye farm has already been visited by several student groups from various schools of Kursk oblast on the Doors Open Days. Touring the production site, the students meet specialists and managers, see machinery and workshops, seed and grain handling facilities and also have lunch in the on-farm canteen.

The company guarantees payment, corporate overalls, compensation of travel expenses, comfortable dormitory accommodation, mentoring and hands-on experience in production.

In 2021 and 2022, 14 students took their internships at Zashchitnoye, one third of them have already fully completed their training and come to work on the farm, which in total, employes about 500 people.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO

House-warming at EkoNiva



EkoNivaAgro, Voronezh oblast, has invested over 62 billion rubles in housing to provide the specialists in Bobrov district with 45 corporate flats. Eighteen employees with their families have already received the keys to their new homes and are settling in.

The one- and two-room flats are newly decorated, furnished and fitted with gas equipment and home appliances. The employees live there rent-free subject to paying utility bills only.

Ensuring comfortable living conditions for the specialists is one of the top priorities of EkoNiva's HR policy. A lot of young professionals have moved from other regions

of Russia to work for EkoNiva, therefore accommodation is of great concern to them.

According to Roman Volodin, First Deputy Regional Director of EkoNivaAgro for Voronezh oblast, new hosts are going to move to the remaining 27 flats by the end of 2022.

'We do our best to create conditions that would attract young professionals to come

to our enterprises. We want to see our villages full of youth: men and women, who would feel comfortable to stay, work and also start their families here to fill our playgrounds with children's laughter', says Roman Volodin.

The keys to new homes were handed to the employees working in various positions for EkoNivaAgro-East and North operations: herd managers,

agronomists, engineers, milking operators and others.

Together with her husband Aleksandr and three sons, Anastasiya Galaganova moved to Voronezh oblast from Murmansk a few years ago to work as an accountant for EkoNivaAgro-North operation. Two years later, the company accommodated the family in a modern two-room flat.

'I'm immensely grateful to EkoNiva for providing us with an excellent flat. The company makes a huge contribution to the social development of the rural area turning it into a place where you want to live and raise your children', says Anastasiya Galaganova.

Besides, to ensure more housing opportunities for the rural workers, EkoNiva has joined the Comprehensive Rural Area Development Federal Programme. In 2020-2021, the company co-financed construction of private houses for the employees of the farms in Liski and Bobrov districts. It is expected to commission 15 more houses in Bobrov district under the programme by the end of this year and another 20 housing facilities – in 2023.

By Viktor BARGOTIN

Done: forty kg of milk per day

EkoNiva has ramped up the volume of daily milk yield per cow to 40 kg on several dairy farms in Bashkortostan and Kaluga oblast. Although the top performers have set the bar high, Ryazan oblast is about to reach the mark milking over 39 kg per lactating cow a day.

EkoNiva is continuously improving the production processes: the farms are enhancing the forage quality and the qualification of the specialists. EkoNiva employees constantly hone their skills by taking part in the workshops and interacting with the colleagues from other subdivisions. Operating in one information space, all the dairies have open access to each other's protocols. Such an approach ensures quick employment of the

practices that prove efficient, and, consequently, promotes the overall business', says Mikhail Gurnov, Livestock Production Director.

The herd genetics is another key element. The company uses top-quality semen to breed in-house grown replacement heifers with a higher genetic potential than the imported ones.

Besides, EkoNiva farms keep up improving milk production. As per 1 September, the average



yield per dairy cow across the holding amounted to 33.5 kg of raw milk, which is nearly a 3.2 kg boost as compared to the beginning of 2022.

In the first 6 months, the Group's herd size amounted to 200,000 head of cattle, half of them are dairy cows.

By Aleksandr KUTISHCHEV

Building economic ties with Armenia

The primary objective of the business meeting is to lay the groundwork for stronger economic ties between the two countries. In total, 40 companies participated in over 250 business meetings with Armenian buyers interested in purchasing Russian produce.

EkoNiva was the only delegate representing the farming sector. The company's product portfolio comprised seeds of high-yielding crop varieties, pedigree cattle and dairy produce.

'We have held over 20 business meetings mainly with the target clients and reached several cooperation agreements. EkoNiva has been supplying seeds to Armenia for 3 years now. There is a considerable demand for certain crops, so it's a great opportunity to expand our customer base', says Maksim Golovanyov, Sales Representative of EkoNiva-Semena.

The varieties supplied by EkoNiva deliver impressive



EkoNiva Group delegates have taken part in the Multisectoral trade mission to Yerevan, the Republic of Armenia, organised by Russian Export Centre.

performance in the fields of Armenia. According to the feedback from local farmers, the peas deliver 4.5 t/ha, on average; the spring wheat yields 4.6-4.8 t/ha, the spring barley – at least 5 t/ha and the oats – around 4.6 t/ha.

Along with high-yielding crop varieties, EkoNiva offers pedigree cattle with an outstanding genetic potential. The company supports the entire sales process: from selecting animals to advising on the latest livestock farming

practices. EkoNiva is open to experience exchange and is always ready to demonstrate how the herd is managed on its dairy farms.

'The B2B-meetings have enabled us to focus on constructive networking with our key partners to increase our export potential and thus expand our presence in the region. This trade mission has given us an invaluable insight into the needs of local farmers. Now we have an idea of the demand for high-quality pedigree heifers in the country. Apart from that, we have been able to better understand how local farms operate and connect with the strongest regional market players', comments Viktor Voronin, Cattle Sales Department Manager of EkoNiva-APK Holding.

The dairy product range has also captured attention of the local business. Currently, at least 5 major retail chains have expressed an interest in selling EKONIVA dairy produce.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO



Kazakhstan: key export market

EkoNiva-Semena has debuted at Jana Dala/Green Day 2022 in Kazakhstan welcoming over 150 agricultural companies at its booth.

EkoNiva's portfolio presents varieties that have already become clear-cut favourites with Kazakh farmers. The company has been supplying its products to Kazakhstan for eight years having delivered, in total, around 22,000 tonnes

of high-yielding seeds of different crops.

'Kazakhstan is one of our key export destinations, so we keep building up our customer base and boosting the sales here. The trade fairs show that EkoNiva-Semena

and its produce are recognised and popular in the republic', emphasises Marina Gerasimova, Marketing Department Manager, EkoNiva-Semena.

The seed exports to Kazakhstan mainly include

spring crops: wheat and barley. Besides, winter wheat, oats, peas, lentils, soya beans and perennial grasses are popular with growers in the southern regions. The company's portfolio offers high-value varieties that adapt well to various climatic conditions of Kazakhstan, such as in Kostanay, Akmola, North-Kazakhstan and East-Kazakhstan oblasts where EkoNiva's key customers are based.

Varieties that boast drought-resistance, high tillering capacity, consistent yields and excellent quality arouse a great interest in local farmers. The average output of EkoNiva's cereal crops reaches 5 tonnes per hectare, leaving far behind competing varieties. It is not surprising that the number of business partners in Kazakhstan is steadily growing – it has already approached 400.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO

Agricultural innovations in Vologda



EkoNiva-Tekhnika has taken part in the Field Day of Vologda oblast hosted by Krasnaya Zvezda farm in Terentyevskoye village.

At its booth, EkoNiva presented the novelties from Polymya Trade House – a production cluster based on the premises of Borisovo Metallist factory.

The company specialises in solutions for grain cleaning, drying and storage, seed conditioning and production of feed concentrates. At the Field Day, the manufacturer

unveiled the new SP-200 gravity separator. The SP-200 separates kernels by the specific weight. It is used to clean and calibrate seeds of cereals, pulses and perennial

grasses to ensure their high quality', says Aleksandr Churanov, Director of Vologda branch of EkoNiva-Tekhnika.

The universal MUZ-16 air screening machine was another highlight at the booth. This separator is used for precleaning, primary and secondary cleaning of cereals, pulses, grasses and other crops.

'The machine design enables to monitor and control the whole cleaning process. The system has 3 tiers of hexagonal screens, which improves the machine performance by 30%', continues Aleksandr Churanov.

The dealer also debuted RUKAS-3 fertiliser dissolving equipment by NAGRO. This unit features a unique patented technology of cold molecular synthesis used for making liquid fertiliser at a concentration of 30-40%.

'A lot of farmers have shown interest in this equipment. And some enterprises have already employed this technology', says Aleksandr Churanov.

By Darya DENISOVA

Green power on farm

EkoNiva Group has started using renewable energy sources on Dobrino dairy farm in Voronezh oblast. The Group is implementing the project in partnership with NovaWind company, a wind energy subdivision of Rosatom state corporation.

EkoNiva is going to become one of the first raw milk producers in Russia to purchase wind power thereby meeting all its energy needs exclusively from renewable sources. By switching to renewable electric power, the farm can reduce its indirect greenhouse gas emissions by estimated 1,000 tonnes of CO₂ a year. After reviewing the pilot project results in Voronezh oblast, the Group will evaluate the feasibility of shifting to renewables at its other facilities. Besides, the design of all subsequent projects will include green power option.

'The use of renewable environment-friendly energy is part of EkoNiva Group's ESG agenda. Minimising the environmental impact of the operations by reducing greenhouse gas emissions is one of the company's priority goals. We are happy that together with our partners from NovaWind we can take an even more responsible approach to doing business', says Lyubov Aksyonova,



Manager of GR&ESG Division of EkoNiva Group.

'The generation of low-carbon wind energy should reduce the carbon footprint and help to achieve

sustainable development goals. Switching to renewable power is an important step in the evolution of any business', comments Grigoriy Nazarov, Director General of NovaWind JSC.

By Viktor BARGOTIN



Siberian Field Day

EkoNiva-Semena has hosted the Field Day on the premises of Sibirskaya Niva – one of the Group’s largest enterprises. Over 120 agricultural producers from Siberia, the Urals and Kazakhstan took part in the event.

EkoNiva displayed its seed growing and plant breeding achievements and shared experience with the attendees. They could see winter and spring wheat, oats, spring barley, peas, chickpeas, soya beans, lentils and flax in the demo plots.

In total, the company’s portfolio comprises sixty-three varieties and two hybrids as well as five winter wheat and three soya bean in-house bred varieties. All seeds have high yield potential and are resistant to unfavourable factors.

‘In the field, our partners learn about our novelties and give feedback on the varieties from our commercial portfolio and EkoNiva’s own programmes. We know for sure what best fits our clients, for them to have a bumper crop in various climate zones. Our plant breeders continuously work on new varieties for specific regions’, says Yevgeniy Kucheryavenko, Executive Director of EkoNiva-Semena.

The company’s operations in Siberia are consistently ramping up the cattle herd. The newly bred EN Argument soya bean is a perfect source of high-quality protein in the rations. Moreover, this crop is well adapted to the conditions of the West Siberia.

‘In Maslyanino district, this early-maturing variety ripens

within 94-100 days. Its yield potential exceeds 2.5 t/ha, while the protein content

Yevgeniy Kucheryavenko, Executive Director of EkoNiva-Semena:

‘In the field, our partners learn about our novelties and give feedback on the varieties from our commercial portfolio and EkoNiva’s own programmes. We know for sure what best fits our clients, for them to have a bumper crop in various climate zones. Our plant breeders continuously work on new varieties for specific regions.’

can reach up to 42.5%’, says Vladislav Rozentsveig, Plant Breeder at EkoNiva-Semena.

‘We are going to test EN Argument soya beans variety in our fields, and we hope it will perform well just like other varieties from

EkoNiva. We started buying seeds from the company 6 years ago. Over this time,

our efficiency has grown by one and a half times. Our partner provides us with disease-resistant high-quality seeds and detailed up-to-date guidance for outstanding yields’, shares Yevgeniy Alekseyev, Krasnoturanskiy

stock breeding farm, Krasnoyarsk area.

In addition to the seeds, EkoNiva showcased pedigree animals with a high genetic potential at the Field Day.

‘In Siberia, we sell mostly Holstein dairy cows. However, the demand for beef cattle – Aberdeen-Angus and Hereford breeds – is also considerable here. Every year, over 2,500 head from Sibirskaya Niva are delivered to the company’s customers in Altai area, Novosibirsk, Omsk and Tyumen oblasts. All animals have pedigree certificates’, comments Pavel Chernyshov, Manager of Pedigree Cattle Sales Department, EkoNiva-Semena.

Siberia is one of the major agricultural regions in Russia. It accounts for more than 45% of the total sales of EkoNiva-Semena with the share expected to further grow.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO



Potato day



EkoNivaSibir has hosted a booth at the International Potato RUSSIA Field Day arranged by GRIMME on the premises of KDV-Agro, Kemerovo oblast.

The International Potato RUSSIA Field Day is held annually on the premises of the best Russian agricultural enterprises. This year, the field forum gathered about 1,200 potato business representatives from all over Russia and the CIS countries. More than 50 exhibiting companies presented their cutting-edge innovations and progressive technologies. EkoNivaSibir acted as one of the event's major partners, as, late in 2021, the company had been granted a premium dealership status by GRIMME, a global leader in potato and vegetable farm machinery.

'EkoNiva together with other Russian producers aspires to common cause – to fully provide the country with home-grown potatoes. Our mission is to assist our farmers in cultivating this essential product. GRIMME is one of our principal suppliers of potato equipment, and our ambition is to become the principal dealer of potato equipment for local growers', underlines Gennadiy Nepomnyashchiy, EkoNivaTekhnika-Holding Commercial Director.

In the past 6 months, the company has shipped 25 GRIMME units to the Siberian region: mainly to Novosibirsk oblast, and also to Omsk oblast and Altai area. Besides, EkoNiva now is a maintenance provider for

GRIMME equipment, which is employed by most vegetable growers in the Siberian region.

'We have been running four GRIMME projects started from scratch in Siberia: two – in Novosibirsk oblast and two – in Altai area. At this

already been signed', says Vasiliy Stepanov, EkoNivaSibir Sales Manager.

At its booth, the company also showcased novelty machines and modern solutions by other manufacturers: the RUKAS

**Sergey Arsiiry,
EkoNivaSibir Altai Office Manager:**

'The machinery can't reliably operate for long without proper and timely maintenance. We have the largest maintenance team in Siberia consisting of over 100 qualified technicians.'

trade fair, we have come to an agreement to commence a similar project in Omsk oblast. Our long-term client has decided to branch out into vegetable growing and placed a request for specialised equipment. In total, the sales plan for the next year includes 44 GRIMME units; for most of them, the contracts have

250 dissolving unit by NAGRO, the Bednar MZ 4500 Mulcher, the Bednar Terraland TN 4000 M9R chisel plough and Gregoire Besson Voyager S70 plough. Besides, the dealer unveiled the UMG construction

equipment: E145W wheeled excavator and TG180 grader.

Currently, EkoNivaSibir services about 6,000 self-propelled machines and trailed implements in the Siberian region.

'The machinery can't reliably operate for long without proper and timely maintenance. We have the largest maintenance team in Siberia consisting of over 100 qualified technicians', states Sergey Arsiiry, EkoNivaSibir Altai Office Manager.

Toksan Kabdenov, a farmer from Omsk oblast came to the Potato Field Day to see innovative solutions, talk to the partners and discuss short-term planning.

'We've been cooperating with EkoNiva since 2015. We purchase machines and seeds and are very happy with the service.'

The company's technicians can be contacted at any time; all issues are solved promptly and efficiently.

It's a pleasure to develop the Russian agriculture with such an excellent partner.'

The Siberian share makes about 40% of the total dealership holding's sales. In fact, EkoNivaSibir is a dealer that every second Siberian farmer works with.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO





EkoNiva Group has participated in Agrosalon 2022, one of Russia's largest agricultural trade fairs, for the third time. The company showcased a wide range of quality field crop seeds, pedigree cattle, domestic and foreign machinery and spare parts to the attendees.

Agrosalon is the culmination of the agricultural season and the best time for farmers to plan out the next season. Over the four days of the trade fair, farming sector representatives shared their experience and discussed the agribusiness management novelties and solutions.

'Such events help us to keep in touch with our loyal customers and get feedback on the varieties from our portfolio. This year, a lot of clients from different parts of our country – from the Southern Federal District to the Far East – have given our products good reviews. The farming season 2022 has seen a bumper harvest of several crops. For example, the spring wheat in Kirov oblast yielded over 6.5 t/ha, the oil flax in Kemerovo reached 2.3 t/ha, and the output of the winter wheat in Tula oblast exceeded 7 t/ha', says Yevgeniy Kucheryavenko, Executive Director of EkoNiva-Semena.

The in-house bred winter wheat varieties EN Albireo, EN Taygeta, EN Cepheus delivered high yields in various regions of the

country. Peas are in demand in the Southern Federal District, and soya beans are gaining in popularity countrywide, especially in the Far East. At the event, EkoNiva-Semena unveiled new soya bean varieties EN Akcent (adapted for the Central region) and EN Argument (adapted for the Siberian region).

Nowadays, the Russian farming sector strives to reach technological sovereignty for agriculture. Hence, in cooperation with the scientists from the Institute of Cytology and Genetics of the Siberian Branch of the Russian

Academy of Sciences EkoNiva launched a new project – the genetics and breeding centre in Novosibirsk oblast. Its mission is to provide the Urals, Siberia and the Far

Vitaliy Voloshchenko, Director of EkoNiva's Plant Breeding and Variety Maintenance Centre:

'Now, farmers in the North can grow maize, soya beans and some other crops, which was impossible in the past. Our breeding programmes are aimed at creating ultra-early-maturing varieties, thus enabling significant expansion of the cultivation area of Russian varieties.'

East with high-quality seed and genetic material.

The company partners all over the country praise the

high genetic potential of the dairy pedigree cattle.

'EkoNiva uses semen of the world's best sires, and in addition, the animals are well adapted to the Russian climatic conditions. With growing demand for our cows, we will keep on boosting the sales', emphasises Pavel Chernyshov, Manager of Pedigree Cattle Sales Department, EkoNiva-APK Holding.

EkoNivaTekhnika-Holding keeps on dealing time-tested machinery and spare parts, including novelties from domestic and foreign manufacturers.

'Despite the challenges that we faced this farming season, the results have exceeded our expectations. We are working on presenting a full line-up of agricultural machinery, searching for new suppliers, which by now, constitute 50%. We are looking forward to seeing the domestic manufacture grow and develop', comments Gennadiy Nepomnyashchiy, Commercial Director of EkoNivaTekhnika-Holding.

This year, the company has signed a dealership agreement with UMG, a Russian construction

equipment manufacturer. Another important supplier is Lovol, a Chinese brand; we have already delivered over 40 tractors of this brand. Other novelties that kindled interest in farmers are equipment for liquid fertiliser application by Nagro and smart farming solutions by FJDynamics.

To sum up, the exhibitors and visitors of Agrosalon also had a 'bumper harvest' of major contracts, productive meetings, new cooperation prospects and wide knowledge about agribusiness management solutions and systems.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO





EkoNiva's path in Volga region



There is a place in the very heart of Volga region where Tatarstan, Bashkiria, Samara and Orenburg oblasts come together. Such a unique location enhances the area economically and culturally. Here 20 years ago, Severnaya Niva embarked on its journey.

Severnaya district of Orenburg oblast headed by Anatoliy Vilokhin at that time was the starting point of the journey. Anatoliy realised that his homeland needed a trusted investor with a progressive European business approach and invited Stefan Dürr to the region.

The beginning of the journey posed a lot of challenges including lack of human resources and poor infrastructure. However, the company brought farm machinery to the district and started sowing. Crop production was the core business of the first decade, but in 2013 EkoNiva launched beef production here. The first 100 head of cattle arrived from the Siberian subdivision of EkoNiva. The largest in the region since 2020, today the beef project of Severnaya Niva has 1,600 head of cattle; the peak size is 4,000 head and, ultimately, the herd is expected to reach 20,000 head.

Taking up dairy farming in 2018 marked another milestone on the enterprise's path.

Kurskaya Vasilyevka dairy farm for 2,800 cows was launched in August 2019. According to Grigoriy Zakharov, the First Deputy Minister of Agriculture of Orenburg oblast, the milk production gave a major boost for the overall region development creating 150 jobs, 90% of which was taken by residents of 22 local

villages, and attracting young people to agriculture.

In 2018, the company crossed the borders of the oblast to expand to Bashkortostan and Tatarstan.

In 2019, the construction of Semeno-Makarovo dairy farm for 2,800 cows was started in Yermeyekeyevskiy district, Bashkortostan; in September 2022, the facility was commissioned and is now operating at full capacity.

'EkoNiva's vision will always meet full support and cooperation on Bashkiria land', says Ilyshat Fazrakhmanov, Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Bashkortostan. 'Self-sufficiency in good-quality milk is one of priority goals for the country, and EkoNiva is committed to achieving this goal.'

Currently, the company is building Naratly dairy farm designed for 3,550 head of cattle. Besides, Severnaya Niva by now has the largest area of farmland among

EkoNiva subdivisions.

'Stefan Dürr has proved that it is possible to develop efficient agricultural business even in tough economic conditions by applying cutting-edge machinery and modern practices in livestock and crop farming', underlines Linar Zakirov, Head of Bugulma district. 'Agricultural production is essential for the rural area as it ensures jobs and powerful social support of local community.'

Specialising in crop production since 2020, Severnaya Niva Samara enterprise makes Severnaya Niva's subdivision complete. It is also planning to construct dairy farms.

In September, Severny district celebrated the 20th anniversary of Severnaya Niva. The event gathered regional ministers of agriculture and district heads that have been together with the company on this journey all this time. The



employees, some of which had been working for the company from day one, received well-deserved honours and gifts.

'The first years of operation were challenging; but it was people that made it possible for the enterprise to get up and running overcoming all the hardship', recounts Stefan Dürr, EkoNiva President. 'Today, it is a flourishing business with great prospects.'

According to Stefan Dürr, it is not only the convergence of four regions with their individual culture and conditions that make Severnaya Niva so unique but also the team spirit, mutual support and common goals.

Today Severnaya Niva employs 1,100 people, cultivates 102,000 ha of arable land and manages over 15,000 head of cattle – an impressive result of 20 years of hard work and so much more is ahead.

'Our ambition is to branch out into processing later along with raw milk production', says Pyotr Dubyanskiy, Volga Regional Director of EkoNiva. 'Thus we are going to implement here the key concept of EkoNiva Group – From-field-to-shelf milk.'

By Svetlana WEBER
Aleksandr KUTISHCHEV



Going organic

Savinskaya Niva, an organic farm of EkoNiva Group, has moved over 130 dairy cows to its organic herd after the conversion period. Thus, the herd has expanded up to 370 dairy cows and the daily milk output has grown by 35% reaching 4 tonnes of organic milk per day.

One hundred and thirty-nine heifers of Black-and-White, Red-and-White, Swiss, Simmental and Ayrshire breeds arrived to the farm from Kaluzhskaya Niva in March. It took them 6 months to go through the conversion period and adapt to natural environment.

'The cows graze freely on natural and cultivated pastures, feeding on exclusively organic fodder grown in Savinskaya Niva',

says Karolina Vasilyeva, Milk Quality Assessment Department Manager.

The cows were calving from June to August delivering in total 127 calves. Out of them, 88% are heifers and will further produce offspring with a high genetic potential.

'Cows are social creatures therefore we do our best to ensure natural social environment for them from the early age. In accordance with the Organic Farming Regulation, calves are housed



in small groups to be able to socialise.

And, of course, they're fed on warm organic milk only from day one', adds Karolina Vasilyeva.

Over the six months, the cows were going through

conversion, which ended early in September. They were kept and milked separately from the main herd. But now their milk fully meets all the organic standards.

By Darya DENISOVA

Quality fodder for organic cows



Savinskaya Niva is finishing fodder preparation by harvesting maize for silage. In total, the enterprise expects to prepare 5,000 tonnes of organic fodder in 2022 including over 4,000 tonnes of haylage, hay and silage.

Such a volume is sufficient to fully provide the herd with nutritious feed for winter. Currently, the farm has about 370 dairy cows, 360 head of breeding beef stock

and about 400 head of dairy and beef young stock.

This year, the farm has invested a lot of work and effort in improving the animals' winter diets trying

new methods and techniques. For example, the specialists applied biological components approved for organic production that increase the aerobic stability and enhance

feed quality.

Another innovation is flax seed added to the rations at 250-500 grammes per head.

'The flax is the source of indispensable fatty acids. Its introduction into the rations can increase fatty acid content in the milk as well, which makes our organic milk even more beneficial for health', explains Karolina Vasilyeva.

That is why it was important for the farm to sow its own organic flax for feed. The crop performed very well. The enterprise harvested 11 tonnes on 14 hectares. Besides, two ultra-early maturing soya varieties and faba beans were included in the feed production. The crops delivered good yields for Kaluga region ensuring enough quality protein for the cows.

'This year, we have experimented with fodder crops; how successful it is, we'll see in December-January. After the data evaluation, we will devise a cropping plan for the next season', says Valeriy Gushchin, Savinskaya Niva Director.

By Svetlana WEBER



Gentle forage harvesting

EkoNiva-Tekhnika Holding offers farmers the trailed belt merger MERGENTO VT 9220, a new grassland solution from Pottinger.

Designed for harvesting alfalfa, clover, and a wide variety of crops from permanent grassland to straw, the merger is compatible with tractors with a capacity of 90 hp and higher.

'The new merger harvests forages with utmost care. Especially with leafy, dry crops, the unit minimises disintegration losses. The overall result is more energy and more crude protein, less damage to the stubble.

Moreover, the gentle pickup has a positive effect on the growth of the new crop, which is of paramount importance when it comes to perennial grasses', says Lev Kramarenko, Forage Harvesting Brand Manager of EkoNiva-Tekhnika.

The heart of the belt-type merger MERGENTO VT 9220 is the conveyor unit, which consists of a pick-up, the crop press roller and the cross conveyor belt. The perfectly

coordinated system ensures a consistent flow of forage.

'The 6-row controlled pick-up delivers maximum collection performance with minimum forage contamination. The crop is gently collected from the ground by the successive pick-up tines and fed to the cross conveyor belt, which moves it in the desired direction and places it in an airy swath enabling the crop material to sun dry for some

time to reach the required moisture content', continues Lev Kramarenko.

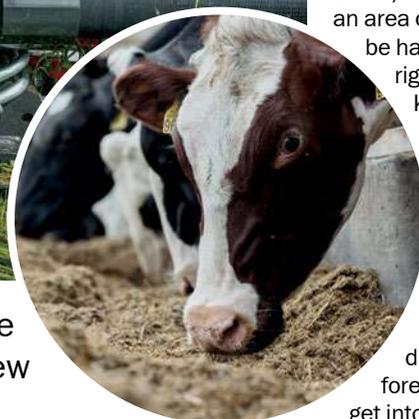
The unit is available with working widths from 7.4 m for a side swath up to 9.20 metres for a central swath.

'The belt-type rake MERGENTO VT 9220 significantly speeds up the forage harvesting process. As compared to rotary rakes, it carries out its functions 30% more efficiently. The performance at the speed of from 12 to 16 km/h amounts to 15 ha/h. Over an 8-hour shift, an area of up to 100 ha can be harvested – impressive, right?', underlines Lev Kramarenko.

The harvesting technology of the MERGENTO VT 9220 facilitates crop pickup without further contact with the ground: the forage does not get dirty, no stones or other foreign materials can get into it. Feeding of cattle with high-quality and clean feedstuffs results in improved animal welfare and productivity. The farm's expenses on concentrates go down. Low ash content of the forage means less forage harvester wear.

We take orders for the new equipment at all EkoNiva-Tekhnika, EkoNiva-Sibir and EkoNiva-Chernozemye dealerships. First deliveries are due to take place in spring 2023.

By Darya DENISOVA





Zero weed tolerance

The specialists of Bolshesoldatsky Sveklovod, Kursk oblast, have shared their experience of using Einböck row crop cultivators in their fields.

The company purchased its first Einböck Chopstar ERS 12 in 2016. The row hoe was required for inter-row cultivation of sugar beets for the purposes of weed maintenance.

'The sugar beet is a demanding crop in terms of growing conditions and weed control. Since we prioritise achieving high yields of top-quality crop, we decided to replenish our fleet with modern equipment by Einböck', says Mikhail Sukhikh, Chief Engineer of Bolshesoldatsky Sveklovod.

This year, the area under sugar beets is 4,200 ha. The agronomists were faced with the task of increasing the machinery performance on row crop tillage. They came up with a solution in no time. An Einböck Chopstar ERS 24B row hoe coupled with a 150 hp John Deere tractor did a perfect job on 24 inter-rows in a single pass – without damaging the crop.

Proper hoeing of the space between the rows has numerous advantages: it controls weeds, enriches the soil with oxygen, retains moisture, mobilises nutrient movement, disrupts

capillary action and protects against erosion.

'Besides, the operation helps to solve the issue of soil crust. Often resulting from heavy rainfall, the surface crust

interrupts the soil-atmosphere gaseous exchange, which can lead to the development of root rots.

Tillage with the Einböck Chopstar ERS 24B promotes

healthy development of sugar beets', comments Oleg Pereverzev, Deputy Director for Production at Bolshesoldatsky Sveklovod.

During the vegetation season, the Einböck cultivator is indispensable for fertiliser application, considerably saving the expenditure on chemical agents.

This season, the sugar beet yield has amounted to around 60 t/ha. Next year, the company plans to purchase its fourth Einböck cultivator to carry out work in a timely manner and further improve the farm's efficiency.

By Darya DENISOVA

Oleg Pereverzev, Deputy Director for Production at Bolshesoldatsky Sveklovod:

'Sugar beets call for deep tillage within a short period of time. Our technical capacity used to suffice for timely cultivation of only 30% of the area. The Einböck Chopstar ERS 24B ensures 100% area coverage.'





Precision non-stop



Since 2021, the Smart Farming Department of EkoNiva-Tekhnika Holding has been offering its customers the FJDynamics auto steer system, which navigates agricultural vehicles along a straight line, curves or concentric circles. Company specialists demonstrated to the clients how the equipment is used in the Russian fields.

FJ Dynamics is a perfect farm tool to perform virtually any task – harrowing, spraying, tillage, sowing, fertiliser and plant protection agent application. Its key objective is enhancing the efficiency and increasing the speed of operations as well as avoiding overlaps and skips.

'Today, farmers tend to buy high-tech machines for their fleet. To unlock the full potential of their machinery, we recommend installing the FJDynamics auto steer kit with electric drive, which does any job in the field quickly and accurately, saving a considerable amount of input material', says Anton Tsaryov, High-Tech Solutions Support Specialist, Tula branch of EkoNiva-Tekhnika.

The electrically-powered FJDynamics auto steer system fits on almost all any types of tractors, self-propelled sprayers, combine harvesters, mowers and spreaders.

'Customers can purchase the novelty in the 27 regions where the company operates. Our specialists regularly hold demo shows, adjust and test the solution on farms. The auto steer system has become a trusted tool for the

machine operators. Over 100 autosteering kits have already been installed on units in different enterprises', points out Artyom Novikov, Manager

cultivated plants in the field, can occur through mere inattention of an operator. Therefore, the yield in certain areas of the land plot declines.



Artyom Novikov, Manager of Smart Farming Department at EkoNiva-Tekhnika Holding:

'The FJDynamics ensures that the set input rate is not exceeded. The system facilitates the operator's routine, enabling him to control the operation of the implement and work comfortably despite adverse weather conditions or even at night.'

of Smart Farming Department, EkoNiva-Tekhnika Holding.

FJDynamics allows farm machines to go straight autonomously. Its precise positioning RTK signal achieves an excellent pass-to-pass accuracy of 2.5 cm.

'Overlap prevention helps farmers to save on sowing material, plant protection agents, fuel and lubricants increasing the efficiency by 10-15%', continues Artyom Novikov.

The use of the FJDynamics reduces the human factor. Overlaps, which lead to a more intense intraspecific competition between the

the operation of the implement and work comfortably despite adverse weather conditions or even at night', emphasises Artyom Novikov.

In the Antonov R.A. enterprise, Voronezh oblast, the technology is utilised for autosteering a Vaderstad planter.

'We are engaged in crop farming. This year, we have sown chickpeas and soya beans on an area of over 700 ha having performed wide-row planting at an inter-row distance of 45 cm, which made further cultivation easier. The FJDynamics system has proven its worth in practice. The reliable RTK signal allowed the unit to work smoothly and flawlessly', shares Roman Antonov, Head of the enterprise.

On Y.N. Kirichenko farm, the FJDynamics was used for spraying and fertiliser application on over 140 ha of spring wheat.

'The machinery followed the set path complying with all the requirements. Before our operator got down to work, EkoNiva's specialists had trained him how to set up the FJDynamics system. Moreover, the dealership offers our team online support', says Yuriy Kirichenko, Head of the enterprise.

EkoNiva-Tekhnika continues organising demo shows and performing the calibration of the FJDynamics units. Installation of the kit comprising several quick attach components does not take too long. The new user-friendly and low maintenance auto steer system makes the process nearly effortless. For machine operators, FJDynamics will become a trusted partner to rely on at any time.

By Darya DENISOVA



Timur Visitayev: 'In agriculture like in football, speed, brain and teamwork are essential'



Timur Visitayev, Farm Manager, starts his working day at half past six in the morning by touring his farmland located in the picturesque East Kazakhstan and finishes by midnight. The guest of our issue is a young and determined farmer, who cherishes the dream of making the world a better place to live in and has unlimited faith in his team.

— Timur, what did you dream of in your childhood? What did you want to be?

– I was dreaming of a football career. I trained every day because I was taking the sport seriously. With speed, zeal, teamwork, 'one for all and all for one' attitude, football is my kind of game. I didn't become a footballer, but I remain an avid fan. I know all the players and coaches of Manchester United, my favourite club. In my free time, I can play a game on Playstation or in the house yard with my son.

– How did you become involved in agriculture?

– My father set up a farm in 2000 when I was 9. I was not trained for this job, what's more, father wanted me to stay away from this hard and thankless job. In 2009, I flew to Beijing for studies planning to stay in China afterwards and work in the international trade relations. However, my life took a different turn on 26 September, 2014, when I was told that my father had suddenly passed away. One day later, I came back home and two days later I took the manager's seat. I was 22 years

old. After discussing it with my family, I decided to continue my father's legacy. To my shame, I couldn't even tell apart wheat from rye back then as I was inexperienced and untrained, but I had a team gathered by my father through the previous 14 years. They promised to support me and gave me a helping hand, so I decided to give it a try.

– Do you remember your first emotions in the director's chair?

– 'What am I doing here?' Even now, I'm not fully sure that I belong here. But farming is like falling sick or in love and I seem to have fallen for good. This isn't only about sowing and harvesting, this is an immense responsibility for the team, not to mention the future of our enterprise. What I know for sure is that we can't become complacent about our work. Our chief agronomist Vladimir is 64, but he never stops learning. Despite the significant difference in age, we're in tune – he's my friend, mentor and a credible coach in farming.

– Let's talk about challenges in the farming business – do they motivate

you to progress, or, on the contrary, make you lose heart?

– Farming business is hard to predict. Sometimes, we purchase the best seeds, apply necessary fertiliser, do all treatments – in a word, hammer away day and night. But then the moisture, the most limiting factor, gets into play, and we get only 2.5-3 instead of the expected 5-6 tonnes per

can impact the outcome of the game in football, the same applies to agriculture – every action influences your harvest. If you gather more than 5 tonnes per hectare, it's a victory. If you have delivered excellent performance throughout the season, it's pretty much like winning the Champions League. Leaving your personal ambitions aside is no less important as the team's interests are the priority though, sometimes, we have discussions, of course. As our chief agronomist says, truth springs from argument, and here I agree with him as a good team player trusting his coach.

– How do you choose your partners?

– In partnership, I most value reliability, quick response and quality. We've been cooperating with EkoNiva for many years, and it has never failed to keep its promises. The company has a wide variety portfolio, high-quality seeds, splendid logistics and the most competent agronomic consulting service. Its experts bring a wealth of knowledge, and they're always willing to give some useful advice or help us to choose the right variety.

– How do you incentivise your employees?

– I aspire to overall personal, intellectual and financial progress together with my team. The key incentives for the employees are a handsome

R. D. Visitayev's farm has been operating in East Kazakhstan since 2000. The enterprise is engaged in growing grain, pulse and oilseed along with cattle, horse and camel farming. The total farmland is 8,500 hectares.

hectare. This is very upsetting as it means you won't be able to upgrade anything this year, but you don't lose heart; on the opposite, you get even more enthusiastic and keep moving forward to succeed.

– What do agriculture and football have in common?

– They both require speed of reaction, brainwork, a close-knit teamwork and also lots of investment – they're all about loaned money (laughs). Seriously speaking, every pass

salary and respectful attitude. I do my best to hear them out and ensure comfortable working conditions for my people. Agricultural workers can only be successful when they are equipped with up-to-date knowledge and technologies. My personal motivation and motto are to make this world a better place to live in. I feel happy when I make people around me happier.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO



Consistent yields and high quality



Choosing a variety that is best adapted to the Siberian climatic zone and has a high yield potential is one of essential conditions for bumper crop. Farmers today tend to opt for spring and winter wheat seeds that sown after a proper predecessor, can yield over 5-6 tonnes per hectare at optimum fertiliser rates.

Seeds of intensive and semi-intensive varieties are Siberian growers' favourites, specifically those that can be sown after any preceding crop and not only after black fallow as it is conventionally recommended by agronomists.

The spring wheat varieties Licamero and Calixo still enjoy popularity in the Siberian region. They are resistant to lodging, early-maturing and, of course, show good performance in the Siberian fields – up to 6-7 t/ha.

'We've been working with EkoNiva for over ten years. We purchase Triso and Licamero wheat. The best yields have reached 5.5-5.7 tonnes per hectare in our fields, and it should be noted that we do not apply any fertiliser, just use fallow system', underlines Aleksandr Fedoreyev (Ugryum company, Novosibirsk oblast).

The highly intensive wheat variety Toccata also deserves special attention. It is a unicum variety, i.e. it doesn't tiller much, but delivers a big ear with 40-45 kernels, which leads to significantly higher

in the state trials 2022, it yielded up to 10 t/ha.

'We've been sowing the Explorer barley for three years; the variety yields about 6 tonnes per hectare, which is twice as much as the average

Yevgeniy Alekseyev, Krasnoturanskiy Stock Breeding Farm, Krasnoyarsk area:

'We used to sow seeds of Russian varieties only, then we decided to try products from EkoNiva-Semena portfolio, and the performance increased immediately by 1.5 times. For example, Belmondo pea consistently delivers over 4 tonnes/ha in our fields and Prudence soya bean exceeds 20 t/ha. We have been growing these varieties for the past 3 years, but now we are considering EkoNiva bred novelties from the portfolio as they are well adapted to Siberia.'

yields. The barley varieties Calcule and Margret, as usual, deliver good performance, at the same time, new varieties Explorer and Formula 1 are taking an increasing share of land. New variety Evgenia will debut in the Siberian fields in 2023.

across our region. We always pay attention to the novelties in the company's portfolio, because as a rule, they are improved varieties upgraded in yields and quality', says Toksan Kabdenov (Omsk oblast).

New early maturing soybean variety EN Argument

created and registered by EkoNiva Plant Breeding and Variety Maintenance Centre was unveiled in the Siberian region in 2022. At Maslyanino trial plot, this variety ripens in 94-100 days at the same time featuring a high yielding capacity (2.5-3.0 t/ha) for this maturity group and high protein (up to 42.5%).

In the regions where the soybean growing is extremely risky due to low effective temperature sum, EkoNiva-Semena offers a different pulse crop – peas. The company's portfolio features the new pea variety Trendy. This early maturing fodder pea develops quickly in early stages, is resistant to lodging and delivers impressive and consistent yields. The variety is high in protein (up to 24%) and can actually be used for both fodder and food.

The company's mission is not simply to sell seeds to a farmer, but more importantly to ensure good yields and high quality of crop in the customers' fields. For this purpose, the company also offers agronomic consulting and support.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO



EkoNiva varieties tested and registered in Volga region

Demonstration plots is the form of partnership that EkoNiva-Semena mostly uses. The seeds of new varieties are distributed to farms in various regions of Russia to grow for trials. And afterwards, the data and reviews from the sites are thoroughly documented and evaluated by the company's experts.

In the Volga region, the winter wheat significantly exceeded the spring wheat in yields and environmental performance. Besides, it can act as a 'backup' crop in arid years, which explains a special attention paid to EkoNiva new winter crops. The variety EN Taygeta was registered for the Middle Volga region in 2021. It showed excellent performance in variety trials and on-farm demo plots. What makes it stand out is its short culm preventing lodging resistance and a big ear with lots of kernels. The EN Cepheus winter wheat had been registered a year before, in 2020. By now it has already been in production in the Volga region and delivered impressive results. Two debutants in the portfolio – EN Mars and EN Photon winter wheats – were registered in 2022, so they haven't passed extensive production in the local fields yet.

In 2022, the Volga Federal District was ranked in the top three soya bean growing regions. Local soya producers have sown almost 270 thousand hectares this year, which exceeds even the area in the South Federal District. For soya project to succeed, it is essential to select the

appropriate varieties. One of the key factors is the sum of active temperatures, which in Penza, Samara oblasts and Tatarstan makes only 2,200-2,300°C.

The new varieties bred by EkoNiva Plant Breeding and Variety Maintenance Centre – EN Argenta, EN Akcent and EN Argument – fit these regions perfectly well. These are early maturing and high-yielding varieties with high protein – from 36 to 42%. This year, EN Argument has been registered for the Siberian region. With the active temperature sum of 1,900 °C, it is referred to the most early maturing group. The variety is also well adapted to the northern areas of the Volga region and can

be used as a predecessor to winter crops in the southern regions. The plants are

rather short – 77 cm high and resistant to lodging. The harvest loss can reach 5%. The optimum crop density by the time of harvesting is 600 thousand plants per hectare.

The company not only advises growers on cultivation techniques, but also offers crop management solutions. For example, by the time of harvesting, winter wheat, especially varieties featuring good tillering, needs to produce 550 ears per a square metre, spring wheat (for instance, the variety Triso)



Willi Drews, Doctor of Agronomy, EkoNiva Consultant:

'The Volga Federal District is ranked among leaders in growing lentils – one of the most ancient farm crops. It is more resistant to drought than peas and fodder beans. For local producers, EkoNiva-Semena offers intensive varieties Redcoat and Kermit featuring good harvestability.'

– 600-650 ears, barley – 750 ears per square metre. Thus, the yield parameters are always under control.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO





Touring Kazakhstan farms

EkoNiva representatives together with EIDala.kz information portal toured the most developed agricultural regions of Kazakhstan. AgroCaravan Crop 2022 Project participants visited partners' fields, observed harvesting operations, researched agronomic practices applied in the climatic conditions of Kazakhstan and the needs of local growers.

The group's itinerary included 14 farming enterprises in the most developed agricultural provinces – East-Kazakhstan, Pavlodar, North-Kazakhstan, Akmola, Kostanay, Karaganda oblasts. In general, local farmers had a good season with proper timing of precipitation in the majority of regions. Though the weather conditions are extremely important for a good crop, relevant agronomic practices, cutting-edge machinery, fertiliser, chemicals and

variety with high gluten, has yielded 3.8 tonnes/ha this year. The time proven Triso with consistently high yields has delivered around 3.5 tonnes/ha this season. Toccata sown for the first time yielded 4.1 tonnes/ha despite only one proper rain over the vegetation season. It is essential for a farmer to remember that the seed quality comes first if he expects a bumper crop, and with EkoNiva, the quality is always guaranteed', underlines Daniil Baybulatov,



Aleksandr Shklovskiy, Chief Agronomist of Zenchenko&K farming enterprise:

'Our average yield across all varieties from EkoNiva portfolio is 3.2 tonnes/ha this year. The fields of Licamero and Kanyuk reached 5.4 tonnes/ha, which is an excellent performance for our climatic zone prone to droughts.'

Our average yield across all varieties from EkoNiva portfolio is 3.2 tonnes/ha this year. The fields of Licamero and Kanyuk reached 5.4 tonnes/ha, which is an excellent performance for our climatic zone prone to droughts', shares Aleksandr Shklovskiy, Chief Agronomist of Zenchenko&K farming enterprise.

Intensive varieties from EkoNiva have highly valuable features and respond well to fertiliser and chemical

application. The company offers proven and new products including of own breeding, which, despite arid climate of Kazakhstan, deliver a consistently good performance.

Over the event, all participating producers could talk to EkoNiva-Semena experts and get individual advice on choosing the crops and varieties that fit best their soil and climatic conditions in the respective areas.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO



Daniil Baybulatov, Director of SBA AgroGroup:

'It is essential for a farmer to remember that the seed quality comes first if he expects a bumper crop and with EkoNiva, the quality is always guaranteed.'

high-quality seeds are also integral elements of great performance and ensure high yields in any climatic conditions.

Reviewed and extended annually, EkoNiva-Semena's portfolio has crops and varieties to meet the needs of each region of Kazakhstan which is confirmed by positive feedback from local growers.

'We grow 3 varieties of spring wheat from EkoNiva's portfolio in our fields. Licamero, an early maturing

Director of SBA AgroGroup, East Kazakhstan oblast.

Zenchenko&K enterprise operating in North-Kazakhstan oblast started working with EkoNiva in 2019. It purchases varieties of spring wheat, barley, oat and now is considering other crops as well.

'First, we chose some varieties from EkoNiva for trials and found ourselves completely satisfied with the quality, the yields and consistent gluten of 25-28%.



Honouring workers in agriculture

Tatyana Kaplina, a milking machine operator from EkoNivaAgro, has been awarded a title of the Honoured Agricultural Worker of the Russian Federation, which is confirmed by the respective decree signed by Russia's President Vladimir Putin and published on the Kremlin's website.

The Liski district administration supported by the Department of Agricultural Policy for Voronezh oblast nominated her for the state award in 2021.

Tatyana Kaplina has been working on EkoNiva's dairy farm in Shchuchye village since 2002, the start of EkoNivaAgro.

'EkoNiva inherited this farm from the previous collective enterprise. Today, after renovations and upgrades, it's a prosperous livestock farming division

with a tie-stall housing system. We manage here 1,400 head of cattle, 640 of which are dairy cows', says Vladimir Frolov, Shchuchye farm Manager.

Seventy-five milking cows in Tatyana's care produce record-breaking yields – up to 40 kg of milk per lactating cow per day. The secret of high yields is a genuine passion for the job.

'Tatyana is a committed professional highly respected by her colleagues and villagers. She has participated in numerous



regional and national contests for milking machine operators and earned a lot of awards. In 2014, EkoNiva gave her a car as appreciation of her achievements', comments Aleksandr Nesterenko, Director of EkoNivaAgro-Right Bank Operation.

It is a hard job. Her workday starts at the crack of dawn, at 5 in the morning. She takes care of the cows,

milks them twice a day for 3 hours each time.

'My mom worked as a milkmaid all her life. Looking at her, I decided to follow in her footsteps and here I am, having dedicated over 25 years to this job. I treat all animals with love. Cows feel my care, warmth and good mood, just like people do, hence high yields', shares her secret Tatyana.

By Darya DENISOVA

Skilled and qualified

Maksim Sagaydak from EkoNivaAgro, Voronezh oblast, has won second prize in the National skills competition of artificial insemination technicians.

The contest takes place every second year and gathers the AI technicians selected at local qualifying stages. Ninety-six specialists from sixty regions competed to be named the best in the profession.

The competition programme consisted of four parts. First, the technicians worked in the laboratories; then, a panel of experts tested their theoretical knowledge on cattle reproduction. At the next stages, the contenders prepared cows for insemination – carried out visual and rectal examinations to check for abnormalities preventing animals from undergoing

the procedure. Keeping necessary records during the procedure was also part of the assessment checklist.

Maksim Sagaydak, Artificial Insemination Technician from EkoNivaAgro, took second place in the Best Specialist in Reproduction category. Today, he takes care of a herd of over 7,100 head, including 3,000 milking cows. The 305-day milk production of the herd is 11,000 kg; the calf birth rate amounts to 85%, which is 5% higher than the standard of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Russian Federation for breeding reproducers.

Maksim Sagaydak came to EkoNivaAgro in 2013.



He began his career as a cow handler; three years ago, he started working as AI technician at Dobrino dairy in parallel with the studies at the Voronezh State Agricultural University.

'It is the first time I have taken part in a nationwide contest. The

tasks are challenging, and all participants are top professionals; so being ranked second is like victory to me. Many thanks to my management who trusted me to represent the company', concludes Maksim Sagaydak.

By Viktor BARGOTIN



Knowledge is power



EkoNiva enterprises in Voronezh and Kaluga oblasts have hosted the Zoovet training project for young specialists. Seventeen employees have completed the intensive two-month course.

The comprehensive course includes classes in animal feeding, fodder

preparation, cow milking, orthopaedics and veterinary science. Hands-on training is

arranged on state-of-the-art dairy farms of EkoNiva. 'We launched the first

Zoovet course in 2016. Since then, over 290 young specialists have undergone the training. Now many of them hold senior management positions in EkoNiva', comments Boris Morev, Human Resources Division Manager, EkoNiva-APK Holding.

Previously held only in Voronezh and Kaluga oblasts, this year the programme

was extended

to include

Novosibirsk and

Orenburg.

Zoovet

finished

at the

beginning

of October.

After the

final exam,

the attendees

returned to

their livestock

farming operations

to apply the newly acquired

knowledge and skills.

By Viktor BARGOTIN



Pilot project for technicians



EkoNiva has held a pilot training course for technicians in Voronezh oblast. The curriculum is specially designed for young employees who come to work for the company straight after university.

The trainees attended theoretical and practical classes in engine and generator design, electrical systems and electrical circuit construction, farm machinery diagnostics.

Practical sessions were dedicated to key components of tractors, loaders, combine harvesters and other farm machines. Video lectures additionally provided to the attendees

helped them to revise and master the new material.

At the end of the intensive training course, the technicians took a qualification exam. The exam is essential for further promotion at work.

'The programme facilitates employee induction. We equip young specialists with extensive practical knowledge thus enhancing the efficiency of the Service Division', comments Konstantin Kanatov, Service Division Manager, EkoNiva-APK Holding.

By Viktor BARGOTIN



Focus on young leaders

EkoNivaTekhnika-Holding has launched an internal personnel development programme – Young Leader Club.

The training programme was designed specifically for the dealership employees: it is aimed at professional upgrading, implementing new efficient solutions and optimising business processes.

‘Today labour market is short for skilled personnel. Our strategy is to contribute as much as possible to the professional development of our employees to ensure a sustainable talent pool for the company. The Club graduates are expected to further become top specialists in the respective fields, project leaders and

managers’, highlights Yekaterina Stolyarevskaya, EkoNivaTekhnika-Holding HR Division Manager.

The Young Leader Club course takes three years, includes both on-line and off-line trainings and implies development of leadership, communication and time management skills. The teaching team consists of both accomplished specialists of the holding and invited trainers and speakers.

‘Currently, the Club features 60 participants: employees of holding’s divisions, service centres and after-sales support



departments. The selection is based on the special assessment of competencies and knowledge’, adds Natalya Pavlova, EkoNivaTekhnika-Holding Personnel Training and Development Manager.

Applications for joining the programme covering 26 regions of the dealership operation should be forwarded to holding’s Training Centre.

By Darya DENISOVA

Mastering the art of agriculture

The tenth anniversary summer session of the Milk Standard agricultural student team came to an end at EkoNiva’s enterprises in Voronezh and Orenburg oblasts. For two months, thirty-eight students of six agricultural universities worked at the dairy facilities and the milk processing plant and learned the ins and outs of modern agricultural production.

The students did their work in the relevant areas: veterinary medicine, herd management, agronomy, engineering or milk processing. Future veterinarians and herd managers learned how to manage daily routines of the herd, treat fresh cows and sick animals in the hospital pen. They also assisted in taking blood samples, giving vaccination shots, breeding, hoof trimming and taking care of young stock.

At the workshops, under mentors’ supervision, young engineers maintained and repaired modern agricultural machinery to get a deeper insight into its design and operation. At Anna dairy plant, processing engineers got acquainted with the workflow, worked at the laboratory and at EkoNiva production line.

‘The students gain up-to-date knowledge and invaluable experience at EkoNiva’s production sites.

Apart from professional expertise, they develop soft skills becoming more independent, responsible, ready to make their own decisions. These personal attributes are very useful for their careers’, comments Boris Morev, EkoNiva Corporate Academy Manager.

Apart from hands-on experience, the students obtained a lot of information at the lectures given by leading specialists of the company.

‘Many of them have already done internship on EkoNiva farms. The graduates come back for favourable working conditions and state-of-the-art

production. At EkoNiva’s enterprises, they realise that agriculture is a promising industry with great career and personal growth opportunities’, continues Boris Morev.

Student teams first arrived at EkoNiva enterprises in 2016. The pilot project proved to be a success, and the next session took place in the winter of 2018. Over the six years after Milk Standard launch, more than 600 students have participated in the project, some of them are now full-fledged specialists at EkoNiva’s production sites.

By Viktor BARGOTIN



Welcome to our farm



Over 100,000 guests have visited EkoNiva farms in Voronezh and Kaluga oblasts since 2013.

EkoNiva was the first agricultural company to open its doors to tourists, which made it a pioneer of industrial tourism in Russia.

‘Stefan Dürr, President of EkoNiva Group, had a dream to launch a farm tour project. Our goal was to show consumers and potential

employees that we make no secret of our production process, every stage is honest and transparent – from field to shop shelf’, recalls

Svetlana Weber, Director General, EkoNiva-Media.

Within ten years, the farm tour geography and content have changed significantly. Starting from just one dairy in Voronezh oblast in 2013, the project is now implemented in two regions and includes several dairy farms and a cheese plant in Shchuchye village.

The Agency of Strategic Initiatives awarded EkoNiva farm tour project as the best interactive initiative in industrial tourism.

‘EkoNiva tells its guests about its activities and agriculture on the whole, popularising the industry, showing that it is a modern high-tech field offering limitless opportunities for young talented specialists. Our farms are among the best tourist attractions in Voronezh and Kaluga oblasts’, says Yekaterina Bartseva, Tour Project Manager, EkoNiva. ‘We are happy to welcome new guests to our dairies every day.’

By Mariya IVANOVA

Unsurpassed hospitality

EkoNiva farm tour project based in Ulanovo, Kaluga oblast, has been awarded a badge of honour and a winner's certificate following the results of Kaluga Hospitality contest judged by a committee of HoReCa experts.

Kaluga Hospitality is a comprehensive programme aimed at improving the tourist appeal of the city. Its key project is the annual contest for the best product or service in the hospitality and events sector.

Candidates are assessed based on the following criteria: popularity, customer feedback on the Internet, web site convenience, accessibility and functionality. The judges also evaluated the state of the facility and the surrounding infrastructure, equipment, quality of service, staff expertise and qualifications,

and compliance with documentation requirements.

The winner and some nominees of the contest were awarded Kaluga Hospitality badges in the form of a quatrefoil, which has a symbolic meaning as the same quatrefoil decorates the front entrance to Kaluga Merchant Court built in the 18th-19th centuries.

‘EkoNiva has taken part in this contest for the first time. We were very happy to receive the award. We keep on working to make our tours even more attractive for visitors. In June, we launched factory tours at our cheese



making facility. EkoNiva is glad to welcome everyone who is interested in learning how the most delicious dairy

products are made’, says Yekaterina Bartseva, Tour Project Manager, EkoNiva.

By Mariya IVANOVA

Discovering flavour

EkoNiva has participated in PIR EXPO, the 25th hospitality industry trade fair. At its booth, the company held a comparative tasting of coffee made with different types of milk: EKONIVA Professional Line developed specially for baristas by the company's experts and EKONIVA Organic whole pasteurised milk.

The company's booth featured a separate zone for hotel business representatives for whom a professional barista was making coffee with superautomatic coffee machine. Such machines are largely applied at hotel chains and are proven to serve longer and require less maintenance when used with high-quality EkoNiva milk.

In addition to the existing 'Cappuchino Flavour Wheel', EkoNiva also presented a new

Flavour Map devised together with Julius Meini, one of the leading coffee suppliers. The Map shows flavour notes highlighted by the combination of different types of EkoNiva milk with one of six coffee types.

It is the third time that EkoNiva-Food, Group's milk processing holding,



has exhibited at the trade fair. PIR EXPO provides an excellent environment to network with the hospitality industry community, learn from the leaders, exchange experience, attend at lectures and workshops and participate in many other special events. This year, the company's

booth received representatives of cafes, restaurants and hotels from various Russian regions and the CIS countries. The team held meetings with large scale businesses – distributors, cafe and petrol station chains as well as small specialty coffee shops.

By Natalya SHARAPOVA

Life's long adventure

Apart from being a world-famous traveller, Fyodor Konyukhov is also a recognised artist – an active member of Moscow Union of Artists and Russian Academy of Art. The exhibition titled 'Life's Long Adventure' is a summary of his unique expeditions all over the world. The artwork accumulates 30 years of Fyodor Konyukhov's travelling around the globe. Voronezh residents and guests can see about 60 rare art pieces in various genres and techniques. His total collection encompasses over 3,000 paintings; the majority was created during his adventures.

The Life's Long Adventure exhibition, arranged in collaboration with EkoNiva Group preceded Fyodor Konyukhov's next big adventure – the NOVA 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



EkoNiva has arranged Fyodor Konyukhov painting exhibition hosted by Voronezh Regional Art Museum n.a. I.N. Kramskoy. Fyodor Konyukhov, a renowned adventurer, took part in the ceremony and personally gave several tours of his exhibition.

main goals are to evaluate the microplastic pollution of the ocean and raise public awareness of this problem. The NOVA project is sponsored by EkoNiva, Hevel Group, a

manufacturer of solar modules, and Rostselmash Group, the largest Russian manufacturer of farm machinery.

'I've been going on adventures since an early

age to understand that the Lord has created an extremely beautiful planet with its endless expanses of the Atlantic, snow-clad Himalayan peaks, the vast Gobi Desert and freezing North Pole – wherever I find myself, I am inspired by the beauty of our Earth. My paintings, lithographs, sculptures reflect everything I have experienced, and I want to share it with the audience. I'm happy that my friend Stefan Dürr supports the project of innovative NOVA catamaran', says Fyodor Konyukhov.

'Fyodor Konyukhov's projects mean a lot for me and EkoNiva. We fully share his values and life principles; therefore, we are always excited to be involved in the projects of the distinguished adventurer and help him to put his ideas into action. We consider it a contribution to the future of our planet and Earth population', underlines Stefan Dürr, EkoNiva Group President.

By Mariya IVANOVA

EkoNiva in focus



23-25 November UzAgroExpo 2022, 17th International trade fair

Venue: Uzexpocentre, 107, Amira Str., Tashkent, Uzbekistan
Russian exposition organisers: Industry and Trade Ministry of Russian Federation, AO EXPOCENTRE

22-25 November YUGAGRO 2022, International agricultural trade fair

Venue: Expograd Yug, 1, Kongressnaya st, Krasnodar
Organisers: ITE Group



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Publisher and founder of journal «ЭкоНива-Вести»/
EkoNiva-News: IA EkoNiva-Media LLC

Registered office:
79A Radishchev Street, 305004, Kursk

Editor-in-Chief:
Ms. Svetlana Ivanovna Weber
Address of the editorial office,
publisher:
79A Radishchev st., 305004, Kursk,
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The journal «ЭкоНива-Вести/EkoNiva-News» is registered by the Federal Service for Supervision in the Sphere of Communication and Mass Communications, Registered Certificate for Mass Media ПИ № ФС77 - 34820 of 23 December 2008. Signed for printing According to the schedule: 30.11.2022 at 15 pm, In fact: 30.11.2022 at 15 pm. Issue date: 14.12.2022

Translated by the International Projects Department of EkoNiva-APK Holding, LLC

Printed by VIP Publishing House LLC, 51st Mokovsky lane, 305007, Kursk
The circulation of the issue: 735 copies. Order № Distributed free of charge