

EkoNiva relaunches Belsakhar sugar plant

in Kursk oblast

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Innovations galore

are presented
in Crop Season 2023

Pages 10-11



Climbing Elbrus

EkoNiva's employees ascend
the highest mountain in Europe

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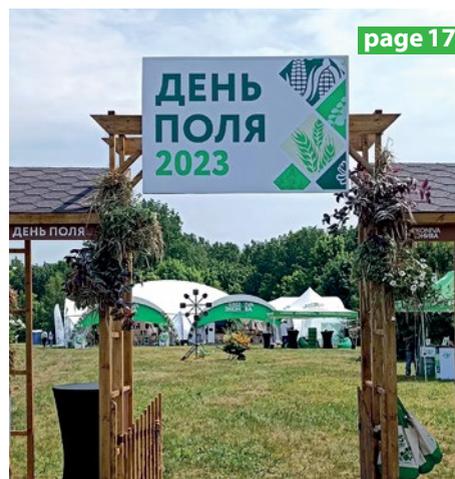
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Stefan Dürr: Sugar, like milk, must be affordable for all

When EkoNiva started its agricultural business 20 years ago, it did not intend to engage in dairy farming. However, it was milk production that ultimately made the company successful. This year, we have launched a sugar plant in Kursk oblast, even though we did not plan any sugar business. I do not think we will be the world's third largest sugar producer but, after all, we never know what is in store for us.

EkoNiva has made its first steps in the sugar industry, and I can see significant potential for further development. Over the past decades, beet sugar production has become extremely high-tech and cost-effective with new hybrids, machinery and plant growing practices, which made it possible to successfully compete with cane sugar worldwide. The year 2023 has seen rapid development of the Russian sugar export within the CIS

countries. I am confident that soon it will expand beyond the CIS area.

It is especially important for us to keep affordable prices for sugar. Today, sugar cost makes up no more than 2% of the market basket, and our goal is to keep it at this level.

Sugar beet processing gives EkoNiva additional benefits, allowing us to diversify the crop rotation and use waste products, such as pulp and molasses, as cattle feed. The sugar

plant we have launched operates well. Next steps will be technology upgrading and production expansion. We have all it takes to succeed: the fields, the crops, the processing facility and, most importantly, the people who love their job and know how to produce high-quality sugar affordable for everyone.

Stefan DÜRR,
EkoNiva Group President



Sweet life: EkoNiva to enter sugar business

The company has officially relaunched Belsakhar sugar plant in its Kursk subdivision. It is symbolic that this event coincided with the 165th anniversary of the factory's foundation. The official opening ceremony was attended by Roman Starovoyt, Governor of Kursk Oblast, and Stefan Dürr, President of EkoNiva Group. As part of the celebration, the best employees of Belsakhar were honoured with regional awards.

The opening ceremony gathered a good half of the residents of Kommunar village, Belaya district. The history of the factory goes back 165 years. In 2018, Belsakhar became part of EkoNiva which started major modernisation of the facilities: refurbished the boiler room and repaired the diffuser, beet cutters, beet pilers, pulp press and other equipment. Today, the daily processing capacity of the plant is up to 2,050 tonnes of raw material, which makes for producing 300 tonnes of sugar per day. Currently, the sugar beets from the company's own fields in Kursk oblast – 2,700 hectares in Shchigry and Solntsevo districts – are being processed at Belsakhar. The enterprise also plans to accept sugar beets from other local farmers. The finished sugar product in 50-kg packages

will be sold wholesale in the Russian market. The by-products – beet pulp and molasses – are going to be used for the company's livestock needs.

When delivering a speech at the ceremony, Roman Starovoyt noted that the region will produce 10% of the country's sugar by the next year when Belsakhar plant reaches full capacity. Thus, every tenth spoonful of sugar on the tables of Russian families will come from Kursk oblast.

'Today, we are witnessing a remarkable event for the economy of our region. After three years of downtime, we are launching the sugar plant in Kommunar village, Belaya district. I am happy that EkoNiva's management has stuck to all our prior agreements, and today, the upgraded enterprise is back

to operation. I would like to mention that during the idle time, all employees received their salaries, which is very important. We are most grateful to the company for the responsible social attitude', said Roman Starovoyt.

Belsakhar employs about 330 people in a peak season.

'The heart of any business is people. The workers of the plant are its backbone and drive. These people have always been loyal to their enterprise and village. Together, we will succeed in developing Belsakhar. What I like even more is the energetic local community, the young generation, which means we have someone to pass the sugar production traditions down to', noted Stefan Dürr at the opening ceremony.

The plant team has some interesting traditions. For instance, the first driver who delivers sugar beet to the plant on the day of its launch is given a bag of sugar as a present. So, two employees from Zashchitnoye farming enterprise received sweet gifts from the hands of the head of Kursk oblast and the president of EkoNiva Group. And the real old-timers of the plant were awarded with commemorative medals in honour of the 220th anniversary of Russia's beet sugar industry. Among the most loyal specialists are those who have devoted over 30 years of their professional life to the plant.

'The reopening of Belsakhar enterprise is essential to the economic progress of Belaya district and the entire region. We thank Kursk oblast authorities for supporting us and providing favourable conditions for work and business development', said Stefan Dürr.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO,
Eleonora DUBININA





Leading raw milk producer

EkoNiva Group has confirmed its status as Russia's largest dairy holding. For seven years in a row, the company has headed the ranking of raw milk producers prepared by the analysts of the National Association of Milk Producers (Soyuzmoloko), Milknews industry-specific agency and Streda Consulting.

In 2022, the raw milk output of EkoNiva's farms reached 1.19 million tonnes surpassing the 2021 result by 73,000 tonnes. It is the second straight year that the Group has remained the only producer in Russia to pass the milestone of

1 million tonnes of raw milk.

EkoNiva is a vertically integrated holding with a continuous production chain and constant quality control from growing forage to manufacturing finished dairy products. This approach, along with standard farm

design and construction and a unified management system, makes for running the farming business in the best way possible. The professional team is another factor of EkoNiva's success – the specialists never cease to improve their competences,

exchange experience and have corporate training.

Taking good care of the animals also contributes to the company's high performance. The cows are housed in free-stall barns and gently milked in rotary parlours. EkoNiva grows its own fodder for calves and cows and uses the in-house developed software Eko.Feed to formulate optimal rations.

Strict quality control at all production stages results in receiving premium raw milk from every farm. The Group's specialists have also developed higher quality standards for milk used in cheese making: Grade A cheese milk is selected based on 29 parameters.

Over the first six months of 2023, EkoNiva has shown growth in operating results: its farms have produced 619,400 tonnes of raw milk, which is 6% more than a year earlier. The estimated output for 2023 is about 1.3 million tonnes of milk.

By Talgat MUSAGALIYEV

EkoNiva among top 20 milk processors



EkoNiva Group has joined the ranks of the nation's largest milk processors in 20th place in 2022. The ranking is prepared annually by the analysts from the National Association of Milk Producers (Soyuzmoloko), Milknews industry-specific agency and Streda Consulting based on the revenue of the top 100 dairy producers in Russia.

Last year, according to the preliminary results of the unaudited consolidated IFRS statements, the turnover of EkoNiva's processing subdivision went up by 75% to reach 12 billion rubles. This made the Group the leader in terms of growth rate in the 2022 ranking.

Such impressive level of performance was achieved through increasing the production capacity of the facilities and expanding the range and sales geography of the Group's dairy. New lines – one for UHT milk with the daily output of 100 tonnes and another for curds with the capacity of 10 tonnes – were launched at Anna dairy plant. Also last year, EkoNiva started selling premium Dürr hard cheese aged for 3 and 12 months and redesigned the packaging of yoghurt and dessert group. In 2022, EkoNiva's processing

plants manufactured almost 164,000 tonnes of finished dairy products, which is 40% more than in 2021 (117,400 tonnes).

'Over the past 10 years, EkoNiva has managed to become the leader in the Russian raw milk market and No. 3 in the world. The decision to independently process the milk from our own farms was the next logical step. Entering the ranks of the largest dairy processors confirms that our business model and adherence to the "from field to shop shelf" principle are efficient. The sales development in the first six months of 2023 shows that we have every chance to gain a foothold in milk processing this year', says Stefan Dürr, President of EkoNiva Group.

By Mariya IVANOVA



Best corporate chain

EkoNiva's brand shops have won the Trade in Russia 2023 contest. The Group's own retail chain was awarded in the Best Local Producer's Corporate Chain category. The ceremony was held as part of the Russian Retail Week, an international business and government forum.

The Trade in Russia contest organised by the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation has taken place for the sixth time this year. The

expert jury considered 1,477 applications in 11 categories. In the Best Local Producer's Corporate Chain category, the following criteria were assessed: the number and

type of sales outlets, their interior and product range.

'Trade in Russia is a unique opportunity for small and niche retail chains, including EkoNiva's

brand shops, to establish themselves in the professional community. That's why winning an award is not only a high recognition of our work but also an added incentive for further development', says Irina Nechayeva, Head of Retail Trade Department at EkoNiva-Food.

In 2019, EkoNiva launched its own retail chain. Currently, the Group has over 60 outlets in 12 Russian regions. The chain is constantly growing – during the first five months of this year, 12 shops were opened. Three of them welcomed the consumers in the company's regions of operation: Moscow, Samara oblast and Altai area.

The advantage of having own retail business is flexibility in pricing and the ability to meet; the market needs of a particular region or city. For example, 6 shops of the corporate chain operate in the 'people's' format. They are characterised by a minimal trade mark-up on basic dairy products such as drinking milk, kefir, curds, sour cream and butter.

By Talgat MUSAGALIYEV

Boosting organic production



Savinskaya Niva farming enterprise has expanded its organic herd by over 200 heifers. In the long term, this is expected to result in the organic milk output increase by one and a half times.

The cows were delivered from the holding's conventional dairies at the end of July. The conversion period of 108 Simmental pregnant heifers, 115 open heifers and 6 bulls lasts for six months. During this time, they will be kept separately from the main herd and adapt to the natural environment of their new home.

In 2022, 139 heifers were added to the organic herd. Consequently, the milk output went up by 35%. Now, 350 milking cows are housed on the farm, and its daily output is 4.5 tonnes of organic raw milk.

'The calving is expected to begin after the conversion period. Newborn calves will be fed on organic milk. We assume that the daily gross milk yield will rise by 40-60%, which means the farm's production will

reach 6-7 tonnes of milk per day', says Valeriy Gushchin, Director of Savinskaya Niva.

The organic raw milk is transported from the farm to MosMedynagroprom dairy plant in Kaluga oblast. The facility has been certified to produce EkoNiva Organic drinking milk.

An increase in the herd size will make it possible to boost the production volumes. The holding's specialists note the growing consumer demand for organic food in recent years.

In addition to dairy farming, Savinskaya Niva is engaged in organic beef cattle breeding and crop growing. The enterprise operates in full compliance with organic standards, which is annually confirmed by the certificate of Roskachestvo – the Russian Quality System.

By Eleonora DUBININA



Leader in herd productivity

EkoNiva's enterprise has taken sixth place in the ranking of the most highly productive dairy farms released by the National Association of Milk Producers (Soyuzmoloko) and Streda Consulting data analytics company. The productivity of the holding's cows on Nesterovo farm in Ryazan oblast reached 12,742 kg per head at the end of 2022.

The rating is based on the 3.7 % fat, 3.2% protein milk yield per dairy cow produced in a calendar year. Compared to the previous

period, EkoNiva has improved its result moving up by six lines at once.

The subdivision in Ryazan oblast is one of the

best in the holding by herd productivity. Shatsk dairy is home to cow Dama ranked second in the internal list of the most productive

animals based on their breeding value.

The increase in animal performance can be attributed to the herd structure optimisation, proper ration formulation and continuous work on improving feed efficiency. Being a vertically integrated holding, EkoNiva provides its cows with in-house produced succulent and rough fodder. In 2022, the Group's herd size averaged more than 222,800 head of cattle, including over 111,200 dairy cows. In the reporting period, the average milk yield per dairy cow across the holding totalled about 11,200 kg in standard weight.

EkoNiva has firmly established itself among the leading companies in the milk industry. In addition to the high position in the productivity ranking, the holding has remained the largest raw milk producer in Russia and Europe for seven years. In 2022, the Group's output amounted to 1.19 million tonnes, making it the only Russian company to have passed the 1-million-tonne-per-year milestone in raw milk production.

By Mariya IVANOVA

Expanding cooperation with Aeroflot



EkoNiva is expanding its cooperation with Aeromar, an in-flight catering company. Milk and bioyoghurts under the Group's brand are now available to passengers on Aeroflot flights.

For breakfast, travellers are served natural spoonable bioyoghurts, and throughout the flight, they can have hot drinks with EKONIVA milk.

The products are delivered under an existing contract with Aeromar, Russia's largest airline catering supplier. The companies have been cooperating for over two years. With in-flight meals in mind, the Group has added natural bioyoghurts in compact 75 g packaging to its range. They are made from premium milk

from EkoNiva's own farms with a special starter culture and bifidobacteria.

'Our collaboration with Aeromar has been ongoing since early 2021. EkoNiva's products have already proved their worth and become a familiar and tasty companion to Aeroflot's meals. We are glad that travellers can have delicious and healthy treats not only on the ground but also on board a flight', says Dmitry Rayev, B2B Sales Director at EkoNiva-Food.

By Talgat MUSAGALIYEV

Home sweet home

EkoNivaAgro purchased a multi-apartment block several years ago to ensure comfortable accommodation for its staff. The one- and two-room flats have been renovated and equipped with kitchen furniture, refrigerators and other household appliances. The company offers them flats and houses on a rent-free basis – only the utility bills need to be paid.

'Most of our employees are young people, university graduates from different regions of Russia, and the housing issue remains pressing to them. We strive to settle it so that people would choose to live in villages', says Roman Volodin, First Deputy Regional Director of EkoNivaAgro.

At the ceremony, herd managers, veterinarians, agronomists, technicians and other specialists of EkoNivaAgro-East and North operations and Anna dairy plant were handed the



EkoNivaAgro proceeds with active social work aimed at providing housing for its specialists. This time, nine employees of the company and their families have received the keys to their new flats in a modern five-storey building in Bobrov district, Voronezh oblast.

keys to their new homes.
Polina Skakova, a native

of Lipetsk oblast, has been
working as a veterinarian at

EkoNivaAgro-North for three years, showing excellent performance. Polina met her husband Aleksandr in EkoNiva. After the wedding, the company gave the newlyweds a special present – a flat.

'It is great that EkoNiva takes care of its rural workers and ensures that they live and work in favourable conditions. We deeply appreciate the company's contribution to the comfort and welfare of our family', says Polina Skakova.

In addition to providing the accommodation to its employees, EkoNivaAgro joined the Comprehensive Development of Rural Areas social programme. In 2020-2021, the company co-financed the construction of 66 single-family houses in Liski and Bobrov districts. This year, 15 more dwellings are to be commissioned in Bobrov district under the programme.

By Viktor BARGOTIN

Nationwide scale

EkoNiva has taken part in the All-Russian Field Day 2023 in Tatarstan, presenting its seeds portfolio at the company booth and holding a tasting session of EkoNiva Organic milk at the showcase arranged by Roskachestvo.

The centrepiece of the event was the plenary session devoted to the performance of Russian crop production under the sanctions pressure. One of the top-priority tasks is to increase the industry's independence from imported seeds. The share of domestic plant breeding in the total volume of seeds is consistently growing, due in no small part to EkoNiva's contribution. Over the last three years, 10 in-house bred varieties have been listed in the State Register: 7 winter wheats and 3 soya beans, while several more are currently under trials. Plant breeding work with spring wheat, barley and lentils is also underway. Plans are afoot to expand

the company's breeding programme to include forage grasses. EkoNiva offers farmers its winter wheat varieties. The EN Taygeta adapted for the Middle Volga region is among the growers'

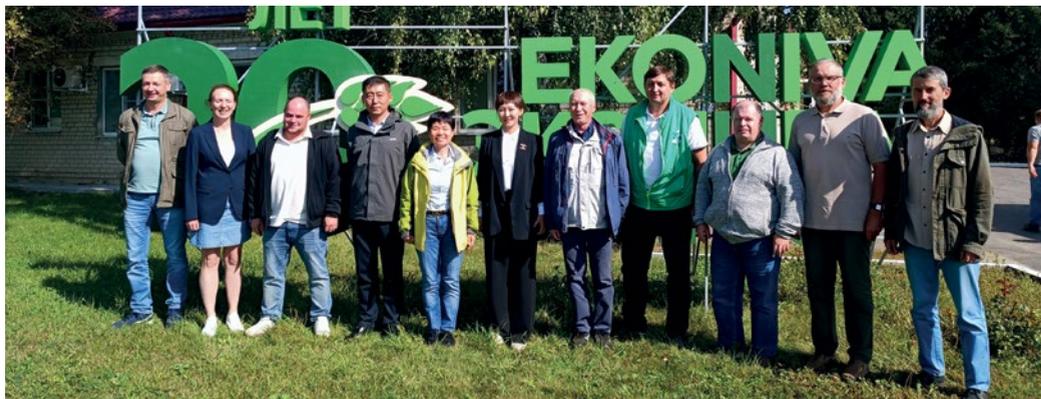
favourites. Last year, it yielded 6 t/ha in the production fields of local farms, which is 10-15% higher than the competitors. The company also presented regionally adapted novelties – EN Voin and EN Persey.



In recent years, the Volga Federal District has been among the leading soya beans growers in the region. The farmers look for early maturing and high-yielding varieties of this crop with a high protein content – up to 42%. There is a special interest in the ultra-early variety EN Argument requiring a sum of effective temperatures of 1,900°C. The soya bean varieties EN Argenta released for the region and EN Akcent are also well suited to the local soil and climatic conditions.

'We are happy to share the best innovations in plant breeding and seed production with our partners. At the Field Day, we have received a lot of positive feedback from customers about our varieties and signed several contracts', says Yevgeniy Kucheryavenko, Executive Director of EkoNiva-Semena.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO



Exchanging experience with Celestial Empire

A delegation from Yinong Corporation, a leading farming enterprise in Harbin, Heilongjiang province, has visited EkoNiva's Kursk subdivision in Shchigry district. The main purpose of the business meeting was to exchange know-how.

The guests from the Celestial Empire saw a presentation of the Group's areas of activity and visited EkoNiva-Semena's plant breeding centre, seed production enterprises and demonstration plots of soya beans in Kursk oblast.

Founded 15 years ago, Yinong is an integrated company engaged in plant breeding, seed growing and introducing

high-quality seeds into production. When coming for the visit, the Chinese specialists had every expectation of sharing experience and discussing partnership opportunities.

'We have seen for ourselves that EkoNiva puts a great emphasis on science. We were impressed with the warm welcome and the scale of the company's business. It has reached a success in different

segments – plant breeding, seed growing and dairy farming – and has a great future', says Mei Mei, Vice President of Yinong Corporation.

For both Russia and China, farming is one of the key sectors of the economy. The Celestial Empire is the global leader in agricultural production. Russia is among the top three countries in the world in terms of farmland area. Therefore,

mutual cooperation in this field is particularly promising now. The Heilongjiang Academy of Agricultural Sciences has established the Chinese-Russian centre for scientific and technical cooperation in farming. Its director Zhang Jiumei also visited EkoNiva's Kursk subdivision with the delegation from Harbin.

'The major goal is to establish contact with Russian enterprises for further research work. Scientists from our countries have been collaborating for a long time, and now, it would be great to forge a strong business connection in production. I believe that the partnership between Russia and China in the farming sector will only solidify in the future', emphasises Zhang Jiumei.

'We have a lot in common with Yinong. United by the same area of activity – plant breeding and seed growing, our companies can benefit enormously from experience exchange and cross-training of young specialists. We are also interested in the joint work within the maize breeding and seed production programme', says Vitaliy Voloshchenko, Director of EkoNiva's Plant Breeding and Seed Maintenance Centre.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO

EkoNiva in hospitality industry

EkoNiva has expanded its product range, having developed new items specifically for the hospitality industry. The company's curds and high-fat butter are already supplied to bakeries, cafes and restaurants.

EkoNiva Professional Line traditional 84% butter is available in 20 kg packaging. The product is made by churning cream from the holding's own milk. Thanks to its increased fat content, the butter is excellent for kneading laminated dough and baking pastries, such as fluffy croissants. In addition, EkoNiva Professional Line butter can be used for making ice cream, creams or as a complement to bread baskets.

The 9% curds of this line are packed in large containers of 4 kg, the volume convenient for industrial kitchens in restaurants and cafes. The product is made of simple and natural ingredients – only top-grade milk fermented with a starter culture. The curds can be served as a separate breakfast dish; alternatively, they can be used as a basis for fritters and baked puddings or as a filling for pies, buns and dumplings.



Both products were created by EkoNiva's specialists together with professional chefs and bakers taking into account their expert opinions.

'The cooperation with HoReCa companies is an important area of activity for us. It opens up new growth

opportunities and niches for the holding as we can offer products that are perfect for the industry professionals', says Yekaterina Dürr, Brand Director for HoReCa and Special Projects at EkoNiva-Food.

By Eleonora DUBININA



Innovations galore



The summer was quite eventful for the company with multiple product launches during traditional field days. Branches of EkoNiva-Tekhnika were actively involved in the trade shows in all regions of the company's presence where they displayed a diverse lineup of novelties. In the highlight were cutting-edge solutions capable of bringing maximum profit to farmers.

Power and comfort

LOVOL machinery occupies centre stage. Russian farmers are actively adopting the latest developments from the leading Chinese manufacturer supplying equipment to over 100 countries worldwide. The TD904, TD1304, TR2004 and TN2604 tractor models with capacities ranging from 90 to 260 hp are available at EkoNiva-Tekhnika. The machines are true multitaskers when it comes to farm and field operations. The stylish cabs are ROPS-compliant.

LOVOL portfolio also features combines. At Ryazan Field Day, EkoNiva displayed the new generation LOVOL GK120 PRO grain harvesting combine. Equipped with the 220-hp Yuchai engine, the unit boasts a capacity of up to 1.8 ha/h as well as an impressive unloading rate of 90 l/min.

Another bestseller, the Basak 2090S tractor (Turkey), was presented to Siberian farmers during AGRO-OMSK 2023 trade show. The 92-hp model is a versatile machine featuring the Perkins diesel engine and the synchronised

Carraro transmission with 24 forward and 24 reverse speeds. The hydraulic system with the capacity of 51 l/min makes it compatible with a wide range of mounted and trailed implements. The unit comes complete with a climate-controlled cab ensuring superior comfort irrespective of the weather conditions.

Up to the challenge

In the loader segment, the solutions by manufacturers from Turkey, China and Russia dominate the market.

'Following a detailed research, rigorous testing in the Russian conditions and verification of the benefits of the MST machines (Turkey), we are excited to offer them to farmers', says Kirill Parfiryev, Sales Manager of Ryazan branch of EkoNiva-Tekhnika. 'At Ryazan Field Day, we demonstrated the MST MH 7.35, a multi-functional telescopic loader with the 100-hp Deutz engine, a lifting capacity of 3.5 tonnes, a boom lift height of 7 m and a boom length of 4.2 m. The displays in Vladimir and Leningrad oblasts featured the MST MP 9.42.'

'The model is equipped with a reliable

and easy-to-maintain 125-hp Perkins engine. Its manoeuvrability makes it perfect not only for the agricultural sector but also for construction', comments Andrey Kamshiy, Director of St. Petersburg branch of EkoNiva-Tekhnika. 'The ergonomic cab with improved overall visibility and intuitive controls enables the operator to perform the tasks in a hassle-free manner.'

Yet another model of the Turkish brand available at EkoNiva-Chernozemye – the MST 7.42 – has a lifting capacity of 4 t and a boom length of 7 m.

At AGRO-OMSK 2023, EkoNivaSibir introduced the LiuGong CLG395B miniloader with a lifting capacity of 1,500 kg. Fitted with a powerful Perkins engine and components from leading global manufacturers, the machine combines high performance, excellent manoeuvrability and operator safety in compliance with the ROPS/FOPS.

Russian products in the segment were represented by loaders from UMG. The enterprise offers a wide range of road construction and

utility equipment. The booth display featured the UMG TLH3507 model with the 93-hp YaMZ engine compliant with Stage III regulations and Bosch Rexroth hydraulics. The machine is suitable for bulk grain handling, big bag packaging, fodder distribution, farm cleaning, excavation and landscaping works.

'This kind of equipment is new to EkoNiva, but the demand for the units is on the rise. UMG offers reliable and affordable machines', says Vitaliy Kozorez, Director of Tula branch of EkoNiva-Tekhnika. 'Considering that their price range varies from 8.5 to 18 million rubles, every farmer can find an optimum machine meeting their needs.'

High in the sky

In 2023, small aviation catering to the needs of agribusiness was added to EkoNiva's portfolio. At the trade shows, the dealer showcased the flagship plane SP-30 developed by 1 OKB (Taganrog).

'This is an ultra-light airplane weighing approx. 300 kg fitted with the 100-hp PCM-100 engine and fueled by AI-95 gasoline.

The machine delivers reliable performance within a flight range of 360-700 km depending on the availability of extra fuel tanks', says Artem Novikov, Head of Smart Farming Department of EkoNiva-Tekhnika Holding. 'An 80-100-metre long dirt runway without any major potholes or other obstacles is sufficient for a takeoff.'

SP-30 can cover up to 1,200 ha per shift. Crops are treated from the height of 2 m, the working width is 13-15 m, the application rate is as low as 3-8 l/ha. The spray liquid tank holds about 150 litres. With this tool, the treatment cost is only 140-170 rubles per hectare. This amount includes the pilot's salary, depreciation and other costs. As compared to using drones or self-propelled sprayers, the technology is quite cost-efficient.

Crop nutrition with NAGRO

Farmers displayed a keen interest in the exclusive solutions from NAGRO (Russia). The company produces dissolving units using a unique patented technology based on cold synthesis. The equipment ensures substantial time and money savings when it comes to high-quality fertiliser, improves fertiliser use efficiency two- to fourfold, saves the soil from salinisation and other negative factors associated with dry mineral fertiliser application.

Sowing, tillage, crop protection

Russian farmers continued exploring the solutions by NARDI, an Italian manufacturer producing a wide range of equipment from ploughs and cultivators to sprayers, spreaders and seed drills for over 120 years. The farmers saw the NX10E3 reversible plough with shear-bolt protection and high-quality microalloyed steel components.

'The reliable and easy-to-maintain seed drills compatible with compact and mid-range tractors are a great choice', adds Sergey Chekhov, Director of Kursk and Belgorod branches of EkoNiva-Chernozemye. 'We are talking about the DORA 600/36 and REGINA RS

400/29 models for cereals as well as the STARSEM FK 570/8 pneumatic vacuum precision planter for row crops.'

The latest addition to EkoNiva's portfolio is French machinery: the Laser 4240 self-propelled sprayer from

hydraulic system. The boom width is up to 30 m, the clearance is up to 1.8 m.

Another novelty is the Tecnomas Tecnis 6036 LVS trailed sprayer with a 6,000-litre tank, a 600-litre rinse tank, 4 hydro injectors



TECNOMA. The model is equipped with the Deutz engine, the Bosch 4x4 hydrostatic transmission, the pneumatic suspension and automatic boom section control via 5 ultrasound sensors as well as the autopilot integrated into the

for agitation and a pump with the capacity of 290 l/min. The set road clearance is precisely maintained due to the chassis-integrated AXAIR suspension.

The SolomMaster 21 tine harrow with the working width of 21 m from Willock Farm is

a competitive domestic product. The unit is made up of high-quality materials using the latest technologies.

Besides the novelties, internationally acclaimed versatile solutions by European manufacturers were on display: the Gregoire Besson harrows and ploughs (France), the Fliegl KDS 140 manure spreader (FRG), the Bednar MZ 6000 mulcher (the Czech republic), the Pöttinger Impress 3160V baler (Austria), the Pöttinger Vitasem 402 mechanical seed drill, the Lucas Spirmix L140 mixer (France), the Haybuster 2574 (USA) bale processor and the Grimme GF 200 rotary tiller.

The tour continued with autosteering systems: EkoNiva experts provided an insight into the pros and cons of the Chinese autopilots from FJDynamics and AllyNav.

In the process of business talks, representatives of EkoNiva-Tekhnika updated the partners on the current genuine parts delivery options, the trade-in programme and additional services available.

The company continues servicing the machinery from the manufacturers that have left the Russian market: farmers can expect dependable technical support and spare parts supply as well as timely maintenance service.

'We've been with EkoNiva for over 10 years now. The company has supplied and serviced over 15 machinery units. I rate our cooperation 10 out of 10', says Vladimir Skvortsov, Deputy Director of Voskresenye Agro (Kostroma oblast). 'The dealer solves the issues promptly, the hotline is available 24/7. I've said this time and time again: there is no service like EkoNiva's. The specialists of the company always come up with new solutions tailored to our farm's individual needs.'

According to Maksim Gudukin, Executive Director of EkoNiva-Tekhnika, the company stays true to its philosophy: it is not about simply selling a machine, but about finding the best solution, ensuring its flawless operation and maximising its efficiency.

By Aleksandr KUTISHCHEV, Tatyana IGNATENKO



EkoNivaSibir: the sky is no limit



EkoNivaSibir has showcased a wide range of machinery from a skid-steer loader to a plane at one of the largest Russian trade fairs – the Siberian Field Day 2023. The company's booth featured over 20 units of cutting-edge farm and road-building equipment. This season, new brands constitute 70% of the dealer's portfolio. The guests had a closer look at them and even took a test flight.

The highlight of EkoNivaSibir's booth was LiuGong road-building machinery. This brand with a 65-year history is the flagship among construction equipment manufacturers in China and is in the world's top 15 manufacturers. The range available at EkoNivaSibir includes crawler excavators, bulldozers, graders, road rollers, dump trucks and, of course, loaders.

The LiuGong 395B skid-steer loader is indispensable for tackling farm tasks. The LiuGong 835H and LiuGong 856H Max front loaders are also a great help in agricultural and road construction works.

'We are fully prepared to carry out the repair and maintenance of LiuGong machines. The spare parts warehouses are stocked, and our sales representatives and service technicians have received the required training to professionally and promptly handle problems 24 hours a day, 7 days a week', says Vasily Stepanov, Sales Manager of EkoNivaSibir.

In the tractor segment, the dealer offered an all-new

solution – the Chinese model Ensign YX2404-N. The YN Series are powerful, reliable and high-performance machines for a wide range of agricultural works. This tractor is fitted with the Shangchai/CN III engine with a capacity of 240 hp and the transmission having 16 forward and 16 reverse gears. The model also features a heavy-duty clutch with a 15-inch disc delivering high torque and enhancing gear shifting efficiency.

The Turkish holding Sanko Makina, manufacturer of MST telescopic loaders, has become a partner of EkoNivaSibir this year. It is a subsidiary of SANKO Group which exports

road-building machinery to over 20 countries around the world. The production volume currently exceeds 5,000 units per year.

'Today, we showcase the MST 9.42 telehandler equipped with European and North American components. At the heart of the machine is the British-made Perkins 125 hp engine, the axles are supplied by the American company Dana Spicer, and the hydraulic system is of the German brand Bucher. In terms of functionality, manoeuvrability and performance, these telescopic loaders are every bit as good as their European counterparts', says Vasily Stepanov.



Since this year, the Brazilian self-propelled sprayers PVT have become available to Siberian farmers. EkoNivaSibir offers two models – the PVT Rhino 4003 and PVT Rhino 4004. In Brazil, these machines compete successfully with other brands in their segment, and now it is time to hit the Russian market.

An exciting part of the Field Day was the demo show of the SP-30 plane designed for field monitoring and aerial application of chemicals. The farmers interested in aviation equipment seized the opportunity to go for a flight with an experienced pilot and see the aircraft in action. The SP-30 carries up to 160 kg of payload. Its capacity makes for covering more than 1,000 hectares per day without access to a ground filling station. The distance can be doubled subject to the station availability. Besides, a 100-metre stretch of unprepared surface is sufficient for take-offs and landings.

'We are constantly expanding our portfolio. Now, our customers have 40 brands from South America, Asia, Europe and, of course, Russia to choose from. The solutions on offer cover virtually any agricultural task both on the ground and in the sky', emphasises Gennadiy Nepomnyashchii, Commercial Director of EkoNivaTehnika-Holding.

By Viktor BARGOTIN



Towards new heights with Grimme

Potato Russia 2023 organised by Grimme is back in all its glory: demo plots, field demonstrations, scores of farm machinery manufacturers and suppliers, hundreds of attendees. This year, the event was hosted by Kostroma Kartofel Group, uniting over 900 farmers from different regions of Russia and the CIS countries.

EkoNiva-Tekhnika has been the dealer of Grimme since 2005. Currently, the company supplies machinery of the brand to 12 regions of Russia. Over the past 5 years alone the company has sold over 200 units of Grimme machinery and, as the sales representatives believe, they can do even better.

'It so happened that the Grimme headquarters and ours are located in the same industrial park in Detchino, Kaluga oblast. Over the years, we've developed not simply partnership, but friendly relations. Grimme produces high-quality reliable machinery which is recognised and valued by farmers all over the world', says Gennadiy Nepomnyashchiy, CEO of EkoNiva-Tekhnika Holding.

At the field day, specialists of EkoNiva-Tekhnika met with the clients whose Grimme machinery they service.

'Our fleet comprises virtually the entire Grimme lineup: ridge formers, storage equipment, planters, combines – over 30 units in total. For many years, EkoNiva-Tekhnika

has been the sole supplier of all of our equipment. Down the road, we plan to put to use some new land, so cooperation



with EkoNiva is definitely going to continue', says Sergey Averin, Manager of Kostroma Kartofel.

Tractors have always been an indispensable part of the crew on any farm. EkoNiva unveiled novelties in this segment – machinery of the Chinese brand Lovol. There were tractors of four power classes from 90 to 260 hp to

consider: the Lovol TD904, the Lovol TD1304, the Lovol TR2004 and the Lovol TR2604.

The powerful Lovol TR 2604 tractor has become available in Russia only recently. The machine is designed for hard work in the field, such as ploughing, tillage and sowing with wide seed drills. Exceptional tractor efficiency is ensured by the reliable high-torque Shanghai engine with the capacity of 260 hp.

The aerial equipment – the SP-30 airplane from the domestic manufacturer Pervoye OKB – has debuted at the trade show this year. The model is suitable for spraying vegetable fields. The daily capacity reaches up to 2,000 hectares provided that there is a ground filling station. Besides spraying, the airplane may be used for farmland monitoring, territory surveillance, mapping as well as for travelling and tourism.

At the trade show, EkoNiva's clients enjoyed a wide choice of over 15 machinery units and digital solutions, among them the MST telehandler, the FJDynamics autonomous driving system, the Pöttinger seed drill and baler, the Bednar cultivator, the Metal-Fach front loader, etc.

'Potato Russia 2023 is a true celebration for the exhibitors and the guests of the trade show. The format of the event includes active and static machinery displays, a tour of demo plots with new potato varieties, presentations of state-of-the-art agricultural technologies and solutions. No doubt, it is one of the best thematic platforms in Russia, which drives the entire industry towards new heights', says Gennadiy Nepomnyashchiy.

By Viktor BARGOTIN

Formula for Success



EkoNiva-Semena has organised its first field day in Kazakhstan together with its partner Oksanovka-1. The seminar called Formula for Success was held on the premises of the farming enterprise in Astrakhanka district, Akmolinskaya oblast. Over 60 representatives of both large agricultural holdings and small companies from Akmolinskaya, Kostanay, Karaganda and North Kazakhstan oblasts attended the large-scale event.

Kazakhstan is one of the key export destinations for EkoNiva's plant breeding and seed growing subdivision. The adopted marketing strategy calls for further developing the local customer base and ramping up sales. The company's portfolio includes varieties that have already become firm favourites among

Kazakh farmers and those yet to be discovered.

'EkoNiva-Semena is well-known in the republic, and the demand for its products is big. Featuring high-value characteristics, our varieties are perfect for the challenging climatic conditions in various regions of Kazakhstan', says Marina Balashova, EkoNiva-Semena

Marketing Department Manager.

The number of local partners is growing – as of today, it has almost reached half a thousand farmers. Over the past 9 years of cooperation, EkoNiva has supplied tens of thousands of tonnes of high-yielding seeds to the republic. The main crops for exports to Kazakhstan are spring wheat and barley, and there is a certain demand for soya beans, flax, winter wheat and forage grasses.

At the field seminar, the specialists provided a detailed overview of the company's varieties and the technologies meeting the conditions the specific region of Kazakhstan. Drought-resistant varieties are at the top of popularity in Akmolinskaya oblast because of its arid climate. For example, in 2023, during the active growing period, there was only 12 mm of precipitation.

Oksanovka-1 purchases basic seeds from EkoNiva, multiplies and sows them on 11,000 hectares of farmland. This year, trial plots have been set up with different crop varieties to assess their potential in real climatic conditions. The focus is on ten varieties of barley, nine of wheat, five varieties of peas, two of soya beans and one of buckwheat. In addition to the plot experiments, the seminar participants were shown the varieties in commercial production. 'Fields of Cornetto and Toccata spring wheat impressed the visiting farmers with their performance. Together

with representatives of Oksanovka-1, the company's experts talked about the agricultural technology and elaborated on all the ins and outs of crop cultivation under the local conditions. Although low seeding rates are typical here, our varieties yield at least 1.6-1.7 t/ha – an excellent result for this area', points out Aleksandr Suntsov, Sales Rep at EkoNiva-Semena.

Barley Calcule, well suited for dry steppe, bears good crops in production at Oksanovka-1. The average yield of the variety in the local fields is 2.5 t/ha. The enterprise is also testing EkoNiva's in-house bred soya bean variety EN Argument.

'The field day is an important step in the cooperation with our partners in Kazakhstan. Every year, new crops and varieties are added to our catalogue, so we have something to offer to all the regions of the republic. And positive feedback from the local farmers speaks volumes', says Marina Balashova.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO



Unlocking power of seeds



Over 120 agricultural producers from across Russia have taken part in EkoNiva's Field Day held at Zashchitnoye plant breeding and seed growing enterprise, Kursk oblast. They visited demo plots showcasing the varieties from the company's commercial portfolio and the novelties of the in-house breeding programme.

Farmers from the Volga, Siberian, Far Eastern, Central and Central Black Soil regions are present at the event, and we have something to offer to all of them', says Yevgeniy Kucheryavenko, Executive Director of EkoNiva-Semena. 'Field forums are a great opportunity for fruitful and constructive dialogue. Taking into account today's challenges, we need to work in a closer cooperation with partners to find game-changing solutions that will enable us to produce impressive results. Here in Zashchitnoye, we are sharing our experience in seed growing and plant breeding and demonstrating new crop genetics.'

'EkoNiva focuses on expanding its own breeding programmes and strengthening its position as a seed growing leader. Also, we are on course to further boost the plant breeding project', says Yuriy Vasyukov, EkoNiva's Regional Director for Kursk oblast, in his opening speech.

Nowadays, new varieties of lentils, spring wheat and barley are undergoing trials in the Group's fields. Plans are afoot to launch breeding programmes for some forage grasses, alfalfa in particular. Natalya Goncharova, Acting

Minister of Agriculture of Kursk oblast, who paid a working visit to the field forum, emphasised the significance of the company's activities.

'EkoNiva is one of the largest producers of high-quality seeds. At the moment, seed production and plant breeding are a priority as they are the guarantee of our food security', underlines Natalya Goncharova.

Today, EkoNiva supplies seeds to 70 regions of Russia and 10 other countries. The geography and volumes of seed deliveries are constantly expanding, with the total number of counterparties exceeding 4,600.

Agricultural producers from different parts of the country enjoy attending

the company's Field Day every year.

'We have been cooperating with EkoNiva for over 5 years, buying seeds of wheat and barley.

become a tradition to come to EkoNiva-Semena's Field Day for a new experience. We look at novelties, receive expert advice and then choose', says Yuriy Nemilostiv, Chief Agronomist at Amuragrokompleks enterprise.

Vladimir Zakhlebeyev, Chief Agronomist at Major Agro organic farm in Tula oblast, purchased seeds of different crops: peas, barley,



Yuriy Vasyukov, EkoNiva's Regional Director for Kursk oblast:

'EkoNiva focuses on expanding its own breeding programmes and strengthening its position as a seed growing leader. Also, we are on course to further boost the plant breeding project.'

In the fields of Amur oblast, these seeds show good results – about 3-3.5 tonnes/hectare, while the average yield for the region is 2.0 tonnes/hectare. It has

soya beans, spring and winter wheat, lentils, alfalfa.

'We are engaged in organic agriculture, that's why we are interested in varieties that are suitable for extensive farming', emphasises Vladimir Zakhlebeyev. 'Of course, the seed quality is an important factor, but the ultimate goal is a bumper crop. Last year, for example, winter wheat varieties from EkoNiva's portfolio sown after black fallow, no mineral fertiliser applied, yielded from 4.5 to 6 tonnes/hectare. This is 25-30% higher than in other varieties. Moreover, EkoNiva is the only company that provides control samples of seeds.'

By Tatyana IGNATENKO





Enhancing crop production



EkoNiva has run its annual crop production workshop in the Volga region. It was the biggest event so far in terms of both attendance and scope of crop farming services presented.

About 100 specialists from all EkoNiva's geographies took part in the meeting – directors of operations, agronomists, technicians, economists, IT specialists, commercial departments, HR and R&D employees.

Over the course of three days, the workshop participants toured Severnaya Niva's fields in Orenburg and Samara oblasts, Bashkiria and Tatarstan. They focused their attention on the specific features of crop cultivation in these regions and technologies used.

'We discussed the most topical issues – how to grow fodder crops in this challenging environment, prevent soil degradation, employ different plant protection and tillage systems for weed control and manage staff shortage. The exchange of experience with specialists from various services related to crop farming helps to work out the right strategy and deliver good results', says Aleksandr Anpilov, Director for Crop Production at EkoNiva.

According to Stefan Dürr, President of EkoNiva Group, such interaction acts

as an excellent catalyst for professional growth:

'We are a large company, and we have a lot of great specialists in different regions, each farm boasts its own achievements and interesting know-how. Our enterprises should make a better use of this avenue for peer learning, visiting each other more often and adopting best practices.'

Stefan Dürr also noted that there is a large number of successful companies in Russia from which there is much to learn and they are ready to share their knowledge, the cooperation with them could become an effective tool for development.

Representatives of EkoNiva's plant breeding and seed growing subdivision find the Volga region a promising platform for ecological and geographical testing of the company's in-house varieties. For example, the new winter wheat EN Albireo has demonstrated impressive performance in the region.

'The fields of Severnaya Niva in Samara and Tatarstan

will become a good testing ground where we can assess the performance of our ultra-early soya bean varieties', says Yevgeniy Kucheryavenko, Executive Director of EkoNiva-Semena.

Such experiments to identify the best varieties and develop effective technologies for their cultivation have become an integral part of EkoNiva's research and production activities. Currently, over 80 trials are being carried out on an area of 6,600 hectares, 10 of which are in Severnaya Niva. The participants of the workshop got to see some of them and concluded that experimental sowing of various crops should be applied to all farms of the company.

Following the workshop, a decision was made to create an expert panel on crop production which would include all related services, boosting the performance of this area of the holding's activity.

By Svetlana WEBER





Perfect variety for your farm

The secret of efficient crop production and record-breaking spring wheat and barley yields lies in the prudent selection of varieties for each area.

EkoNiva's commercial portfolio includes nine spring wheats from leading plant breeding companies. The varieties have successfully passed trials in all regions of crop cultivation and are listed in the State Register of Plant Breeding Achievements Approved for Use in the Russian Federation.

Spring wheat Toccata from the originator Selgen is a novelty in the company's portfolio. This low-growing, awnless variety has already made a name for itself in both Russia's and Kazakhstan's fields. The average yield is 5-5.5 t/ha, but last year saw the first record figures of over 6.5 t/ha in East Kazakhstan. In Omsk oblast, on Dranishnikova farm, the variety was sown on fallow land at a seeding rate of 200 kg/ha and produced a harvest of over 6.8 t/ha. This is significantly higher than the yield of the regionally adapted varieties of Russian breeding. In the current season, Toccata's yield in Kursk oblast beat last year's record and reached 8.6 t/ha.

'Toccata stands out among other varieties. It is a unicultm plant – it does not tiller much, but forms a big ear with 40-50 grains. It is excellent for production as it is not prone to lodging under

adverse weather conditions and is drought-resistant. The variety gives a strong response to the use of fertilisers and crop protection agents and adapts well to different soil and climatic patterns.



Its vegetation period is 95-97 days, which makes for scheduled harvesting without major losses. Toccata can be grown in a vast number of areas – the Black Soil region, Central Russia, Siberia, the Far East and Kazakhstan', points out Willi Drews, Doctor of Agronomy, EkoNiva's Consultant.

This year, EkoNiva-Semena has started offering its partners a new product from the malting spring barley line – a high-yielding variety Abba from Nordsaat Saatzzucht.

This plant belonging to the mid-maturing group has a short culm and boasts great tillering capacity and lodging resistance. ABBA variety is distinguished by very large grains (maximum 1,000 grain weight – 60 g) and protein content not exceeding 11.4%. The high plasticity of the variety allows it to produce impressive yields in the fields of the North-West, Central

and even in the challenging conditions of the Republics of Khakassia and Tyva.

Another interesting novelty from EkoNiva-Semena's portfolio with extensive cultivation geography is Formula 1, a malting barley variety of intensive type. In 2023, in the race for the highest yields, the variety came second with a result of 10.84 t/ha. The variety stands out for its good tillering capacity and lodging resistance. The grain is very large with a 1,000-grain weight of up to 53 g and a protein content of up to 11.4%

'This variety is definitely a record-breaker, having shown high results in production for the second year in a row. In the 2022 season, Formula 1 yielded over 5.5 t/ha in the fields of Tula oblast and more than 6.8 t/ha in Voronezh oblast. This season's performance is also up to the mark. The harvesting data from the Volga-Vyatka region indicates that despite the harsh climate, the variety delivered a yield of over 4 t/ha, while farms in the Central Black Soil region harvested about 7 t/ha', says Aleksandr Suntsov, Sales Rep at EkoNiva-Semena.

EkoNiva puts a premium on variety cultivation technologies, which complement the products from the company's portfolio to provide a complete solution and guarantee a bumper crop.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO



Fertile ground for innovation



Enhancing linkages between extension, research and producers and implementing innovations are the key success factors for a modern agricultural enterprise. Understanding the importance of having its own research and development team, EkoNiva established an in-house Plant Breeding and Variety Maintenance Centre. This season, specialists of the Centre jointly with EkoNiva-APK Holding employees have launched over 80 agronomic trials, which is 25% more than in the previous year.

Introduction of advanced breeding developments and practices ensures production efficiency and high margin. Leveraging on over 30 years of experience in the farming sector, the company applies innovative solutions in various processes to deliver good economic performance and gain a substantial market share.

‘Major effort has been put into testing, evaluating and implementing emerging products and solutions: technologies, chemicals, crop varieties and hybrids. Trials take place in 14 operations in five ecoregions’, says Aleksey Temichev, Deputy Head of Plant Breeding and Variety Maintenance Centre.

The company’s breeding centre carries out winter wheat and soya bean projects. It has 10 varieties entered into the State Register, several more in state variety trials and some new projects in the pipeline.

This farming season, 41 field variety and 43 agronomic technique trials have been held across the holding’s operations. The extensive trial network helps to identify the most profitable and high-yielding varieties and hybrids. The trial conditions, including the machinery and technology, are as close as possible to the real ones in specific areas. Thus, the specialists ensure the most reliable objective data consistent with the real production environment.

‘After reviewing variety choices of previous years and accumulating the data base, we have increased the number of farming technique trials. First, we select the most efficient variety and then apply various practices to maximise the yields. Thus, we obtain unique data to process, evaluate, systemise, store and use further across the holding’, continues Aleksey Temichev.

One of the centre’s priorities is forage crop seeds as dairy farming is the holding’s core business. The centre has

include over 100 samples’, underlines Aleksey Temichev.

The trials feature such high-protein crops as lentils and soya beans. The company also experiments with various chemical application schemes.

The first harvests of winter crops have provided the data on the trial plot yields.

‘EkoNivaAgro-South operation held a large winter wheat trial (32 varieties):



Aleksey Temichev, Deputy Head of Plant Breeding and Variety Maintenance Centre:

‘Major effort has been put into testing, evaluating and implementing emerging products and solutions: technologies, chemicals, crop varieties and hybrids. Trials take place in 14 operations in five ecoregions.’

breeding programmes on maize, alfalfa, annual and perennial grasses. Maize trials are carried out at 4 of the holding’s enterprises – in Voronezh, Kaluga, Novosibirsk oblasts and Bashkortostan.

‘The fields of EkoNivaAgro-East have been the location for the most extensive annual maize hybrid trials for over 5 years. This season, the trial plots

the best sample delivered impressive 7.62 t/ha (+39% as compared to the check variety) at standard moisture. In-house bred varieties also showed good performance’, says Aleksey Temichev. ‘The internal trial programme launched by EkoNiva proved to be a success and an efficient tool to collect, process and store production data, select and implement innovations.’

By Tatiana IGNATENKO



Siberian partnership

As part of experience exchange, managers and specialists of Siberian farming enterprises took part in a tour of EkoNiva service centre in Ob as well as one of Sibirskaya Niva's dairy farms. The aim of the tour was to provide an insight into the operation of cutting-edge facilities and machinery for efficient production.

The guests from over a dozen enterprises in Omsk and Kemerovo oblasts first visited the head office of EkoNivaSibir where more than 30 units of state-of-the-art equipment were showcased. These versatile machines can handle a wide range of tasks.

'Together with our partners, we took a close look at the machinery from our portfolio', says Oleg Datsenko, Manager of Omsk branch, EkoNivaSibir. 'The sales reps talked more specifically about BVL mixer wagons and various models of Pöttinger forage equipment – swath mergers, tedders, mowers. They also elaborated on the advantages of Haybuster tub grinders, one of which had been previously shown in action at the trade

fair AGRO-OMSK 2023, and the French tillage equipment Gregoire Besson.'

The presentation of front loaders and mini loaders of the well-known Chinese brand LiuGong as well as Turkish solutions – Basak tractors – and MST telescopic loaders sparked lively interest among the guests.

Having studied the broad scope of high-performance machines, the delegation headed for Ogneva Zaimka dairy in Cherepanovo district, Novosibirsk oblast. In 2023, this enterprise became the first in Siberia to launch a tour project as part of the agritourism development programme. Commissioned in 2020, it is one of the four modern dairy farms of Sibirskaya Niva. It has

3,550 milking cows, with the gross daily milk output as per early September exceeding 110 tonnes.

After an overview tour of the farm, the guests received detailed information about each stage of milk production and the company's approach to cow comfort, cattle housing, milking in rotary parlours and veterinary support of the herd. The specialists emphasized the importance of balanced formulation and uniform distribution of ration. Some of the machinery ensuring uninterrupted operation of the dairy had been supplied by EkoNiva-Tekhnika.

'When preparing the event, we set three major goals. First, we looked to

establish new and strengthen existing contacts in the region via experience exchange sticking to EkoNiva's hallmark principle of partner transparency for the benefit of the farming sector', says Oleg Datsenko. 'Second, we wanted to demonstrate the equipment that allows modern farmers to increase their output and product quality while significantly reducing costs and taking a more responsible approach to the land. To illustrate this by an example, we organised the visit to a benchmark Siberian farm. Today, we managed to reach these objectives.'

EkoNiva is poised to further cooperate with Siberian enterprises contributing to their success.

By Aleksandr KUTISHCHEV





Cornerstone of dairy farming



Healthy young stock is the lifeblood of a highly productive herd. The lactation performance of future cows is determined by high-quality heifer raising, intensive development in the dry period and careful preparation for breeding. EkoNiva specialists share the secret of rearing a first-class Holstein heifer.

The key stage in the development of a dairy cow to-be is the period from its birth until 2 months of age. That is precisely when the foundation for good health and lactation potential is laid.

Around 150 calves are born on EkoNiva farms every day. Colostrum drenching in the first hour of life is imperative. Overall, the calves receive six litres of colostrum: four litres in the first hour of life and two more six hours later. All the colostrum undergoes rigorous quality control. Every dairy farm has a colostrum bank, where the first milk is stored in freezers. Newborn calves are given colostrum with high immunoglobulin content to acquire stable immunity.

Apart from timely feeding of high-quality colostrum, proper hygiene supports calf growth and development. The company employees maintain cleanliness in the calving pen: calvings take place in separate stalls covered with clean straw. Newborn calves are placed into

special drying cubicles, which are scrubbed, washed and disinfected after each animal.

Within 12 hours after birth, the calves are moved into individual hutches positioned in rows outdoors. Here they are bottle-fed pasteurised



whole milk or milk replacer. Such approach ensures strong immunity, high milk productivity and proper development later on.

The calves stay in individual hutches for 10 weeks. In the final week, they

are weaned off milk and fed water and TMR. The majority of the TMR is produced in-house. The highly nutritive rations contain soya beans, a source of protein, and barley and corn which are rich in starch. Smooth transition to

TMR and water is aimed at adapting the animals to the conditions which await them in the future.

'We closely monitor physiological parameters of each female calf: height, size and uniformity. The

main criterion for the transfer to the next stage is the animal's body weight. Minimum weight upon attaining which a female calf is moved into the 3-8 month group is 90 kg or more. To meet the target, an animal needs to have substantial average daily weight gain. At our operations, it amounts to 850-900 g per calf. If a female calf is properly fed, grows in a clean environment and has no history of disease until the age of 2 months then she is likely to make a good breeding heifer', says Mikhail Gurnov, Farming Division Director of EkoNiva-APK Holding.

At the next stage, from three to eight months of age, heifers are kept in group pens. Up to the age of 5 months, the maximum size of groups is not more than 10 head. This is required to achieve the desired group immunity and minimise stress. During the first two weeks, they consume pelleted feedstuffs. Then the

rations change depending on the animals' needs.

At the age of five to eight months, the number of animals per pen is increased to 20 head. During this period, company specialists sort the heifers once a week to prevent the factor of natural selection from coming into play. Animals of similar weight and height are grouped together in the pens, which eventually contributes to the uniformity of the herd.

Herd managers at dairies control the feed bunks via the company's own software EkoFeed. They receive information about the quantity of the feedstuffs distributed and the leftover feed, thus assessing the appetite of animals in each pen. These data, which provide insight into the heifers' state of health, are taken into account when the rations are formulated.

Besides, specialists continue monitoring the bedding quality and quantity, housing conditions and pen hygiene in this age group. The stalls, feeding alleys and water troughs are cleaned on a daily basis.

'The first two stages literally make our animals hardy. It is during these periods that the heifers adjust to the environment. From childhood, the cattle are adapted to different climatic conditions: from harsh winter frost to summer heat. Thus, they build a strong immunity against various viruses and bacteria', continues Mikhail Gurnov.

Once the heifer's weight reaches 200 kg, she is moved into the next age group.

The animals from eight to twelve months of age are transferred into outdoor



feedlots. At this stage, herd nutritionists pay particular attention to formulating the rations. These are made up of basic feedstuffs, i.e. silage, haylage, straw, which

into the feedlot with obese cattle. A separate ration is developed for the group,

which enables the animals to return to their healthy weight. Excess weight can result in difficulties during calving and nonviable progeny, so herd managers regularly control



Mikhail Gurnov,
Director of Animal Farming
Division of EkoNiva-APK Holding:

'We closely monitor physiological parameters of each female calf: height, size and herd uniformity. The main criterion for the transfer to the next stage is weight. If a female calf is properly fed, grows in a clean environment and has no history of disease until the age of 2 months then she is likely to make a good breeding heifer.'

have a high metabolisable energy and fiber content, and concentrates such as cake, meal, grain and vitamin-mineral supplements. The ingredients in the ration are adjusted depending on the animal physiology: if a heifer is overconditioned, for example, she is transferred

the body condition score of the young stock.

At this point, hoof care is added to all of the abovementioned housing and feeding procedures. All the heifers undergo hoof baths up to 3 times a week.

During health checks, herd managers and veterinarians pay attention to the extremities, and the animals with issues are sorted into a dedicated area where an orthopedist trims and treats their hooves in a special hoof trimming chute.

From the age of 12 months onwards, reproduction specialists begin work with the replacement females. The main selection criteria when it comes to eligibility for insemination are height – no less than 127 cm at the withers – and weight – 350-400 kg.

'For herd reproduction, we use sexed semen from the world's best sires, which produces 80-98% female calves. As for the lactation performance of our dams, the 305-day yield amounts to around 10 thousand kg', says Valeriya Pavlova, Breeding Department Manager, EkoNiva-APK Holding.

Rearing of healthy, highly productive heifers of the breeding age would have been inconceivable without a professional team, efficient production processes, modern technologies, proper nutrition, hygiene, but most importantly – love and care for each animal.

By Viktor BARGOTIN





Closing MoSt session

The twelfth session of MoSt, the all-Russian agricultural student team Milk Standard, uniting fourteen higher and secondary vocational education institutions of the country at EkoNiva's production facilities in Voronezh, Ryazan and Orenburg oblasts has finished. Seventy-nine students worked at the company's enterprises.

This year, MoSt has more than doubled in size compared to 2022. The young people studying to become herd managers, veterinarians, technicians and economists mastered their professional skills on EkoNiva's eighteen modern farms.

Over a period of two months, together with the company's experts, they provided animals with preventive care and treatment, practiced vaccination and blood collection, fed and milked cows. Besides, the herd managers and veterinarians worked in the reproduction, young stock raising and orthopaedics departments.



The aspiring technicians learned about the design and functions of imported and domestic agricultural equipment, carried out maintenance and repair and tried their hand as machine

operators on the farms and in the fields. The future economists gained experience from the company's leading specialists.

'Over the past seven years, our enterprises have welcomed

more than 700 up-and-coming young specialists. This project is getting increasingly popular with students, and no wonder – it gives them a true picture of agriculture. Today, farming is a modern, promising and high-tech industry where one can find a good job and achieve success', says Yevgeniy Bezpалov, Talent Pool Department Manager at EkoNiva-APK Holding.

In addition to developing practical skills, the students received a lot of valuable information during lectures delivered by the company's top specialists. Stefan Dürr, President of EkoNiva Group, also had a meeting with MoSt members, sharing his professional and life experience with them. He praised the students for their high level of training, wished them good luck and invited them to join the holding after graduation.

By Viktor BARGOTIN

Intern 2023: team building for EkoNiva's employees

EkoNiva's enterprise in Voronezh oblast has hosted a team-building event called Intern 2023. It was held as part of the Internship training project, bringing together 36 young specialists from 5 of the company's regions of operation.

Intern 2023 united employees from Kaluga, Ryazan, Orenburg, Novosibirsk and Voronezh. The comprehensive programme included lectures, tours of EkoNiva's enterprises and other events aimed at team building.

The aspiring specialists were given an overview lecture on Economics of Production by Marina Gorelkina, Internal Coach, EkoNiva's Training and Development Department.

Special emphasis was placed on digitalisation. Konstantin Kapiturov, Deputy Manager of EkoNiva's Digitalisation Department, shared the company's progress

in developing digital solutions. Two proprietary software applications are successfully used at the enterprises: Eko.Feed for livestock farmers and Eko.Crop for agronomists.

The young specialists visited EkoNiva's dealership facility in Dobrino village and the cheese plant in Shchuchye village. At the end of the three-day event, they took part in sporting events and corporate games, which helped them get to know each other better and become one big team.

'The objective of the Internship training project is to prepare young livestock

specialists and agronomists for independent work in any situation without the supervision of managers. In addition to professional knowledge, we improve team spirit and familiarise employees with our company culture', says Maksim Potapov, Head of EkoNiva's Training and Development Department.

The Internship initiative has been successfully

implemented at EkoNiva since 2016, helping the company's newcomers to immerse themselves in the profession and hone the skills acquired at universities. In the course of seven years, more than 500 employees have mastered the programme, and some of them now hold senior positions at the enterprises of the holding.

By Viktor BARGOTIN



From intern to manager – with patience and responsibility

Over nine years, Nikolay Geleverya has worked his way up from an intern to the chief veterinarian at one of Sibirskaya Niva's operations. The main philosophy of the young yet experienced specialist is to live a full life and do his job well inspiring others by outstanding performance. The best way to be convincing is to take responsibility. In his interview, Nikolay told us about this and much more.



Get off to a good start

In my childhood, we had pets at my parents' homestead. I always had a great love for animals, wanting to take care of them and protect them. When I was a teenager, I became interested in the profession of a veterinarian. During my first years at university, I worked part-time at an animal clinic. We gave vaccinations and put IVs to pets, operated them and treated bone fractures, fighting for the life and health of each four-legged patient with deep concern.

After the third year of university study, my fellow students and I started to think about a place for internship. Of course, we were looking for the best conditions, including accommodation and opportunities for earning money. The choice fell on EkoNiva, and I can say with confidence now that we were right about it. I remember my very first day with the company – I had never seen so many cows on one farm before. The large dairy for 3,000 animals and cutting-edge technologies shook me to the core, and it became a starting point for me.

The desire to learn more and develop kept growing in me.

Challenges and joys

Animals are just like people: each one has its own personality, habits and peculiar features. As veterinary care practitioners, we need to find an individual approach to each patient. Unfortunately, they cannot express in words what is bothering them, so we have to be very attentive in order to notice any minor changes in their behaviour and mood. And one more thing is essential for success in our work – embracing any result. When the outcome is good, my colleagues and I are glad about it and take steps to improve it. If something goes wrong, we focus on fixing the problem. And most importantly, pleasure in the job puts perfection in the work.

What really matters

As the popular saying goes, one man is no man, and I cannot but agree with it. What really matters in the work of veterinarians, especially at large dairies, is well-coordinated and effective teamwork. We are in charge

of over 30,000 animals, so we need to be composed and united, always move forward and adopt new technology.

Right before my eyes, the company has been growing and consolidating. The first mega-farm in the Urals with 6,000 head of cattle has been launched, and I am proud to be involved in this large-scale project. In addition, several groups of interns and students have upgraded their skills under my guidance, and I am happy to share my experience with them. EkoNiva always encourages initiatives aimed at learning

and developing. The company offers great opportunities for self-realisation – anyone can come up with an idea, discuss it with colleagues and put it into action. I also appreciate how we handle mistakes in our team – we never blame each other; instead, we concentrate our efforts on finding the way out of the situation and preventing such blunders from occurring in the future.

More than a job

I would advise young veterinarians to keep learning and improving, join a professional team and seek out a good mentor as soon as possible. They can benefit from their expertise and draw valuable lessons that they will carry through their professional life. Personally, I have a rule: do no harm and make decisions before it's too late. As for my four-legged friends, I always have kind words for them: 'Everything will be fine, be patient, my dear, I will do my best'. Animals are grateful creatures, and it is such a pleasure for me to look into the eyes of a cow that I have cured. For me, veterinary medicine is more than a job, it is a true vocation. Recorded by Tatyana IGNATENKO





First agriclass in Kursk oblast

In the current academic year, EkoNiva has opened the first specialised class, so called agriclass, in the region together with Kursk State Agricultural University. High school students will be introduced to modern farming and trained to enter agricultural universities.

The issue of staff shortage remains one of the central ones in the Russian farming sector. For several years now, EkoNiva Group's subdivisions have been cooperating with the country's leading agricultural universities, taking on students for internships and teaching them the ins and outs of the profession. Eight years ago, the holding started to involve schools in this work – its first agriclass appeared in a school in Maslyanino district, Novosibirsk oblast. Later,

EkoNiva implemented the project in its other geographic locations in Voronezh, Ryazan and Kaluga oblasts. This year, Kursk has been added to the list.

A specialised class has been formed at the secondary school in Zashchitnoye, Shchigry district. The educational programme is designed for high school seniors who want to pursue a professional career in farming. The agriclass covers the natural sciences and humanities required for



value for the university, at the same time covering the staffing needs of the company and contributing to the development of the local community', points out Aleksandr Musyal, Rector of Kursk State Agricultural University.

Studying in the agriclass, schoolchildren gain important specialist knowledge and can count on extra points to be added to the Unified State Exam results when entering the university. Among other benefits there are, open meetings with managers and employees of farming enterprises, professional coaching and workplaces equipped with state-of-the-art technologies.

'It's a win all-round: thanks to the initiative, the university gets a skilled student, the student is provided with quality free education, and the company receives a local specialist. We strive to popularise agricultural and engineering majors, provide career guidance to schoolchildren and encourage

Aleksandr Musyal, Rector of Kursk State Agricultural University:

'Our university has long-standing good relations with EkoNiva, one of the strategic partners. Our students do practical training and internships at the holding's enterprises. A few years ago, we launched an industrial chair in applied plant breeding and seed growing at the university, and now, an agriclass has also been established in Shchigry district under the auspices of EkoNiva. I am sure that this will contribute to the development of the local community, be of great value for the university, at the same time covering at the same time covering the staffing needs of the company.'

admission to agricultural universities. During practicals on EkoNiva's farms, teenagers will learn about applied aspects of crop production, farm machinery design and cutting-edge technologies in the farming sector.

'Our university has long-standing relations with EkoNiva, one of its strategic partners. Our students do practical training and internships at the holding's enterprises. A few years ago under the auspices of EkoNiva, we launched the Faculty of Applied Plant Breeding and Seed Growing on the basis of the university. I am sure this will be of great

them to live and work in rural areas', emphasises Yuriy Vasyukov, Regional Director of EkoNiva Group's Kursk subdivision.

The holding continues to pay special attention to implementation of its social policy, supporting schools in the districts where its operations are located. Traditionally, on 1 September, employees in Voronezh, Kursk, Kaluga and Ryazan oblasts attend festive school assemblies, congratulate children on the Knowledge Day, presenting them with gifts and energising them for the new academic year.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO



Climbing Elbrus

This summer, EkoNiva staff ventured out into the mountains to test their strength, courage and endurance. In July, a group of 25 amateur sportsmen ascended Elbrus and planted the EkoNiva flag at the height of 5,360 metres.

Any EkoNiva employee could take part in the summit. To gain admission, it was enough to hit the special physical training standard: to cover the distance of 10 km with a backpack weighing 7 kg. Out of 60 participants, 25 passed the physical

readiness test. The members of the company's first expedition to Elbrus comprised representatives of EkoNiva-Food, EkoNiva-APK Holding and EkoNiva-Tekhnika.

'Every year, we hold a youth forum, which is attended by specialists at the age up to 35 years. The Group President

Stefan Dürr also regularly takes part in the event. During the last forum, the employees put forward the idea of climbing Elbrus. Stefan Dürr enthusiastically endorsed the idea and entrusted us with the implementation of this project', says Anna Novikova, Leading HR Manager of

Learning and Development Department, EkoNiva-Food.

Instructed by experienced mountain guides, the group spent the first several days making one-day trekking trips to acclimatise: they climbed up Mt. Cheget (3,000 m), Terskol peak, hiked to the meadows beyond a high-altitude observatory and The Maiden Braids Waterfall. On the fourth day, the group went up by cableway to the height of 4,100 m and within 3 days completed an arduous ascent to the 5,360 m.

'Initially, we planned to clear the 5,600-metre height, but bad weather and strong wind prevented us from climbing beyond this point. Still, it is a fantastic result for us since the group is made up of climbing novices with no mountaineering experience. We are grateful to EkoNiva for the incredible emotions and indelible impressions.'

Next year, EkoNiva plans to send the second group to ascend Elbrus, so EkoNiva employees still have time to get into shape and join the unique expedition.

By Viktor BARGOTIN

Our champions

For three summers in a row, the brothers Emil and Rafael Shaykhtudinov have been working at Kurskaya Vasilyevka dairy farm, part of Severnaya Niva operation. This year, along with good production results, the brothers have won beach volleyball championships held in the Republic of Tatarstan, Samara and Orenburg oblasts.

The siblings have been actively involved in sports since their early childhood. First, they played football, then went to sambo classes, but once they tried their hand at volleyball in 2012, they could not imagine their lives without their favourite sports.

During summertime, Emil and Rafael take seasonal work at EkoNiva facility, where their father Elmir Shaykhtudinov is fully employed. The elder brother, 19-year-old Emil, is engaged in the veterinary assistance while the 17-year-old Rafael is an odd-jobber.

'My sons are eager to work at our facility even though each

of them is going to pursue their own career paths. This is the place where they are gaining invaluable life experience, which will definitely be of use to them in the future', says Elmir Shaykhtudinov, Deputy Regional Director for Volga region at EkoNiva.

The brothers' outstanding performance in classical volleyball has brought them a lot of awards. They are also adding to their medal haul by winning awards in beach volleyball championships. This year, the Shaykhtudinovs have become the winners of the republic's competitions in Kazan. Besides, they have won the first place

at tournaments in Orenburg and Samara oblasts.

'We highly appreciate EkoNiva's contribution to our success: the company always

provides us with transport, sports uniforms and other essential training equipment. Most importantly, EkoNiva has completely renovated our gym in Severny village (Orenburg oblast). Now we have more comfortable conditions for training. Our impressive results are in no small measure due to this support', emphasises Rafael Shaykhtudinov.

By Viktor BARGOTIN





EkoNiva Group and Stars Coffee, a chain of coffee shops in Russia, have partnered in a joint project 'Organic summer'. From 1st July to 31st August, all coffee drinks were made exclusively with EKONIVA UHT Organic milk 3.2% fat.

Since February 2022, EkoNiva has been manufacturing its organic SKUs at MosMedynagroprom processing plant in Kaluga oblast. The Group pioneered in providing the Russian B2B and B2C sectors with the UHT organic items. The high-protein milk with a distinct creamy flavour is easy to whip into the stable foam of desired consistency,

which makes it a perfect ingredient for latte art, contributing to the balanced flavour of coffee drinks.

'We strive for continuous improvement and development, and switching to EkoNiva milk is an obvious step forward. Stars Coffee was the first to introduce organic milk in its drinks menu to bring out the best flavors of roasted coffee beans. At the

same time, the price of the cup remains pretty much the same', comments Anton Pinskiy, Head of Pinskiy&Co Holding and a co-owner of the Stars Coffee coffee house chain.

EkoNiva organic raw milk is produced at Savinskaya Niva farm in Mosalsk district, Kaluga oblast. All the production processes on the farm are in compliance

with the organic standards. Dairy cows graze freely in the pasture for at least half a year. The cows' healthy lifestyle, spending much time in the fresh air, eating properly selected pasture grass mixture and fodder from the company's own fields enable the company to produce milk with rich flavour and aroma.

Savinskaya Niva organic farm and MosMedynagroprom dairy plant annually confirm their certificates of compliance with the organic production standards with the Russian Quality System (Roskachestvo), the latest verification took place in March 2023.

'Organic philosophy means a special reverential attitude towards the world around us as an integral system. We are happy to partner with the Stars Coffee chain, which shares the values of responsible business approach and is ready to continue advancing down this path together with us', emphasises Yekaterina Dürr, HoReCa Brand Director of EkoNiva-Food.

Today, Stars Coffee operates a total of 95 coffee shops in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Yaroslavl, Rostov-on-Don, Sochi and Samara.

By Eleonora DUBININA

EKONIVA milk comes to Altai

The Republic of Altai has become the 13th region of EkoNiva Group retail presence. Two new sales outlets opened their doors in Chermal and Maima districts.

The Group keeps increasing the EKONIVA brand representation in Western Siberia striving to make its natural dairy available to a wider range of customers all over the country, including rural areas with a limited number of chain retailers.

The produce is delivered to new EkoNiva shops three times a week from the company's own plants in Voronezh, Kaluga and Novosibirsk oblasts. The full

range of the brand's dairy is available to consumers, including this year's novelties: Momente aus Schollbrunn semi-hard cheese and the premium-quality Dürr Zeller hard cheese.

The 2nd brand outlet was launched in Biysk, Altai area. A total of 65 shops are currently under the Group's management. The full list of shops is available on the website ekoniva-moloko.com.

The Group continues developing its retail network



region by region. Over the past six months, 17 shops were opened in 13 Russian oblasts. The long-term goal is to expand EkoNiva's own



retail presence to every constituent entity of the Russian Federation.

Вера УСТИНОВА

Always fresh

EkoNiva Group has become one of the winners of the brand contest held within the New Times, New Ideas forum. The company was awarded as the Best Brand in the Fresh Produce category – one of the nominations proposed by X5 Group, an official partner of the contest.

The primary objective of the brand contest is to honour the companies demonstrating dynamic development, gaining consumer trust and occupying vacant market niches. X5 Group proposed three nominations: Best Brand in the Fresh Produce Category, Best Brand in the Pet Products Category, and Best brand in the Household Chemicals Category. The key winner selection criteria comprised expert opinions from the contest partners, the localisation degree, brand image, corporate social projects and responsibility.

‘We highly appreciate the trust placed in us by our partner – X5 Group. The cooperation with Pyaterochka, Perekryostok and Chizhik retail chains enables us to provide a large number of people with high-quality dairy produce across Russia. We are planning to further increase the volume of deliveries and expand our product range’, says Stefan Dürr, EkoNiva Group President.



EkoNiva-Food, a milk processing company within EkoNiva Group, and X5 Group have been partners since 2019. EkoNiva sells dairy produce under its own brand

as well as Pyatyorochka and Chizhik private labels. In total, the range of supplies covers around 90 SKUs.

By Eleonora DUBININA

Spectacular debut

For the first time, EkoNiva Group has taken part in the food industry trade show InterFood Astana in Kazakhstan. In the course of meetings of the company’s delegates with the representatives of the HoReCa and retail segments, a number of agreements on the deliveries of dairy produce to Kazakhstan were reached.

The Group presented EKONIVA Professional Line milk lineup with an increased protein content. The attendees could evaluate the taste of milk on its own and in coffee drinks made by a barista or an automatic coffee machine. Along with milk, EkoNiva made a tasting session of the brand’s cheese range: Shchuchye and Kolybelka semi-hard cheeses, Dürr Zeller and Dürr Classic 3-, 6- and 12-month-aged hard cheeses. Raclette, a Swiss national dish, prepared by a professional chef using Dürr Classic hard cheese was the icing on the cake for all the visitors of EkoNiva’s booth that day.

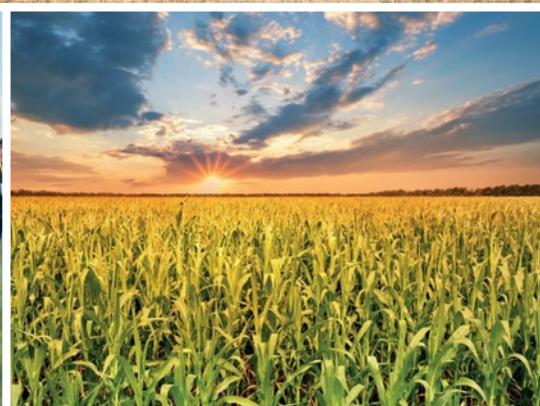
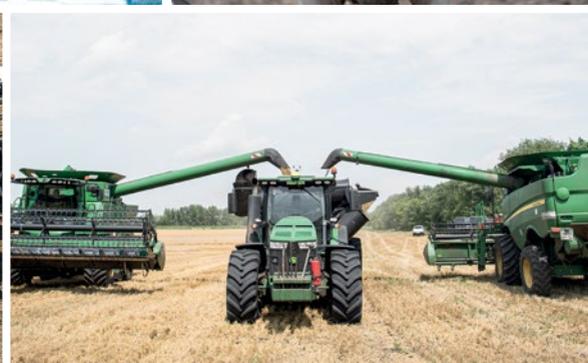
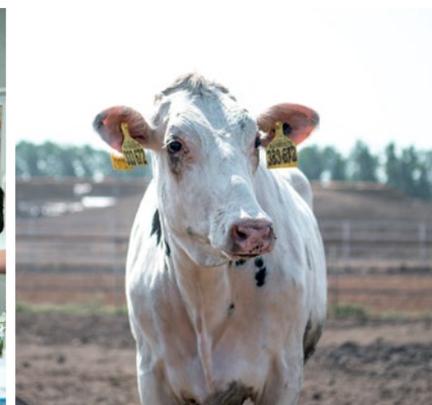
The organisers commended EkoNiva’s interactive approach to showcasing its produce and the company was rewarded for the most attractive, most-attended booth.

EkoNiva started exporting UHT milk and cream to Kazakhstan in the summer of 2022. Three milk processing plants of the Group in Voronezh and Kaluga oblasts have been certified to export UHT milk and fresh dairy items to the republic. In addition to the deliveries of dairy, farming enterprises of the republic benefit from top-quality seeds of field crops supplied by EkoNiva’s plant-breeding subdivision.

By Talgat MUSAGALIYEV



EkoNiva in focus



8–10 November International agricultural exhibition ‘Siberian Agricultural Week’

Venue: 104, Stantsionnaya St.,
IEC Novosibirsk Expocentre, Russia
Organiser: Siberian Exhibition Company, LLC

21–24 November 30th International Agricultural Trade Fair ‘YUGAGRO’

Venue: 1, Kongressnaya St., Expograd Yug Exhibition
and Convention Centre, Krasnodar, Russia
Organiser: ITE Group

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