

## Milk production pays

The dramatic reduction of the cattle stock in the 90s is still felt in Russia in that it is unable to adequately satisfy its domestic market with cattle breeding products, particularly with milk. The Russian dairy industry today is being revitalised, thanks largely to state support. Despite the tangible positive changes, the question *can dairy husbandry pay?* is still open for many Russian farmers. However, the EkoNiva agricultural holding has unequivocally answered it in the affirmative.

By Yulia SALKOVA



### Where the milk rivers of EkoNiva come from

Four agricultural enterprises of EkoNiva are engaged in dairy cattle breeding.

At the EkoNivaAgro LLC (Voronezh region) there are 15 divisions involved with cattle breeding. Thirteen of them specialise in dairy production. The company raises Simmental and red-spotted breeds of cows. In 2007, under the national project Agricultural Complex Development, it launched a high-technology cattle breeding facility for 1,200 Simmental dairy cows. The total livestock is 8,700 animals, including 3,600 milch cows. EkoNivaAgro is the largest producer of milk in the Voronezh region. Its daily milk yield is over 50 tonnes. The company is a pedigree reproducer of Simmental and red-spotted breeds.

Zashchitnoye LLC, Kursk region. Under the national project, a cattle breeding facility for 500 dairy cows has been rebuilt and modernised. The breed being raised is Simmental. The total livestock numbers 910 animals, 380 of which are dairy cows. A pedigree reproducer of the Simmental breed.

Sibirskaya Niva LLC, Novosibirsk region, has four cattle breeding divisions with a total

of 3,550 animals, 1,000 of which are dairy cows.

In 2009 the first line of a new cattle breeding facility was launched. This implied loose keeping of cattle. The construction of the facility proceeds in the framework of the national project. The designed stock is 1,800 dairy cows. It is a pedigree reproducer for raising the Simmental breed.

Kaluzhskaya Niva LLC, Kaluga region. A cattle stock of 1,000 animals, 500 of which are dairy cows. The breed in production is



Brown Swiss. A pedigree reproducer for raising this breed of cattle.

The livestock of all agricultural enterprises of EkoNiva is around 15,000 cows.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

**23-26 September.** "Kaluga Autumn 2010", regional agro-industrial fair  
**Location:** Annenki village, Kaluga  
**Organisers:** Kaluga region's Ministry of Agriculture

**September.** "New Products from EkoNiva", a semina  
**Location:** Kirov region

**Organisers:** EkoNiva-Vyatka LLC  
**September.** "Use of the AMS Navigation System for Sowing," a seminar with demonstrations

**Location:** Tula region  
**Organisers:** EkoNiva-Tula LLC

**September.** Demonstration of John Deere 7450 forage harvester. Presentation of WestfaliaSurge milking equipment and expendables

**Location:** Sibirskaya Niva Company, Maslyaninsky district, Novosibirsk region

**Organisers:** EkoNiva-Sibir LLC, Sibirskaya Niva LLC

**6-9 October.** "Agrosalon 2010" international specialised exhibition of agricultural equipment

**Location:** Crocus Expo International Exhibition Centre, Moscow

**Organisers:** Rosagromash Russian Association of Agricultural Equipment Manufacturers, VDMA Landtechnik German Association of Agricultural Equipment Manufacturers

**8-11 October.** "Golden Autumn 2010" Russian agro-industrial exhibition

**Location:** All-Russian Exhibition Centre, Moscow

**Organisers:** All-Russian Exhibition Centre's Agro-Industrial Complex LLC

**26-29 October.** "Altai Field" International Farming Fair and Exhibition  
**Location:** Titov Show and Sports Palace, Barnaul, Altai Territory

**Organisers:** Russian Federation Ministry of Agriculture, Altai Territory Administration, German Ministry of Food, Agriculture, and Consumer Protection

**19-22 October.** "Selmas-Expo 2010" International specialized fair and exhibition of agricultural equipment and machinery

**Location:** Track and Field Sports Centre, Kemerovo

**Organisers:** Russian Federation Ministry of Agriculture, Siberian Accord Interregional Association, Kemerovo Region Administration, Expo-Sibir Kuzbass Exhibition Company

# Seeds approved by GOST

A modern seed production plant started operating at the EkoNivaAgro LLC. Seeds there undergo all stages of treatment, from cleaning to packing into big bags. This enables seed producers to come onto the market with products that meet the most rigorous standards.



By Tatiana PAVLOVA

The seed production plant's output is 10-12 tonnes per hour. It uses modern North American-made equipment for

cleaning and treating seeds from LMC.

Following preliminary treatment by an air and screen cleaner at the

seed treatment facility, the seeds are delivered to the seed plant where they are calibrated as per their length, thickness and

weight. If necessary, the seeds undergo dressing and are poured into bags with a capacity of 10 to 1,000 kg. The dressing machine can be charged with several treaters at the buyer's choice. The shipment-ready seeds are also stored here at the final product storage facility.

"The absence of foreign admixtures and crushed seeds, the grading by size in compliance with GOST (Russian State Standard) requirements, and safe and smooth dressing yield high class seeds," says Sergey Lomantsov, an expert on grain technologies. "The seed plant built in Zaluzhnoye meets the world's most rigorous standards, enabling the EkoNiva Company to offer high quality seeds to the market."

Over 600 people gathered in the German town of Emsburen where the glorious history of the family enterprise BvL began just with a smithy. The officials of the Lower Saxony and company executives greeted the guests. They thanked those present for cooperation and expressed assurance that BvL has been and will remain a reliable partner and manufacturer of high quality equipment.

For over 30 years the BvL Company has been specialising in the development and production of vertical fodder mixers. It offers one of Europe's most diverse product lines of fodder mixers on today's market. Various component packages of V-Mix fodder mixers can be chosen in accordance with customer demands and specific



## BvL, 150 years

### of unflinching quality

On 20 August, the BvL Company marked the 150th anniversary of its foundation. Dealers from all countries of the world where the company's products are sold, have been invited to the festivities.

By Tatiana PAVLOVA

operating conditions. At present, BvL machines are known to thousands of

farmers across the world. "Excellent fast mixing without losses, patented

unloading and precise weighing are the strong points of the BvL mixers," says Dmitry Kostev, sales manager at EkoNiva-Tekhnika. "These durable and reliable machines are very safe. They can be integrated with domestic tractors."

In Russia today, more than 250 enterprises use BvL fodder preparation and delivery equipment. In its six years of operation in Russia, the company has confirmed its status as a manufacturer of high quality and reliable equipment.

BvL management believes that the company owes its success to unflinching German quality, the blending of innovations and traditions in production, and a personalised customer approach. The BvL machines' high quality of steel and welding makes them reliable and highly productive.

## EVENTS

### EkoNiva agrarian projects

A new agricultural enterprise, Savinskaya Niva, has appeared in the Masalsky district of the Kaluga region. The total area of its farmland is 6,800 ha. In the Voronezh region, EkoNivaAgro has increased its area by 10,000 ha through annexation of two farms. Sibirskaya Niva, Novosibirsk region, has grown by 10,200 hectares. Now, the total area of EkoNiva's farmland is 121,000 hectares.



### A road 150 years long

**1860.** Gerhard van Lengerich opens a blacksmith's workshop in Emsburen and names his enterprise BvL in honour of his son Bernard Van Lengerich.

**1883.** Bernard Van Lengerich puts BvL on a new course: production of equipment for plowing and of devices for tilling.

**1955.** BvL expands its product range of farming equipment: dung spreaders and loader carriages come into being.

**1960.** Development and production of fodder beet harvesters begins.

**1978.** BvL manufactures Europe's first vertical fodder mixer.

**2010.** Like 150 years ago, BvL remains a family enterprise. The main products of the company today are fodder mixers, litter spreaders, silo extractors, and biogas systems.

## IN BRIEF



Danone, one of the world's major dairy producers, and Unimilk agreed to merge their assets in Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Belarus. The merger will give rise to a new dairy giant on the market. With a turnover of 1.5 billion Euros, it will hold 21% of the market. The Federal Anti-Monopoly Service and the governmental commission on foreign investments have approved the companies' merger.

According to the deal, Danone will control 57.5% of the shares of the new

company, whereas Unimilk will control 42.5%. The newly formed company's name will be Danone-Unimilk. There are plans to increase the proceeds by 10%, bringing them up to the current amount of sales within three years and to invest around \$500 million in the next five years.

Following the deal, Wimm-Bill-Dann agreed to buy out 18.4% of its shares, worth \$470 million, from Danone. The company plans to use these securities for funding attractive merger deals and not to sell them on the open market.

## EkoNiva's meat production project



This May, at the first Russian auction of pedigree bulls, the EkoNiva Company acquired seven Aberdeen Angus bulls from the Angus Genetics Centre. This was the first step in implementation of the company's meat production project.

By Yulia SALKOVA

The goal of the project is to improve meat quality by rejecting cows that yield little milk but are fit for breeding and then for production of marbled meat.

After a 30-day quarantine, the Anguses arrived, with a drove of 160 Simmental cows, at Petrovskoye village on a pasture of the animal breeding and fattening complex. The animals have grown a little and are now doing their "job".

"These Anguses are produced through natural mating," says Konstantin Udaltsov, head of the animal breeding division of the

EkoNiva Company. "We are going to acquire a further 80 Simmental cows in addition to those on the pasture. The bull-calves stay there till late October. Then they will move to Petrovskoye for wintering. We expect the first young in April to May of next year."

Konstantin Udaltsov emphasized that the EkoNiva meat production project will keep growing and increase its meat producing animal stock. He also thanked experts of the Angus Genetics Centre for the "fosterlings" and professional advice on breeding and keeping the animals.

### OPINION

**Sergey Nitsenko,**

*founder of the Angus Genetics Centre:*



"We have handed over the bull-calves to reliable hands. The EkoNiva complex at Petrovskoye is an ideal place for breeding beef animals. It has excellent pastures with a good deal of green stuff, three ponds within a radius of a kilometre and a half, and properly renovated cattle breeding houses. I hope that in a few years EkoNiva will become a major supplier of quality meat and we shall be proud that those were our bull-calves that gave birth to the Company's meat project."

## With sights set



## on cattle breeding

By Anna BORDUNOVA

The event was arranged by the Globtorg Company, Germany, which supplies Russia with pedigree cattle. On the first day, the participants were shown new cattle breeding equipment and elite animals. On the second day, they visited the farms, where they familiarised themselves with the special techniques of raising pedigree bull-calves. The cattle breeders visited one of Europe's best selection stations for reproduction of Simmental cows. Also they attended a fattening farm engaged in breeding Angus and Limousine

cows. "Visiting an exhibition is a practically useful thing," says Yekaterina Brusentseva, head of the Zashchitnoye stockbreeding complex. "We learned some little secrets about the breeding of Simmental cows. We enlarged our knowledge about new developments in stockbreeding. Such events provide an opportunity for exchanging accrued expertise and acquiring new know-how. The information obtained will enhance the efficiency of our work."

Experts at Zashchitnoye LLC have made a familiarisation tour of Austria. In a short time, they managed to attend an international pedigree stockbreeding exhibition and see how foreign stockbreeders work.

## Potatoes, European style

The European Day of Potato Fields was attended by customers and employees of EkoNiva. In the small town of Bokenrode, near Hannover, Germany, 200 exhibitors from different countries of the world presented all that is needed for growing potatoes.

By Svetlana WEBER

This trip was undertaken by executives of Russian agricultural enterprises specialising in potato production or just planning to do so.

With earnest interest, the Russian farmers familiarised themselves with new varieties, agricultural machines and plant protection equipment.

For "learning the ropes," the guests toured a Grimme plant, manufacturer of potato production machinery. The plant is impressive for its size. Its automated spare parts depot got no end of praise. Also, the guests appreciated a new product, the SE-140 single row combine harvester with a four-tonne bin and roller-aided bottom conveyor.

The desire to learn about Europlant varieties of potatoes was so keen that the visitors

made ample use of plastic bags while inspecting a demonstration field after a torrential rain. But that was a worthwhile outing. Eighty varieties of potatoes were demonstrated, ten of which are entered in the State Register while eight are in variety testing.

In conclusion of the program, the Russian farmers examined modern potato storage facilities and attended a plant that cleans, sorts and packs potatoes for shipment to supermarkets.



### EVENTS

## Have you got a tractor for gardening?

In association with John Deere, the EkoNiva Company opens a gardening tools shop near Moscow.

By Svetlana WEBER

For many years, the John Deere Corporation has been producing gardening tools and equipment. Gardeners the world over justly appreciate its reliable and efficient implements. Now they are available to Russian buyers.

At first, two models of lawn mowers, the JD X 110 and JD X300R, and two models of mini-tractors, the JD 3720 and JD 4720, with power below 50 hp, will be offered. At the shop, it will be possible to buy expendables like oils, components, and spare parts. These products can be sold not only at the retail shop, but also through the EkoNiva-Tekhnika Company's department of farm equipment sales.

Knowledgeable consultants will help you choose the right equipment and will advise on how to maintain it. The shop staff will include an expert on servicing and spare parts.

At the shop, in addition to gardening equipment one can buy work clothing, children's toys and souvenirs sporting the world-famous JD brand.



Oats are a grain crop which is largely underrated by farmers today. This crop prefers a cool climate and low yield power soils (25–40). Oats are grown in most countries of Europe, in North America and South-eastern Australia. In Russia, the crop is grown virtually everywhere, a third of sown areas being in Western Siberia (10).

By Sergey GONCHAROV,  
 doctor of agricultural sciences,  
 SAATEN-UNION Rus LLC director

**GAINING  
 EXPERIENCE**



# THE PROMISING CROP

The sagging interest in this crop in the last decades is attributed to the fact that the productivity of oats is lower than that of wheat and barley. The world's oats-

sown areas shrank by 32.4% from 18.2 million hectares in the 1995-96 season to 12.3 million hectares in 2005-06 (USDA). Among the European Union countries, the largest oats-sown areas are in Poland (0.54 million hectares) in 2007, Spain (0.48), Finland (0.36), and Romania (0.2). From 1995-96 to 2005-2006 the sown areas in Europe shrank from 4.7 to 3.8 million hectares, and in

America from 2.6 to 2.3 million hectares. The sown areas in Russia in the period under consideration shrank by 54.1% from 8.5 to 3.9 million hectares. The trend still persists. Whereas in 2006 oats accounted for 3.6 million hectares, in 2010 they did for 3.1 million.

With a third of the world's oats-sown areas, Russia contributes a fourth of the global harvest. Whereas in 1995-96 the country's gross harvest of oats was 8 million tonnes, in 2009-10 it decreased to 5.4 million tonnes. Incidentally, the reduction in the oat grain harvest was registered in the rest of the world from 28.5 to 23.4 million tonnes. In Europe, the harvest fell from 11.2 to 10 million tonnes. In the US it remained at a steady 5.7 million tonnes.

Oats selection is developed mainly in Northern Europe. Thus 7 to 8 originators dominate the German domestic market, simultaneously promoting their varieties to the EU-27 countries and beyond. The primary tasks of selection are:

- seed productivity and its components (plant stand density, weight of 1,000 grains and the number of grains in the panicle);
- grain quality (energy content, high

starch content; moderate fat content, optimum  $\beta$ -glucan and anti-oxidant levels). High protein content (up to 20%) is a target for fodder varieties, while low

content (down to 9%) is essential for malting;

- early maturity. Early ripening is particularly important on difficult soils and in droughty conditions;
- resistance to lodging based on the dw6 short stem gene (Palestinian dwarf) and overcoming negative correlations;
- straw properties. Elimination of the negative correlation between resistance to lodging and uneven ripening of straw.

Of all oat-sown areas in Russia, 3 to 5% are certified brands. However, considering the large sown areas, the seed market's capacity in 2009-10 varied between 40 and 60 million rubles. Collection of license payments (royalties) is not yet widely used in Russia. This is the chief obstacle to investments in the country's selection work.

The State Register of selection

achievements includes around 80 varieties from thirty originators. Now registered are varieties of West European selection, such as Ivory, Roope, and Effective.

Applications have been submitted for new varieties from German, Austrian, and Finnish selectors. Their fate will depend not only on their yield, but also on consumer demand. Food products from oats are increasingly positioned as "healthy food" both in Russia and the rest of the world. Gradually, a closed cycle of seed circulation is being formed, from the variety originator to consumer who processes the commercial oat grain (muesli, flakes, cereals). The amount of processing in the country is growing. Competition on the seed and variety market is getting tougher. High quality grain may become an item for export. The share of areas sown with foreign varieties is likely

to increase. Oats are becoming a crop which is attractive to the seed production business.

In 2010 a new German-selected variety, Ivory, brand Nordsaat, was included in the State Register for admission. This

is one of the most widely used varieties of oats in Europe. It

offers high quality grain and is demanded by the processing industry. In Germany it's a model of quality. The Ivory variety is an intensive type, which with due nourishment yields highly productive crops resistant to lodging.

At the production trials in the Vologda region in 2009, the grain yield exceeded 5.5 tonnes per hectare. The grain met requirements applied to food grain of the 3rd and 4th class.

There is every reason to believe that before long the Ivory variety will take a worthy place on Russian fields.



**TECHNICAL INSPECTION**

# John Deere's

This May, the John Deere Company opened a spare parts production and distribution centre at Domodedovo. The Russian-assembled 8th and 9th series JD tractors, JD 9670 STS rotary combine harvesters and W 650 key-operated machines are in high demand on the market. In just a few months, EkoNiva has supplied farmers with 50 combine harvesters and just as many John Deere tractors made in Russia.

By Yulia SALKOVA

## second home



Ryazan farmers decided to see for themselves how production of the world famous farming machines is organised in Russia. The familiarisation tour was arranged by EkoNiva-Ryazan. The guests saw the production lines for assembly of tractors and combine harvesters sporting a deer on their side. Already 100 tractors and 225 harvesters have rolled off the lines. The facility at Domodedovo immediately was nickname John Deere's "second home". The facility's experts noted that today one tractor is built in a day, but there is the capability for building six.

Contrary to prejudice against the world's leading brands manufactured in Russia, agricultural machines from Domodedovo work trouble-free this farming season, challenging their foreign counterparts.

"This is normal," says Oleg Ilyin, quality supervisor of the John Deere plant in Domodedovo. "Quality control of John Deere machines in Russia doesn't differ from that abroad. The tests start as components arrive at the workshop and end before shipment of finished products to customers. We check how the machine is fastened so that nothing can happen to it during transportation and the customer will be pleased to receive his combine harvester or tractor on time."

Double quality control is employed at each of the 12 stages of assembly. Checks are made of what has been done at a given station and the next one. At the final station, all the systems are tested, including the

electricals and hydraulics. This is followed by a five-hour test drive which evaluates all of the machine's operating modes at full load.

A familiarisation tour of the John Deere plant would be incomplete without a visit to the world class spare parts depot measuring



the delivery of spares is a matter of two to three days. Thanks to the availability at the depot of 65,000 items of components, urgent orders are executed within 24 hours. Each day, 10 tonnes of spare parts are shipped to 48 dealer companies all over Russia. With the opening of the plant in Russia, farming equipment

of the Voskhod LLC. "We use the JD 7830 tractor on our farm. It is employed in all main types of agricultural work, such as sowing, cultivation, and plowing. Actually, it replaces several medium-power tractors. Besides, it is very convenient to operate. Soon we are going to acquire another JD tractor of the 8th or 9th series. This, indisputably, will be a Russian-assembled machine. As for me, I'd rather sell two of my New Holland combine harvesters and buy one Russian John Deere."

Deere plant at Domodedovo maintains all the standards of production, quality control and labour management accepted in Europe," says Roman Shkaraput, head

### Types of financing for purchase of farming machines and equipment

#### Rosselkhozbank JSC

- advance – 10%;
- credit funds – 90%;
- credit period – up to 10 years;
- grace period of repayment – up to 12 months.

#### Sberbank Rossii JSC

- advance – from 20%;
- credit funds – 80%;
- credit period – up to 5 years;
- grace period of repayment – up to 3 months.

**At Domodedovo they assemble farming equipment that proved to be efficient in Russia. The JD 8295 R (295 hp) and 8320 R (320 hp) 8th series tractors feature an excellent thrust and fine fuel economy. The machines of this series are used for sowing at minimum or zero soil treatment and for transportation. The 943 (430 hp) tractors are used for the same jobs but with wider mounted implements.**

**Over the years, the JD W 650 key-operated combine harvesters with a separation system have been effectively used for harvesting a wide range of crops. Depending on the field conditions, the combine's productivity may exceed 40 hectares per day.**

**The JD 9670 STS combine harvesters with rotary threshing system ensure minimal grain loss even at high speed operation. The combine's average productivity is 50 hectares per day, which may increase depending on the field conditions and the header width.**

order time has reduced at least by 2 months since transportation from abroad became unnecessary and finished products are readily available at the storehouse.

"Today we saw with our own eyes that the John

of the Voskhod LLC. "We use the JD 7830 tractor on our farm. It is employed in all main types of agricultural work, such as sowing, cultivation, and plowing. Actually, it replaces several medium-power tractors. Besides, it is very convenient to operate. Soon we are going to acquire another JD tractor of the 8th or 9th series. This, indisputably, will be a Russian-assembled machine. As for me, I'd rather sell two of my New Holland combine harvesters and buy one Russian John Deere."

A visit to the John Deere plant ended on an open site with a wall in the distance sporting an inscription "Made with pride in Domodedovo."

"Yes, indeed, we have what we can be proud of," said the Ryazan farmers.

"The organisation of production is amazing!"

The important thing is that now the production of John Deere machines at Domodedovo is credited as Russian-manufactured equipment and gets subsidies equal to two thirds of the Russian Central Bank's rate of refinancing.



**TREND**
**Beginning on page 1**
**European expertise**

In 2002, as EkoNiva opened its first dairy production facility, cattle breeding was considered an unprofitable enterprise and milk production – destined to failure. Cattle was being slaughtered because of low prices and difficult financial conditions. Nonetheless, EkoNiva took up dairy production.

The focus was on high quality of milk and increasing output. Pedigree animals were purchased in Germany, Austria, Hungary, and Switzerland.

“The purchase of highly productive cattle abroad was the sole correct solution,” says Konstantin Udaltsov, EkoNiva director for dairy production. “With the collapse of cattle breeding, domestic selectors had nothing to offer. For that very reason the stake was on European expertise in cattle breeding.”

**What does a calf want with a jacket?**

In many ways EkoNiva had to break the established methods of cattle breeding and launch changes.

Cattle breeding facilities left over from the Soviet era were reconstructed and modernised. Heating was discarded. Milk pipelines were installed.

Loose keeping of animals with free ranges has considerably reduced the labour input, enhanced mechanisation efficiency and improved sanitary conditions.

Housing and treatment of the young was also improved. After birth, the calves are transferred to individual cold houses, then placed under collective shelters where they live from the age of two months till they are four months old. At first, the cold keeping of calves was strongly disapproved of by kind-hearted calf-tenders who, in freezing cold, tried to dress the calves in their own padded jackets.

**Starting from scratch**

In 2007, EkoNivaAgro launched a high technology dairy production complex of 1,200 milch cows. The facility was the first one in the Voronezh region built from scratch. Here, the livestock is kept free in Wolf System cow-sheds having collective and individual stalls with a deep litter. The milking room is fitted with the Europarallel, GEA WestfaliaSurge, 2 x 24 high speed system. The livestock is

# Milk production pays



controlled by means of a Dairy Plan management program. This stores complete information about animals: their pedigree tree, medical case record, vaccinations, milk yields, etc.

The construction of the complex proceeded with a credit support of the Sberbank. The recoupment period is 8 to 10 years. Now the complex is bringing in a steady income. The total milk yield in August this year was 527 tonnes of milk only of superior quality.

The cattle breeding complex is a model enterprise of the German-Russian cooperative project for introduction of modern technologies in milk and beef

difficulties in 2009, Sibirskaia Niva launched the first line of the dairy complex, a cowshed for 472 animals, a calving section for 100 cows, dairy production room and offices for staff. Once the complex reaches the designed output, it will house 1,800 milch cows. Simmental heifers were imported from Austria and Germany. The housing conditions are the same as those at the EkoNivaAgro Company. The milking employs GEA WestfaliaSurge rotary milking machines with a throughput capacity of 220 cows per hour. The total milk yield this August

EkoNiva-APK Holding LLC in the Voronezh region. “Without state support, the recoupment period of such a project as a 1,200 animal farm would grow by at least 2 to 3 years. Now subsidies are provided for all types of work: for sale of milk, for acquisition and keeping of pedigree young, for keeping and increasing the number of dams. Also, subsidies are provided for purchasing agricultural machines and stockbreeding equipment as well as for purchasing veterinary preparations.”

**Prospects**

In full swing at EkoNivaAgro is construction of another cattle breeding complex with a designed stock of 1,800 milch cows. The commissioning of the first line is due in November 2010. In 2013, the complex is scheduled to go into operation. The new complex will house 1,000 Holstein cows, 400 of which have already arrived. The total investments in the cattle breeding project will reach 646 million rubles, 80% of which is loans provided by the Sberbank.

Asked if dairy production can bring profit, the president of EkoNiva Group of Companies Stefan Duerr said:

“Cattle breeding can be quite profitable. However, one should not expect a fast recoupment. This is the most complicated branch of farming, involving considerable outlays, long recoupment time and many risks. However, unlike plant growing, it is free from seasonal fluctuations, ensures a steady profit and jobs all the year round. So dairy producers have nothing to complain of. The purchasing prices are high, and the state supports both old timers and newly established businesses in this field.”



production. In the framework of the project, seminars are held for workers of the cattle breeding industry in various regions of Russia. The main reason why domestic stockbreeders visit the complex is to make sure that the European technologies do work in Russia and bring a handsome profit.

Despite the economic

was 213 tonnes for a livestock of 280 milch cows. At the moment the investments amount to 340 million rubles, some 80% of the sum being provided by Rosselkhozbank in the form of loans.

**State support does work!**

“All cattle breeding facilities of EkoNiva were built using loans of the Sberbank and the Rosselkhozbank,” says Sergey Lyashko, financial director of the

# Laurels to John



**for a breathtaking performance**

The cooperative has been in operation since 2004 and is specialised in the production of milk and growing of potatoes and grains.

Nikolay Mitrokhin believes that no matter how much expertise one has no proper work can be done today without modern equipment. For the past three years, the cooperative has been acquiring agricultural equipment from EkoNiva-Ryazan LLC. This year, the inventory was replenished with the Russian-built John Deere 9670 STS grain combine harvester. Nikolay has tried it himself.

"I enjoyed every second of

handling the harvester steering wheel," Nikolay says with delight. "In July I threshed 2,012 tonnes of grain. Another two combine operators worked with me on machines of a different model. One came up with 840 tonnes, another with 828. The figures speak for themselves. They are fantastic!"

Nikolay also noted that the Rapid 400 C from Vaderstad came in very useful in their struggle against drought:

"We're using it to the greatest possible extent, covering 75 to 80 hectares in two shifts. It runs beautifully following the least technical requirements and enabled us to complete the sowing in a short

**Addressing manufacturing problems unconventionally, obtaining results not by numbers but by skill, such is the modus operandi of the Vyshgorodsky agricultural cooperative.**

By Yulia SALKOVA

period of time. We use our seeder together with the John Deere 7030 tractor. Realising this is a reliable machine, we are thinking of getting another tractor of the 7000 series.

We're going to replace our T-150's because the drivers die of heat in them even at night. Each day the Vyshgorodsky agricultural cooperative produces 9 tonnes of milk. The enterprise keeps 1,500 animals, 700 of which are cows. For forage preparation, we use the JD 7300 tractor. In addition to the John Deere, we have three forage harvesters. But they only mow the creep-feed. I don't use them for big harvesting jobs. Why get in



the way? The crushing quality is beyond comparison! Last year, the harvesting of fodder and hay dragged on for about a month and a half due to endless malfunctions. So, the hay we stocked was virtually half-rotten. Now, with the John Deere machine we do the job in 9 days. Once we got the equipment from EkoNiva, our lust for work burst out. I got so enthusiastic I wrote a hymn devoted to John the grain harvester! We'll continue to cooperate with EkoNiva. They offer excellent and prompt servicing. Here is just one example. At night, a combine harvester was delivered. When did the guys from EkoNiva unload it? When did they put it together? I have no idea. But as I came in the morning I saw some

putting the sowing machine together, some fitting the drums. And at lunch they said, 'Let's go, Nikolay!' I answered in surprise, 'Sorry, boys! I'll go myself!' Once in the field, I made all the necessary arrangements from the cabin and off I went. Empty the bins quick!"

**During the crisis, they decided at Vyshgorodsky to cut costs. The company office moved to the workshop building and the two-storey office was converted into a residence for four of the employees' families.**

## Differentiated fertiliser introduction is a really economical technique

Differentiated fertiliser introduction is a really economical technique. We have written already about differentiated sowing and fertiliser introduction (issue No.19, 20). On the fields of the EkoNivaAgro Company (Liskinsky district, Voronezh region) we carried out another experiment with differentiated introduction of fertilisers for subsequent sowing of sugar beets. Such a technique not only levels out the soil's agrochemical composition, which increases the crop yield, but also saves much fertiliser.

By Yulia SALKOVA and Denis DUDKIN, GPS navigation specialist

### INFORMATION:

Experimental field area – 202 ha  
Ammonium phosphate  
Potassium fertilisers

### Machines used

Hansenhof electronic software developer  
Monitor (manufacturer – WTK electronic)  
NietField sampler  
Bogballe spreader  
John Deere 5725 tractor

**Step 1.** Based on the map of soil analysis carried out using the NietField sampler, a fertiliser introduction map (fig.1) is made in the Gis Navikat module of the Hansenhof electronic software. The fertiliser introduction dosage was calculated by a balance method separately for each element.

**Step 2.** We load the obtained maps into a special monitor (manufacturer WTK Electronic, fig.2). Then, we install this in the

cabin of the John Deere 5725 tractor fitted with the Bogballe spreader (fig.3) having a fertiliser weighing and introduction control system.

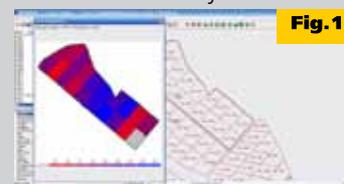


Fig. 1

Once on the field, work begins.

Fig. 2



The monitor is connected to the spreader control panel, after which it starts regulating the fertiliser dosage in accordance with the GPS position. The spreader automatically regulates the dosage of fertiliser introduced. Ammonium phosphate and potassium fertilisers are introduced alternately.

### Result of differentiated

Area of experimental field, ha	ammonium phosphate consumption at recommended dosage, for Black Earth Region, t	potassium fertiliser consumption at recommended dosage, for Black Earth Region, t	differentiated introduction of ammonium phosphate, t	differentiated introduction of potassium fertilisers, t	saving of potassium phosphate, t	saving of potassium fertilisers, t
202	40.4	60.6	33.010	29.69	7.39	30.91

### EXPERIMENT



Fig. 3

### introduction of fertilisers

The recommended dosage of introduction for the Black Earth Region of Central Russia is:

200 kg/ha – ammonium phosphate;  
300 kg/ha – potassium fertilisers.

The table below shows economic data of differentiated introduction of fertilisers as compared to conventional dosage.

The quite good savings are obvious, considering that the cost of ammonium phosphate in the Black Earth Region is 15,000 rubles a tonne and that of potassium fertilisers is 6,000 rubles per tonne.

## SOCIAL LIFE

# Our numbers have grown!

At the EkoNiva Company, they stake on the young. The majority of the company's personnel consists of young specialists. They're the ones who are getting married and are raising children. And it's precisely this that brings joy!

By Tatiana PAVLOVA

## Who bids more?

This year the company's employees have celebrated 22 weddings. None of the holding's divisions wished to yield in this respect. For instance, employees of the EkoNiva-Tekhnika Holding performed 11 weddings. And the employees of the EkoNiva-APK Holding came up with just as many. As for marriages between employees, the contribution of people from the Tekhnika division is markedly higher. Of five office romances, three ended in weddings at EN-Tekhnika and two at Zashchitnoye.

Tatiana and Sergey Kupriyanov met when they were students of the Saratov Agricultural University. For six years they had been "testing" their feelings. In 2008, Sergey came to work as a veterinarian at Zashchitnoye. Tatiana finished her studies and followed her beloved one to the Kursk region. Here they both found work in their professional fields and created a family.

"Sergey is very fond of his job. This is what he was born for," Tatiana says. "As for me, I'm happy where he is."

Thus far, the young family lives in a company-provided apartment. However, construction of a spacious and light house for them is close to completion. Their housewarming party is not far off.



Varvara and Anastasia Polivanova with father

In 2010 the company supplied 17 representatives of the fair sex and 10 men. One of the chief "suppliers" of brides was EkoNivaAgro. This

division alone has married off five girls.

We are in for reinforcements!  
**Boys vs. girls. A draw?**

Nine months have passed since the beginning of the year. I don't know what you make of this time, but for me this is a reminder of the most important event in human life, the birth of a baby. It's good that EkoNiva employees do not only perform their service duties, but also expand their families.

Some produce babies for the second time, bringing joy to themselves and their relatives. For instance, the family of Tatiana Burkhovetskaya has come by another son. She succeeds in combining her duties of mother and housewife with a responsible job as the EN-APK Holding's financial director.

In the Polivanov family, employees of the Sibirskaya Niva, the joy is twofold. Two baby girls were born to them – Varvara and

Anastasia. On 4 September the girls turned one month old. Thus far the little sisters are so much alike that nobody except their father and mother can tell them apart. Is it difficult to cope with two little ones at a time? In response, Svetlana Polivanova just shrugs her shoulders.

"I can't imagine how it could be differently," Svetlana says. "These are my first children and, naturally, I have a lot of concerns. But we are not going to stop at what we have achieved. My husband and I dream of a boy."

This year, EkoNiva has witnessed the birth of 17 boys and 17 girls! So it looks like an amicable draw. There is still time before the year ends. It's interesting to ponder who will come next?

P.S. As the issue was being prepared, the "next" parents became known. Yekaterina Yozhikova, head of pedigree stock breeding at EkoNiva-APK Holding LLC, presented her husband, chief of the EkoNiva-Agro animal farm, with a boy.



Tatiana and Sergey Kupriyanov

# Almost



In the first days of January 2010, junior residents of Shchuchye village (Liskinsky district, Voronezh region) got an excellent New Year's present – a new kindergarten. This "strategic facility" for 40 children was jointly built by the EkoNivaAgro Company and the Liskinsky District Administration. At last, in late August, the Shchuchye kindergarten held its first graduation party.

By Yulia SALKOVA

# first-formers

Under the careful guidance of their tutors, nine prospective pupils treated their parents and guests to a real celebration with entertaining games, breathtaking dances and boisterous songs. The children proved that they are not only good at merry making, but also are fully fit to be referred to as "first formers." To the joy of their parents and grandparents, the kindergarten leavers displayed their readiness for school: they did difficult math sums, guessed riddles and answered questions about the world.

On this day, the heroes of the occasion got

"a heap" of presents and benedictions. Valentina Shestoperstova, head of the Shchuchye Village Administration, and Roman Litvinov, deputy executive director of the EkoNivaAgro LLC, congratulated the kindergarten leavers, presenting them with trim satchels full of school accessories. Second-year pupils of the Sredny Ikoresh school, where the children will study, handed over to them the symbolic keys to the primary classes. Their junior "colleagues" at the kindergarten also came up with their farewell speeches. The party ended with a banquet of

sweets for all the children.

"I will remember these leavers forever. After all, they are my firstlings," says Yulia Kaplina, the head of the kindergarten. "They are marvellous children, all real characters! I think they'll do fine at school and then beyond it. I wish to thank the parents for their children of whom they can be proud. I thank them for their involvement in the kindergarten's life and wish they may give birth to more children now that we have this infants' facility."

The parents promised to work on the addition to the kindergarten population since they, just like their children, don't wish to leave it and are willing to come here again. Bidding farewell, the leavers promised their tutors to get only good grades for achievements at school and not to forget their dear kindergarten where they were served very special "magic" porridges with sweet "flower pollen" and where they learned to be good friends and take care of their juniors.

"At the kindergarten I was fond of putting together a Meccano set and driving a John Deere tractor because it looks like a real one, though it's just a toy," says Danila Litvinov, a prospective first year pupil. "Also, I liked to play with little kids and help them build temples from toy bricks and sand. I will miss my kindergarten and I will be coming here, though I'm already grown up and ready for school," Danila promised in real earnest.



# Focus ON US!

## PHOTO EXHIBITION

**Please, send your photos marked FOCUS ON US! to:**

305004 Kursk ul. Radishcheva, 79-a 000  
EkoNiva-Media or e-mail them to: [vesti@ekoniva.com](mailto:vesti@ekoniva.com)  
Please, feel free to contact us on the telephone:  
+7 (4712) 39 26 60

EkoNiva continues a 'FOCUS ON US!' photo competition. We invite the participation of anyone who thinks that the best moments from the life of a village and of the peasants are moments worth capturing as history. The photos will compete in one of the following categories:

The best photos will be published in *EkoNiva-News* and awarded prizes. Moreover, most interesting and attractive pictures will be demonstrated at the exposition.

1. **Russian Field...** (You can send photographs featuring fieldworks or pictures of beautiful landscapes featuring fields)
2. **Field Machinery of the XXI Century!** (We are expecting photographs of state-of-the-art agricultural machinery and equipment required for implementation of advanced agricultural techniques)
3. **The Renaissance of Livestock Breeding.** (Send us pictures of livestock farms)
4. **Farmers of Russia – we expect portraits of your neighbours, friends and relatives...** and any other persons who work on the land
5. **My Native Village and My Home** (Send us photos featuring the most interesting moments in the life of your native village)

**This tired cow has sweet dreams, She produces tasty creams.**  
At a EkoNivaAgro LLC farm



**What a romantic date!**



On the potato field of the Zashchitnoye LLC

**Warming up was not in vain, look – the game is drawn again.**



**Always in flight: in sports and at work.**



Friendly football and basketball matches between EkoNiva and John Deere teams



**Three accordions were torn while selling John Deere!**  
EkoNiva-Chernozemye sales managers are inventive guys

**"We must camouflage immediately as Simmentals!"  
"Think they'll take us for one of them?"  
"Of course! I did this lots of times!"**



Newly arrived Anguses get a new lease of life at EkoNiva-Agro LLC

# Field days in the regions

## Voronezh region

The Rapid RDA 600 C machine presented by EkoNiva-Chernozemye LLC was a real hit of the sowing campaign. Crushing of vegetation remainders, introduction of fertilisers, sowing, compacting,



and extra levelling are operations performed by the Rapid in one go. This forms a sort of a moisture saving "shield" from mulch on the field surface. The high

operating speed of the sowing machine (up to 25 km/h) reduces sowing time. Also on display was fodder harvesting, sowing, tilling and loading equipment from John Deere, Kverneland, Vaderstad, Degelman, and JCB. An agreeable surprise for visitors to the EkoNiva-Chernozemye exposition was a raffle of certificates for discounts of 100, 200 and 300 thousand rubles in purchases of Russian-made John Deere tractors.

## Novosibirsk region

The EkoNivaSibir Company has demonstrated the JD 4730 self-propelled sprinkler for farmers. With a bar width of 30 m and operating speed of up to 28 km/h, it has a productivity of 50-70 hectares per hour. The dosage of compound introduced, between 40 and 250 litres per hectare, is adjusted



in the cabin. Incidentally, the sprinkler cabin is fitted to receive Green Star and Autotrac high precision agricultural machines. This increases productivity and saving of compounds while simultaneously, allowing introduction of differentiated chemicals for higher crop yield.

## Kirov region

The EkoNivaVyatka Company has demonstrated fodder harvesting equipment for Kirov farmers. The Taarup 4232 mower,

Fanex agitator, Vicon baler, Taarup 612 fodder mixer, and Andex rake unit from Kverneland are not only reliable and highly productive, but also very competitive in terms of price. Such equipment meets the needs of both a small farm and a large agricultural holding. The JCB telescopic loader is a must-have for farms engaged in all types of year-round loading operations.



## Record-breaking COWS



The 8th Interregional Trade Exhibition, Pedigree Animals and Livestock Raising Equipment, took place in the Voronezh region. Over 50 companies working in this field took part in the event.

By Yulia SALKOVA

Opening the exhibition, Anatoly Spivakov, head of the Department of Agricultural Politics, pointed out:

"Despite the adversely droughty year, the region will not suffer shortages of milk and meat thanks largely to the government's support. Our farmers have already received one billion rubles, which are working, ensuring the supplies of fodder, seeds, spare parts and fuel. It is planned not to slow down the rate of development of cattle breeding and to make every effort to increase it. Therefore it is a great comfort to see the serious 'representatives' of meat, dairy and dual purpose breeds of cattle at exhibition pavilions."

At the exhibition, the EkoNivaAgro LLC presented its pedigree cows and heifers of Simmental and red-spotted breeds, respectively for meat/dairy and dairy production. Given the optimistic plans of the Voronezh agricultural industry, visitors to the company's exhibition were interested to know the cost of heifers on display and their productivity. Upon his visit to the EkoNivaAgro exhibition, Yuri Kvasov, deputy head of the Department of Agriculture, noted that in terms of milk yield and milk quality the company's cows deserve the title of record holders of the Liskinsky district. In 2009, milk yield per cow was 5,630 litres for Simmental cows and 5,305 litres for red-spotted ones.

## Agrobusiness Club Starts Operating In Penza

United we are strong – this idea was the corner stone in building the Agrobusiness Club in the Penza region.

By Tatiana PAVLOVA



Arkady Isenin, head of the Russian Grain Company, cordially welcomed the representatives of the farming business at his complex in the Penza region.

"This is the first constituent meeting," says Arkady Isenin. "Upon gathering, we realised how the region's agriculture needed such an organisation. Here we shall be able not only to share expertise, but also jointly address these pressing problems."

The EkoNiva Company, which has been successfully operating in the Penza region

for a number of years, received an invitation to participate in the first session. However, many participants of the farming club did not know that EkoNiva not only supplies agricultural machines from the world's leading manufacturers, but also produces high quality field crop seeds of domestic and imported selection. Moreover, this year jointly with the Russian Grain Company, EkoNiva launched a seed production project. Thus the Penza farmers will be able to acquire seeds of spring wheat Trizo and Phoenix, and Rocket peas grown in the region in 2010.

## IN BRIEF

The EkoNiva-Kostroma LLC took part in the first Yaroslavl Yar AGRO Agricultural Exhibition, timed to coincide with Yaroslavl's millennium.

The numerous guests of the show were introduced to farming machines from the world-renowned company, John Deere, including the JD7350 forage harvester and the JD 6920 SE tractor. Guests of the show noted that the Yar AGRO will usher in investments in the region's agriculture and become a sort of indicator of progress in the local farmland.



**OUR PEOPLE**

# Knowledge plus effort

Thirty-three years ago, the young agronomist Olga Pasyukova came to work for the kolkhoz Tikhy Don in Shchuchye village, Liskinsky district, Voronezh region. Much has changed since then. Tikhy Don is now replaced by the EkoNivaAgro Company, but Olga still works on the Shchuchye soil where she first found her professional calling and personal happiness.

By Yulia SALKOVA



**Three in one**

I must admit that I made the acquaintance of Olga Pasyukova before meeting her in the flesh. And this occurred under unusual circumstances, too. One day, on our way to EkoNivaAgro, a Niva Chevrolet car passed us in dazzling fashion. Somebody from my travel companions said respectfully "Oh! This is our agronomist Olga passing by!" "Passing, indeed," I thought to myself. "It was rather a flight than a passing."

Olga just can't imagine her life without high speed. As Yuri Vasyukov, EkoNivaSemena director, says, Olga's shoulders carry all the seeding commitments of EkoNivaAgro. She is in charge of growing, harvesting, post-harvest treatment, certification and shipment of seeds to customers. Nine seed production facilities are located thirty to forty kilometres apart from one another. So, to be able to make it everywhere, she has to operate "at the speed of sound."

"Olga knows how to work at double efficiency," says Yuri Vasyukov. "Her knowledge of agronomy is quite enough for three agronomists!"

Roman Litvinov, deputy director of the farm, is of the same opinion.

"She does a three man job."

I met Olga on the premises of the EkoNivaAgro Company's new facility, a seed production plant opened last August in Zaluzhnoye village.

"Never before did we have such excellent seeds as this year," says Olga with delight glittering in her eyes. "Thanks to our new Canadian machines, the cleaning quality is such that the final grains are good enough for food!"

The time for talk was very short, which is why much of the talk took place in the car on the way to the fodder production plant. Her professionalism became obvious from the first minutes of our chat. Therefore we decided to speak about the most important things, or, as

they say at Shchuchye "about life as it is".

**About the most important...**

Olga believes that the important thing is to be able to share other people's happiness. And then you yourself will be happy and successful. As family life goes, she thinks that what matters here is the ability to understand, to agree, and to forgive. She has been living with her husband, Vladimir, for 33 years now. They have an adult daughter, a son and three grandchildren, Yaroslav, Vladislav, and Oleg.

"I keep reminding my children that they must be heedful of their other halves' opinions because they are a single family. At the same time, I try not to interfere with my children's family matters. And, of course, we help them and support them financially. We enjoy looking after our grandchildren. Our children don't forget us. They renovated our house recently. And they do their bit in helping us keep up the household." The Pasyukovs' private household is quite impressive: six oxen, a cow, pigs, and poultry. To keep everything in order, they begin their working day very early, at half past four, as the first roosters start crowing. But she never complains about the accumulating tiredness or not having the coveted rest. A good-humoured smile flickers on her worldly-wise face as she voices a request: "Please don't write too beautifully about me." Dear Olga! We have written just as you deserve it.



**LEGAL NAVIGATOR**

## Amended taxes

On 2 September 2010, amendments to the Tax Code came into force (Federal Law No.229-FZ dated 27.07.2010).

By Olga ROMANOVA,  
RATUM Law Group



Improvements have been introduced to the procedure of registration for fiscal accounting and removal from the tax register through wider use of electronic documents in dealings between taxation authorities and taxpayers, banks, and registering organisations. A procedure has been established for compiling, registering, and transfer of invoices in an electronic format.

Thus, the standards of the taxation law have been altered for taxpayers to be able to use the Law on Digital Signature.

A procedure for granting a grace period (deferment) to pay taxes and duties has been revised. A grace is given to an entity for a sum not exceeding the value of its pure assets and, to a private individual, for a sum not exceeding the value of his/her property. It became possible to change the timing for paying not only taxes and duties, but also fines and penalties.

The law has increased the fine for various tax violations. For not submitting a declaration, a tax payer will have to pay not less than 1,000 rubles (previously 100 rubles). Non-submission of a declaration in an electronic format carries a fine of 200 rubles. The fine for violations in registration for fiscal accounting has been increased from 5,000 to 10,000 rubles, and that for conducting business activities without registration for fiscal accounting stipulates a fine equal to 10% of the proceeds, but not less than 40,000 rubles.

Foreign organizations with several separate divisions will have to submit VAT tax declarations and pay a tax at one taxation authority for operations of all their separate divisions in Russia.

Revision has been made to the maximum interest applied in tax imposition. Thus, from 1 January to 31 December 2010, expenses are included in the base of a profit tax at an interest rate not exceeding the Russian Central Bank's refinancing rate increased by 1.8 times and for credits in foreign currency – not exceeding 15%. From 1 January 2011 to 31 December 2012 the interest rate for credits in foreign currency will be reduced by the amount of expense not exceeding the product of the Russian Central Bank's refinancing rate and a factor of 0.8. Thus, from the standpoint of taxation ruble credits will prove more profitable.

Other changes in the procedure for determining the tax base for profits tax concern fiscal accounting of amortised property. The minimum value of amortised property has been increased to 40,000 rubles.

# The initiator of Russo-German agricultural contacts



**Starting from very little, Stefan Duerr succeeded in creating one of the largest agricultural holdings. In addition, he is an indefatigable architect of German-Russian relations.**

Stefan Duerr is a model businessman. His EkoNiva Group of Companies is an example for others to follow in Russia's farming sector. The company's facilities house 6,000 dairy cows (soon the stock will exceed 7,000 animals). Its total arable land is approximately 100,000 hectares. The company is one of Russia's major dealers in agricultural equipment. The holding employs 2,100 people in 25 locations around Russia.

Stefan Duerr's name is mentioned whenever there is talk about German-Russian agricultural business. No other German businessman has worked in Russia for so long, and nobody has done so much for the development of German-Russian relations in this sector. He is called *Brueckenbauer* (a bridge-builder) in Germany. One farming expert who has known him as a colleague in Moscow says about him: "Thanks to his assiduity combined with modesty, his contribution to the German-Russian Agro-Political Dialogue is great."

Born in 1964 in Baden-Wuerttemberg, businessman Stefan Duerr does not fit our idea of a businessman as usually

visualised in Russia. He is the total opposite of the typical Russian businessmen in costly suits, tinted glasses who invariably travels in hugely powerful jeeps. His sincerity wins you over at once.

Though he is a competent professional, Duerr is interested in other people's opinions and, at the same time, he speaks his mind without hesitation.

Duerr's career is unusual. In 1989, back in the socialist era, he came to Russia under the first trainee exchange program. In 1991, he was authorised by the German government to establish contacts between the agrarians of Russia and East Germany. This gave rise to the now operative German-Russian Agro-Political Dialogue. From the time of its emergence, Duerr has remained firmly confident that it was the right policy to prevent overly fast sale of land and to retain large farming complexes. Otherwise, Russia's land would have been promptly and irrevocably appropriated by oligarchs in the gold rush atmosphere of the 1990s.

Meantime, Duerr completed his studies at Bayreuth. In 1994 he created the EkoNiva Company. In 1998, in the wake of a disastrous financial crisis, Stefan Duerr started trading in agricultural equipment. It was then that the Russians came into money again, but their machinery was hopelessly obsolete. Today, EkoNiva is Europe's largest dealer of the world-famous John Deere Company. Since 2003, the company has

been investing significantly in agriculture, including dairy production, which had declined in Russia altogether. The bulk of his investments are in the Voronezh region (600 km south of Moscow), where the Governor, Aleksey Gordeyev (Duerr calls him his friend), a former Russian Minister of Agriculture, wishes to create a model farming area.

The 2009 crisis also impacted the EkoNiva Company when its Russian bank demanded the return of money it owed to a German bank, which began to worry. The short term interest rates to the tune of 40% annually were unpalatable, too. The administration helped to find a solution to this problem. "It's good we live not by trade alone but also by production," Duerr adds.

"And still the crisis had its positive points, too," assures Duerr. "Many profiteers, who whipped up prices in 2007-2008, disappeared."

Duerr continues to fearlessly invest in the expansion of production. This year, a new cowshed will be built for 1,200 animals. Its construction and the equipment for it alone cost 9.5 million Euros. But last year did teach a lesson. So, at EkoNiva, as at other major enterprises, the use of financial market instruments is now under consideration.

Thomas Preusse, DLG-Mitteilungen Magazine, August 2010, No.08/10

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