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Robots and/or people?

Automation and robotics in farming have become a reality. Robots service animals on the farm and smart systems control a tractor without a driver. What is left then for people to do? EkoNiva experts pondered this issue.

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Robots work hard to make man's life easy!

In the Kaluga oblast, EkoNiva opened its first stock breeding complex fitted with robotised milking equipment. Once it reaches full capacity, it will become the largest of its kind in Russia.

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Closer to farmers!

EkoNiva-Chernozemye has made another step towards Voronezh farmers, opening a new servicing centre at Verkhny Mamon village.

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From the hothouse straight into icy water

Over the last ten years, thanks to state support, favourable conditions have been created in Russia for doing agricultural business. True, hothouse conditions can't be maintained indefinitely. We must adapt ourselves to the global economy now that Russia joined the WTO and we got a powerful stimulus for movement in this direction. But it so happened that the farmers found themselves in icy water after operating in hothouse conditions.

This year, in addition to stiffening of conditions following Russia's entry to the WTO, the government cut subsidies to the farming segment more dramatically than the WTO membership required. This poured the first cold water on the farmers.

The next part of the cold treatment was a drastic reduction of funding to agricultural producers by such major banks as the Rosselkhozbank and Sberbank. The final launch into free sailing was the delay, the first in the last few years, of budgetary subsidies promised by the state.

The disconnected funding of milk production, introduced this year, and per hectare premiums are just a short summer drizzle, a weak palliative for sufferings of the companies that made sizable investments.

Such a situation may ruin everything that was created under the national project in the past decade. It is not clear whether the agricultural companies will keep their heads above water in a situation like this.

What impact will all of this have on 2014? Only the strongest will survive, meaning those who learned how to work using the newest technologies, built a capable team and created an efficient managerial system.

Obviously, many farmers will have to give up their support for social programmes in the country, i.e. schools, kindergartens, etc. This is really sad.

Probably, those who stay afloat will become more competitive on the global market, but many will sink without learning to swim.

We would like to end up among the survivors, something I wish you in the coming year. I want you to be strong, wise and patient enough for work in new conditions and to make further progress. As a philosopher said, what does not kill us makes us stronger! Once we become stronger, we'll take up the leading positions on the world's agrarian market.

Stefan DUERR,
President of the EkoNiva Group of Companies

Robots work hard to make man's life easy!

In early December, EkoNiva opened the first animal breeding complex in Kaluga oblast fitted with robotised milking equipment. Once it reaches full capacity, it will be Russia's largest robotised facility in its class.

Opening the festivities at the Kaluzhskaya Niva Company, Leonid Gromov, Kaluga oblast Minister of Agriculture, cordially congratulated the company on the important event and noted that the construction of robotised farms in the Kaluga area is massively supported. Under the dairy cattle production programme, the oblast budget will compensate buyers of robots up to 40% of the purchase cost. And the support will continue next year.

"Our task for 2014-2015 is to create close to 100 robotised milking stations at stockbreeding complexes of Kaluga oblast," says Leonid. "EkoNiva, as the leader in the use of advanced technologies, set an outstanding tempo for performance of our task."

Over 100 guests from various regions of Russia attended the event. Among them were the leading milk producers and processors. Till now many of them had seen abroad how cows are milked on small farms only when they were abroad. The EkoNiva experiment drew everyone's close attention since the robots under consideration are installed at a large complex.

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Closer to farmers!

This year EkoNiva-Chernozemye opened a servicing centre in Verkhny Mamon village, Voronezh oblast.

Over 100 farmers took part in the opening ceremony. The guests were introduced to a spare parts depot, showroom and workshops designed to repair three self-propelled machines at a time.

"We set our course for development and movement towards the farmers," says Ivan Vorobyov, Executive Director of EkoNiva-Chernozemye. "Our investments in this servicing centre are farmers' investments in tomorrow. We seek to ensure performance of field operations on time, helping the farmers to find more time for their loved ones, children and grandchildren. Wasting time is inadmissible."

EkoNiva-Chernozemye's plans for 2014 envision the opening of a servicing centre in Novokhopersk which will support the farms in the east of the oblast. In 2015, a large servicing centre will be commissioned in Davydovka village (Liskinsky district), with an area of 4,000 sq m. The opening of servicing centres will cut the response time to one hour.

By Yulia SALKOVA

Agritechnica 2013: peasants' dreams come true

Over 100 farmers attended the Agritechnica exhibition arranged in association with EkoNiva. This year, the number of interested guests reached a record number. The exhibition rewarded the Russian guests with an unprecedented variety of agricultural equipment adapted for work expressly in Russian conditions.

John Deere supplies innovative solutions

John Deere came up with one of the largest exhibitions. This year, it laid emphasis on mounted tilling and seeding tools. The highlight of the event was the semi-mounted swivel plough 3910. This makes a fine match with tractors having rated power of 200 to 560 hp. This plough with shares protected by shear bolts boasts outstanding reliability.

The special feature of the deep digger 2720 is more aggressive soil treatment, down to 40 cm. The device is fitted with a covering roller that has three positions: travelling, floating and depressed. The farmers liked that by using the hydraulic drive they are able to control the roller from the tractor cabin.

Next spring, new 1745 cultivating seeders will come onto the Russian fields for seeding maize and sunflowers. They will be in two versions, 12- and 16-row models, with an inter-row space of 70 cm. The 1780 universal seeder with variable inter-row space is a truly pioneering product which makes it possible to treat several crops at a time, including maize, sunflowers and sugar beetroots, without auxiliary devices.

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A new player on the milk market

In late November, members of the National Cooperative of Dairy Producers decided to establish the East-European Dairy Alliance (EEDA).

The Alliance brought together rather large and successful dairy producers like the TRIO Group of Companies, EkoNiva, the Voshchazhnikovo farming enterprise JSC, the Zelyonaya Dolina Group of Companies and the United Dairy Producers of Lipetsk Oblast.

The new organisation considers as its main goal to pool the expertise of major milk producers to enhance production efficiency and create an economically viable model of cooperation.

"Some companies possess outstanding experience in cattle fattening, others a superior know-how in farm construction, and still others - interesting management methods," says Stefan Duerr, President of the EkoNiva Group of Companies. "The consolidation of knowledge and accumulated expertise will benefit all.

In addition, EEDA will continue the joint milk sales as well as acquisition of fodders, mineral fertilisers, veterinarian preparations, plant defence agents and other materials needed by Alliance members."

In the opinion of Vasily Redin, head of EEDA, the Alliance may become the driving force in establishing civilised relations on the milk market.

"Today there is no strong operator among the dairy producers who might be a promoter of new technologies. There is no one who is concerned not with the instant profit but with business development for years to come, and who might be able to formulate rules for market operators which are clear and comprehensible to all."

The dairy alliance has every chance of becoming an influential operator on the milk market given the authority of its participants, the scale of production and the goals of integration. At present, the Alliance facilities turn out 530 tonnes of milk per day.

By Svetlana WEBER

Attractiveness for investment to be worked on

A visiting session of the Committee for Economic Policy of the Federation Council, the Russian Federation Assembly, took place in Voronezh.

The session dealt with the issues of drawing investments to the Russian economy. This year Voronezh oblast won first place in the rating of the Russian Federation's most attractive regions in terms of investments. Governor Aleksey Gordeyev said that in 2012 investment growth in the region was 121%.

After the session, members of the Federation Council visited several investment projects. Among them was the modern dairy production complex for 1,800 head of animals at EkoNivaAgro in Zaluzhnoye village. The guests familiarised themselves with the Academy of Dairy Sciences project, which promotes and advertises milk consumption.

The guests were introduced to EkoNiva's own development, the NivaControl precise farming system. Head of the farm Aleksandr Rybenko explained how the system helps agronomists to plan sowing more precisely, teaches machine operators to be more responsible and cuts spending on fuel and fertilisers.

"Both the investors and administration must work on investment appeal," says Sergey Lukin, member of the Federation Council. "EkoNivaAgro proves this convincingly. This is not a simple industry for investments, but the company is steadily growing and permanently opening up new areas for its activities."

By Yulia SALKOVA

A model of high technologies

Governors of eight Ukrainian regions have visited the Kaluga oblast where they visited the biggest EkoNiva dealership in Detchino.

Gennady Nepomnyashchy, Executive Director of EkoNiva-Tekhnika, together with Leonid Gromov, the region's Minister of Agriculture, made a tour of the dealership. They were particularly impressed by the scale and technical equipment of the project. On the display site, the guests saw the whole product line of agricultural machines from the world's leading manufacturers. They liked that the Company not only provides superior servicing, but is also an excellent training base. For training sessions, it has two classrooms accommodating 80 and 20 people.

The guests visited the servicing zone where up to 16 machines can be serviced simultaneously! They inspected two spare parts depots for 2,500 pallet units each fitted with modern systems of shelf storage.

"We did our best to create all the conditions needed for appropriate servicing and convenient customer support," says Gennady Nepomnyashchy. "Our company's principle is to be close to the customers and the land in order to successfully introduce modern technologies."

According to the Ukrainian guests, the capabilities of the new dealership are infinite. Actually this is a model supplier of high technologies for farming. Here one always can find something to learn.

By Yekaterina GALUSHKINA

New concept of John Deere

In 2012, the company brought to the Russian market an absolutely new concept, Green on Green. This brings together self-propelled and towed equipment from John Deere. Thanks to the servicing provided by FarmSight and JD Link, soon it will become possible to control the equipment right from an office.

"The Green on Green concept gives the farmer a packaged solution to make effective use of towed equipment," says Project Manager Alexander Olson. "In this connection, John Deere plans to develop and manufacture new products for Russia. Thus, the product range of the Orenburg plant will increase. The plant will manufacture seeding and tilling equipment, while the rest will be imported from the US."

John Deere is looking for new partners and suppliers to implement its concept. The American company DB joined the John Deere family for manufacture of wide-coverage cultivating seeders. The French company Grйgoire-Besson became another new partner. It will supply John Deere ploughs expressly for Russia and the CIS. It should be noted that many models of crop treating equipment are designed by the company's engineers in Europe.

Alexander Olson is sure that the promotion of new products is only possible in association with the dealers.

"Today, EkoNiva is closer to the customers than any other company, operating in appropriate manner on the markets of Siberia, Black Earth Zone and Central Russia. This is crucial in the development of new types of equipment," says Alexander.

In order to demonstrate in practice how the JD concept works, a number of equipment shows are planned in various regions of Russia. The experts from John Deere are prepared to arrive from any point on the globe to help their dealers and farmers.

By Yekaterina GALUSHKINA

Not to be found in textbooks

For a month, EkoNiva-APK representatives toured the farming higher schools of the country in search of new personnel. Students of the Oryol State Agrarian University paid a return visit to the Zashchitnoye farming enterprise (Kursk oblast).

The excursion began with a visit to the animal farm. Aleksey Bibikov, director of Zashchitnoye, told the would-be animal technicians that the high milk yields result from advanced technologies, such as yard housing, balanced rationing and modern milking equipment. The students visited the forage kitchen, where special food in the form of immunity-sustaining yoghurt is made for the calves.

"The animal welfare is top rate," says Liubov Frolova, a third year student of the Department of Biological Technologies and Veterinary Medicine, who is majoring in zoological engineering. "We've seen in real life the results of a modern approach and foreign methods. Nothing like it can be found in textbooks."

The future agronomists and engineers inspected with keen interest the up-to-date potato warehouse, seed production facility and elevator.

The farm actively supports young specialists, providing them with lodging, organising training courses in Russia and abroad and arranging master classes with leading experts.

After the excursion, many students conceived the idea of coming to Zashchitnoye for practice.

By Anna BORDUNOVA

GMO in Russia: is the issue finally settled?

On 23 September 2013, the Russian Federation Government issued a decree which significantly simplifies the registration and introduction of transgenic organisms into production and commodity turnover. In other words, Russia opened a gateway to the entry and distribution of GMO varieties of crops and transgenic breeds of animals.

It's curious that a day before the decree was adopted, the Kremlin site published President Putin's direction to the Russian Federation Government on the GMO issue. In particular, this implied "submission of a proposal for amending the Russian Federation law for tougher control of distribution of products containing components obtained from genetically modified organisms and a possible ban on import of such products." Does it mean that yesterday an attempt was made to ban the import of GMO and on the following day a permission was granted to grow them on the home fields? In that case the right hand truly does not know what the left hand is doing.

What consequences will this bring to farming?

"This is an act of sabotage performed by our government against Russia and the strategic development of her agriculture," says Ivan Starikov, chairman of The Union of Organic Farming. "It fully blocks the prospects for organic farming. All the international systems certifying eco-products forbid the use of GMO. This contradicts all the statements of the President and Chairman of the Federation Council of the Russian Federation Federal Assembly on production of ecological products and its prospects."

And the prospects are as follows…

Ruin to organic farming. Despite all the positive changes in this area and the forthcoming law on organic foods, Russian products just won't pass certification! It's a great pity! The experts point out that Russia's potential in this area exceeds that of the world by 1.5 times.

The dependence on transnational suppliers: GMO seeds, after 3 to 4 reproductions, lose their germinating ability. This means that humble obedience to commands of the global producers of GMO seeds is imminent.

"Several biological factors are particularly dangerous," says Yuri Vasyukov, director of EkoNiva-Semena LLC. "First off, this is immediate harm to people's and animals' health. For instance, transgenic maize with Bt-gene produces an insecticide which may be brought into an animal's organism by fodder and into a human organism by foodstuffs produced from such maize.

Harmful consequences may result from the emergence of resistant populations of hazardous organisms (pests in the first place), which overcome the plants' resistance based on foreign genetics. Then the seeming successes of transgenic genetics will stop working and methods will have to be sought to fight new, aggressive types of pests resistant to toxins.

The emergence of modified genetics in wild nature may have unpredictable consequences. In my opinion, this is the biggest danger, one with unforeseen after effects. If it happens, the situation won't be brought back under control. For example, rape, a cruciferous plant, has a lot of relatives in the wild which rather easily breed both with one another and with the rape. In case a transgenic rape is used in production, very soon a transgenic winter-cress may appear in wild nature."

"In terms of national food supply safety, this is absolutely inadmissible," says Stefan Duerr, President of EkoNiva GC. "If the farms now start sowing GMO varieties, over time they will lose the skill of growing crops without GMO. The world's demand for food products can be satisfied without GMO. Russia can double the volume of crop production if there are suitable grain prices. However, the use of GMO will lower the price of conventional grain. The worst part of it is that the impact of using GMO on man and nature has not yet been fully studied. Hope is now pinned on the country's President who, hopefully, will not admit the spreading of GMO in Russia as this is not admitted by the European Union."

Unfortunately, the GMO issue looks settled. We hope it is not yet so…

By Svetlana WEBER and Yulia SALKOVA

Robots and/or people?

Automation and robotisation of farming have become a reality. Robots service the animals on the farm; smart systems control a tractor without a driver. What is left for people to do? What are the robots, our friends or foes? We asked EkoNiva workmen engaged in different segments of farming to tell us about that.

The human factor

Vitaly Polyakov, post-harvesting grain processing engineer, EkoNiva-APK Holding LLC:

"All production processes on the EkoNiva grain production farm are automated. First off, this enables us to eliminate the human factor and associated risks. Grain storage is, after all, a fine art in which gross carelessness and inattention may result in heavy losses and damage. The situation is particularly critical in seed drying, where the rigorous quality control of seeds is a must.

Second, it helps us resolve the problem of labour shortage. Today skilled experts are very hard to find. So they have to be either won over from some other place, or young people must be hired and trained on the job.

Eventually we save time and money. For example, the largest elevator of EkoNivaAgro, with a capacity of 30,000 tonnes, is run by just 6 operators in an 8 hour shift."

Inevitable reality

Stefan Duerr, EkoNiva GC President:

"Today robots milk cows, tomorrow they will distribute fodder and the day after tomorrow they will do crop production jobs. Robotics is an inevitable process in agriculture that one should embrace rather than shun. Thanks to robots, people give up routine mechanical operations, taking up intellectual ones instead. Thus, they get more time for professional improvement, refinement of work quality, and leisure instead of performing the same operation every single day. This benefits both production and the man."

Another economy!

Roman Litvinov, first deputy director of EkoNivaAgro LLC:

"The use of different systems that automate agricultural production is beneficial in all aspects, such as precision and transparency of production, order on the land and people's discipline at the office and in the field. Eventually this creates a different economy altogether. Smart systems do not replace man. They optimise his work and put all the control operations on an essentially new level."

Everything under control

Sergey Kapustin, precision farming agronomist, EkoNiva-APK Holding:

"Today efficient agriculture is unthinkable without precision farming methods. On our farms, we use the NivaControl precision farming system. Using satellite-supplied data, it calculates the rate of mineral fertiliser introduction, cutting by our expenses on fertilisers 10 to 15% and increasing productivity by 5 to 7%.

By monitoring the agricultural equipment, we control all the movements of the machines and see if the operator exceeded the speed during sowing or idly left the field. This has stopped thefts of fuel oil and saved 6 to 8% of diesel fuel.

The load on the accounting department went down, too. Document flow has decreased and falsification of figures became impossible. All the data from the fields comes to the accounting department in on-line mode. The write-off of fuels and lubricants as well as payroll calculation proceed now automatically on the basis of 1S Bookkeeping USKhP software."

By Svetlana WEBER, Yulia SALKOVA and Yekaterina GALUSHKINA

Bjoerne Drechsler: Russia will become a dairy power

The GEA Farm Technologies Rus stands firm on the Russian market. Last year, the company's trade turnover amounted to 40 million euros. General Director Bjoerne Drechsler has shared with us his thoughts on development of Russia's dairy industry and his company's plans.

From A to Z

"The company strategy has not changed since 1996, when GEA first appeared on the Russian market. We have always been ready to work steadily and provide premium quality servicing to our customers. We have solutions to the various problems of dairy farms of any size. We can supply everything, from A to Z, both for a small family farm and for a large stockbreeding complex. We provide equipment all over Russia, working with 48 dealers. We pay special attention to the development of servicing and urge our dealers to do also as well. To be closer to our partners, we have opened two plants in Russia. One operates in the Voronezh oblast where we produce udder hygiene products and cleaning agents. The plant's monthly output is 100 tonnes. The second plant, combined with our head office, is in Kolomna, Moscow oblast. Here we manufacture stall equipment, milking machine components and calf pens. In addition the spare parts logistic centre is there. Soon we shall allocate €4 million for our production development in the Moscow oblast and for optimising the logistics system in general."

Demand higher than supply

"Russia's dairy market is one of the most important markets for us. There are all the conditions present for the country to become a dairy power in the next 10 to 20 years. At the moment, the process is slack. Most dairy producers, around 80%, have their doubts about the profitability of the business and take their time about investing in construction of new complexes. We believe the market weakened in 2013 for lack of major investments. Next year we anticipate a further slump. I believe that the state must pay more attention to this issue, for instance, by increasing subsidies for loans. The new measures of state support have reduced subsidies by a factor of ten. As milk goes, I think it's unwise to give subsidies per litre of milk. Investments can be controlled, but it's impossible to control who sold the milk, where and what kind. With reference to the market prospects and milk production in general, it is safe to say that until the year 2022 demand will outpace supply. I think that the price of milk will be high.

Number one in the world

"Our principal partners are farming enterprises that build stockbreeding complexes for 1,200-1,800 head of animals and more. They make up 20% of those who are prepared to introduce new technologies. Among them is EkoNiva. We have an interesting alliance. On the one hand, the company is our official dealer. We are pleased with how EkoNiva-Farm is doing. The company supplies the equipment we manufacture. Servicing is well established. On the other hand, EkoNiva is our major customer. It has a team of high-class professionals who realise that milk production really pays. Today in terms of daily milk yield the company is number one in the world. EkoNiva is the first company to test on its own farms the new products we are offering on the Russian market. This enables us to check how new technologies adapt themselves to Russian conditions."

New philosophy

"GEA is working steadily on creation of new products. Next year our new know-how, the Dairy ProQ automated carousel system, will make its appearance on the Russian market. This is a unique milking technology developed expressly for large farms. We were the first to present this development on the market. Dairy ProQ is the world's first automatic carousel system capable of operating in an autonomous mode. It is designed to serve 300 to 500 cows. The Dairy ProQ system features high throughput, milking 500 to 1,000 cows per hour. The system uses a manipulating hand, developed by us, and a manipulator guiding camera. In this carousel system one can add or remove a box, which makes it possible, should a problem arise, to use a standby box kept by the farmer close at hand. The farmer just brings a new box in a cart, takes out the old unit and puts in the new one instead. It's as simple as that. It is also possible, if necessary, to manually connect the milking machine. Not a single milking operator is needed for this job. You only need an administrator on duty who can monitor the process on his tab computer. The Dairy ProQ makes milking more stable compared to processes employing the traditional carousel system based on manual operations.

This is not the only new product. Next year, at the EuroTier exhibition in Hannover, GEA will present 15 new products for the Russian market. But we won't show all our cards. We just invite you to our stand where you will see everything for yourself."

By Anna BORDUNOVA

EkoNiva-News dossier

Bjoerne Drechsler graduated from a school at the German Embassy in Russia. In 1993, he left for Germany where he received an education as an economist. Since 2003 he has been living and working in Russia. In 2005 he was appointed General Director of the GEA Farm Technologies representative office in Russia. Bjoerne Drechsler likes the openness and hospitality of the Russian people, as well as the beauty and grandeur of Russian nature.

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Agritechnica 2013: peasants' dreams come true

Expressly for Russia, the John Deere developers created a multi-role, low-budget 6B series tractor (95 to 135 hp). The lifting capacity of the machine

exceeds 3,000 kg, which enables it to use heavy tools. Another debut was the 6150M tractor. This is an appropriate substitute for the popular 6930 tractor. The new model has an improved hydraulic system which ensures more effective operation of the pump, up to 114 l/m, an upgraded transmission and a premium class cabin.

John Deere was awarded two silver medals for its innovative products. In addition, one award was given out for the Hitch Assist auxiliary unit in recognition of its fast, simple and safe linking of mounts and trailers to the tractor. Another silver award went to the Smart Irrigation System (SIS). This effectively combines irrigation and fertiliser introduction.

Grimme, the gold champion

The stand of the Grimme Company displayed the SV260 two-row linked potato combine harvester, which caused quite a stir with the farmers. The machine is extremely interesting due to its unique pneumatic separator, AirSep. Employing the push-out principle, during harvesting the AirSep system carefully separates tubers from stones and dirt. The harvested potatoes are clean and need no extra grading, which significantly cuts costs. This unique technique received a gold medal of the exhibition. The AirSep system will be further optimised and appear on the Russian market in 2015.

The company also presented a number of other new products. Among them were GF 800 Compacta full sweep ridge-making tiller linked to the 325 hp tractor and SE 260 combine harvester with a fully automatic separator RPM adjustment. Grimme specialists shared the latest news: the company has acquired new partners, Spudnik, Kleine, and ASA-LIFT, thanks to which it expanded its range of equipment for potato, beet root and vegetable production from 80 to 150 models.

JCB, always straight on!

The JCB stand with an assortment of new products treated guests to an array of exhibits, from large front loaders with a telescopic jib to improved "telescopic systems." The visitors liked the new 516-40 loader with a lifting capacity of 1.5 tonnes and boom length of 4 metres. The machine earned the name of "the Russian standard" for its multiple capabilities and outstanding versatility. The Farm Master 435S Agri made its successful debut. The newcomer features an increased draft, higher speed and improved operator comfort.

Ten right things from Pöettinger

Poettinger presented ten new machines for fodder procuring, seeding and tilling. The farmers liked the new mower, NOVACAT S12, with a grip width of up to 11.2 m. The machine can be linked to tractors with power above 160 hp.

The pride of the company is the Aerosem 3002 multi-role seeder with a capability of seeding row crops by the precision planting technique. The machine is fitted with PCS-Precision Combiseeding system and intellectual distribution system (IDS). At its basis is an electrical batching drive. This can be controlled from the tractor cabin by means of POWER CONTROL or ISOBUS systems. The distributor makes it possible to choose any spacing of the

technological gauge or track width and to activate a special process tread mode. IDS ensures the planting of an equal amount of seeds and the saving of seed supply. The PCS and IDS received silver medals for their unique technological solutions.

Einböck lights up the stars

Einbock presented four new products for harrowing and weeding. Weeder PNEUMATICSTAR-PRO (12 m) is finely suited for treating meadows and pastures as well as for re-seeding and undersowing. The new rotary cultivator, ROTARYSTAR, also known as "the star roller" will leave no chance for weeds to survive. The star-shaped rotary operating elements, fitted with fingers (pins), intensely crush the earth and remove crop residues. The AEROSTAR-EXACT system is a new generation chain link harrow, a pledge of high precision work. The controlled terrain profile-following wheels precisely maintain the teeth operation at the required depth.

Väderstad, expressly for Russia

The Swedish company Vaderstad has developed, expressly for Russia, a 12-row Tempo R seeder for tilled crops. Taking into account the farmers' wishes, the developers added extra seeding sections, thus resolving the problem of work on large areas. The improved seeder retains outstanding accuracy of seed planting at a speed of 15 to 17 km/h.

Vaderstad presented a new E-services system. This attachment is installed on an iPad for controlling Tempo and Rapid seeders. It makes it possible to control the seeding, obtain information about the machine's operating parameters, deactivate individual sections, manage markers and keep the data logbook. There is also now an E-parts attachment to facilitate the ordering of spare parts right from the field.

LEMKEN, collection replenished

At the LEMKEN stand, guests familiarised themselves with the Rubin 12 disc harrow. It features an increased size and thicker disc. The machine is more productive than previous models. It tills to a depth of 20 cm.

The company presented a pilot project single grain seeder, Azurit, for seeding maize, soya, sunflower and rape at a speed of up to 15 km/h. The engineers developed an innovative technology of optimal distribution of seeds, Delta Row. This not only plants seeds in a row, but distributes them using two twin-disc coulters in a staggered arrangement at a distance of 12.5 cm from one another. This increases the distance between the plants, giving them more water and nutrients. LEMKEN got two silver medals for its innovative developments. One went to the Swing Cut system that reduces rod oscillation during sprinkler work and makes it possible to introduce the plant protecting agents more regularly.

Fliegl, well-considered solutions

At the Fliegl exhibition, farmers were shown new trailers with ASW (wall), transfer-accumulators and manure distributors. The silver medal went to a new weighing system, FWS 2014, which facilitates precise crop weighing and controlled introduction of organic compounds and mineral fertilisers.

The guests also visited the stands of Kverneland, Degelman, Schulte and AGI.

The centre of attraction for the farmers was the EkoNiva stand, where they could discuss the latest developments, receive advice on acquisition of agricultural equipment and spare parts and learn about the latest trends in seed production. Company experts noted that the farmers really liked the Canadian variety of soya, OAK Prudence, with its 40% raw protein content.

By Anna BORDUNOVA and Svetlana WEBER

Opinion

Based on last year's results, the Bogoroditsky Alliance LLC was recognised as the best farming enterprise in Tula oblast, with the highest achievements in crop production. This is the natural result of work in keeping with the demands of the day. For instance, all the company's equipment employs precise farming technologies and its engineering inventory is permanently updated. From each exhibition, Nikolai Lavrentyev, Director General, returns with new ideas on how to make business still more efficient.

"We have seen everything that our forefathers previously dreamed about and engineers endeavoured unsuccessfully to materialise. We liked very much the Einbock spring-assisted blade cultivator that follows precisely the terrain profile and prepares an excellent seed bed. Vaderstad boasts a unique cultivator, Swift, that combines several tools in a single machine. I hope that the series T John Deere combine harvesters with innovative threshing technologies will be supplied to Russia."

Each grain counts

This year Siberian farmers struggled in extreme weather conditions for each grain of the harvest. Not even farming veterans remember such a wet summer. Despite the disagreeable surprises of nature, the region's farmers managed to harvest 2.76 million tonnes of grain, nearly a million tonnes more than last year.

Opening the Harvesting Days exhibition, Novosibirsk oblast governor Vasily Yurchenko noted that thanks to the farmers' team spirit and to appropriate technical equipment on the farms a good harvest was reaped. This year alone, farmers in the oblast bought more than 2,000 pieces of equipment worth 2.5 billion rubles.

As a result of bad weather, the farmers had to find a solution to the problem of grain drying and storage. At the exhibition, EkoNiva-Sibir offered it in the form of equipment supplied by the North American company AGI for storage and post-harvest treatment of grain.

"The farmers wanted to find an acceptable price-to-quality ratio and were interested in elevators that can be built quickly," says Irina Gort, elevator equipment acquisition manager. "We offered a trustworthy version, the Twister grain storage facility. It is easy to erect and fast to load. The modern ventilation and temperature control system maintains the grain's life over a long period of storage."

MEPU mobile dryers were in high demand. Their special feature is an even drying process. The service life of such dryers in the open air is more than 25 years; in covered accommodations it is unlimited.

By Anna BORDUNOVA

To know the loader inside out

JCB held a training session for EkoNiva engineers at the servicing facility in Detchino. For four days, the foreign colleagues delivered a complete course of lectures on diagnostics and repair of telescopic loaders.

During the theoretical classes, the engineers were briefed on the hydraulic systems, specifics of diagnosing the telescopic loaders by means of the JCB Service Master attachment, steering systems and electronic control units. The most interesting part was the practice. JCB 531-70 and 550-80 loaders were used to show the engineers how to correctly measure the hydraulic system pressure and replace the cabin display. The specialists independently performed computer-aided diagnosis of the loaders. The servicing experts deliberately created malfunctions, for instance, they disturbed the hydraulic valves, in order to see the machine's behaviour in failure.

"The training proceeded intensively," says Aleksey Ushakov, servicing engineer of the Tula branch of EkoNiva-Tekhnika. "We learned a lot of useful information about loader repairs. We, the maintenance people, ought to know the machines inside out to be able to promptly fix the faults."

As the engineers said, studying the new JCB 550-80 loader, crammed with all sorts of electronic gadgets and devices, was particularly interesting. They were shown how to adjust correctly the operator safety system which prevents the loader from tipping.

By Anna BORDUNOVA

High class

The John Deere plant at Domodedovo has operated for over three years. Over this time, the product range of "Made in Russia" machines has considerably grown and the plant's manufacturing capacity has increased remarkably. EkoNiva has organised for its partners a traditional tour at Domodedovo to attend the John Deere Customer Day in order to find out what useful surprises the American company has prepared for Russian farmers.

The production complex at the John Deere enterprise in Domodedovo houses under its roof a manufacturing facility, a spare parts depot and a training centre. The total area of the plant is 66,900 m2. The guests visited the assembly lines of series 6, 7, 8 and 9 tractors, series S and W grain combine harvesters, and fatteners. The farmers were introduced to the new tractor John Deere 6B, swivel ploughs 3810 and 3910 and seeders. The latter, however, were US-built machines.

But the John Deere experts assure us that this equipment too will soon be manufactured in Russia. The guests inspected the spare parts depot, which contains 140,000 storage boxes. Every day more than 25 tonnes of spares leave this facility for 48 places across Russia. The convenient location of the plant, close to transportation thoroughfares and Domodedovo airport, makes it possible to deliver spare parts to any region in the shortest possible time. Urgent order execution time is 48 hours.

The farmers unanimously assessed the work organisation and the enterprise's level of technical equipment as high class.

"The Russian John Deere is hugely popular with the farmers," says Dmitry Zverev, Sales Manager of the Vladimir branch of EkoNiva-Tekhnika. "The quality of equipment is like that of the best foreign counterparts. The important thing, however, is that John Deere machines made in Domodedovo are subsidised by the state."

By Anna BORDUNOVA

Abreast of the times

Support of agriculture is a priority task of the Kaluga Oblast Administration. It is actively developing dairy and beef production, building modern animal farms. At the Kaluzhskaya Osen (Autumn of Kaluga) 2013 exhibition, EkoNiva presented its innovative methods of efficient work.

At the stand of the Kaluga branch of EkoNiva-Tekhnika, farmers encountered farming machines suited to all tastes, from medium power John Deere wheeled tractors to powerful tracked prime movers. A wide range of JCB telescopic loaders drew the farmers' attention. They especially liked the Power Boom 260T tracked telescopic loader with single boom jib which minimally hampers the operator.

After visiting the EkoNiva exhibition, Governor of the Kaluga oblast Anatoly Artamonov noted that the company is contributing generously to the technical progress of the region, supplying the agricultural enterprises with innovative equipment and thus helping the farmers to move with the times and produce competitive products.

EkoNiva-Farm presented the MIone milking robot from GEA, which expands with the growth of livestock by connecting extra boxes. This increases the production, improves the milk quality and cuts labour inputs.

Milk cooling tanks drew everyone's attention. Their advantage is in the unique technology of 3-stage washing which safeguards the quality of raw milk. Another benefit is the fast milk cooling, taking up no more than 2 hours.

By Anna BORDUNOVA

For northern regions

In the new 2014 season, EkoNiva-Semena is presenting its new products, maize hybrids from the DuPont Pioneer, US, along with new linear varieties and hybrids of spring rape from Bayer CropScience.

Pioneer is an acknowledged leader in maize selection. This year EkoNiva concluded a dealer agreement for growing maize on its fields and sale of seeds.

Super-early hybrids of dent maize are quite interesting. They feature high crop capacity and excellent water loss. They can be successfully grown in the northern regions of Russia, where large numbers of horned cattle are raised, while maize varieties with a short vegetation period are not yet produced on a large scale.

High quality silage for milk production and fattening horned cattle must meet the following requirements:

- Dry matter content (depending on the cob content) from 30 to 37%
- Metabolic energy (ME) content > 11.0 MJ/kg of dry matter
- Net energy lactation (NEL) content > 6.6 MJ/kg of dry matter
- Starch content >30 % in dry matter

In order to obtain high quality silage from maize, the cob share in the total harvested mass must be 50 to 55%. The main value of the fodder is in its cobs.

The right selection of maize and agro-engineering can substantially increase the energy value of silage by increasing the share of high quality cobs in the fodder. Based on biological requirements applied by the variety to the sum of effective temperatures, maize hybrids must be selected which can mature by the time of silage harvesting in the given region. The readiness for maize ensilage comes with cessation of substantial increment of feed value and end of starch build-up in the cob. The maturing of the cob is determined based on the grain condition after breakage of several cobs in the middle. When the grains are in the stage of paste-like maturity, the optimum harvesting time comes. During this period the dry matter content in the maize grain is 55 to 60%. In the remaining part of the plant, it varies between 23 and 25%.

In the total mass (cob + plant), the share of dry matter must be 30 to 35%. In the dry matter of such fodder, the starch content will be not less than 30%, exceeding 35% in some hybrids.

The cutting height in maize harvesting substantially influences the energy and nutrient elements content in silage. High cut (up to 40 cm) reduces the productivity of the total silage mass by 10% on 1 hectare, but increases the nutrient value by increasing the share of cobs and starch, whereas the energy for producing milk (net energy lactation, NEL) in 1 kg of dry matter grows by 0.2 megajoule.

For the northern regions of Russia, the ultra-early group of hybrids of maize, such as P7535 with FAO 150 and P7709 with FAO 160 are very interesting. These hybrids with a dentate type of grain quickly lose water and combine very well high productivity with the earliest possible harvesting.

The early maturing hybrids PR39B29 and PR39Kh32 with FAO, respectively, 170 and 180 have a siliceous-dentate type of grain, high starch content, and rapid moisture loss during after-ripening. The hybrid PR39A50 with FAO 200 belongs to the early maturing group and is distinguished by a high potential for productivity and adaptability for early sowing.

Since this season, EkoNiva-Semena supplies the Russian market with rape seeds from Bayer CropScience. Along with well known linear varieties of the spring rape Geros, Larisa, and Hunter, the season 2014 will get the earliest maturing variety Highlight along with hybrids Delight and Belinda for northern regions of Russia. The vegetation period of Highlight is around 90 days, which enables it to mature even in the Yaroslavl, Kostroma and Kirov oblasts. A new hybrid, Mirko, was offered; it is grown by the Clearfield method. This belongs to the group of early maturing varieties, enabling it to be grown on the weediest of fields in the northern regions. The use of the herbicide Nopasaran, clears the fields of weeds, making them well suited for sowing grain crops.

The early maturing varieties and hybrids of spring rape suffer less from droughts, assure higher yields and are highly profitable. Processed rape yields, in addition to oil, rape meal. This is a valuable source of high quality fodder protein, well balanced in terms of amino-acid content, highly nutritious and easily digestible. Introduction of rape meal into the animal feed is one of the key factors for intensive stockbreeding, especially poultry, swine raising and horned cattle production.

Furthermore, rape is a fine predecessor in crop rotation.

By Willy DREWS, Doctor of Agronomy, adviser to EkoNivaTekhnika-Holding

Here's an idea!

Specialists of the EkoNiva agrarian holding left for Germany to attend the Agritechnica exhibition.

In the course of negotiations with leading foreign manufacturers of equipment, new solutions were found to issues of fodder procurement, grain storage and precision farming.

The crop production specialists were interested in equipment for no-till farming and cultivated crop seeding without tilling. The precision farming group liked a new system of monitoring the machine operator's work via software using the Internet instead of a satellite channel. The stockbreeders were interested in a band rake which does not rake the green mass but picks it up without making contact with the soil.

"This is a radically new method of shaping a swath in hay making which we want to test on our farms," says Ramon Schenk, Deputy General Director for stockbreeding. "This enables us to produce premium quality fodder."

According to Vitaly Polyakov, process engineer in the seed quality control department of EkoNiva-Semena, many interesting proposals came relative to the elevator equipment, from barrels and dryers to a unique grain turner stabilising the temperature at the bottom grain layer.

The EkoNiva team also visited farmsteads. One of them, Landgut Nemt, is a large enterprise by German standards. Crops are grown here on an area of more than 1,200 ha. Cattle breeding is well established. The daily yield of one cow is 30 litres of milk which is used to produce dairy bio-based products. This year, farmer Renй Doebelt, head of Landgut Nemt, visited EkoNivaAgro. He noted that mutual visits are a rich source of new knowledge and expertise.

By Anna BORDUNOVA

Waste's second life

This year a pilot project was launched in Voronezh oblast for collecting and recycling pesticide containers. The project initiators were The European Business Association, The Russian Union of Producers of Plant Chemical Protection Agents and the Department of Agrarian Policy. EkoNivaAgro was involved in the project, too.

In the first five months of the current year, the agricultural holdings of Voronezh oblast collected over 100 tonnes of empty containers of plant protection chemicals. EkoNivaAgro alone contributed over 20 tonnes.

All the containers were crushed and turned into granules, which gave them "a second life" in the form of plastic products for non-food applications (sewage pipes, road enclosures, etc.)

"The containers discarded in ravines today will cause an ecological catastrophe tomorrow," says Aleksandr Rybenko, EkoNivaAgro Executive Director. "The project gives us more than just recycling of used products. It instils the environmentally friendly culture in people. In addition, it rids us of the unending disposal problem. What we need to do now is just wash the containers. Their collection and recycling will be done by organisers of the project."

The project is becoming increasingly popular. Nobody wishes to have on its home territory a wasteland of plastic refuse like that in the Pacific Ocean, more than twice the size of the US. This has already been recognised as an ecological catastrophe.

By Yulia SALKOVA

The first stud farm of EkoNiva

This year the Zashchitnoye farm has grown from a stock reproducer to a stud farm breeding the Simmental variety of horned cattle.

EkoNiva has been engaged in pedigree stock breeding for the sixth year. Zashchitnoye was the first of the holding's divisions to become a stud farm. As Valeria Serebrennikova, chief of the pedigree department of EkoNiva-APK Holding said, this year the farm has improved its performance which now fully meets requirements applied to a stud enterprise.

"All the animals are thoroughbreds," says Valeria. "99.7% of the stock belongs to the elite-record category. Milk production has grown. In 305 lactation days, we get 7,090 kg of milk with fat content of 4.19% and protein content of 3.38%. The followers grow at a high rate. The body weight of heifers at the age of 10 months is 267 kg; at 12 months, 339 kg; and at 18 months, 494 kg."

The farm will further improve the quality of the Simmental variety by true breeding, with the use of semen of pedigree sires.

"Our chief function as a stud farm is to supply followers to pedigree reproducers," says Yekaterina Brusentseva, head of the Zashchitnoye stockbreeding enterprise. "The artificial insemination centres should get from us the best sires."

The semen is bought by the best artificial insemination centres of Germany and Austria. The animals are carefully selected with regard to their origin and individual qualities.

By Anna BORDUNOVA

From Charolais county

The Charolais beef breed was created in Charolais county, France in the 18th century. Today this species is raised in more than 50 countries around the world, though mainly in Europe. This year the Savinskaya Niva (Ferzikovsky district of Kaluga oblast) acquired 420 head of "cows from the county" for its environmentally friendly project.

Today the farm's horned livestock numbers 1,220 animals, including 550 stud stock. Four hundred hectares are provided for rotation pasture. Management pins its hopes on the Charolais breed largely due to its outstanding beef production properties.

"The cows of this species are among the biggest beef cattle," says Anatoly Nakaryakov, the project manager. "They build up muscle mass fast, with a high dressed weight of 60-70%. The meat has excellent taste qualities and a protein content 19-20%. Its minimal fat content makes it a dietary product."

Bulls weigh 1,000 to 1,200 kg; cows, 700 to 800. The yield per 100 dams is 80-92%. The daily weight gain is 1.5 kg. The animals are omnivorous, easy to care for, adaptive and good-tempered.

According to Anatoly Nakaryakov, next year Savinskaya Niva plans to increase the project capacity and bring the number of dams to 700 cows by using the reproductive capability of its own stock. The target figure by the year 2016 is 1,100 animals.

By Yekaterina GALUSHKINA

Robots work hard to make man's life easy

Beginning on page 4

According to company president Stefan Duerr, two months ago he himself doubted the project's feasibility.

"Today, I can safely say that we chose the right way," he says. "The system operates steadily and reliably. The milk yields have grown. The robots perform all their jobs."

The MIone GEA Farm Technologies robot belongs to the next generation. Using a 3D Real Time camera, the robot sees a cup and a teat in real time. The connection is made by a single operation with a pin-point precision. The MIone robot assures stress-free milking of animals and complete control of all the milking procedures. The robot knows the cow's history and monitors sick animals. The MIone treats each cow individually. Once the animal enters the box, the robot scans it and supplies food prepared expressly for it.

The robot resolves another big problem, the labour shortage in the country. A robotised system makes milkmaids quite redundant. In case of emergency, a single engineer will cope with the situation. The MIone replaces not only a milkmaid, but a whole milk quality control laboratory. It tests the milk for pathogens, only after which is it delivered to the cooling tank. On average, the robot milks 120 cows. In case of malfunction, it immediately sends an SMS to the chief engineer or the servicing department of EkoNiva-Farm. In a word, milking has become a real pleasure for the cows.

At the seminar on automatic milking, Aleksandr Venglinsky, EkoNiva-Farm director, emphasised that the MIone milking machine is a multiple-box system capable of growing with the number of livestock. Company specialists will choose a proper machine with regard to the stock size and its specifics. They will install the equipment and promptly provide servicing.

"We are glad robotics is starting to gain momentum in Russia," says Bjoerne Drechsler, director of GEA Farm Technologies Rus. "I think that with a powerful partner like EkoNiva this technology will be readily embraced."

After the seminar, the guests went to the stockbreeding facility where they watched the operation of a twin-box robot. A total of twelve MIone robots will be installed on 32 milking stations. So far cowshed for 440 animals, a maternity barn and a small 10-station milking parlour have been commissioned. Each day 30 tonnes of premium quality milk are produced here and go to the Tula Dairy Plant. Sergey Mitusov, director of the enterprise, personally came to congratulate EkoNiva on the important event and to give them an award, a milk quality analyser.

"We are proud of our cooperation with EkoNiva," says Sergey Mitusov. "It is no surprise that a company with such an innovative approach to business is a leader in milk production."

Mikhail Shepelev, head of the Yefremovskiye Elevator enterprise, has long cooperated with EkoNiva in different areas. This year he is planning to modernise his milking equipment. In his opinion, EkoNiva succeeded in establishing its own innovation centre in the Kaluga oblast.

"Now we may skip trips abroad," says Mikhail Shepelev. "All of the most advanced and progressive machinery can be seen at EkoNiva."

In 2014 the company plans to build two cowsheds for 600 animals. A fully commissioned stockbreeding complex at Kaluzhskaya Niva will include:

- 2 cowsheds for 600 head and 1 cowshed for 440 head of cattle
- Milk production department:

— 12 MIone milking robots (8 three-box and 4 two-box models)

— a smaller milking parlour, tandem-type (2x5 stations)

- Calving department for 160 head of cattle
- Young stock area
- Silo trenches
- Circulation and automatic manure processing unit.

Planned amount of investment — 630 million rubles. To date, 350 million rubles worth of work has been done. The project payback period is 7 years.

By Anna BORDUNOVA

With milk, everything must be perfect, both taste and packaging!

Who would know better what the container should look like than a child, the chief consumer? The Academy of Dairy Products held a contest for children of the Liskinsky district to see who could come up with the best ideas. The contest was called "Packaging for my favourite milk."

The most creative works were submitted:
in the Drawing category: *by Daria Teslenko, Anastasia Alekseyeva, Alina Poluektova;*

in the Handcrafted Item category: *by Victoria Kosheleva, Fyodor Bakulin, Kristina Zolotaryova, Yelizaveta Grom, Carina Krivoshei, Yulia Korebeinikova;*

in the Packaging category: *by Tatiana Chiglintseva, Maxim Kvashnin, Yulia Voronkova.*

Over ninety schoolchildren of different ages participated in the contest. They had two months to put their "milk ideas" into practice in the following categories: Drawings, Handcrafted Items and Packaging.

The finals took place in late November, when the 12 most outstanding creative endeavours were awarded prizes of the contest. The jury noted the contestants' unconventional approaches and diverse techniques, such as sewn-in patches, appliqué, paper modelling and even knitting.

"This is an exciting contest," says Tania Chiglintseva, a prize winner of the contest. "Because we had to produce something ingenious, truly different from all else."

After the awards ceremony, the participants of the contest were in for a cheerful programme while the improvised milk cafeteria "Academy of Dairy Sciences" treated the children to milk-based desserts.

By Yulia SALKOVA

Milk as an exhibit?

Propaganda on behalf of milk in the Soviet era

Milk and dairy product storage containers from the Neolithic era to mid 20th century

Mechanical butter churn used by city dwellers and wealthy peasants in 19-20 centuries

There is a museum of butter in Vologda, a museum of pastille in Kolomna, a museum of honey in Moscow and even a museum of salt in the Yaroslavl oblast. But there is no museum of milk in Russia. The Academy of Dairy Products decided to rectify this injustice by opening a museum of milk in the Voronezh oblast.

The Liskinsky district was chosen not by chance. It produces more than 100,000 tonnes of milk per year, more than many other regions.

"Today, people know very little about milk, and still less about its history," says Christine Frank, the project coordinator. "We decided to reconstruct the history of milk in our museum. We are interested in how milk was produced at different times and how this is reflected in sagas, tales and legends. We want to find ancient recipes, the original milking equipment and milk tableware. All this is part of Russian history and culture."

An appeal was launched across the entire district. The first exhibits have already arrived.

"Join us! You too may contribute to the creation of the museum."

By Yulia SALKOVA

Duly respected

Farmers' Day is a good opportunity to thank all those toiling on the land for their strenuous effort and to inspire them to further professional exploits. On this occasion, all the major regions of Russia arranged celebrations in honour of farm workers. The specialists of EkoNiva also got their well-deserved awards.

With love and care

Kursk oblast governor Aleksandr Mikhailov handed honorary awards to more than 500 farmers. Among them was Yekaterina Brusentseva, head of the Zashchitnoye animal breeding complex.

Yekaterina has worked on the farm since 2009. Under her supervision, the complex

introduces advanced technologies in milking, feeding and animal care. Today the complex produces 11 tonnes of milk per day, 2 tonnes more than last year. The dairy herd amounts to 580 animals. Yekaterina treats her charges with love and care.

"A young and talented leader, a real professional," director of the complex Aleksey Bibikov says of Yekaterina. "I wish our farms would have more such specialists!"

Yekaterina arrived at the festive ceremony right after the midday milking.

"I'm very pleased my work has been appreciated in this way," says Yekaterina. "This is a stimulus to work still better. This also shows that the farming professions are respected after all."

A team of professionals

The successful work of EkoNivaAgro, the biggest milk producer in Voronezh oblast, was valued highly at Farmers' Day in the Liskinsky district. Over 50 workers from the enterprise were awarded memorable gifts and decorations.

Over the last seven years, local investments in stockbreeding have exceeded 3.5 billion rubles. The farms here produce 240 tonnes of premium quality milk per day. This is a fifth of the oblast total. The horned cattle stock exceeds 27,000 animals. Two thousand people work at the enterprise. Over 60% of them are young people under 35. EkoNivaAgro pays a lot of attention to the social policy, creating good conditions not only for work, but also for a respectable life in the village.

"It's a blessing we've got something like EkoNiva in our district!" said Victor Shevtsov, head of the Liskinsky district. "This is a team of real professionals devoted to their cause and the native land."

Well-deserved recognition

The Kaluzhskaya Niva workers were awarded prizes from the Kaluga oblast and district administrations. Aleksandr Yerokhin, machine operator of the Polyana division, received the honorary title of "Meritorious Farmer of the Kaluga Oblast".

"In the 30 years of my toils in farming this is the first big prize and recognition at such a high level of my efforts," says Aleksandr. "This is both a joy and an honour! Only love of my native land, my job and my machines helped me achieve the good results and win such a high appraisal."

First place

Labour Day festivities were also arranged for the Sibirskaya Niva employees. Liudmila Ishimova, head of the Maslyaninsky district, awarded certificates of appreciation to farm manager Sergey Lyakhov and specialists in the field for their high achievements in farming work. Sibirskaya Niva has a lot to be proud of. This year the company doubled its performance in the total grain harvest, ending up as a winner among agricultural enterprises of the Maslyaninsky district. Whereas last year the company harvested 17,620 tonnes of grain, this year it came up with 38,640. It can also pride itself on milk production. Today the company produces 68 tonnes of milk per day, 25% more than last year.

"We have achieved this success thanks to the use of modern technologies and the well-coordinated professional work of all of the company personnel who whole-heartedly support the common cause," says Sergey Lyakhov. "It's pleasing that our efforts did no go unnoticed."

By Anna BORDUNOVA and Yekaterina GALUSHKINA

The job is my life!

EkoNiva's many employees differ greatly in terms of age, character and temperament, but they have one thing in common – devotion to their job. For them, their work is their life.

Valery Palamarchuk, the chief agronomist at EkoNivaAgro (Voronezh oblast), is just one such man. In the four years he has worked on the farm, he has already acquired a reputation as an expert who is committed to his job, a reasonable and fair instructor and a highly motivated person.

Valery Palamarchuk has lived in the Liskinsky district since 2001. Before that, following graduation from the Alma-Ata Institute of Agriculture, he worked in his home country, the Republic of Kazakhstan. Once times turned bad and there was no work, he moved with his family to Russia to pursue his profession. Here he worked on a farm adjacent to EkoNivaAgro. He started as an agronomist, reaching, over time, the position of a deputy director for production. According to Valery, he always liked EkoNiva, with its new technologies and good attitude to workmen. In 2010, Valery joined EkoNivaAgro as a Chief Agronomist.

"I came to EkoNivaAgro gladly" says Valery with a smile. "To be sure, I lost a little in status, but I gained hugely as a professional!"

Today Valery is a EkoNiva's Chief Agronomist. His colleagues and subordinates believe he is a man well out of the ordinary.

"Valery Nikolayevich knows his job perfectly well, keeping an eye on what goes on in each field," says Roman Litvinov, First Deputy Director for Production. "He controls everything. At the height of the season, Valery may even rough it in the open. He is a strict but fair instructor. He has raised several promising young agronomists."

Valery believes that in educating specialists it is essential to use "the stick and carrot policy." In his opinion, the knowledge and skills with which young agronomists come to work are, regrettably, next to nothing. But that won't prevent an ambitious fellow from becoming a real pro.

Asked about his hobby, Valery falls pensive…

"I do a spot of photography," he says. "I was crazy about it at school. I was fond of portrait photography and used to take galleries of my classmates. Back then it was quite a process! One had to develop a film, to fix it, to wash and dry the photos. In summer, I did odd jobs on the collective farm to earn a little money to buy the photography stuff. Today, I devote all my spare time to my family. But I am at all times easy to contact by phone."

Valery has two children, a daughter, Elina, 17, and a son. Nikita, 25, a military officer serving as a battalion deputy commander in St Petersburg.

In many ways, Valery himself is like a serviceman. He is always trim, self-disciplined and punctual, boasting a fine sense of humour. That's probably what he ought to be. After all, he is in charge of more than 72,000 hectares of arable land, something close to a battlefield. His 70 subordinates make up a little less than an army troop company. Each day, especially when the season is at its height, things are like in the famous verse "Again into battle, peace is for dreams." Valery wholeheartedly hails this.

"I do not wish to change anything in my life or business," he says. "I don't even know how to describe what I feel when it all works. Despite the unpredictable freaks of nature, we did take all of the sugar beet roots from the fields. Also, the last truck of maize left the field. And … we are making plans for the future. This moves us to happy tears!"

By Yulia SALKOVA

Here's the snapshot!

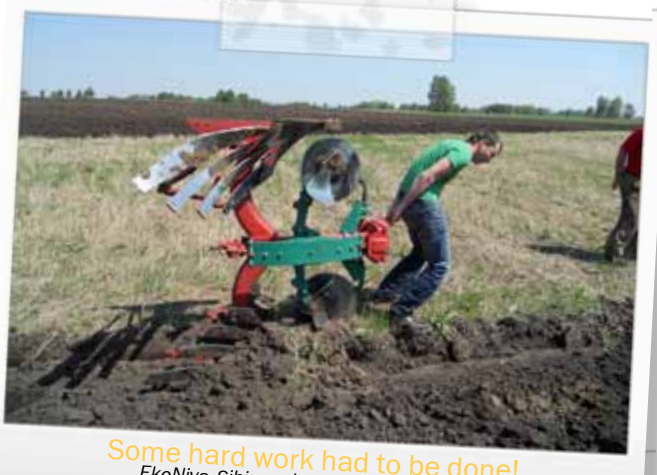
The EkoNivaTekhnika-Holding Company has summarised the results of the Our Personnel photo contest devoted to the company's 20th anniversary.

A total of 86 photographs were submitted to the contest. They showed the brightest and most interesting glimpses of life in EkoNiva.

"In late November, the Company arranged on its domestic portal a virtual exhibition of all the photographs it received. Those were judged by an on-line vote," says Svetlana Nepomnyashchaya, the contest coordinator. "Thus, the company personnel themselves determined the winners in each category."

It is still a secret whose photos were found to be the best. By the organising committee's plan, the official declaration of the results and decoration of the winners will take place at the corporate New Year's party. In this issue, EkoNiva-News publishes photographs which, the editors believe, deserve the attention of the general public and can rightly be called the best snapshots!

By Yekaterina GALUSHKINA



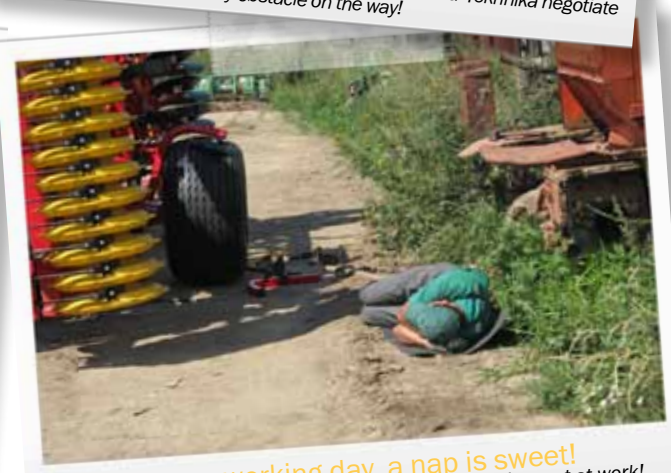
Some hard work had to be done!
EkoNiva-Sibir workers take up any work!

Abducted right from the holiday!
At EkoNiva-Chernozemye, John Deere equipment also caught the fancy of the police!

The art of reincarnation!
Financiers yesterday, artists today. The staff of EkoNiva-Tekhnika financial department at the corporate New Year's party

Tanks fear no mud!
John Deere machines from the Vladimir branch of EkoNiva-Tekhnika negotiate any obstacle on the way!

Individual parking
for the engineers of the Ryazan branch of EkoNiva-Tekhnika



After a working day, a nap is sweet!
Engineers of the Vladimir branch of EkoNiva-Tekhnika rest at work!

Announcements

17-26 January. Green Week 2014 International Exhibition and Fair

Venue: Messe Berlin, Berlin, Germany

Organisers: Messe Berlin GmbH

January. Technology training for farming specialists of Novosibirsk oblast

Venue: EkoNivaSibir servicing centre, Novosibirsk

Organisers: EkoNivaSibir LLC

February. Demonstration of Schulte and John Deere snow clearing equipment

Venue: Enterprises of EkoNiva-Tekhnika in Kaluga, Tula, Ryazan, Kirov and Vladimir oblasts

Organisers: Regional enterprises of EkoNiva-Tekhnika

4-6 February. Dedicated cattle breeding exhibition AgroFarm 2014

Venue: All-Russia Exhibition Centre, Moscow, Russia

Organisers: All-Russia Exhibition Centre, German Agricultural Society

4-7 February. 19th International exhibition of Grain-Combined Fodder-Veterinary 2014

Venue: Moscow, Russia

Organisers: Expokhleb Marketing Centre

24-28 February. Training specialists of servicing and sales departments in the use of John Deere equipment

Venue: Domodedovo, Moscow, Russia

Organisers: John Deere plant in Russia

To download the electronic version of the journal scan the QR code

EkoNiva looks forward to seeing you 17-26 January at the 79th international trade exhibition of the food industry, horticulture, farming and forest management in Berlin, Germany.

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