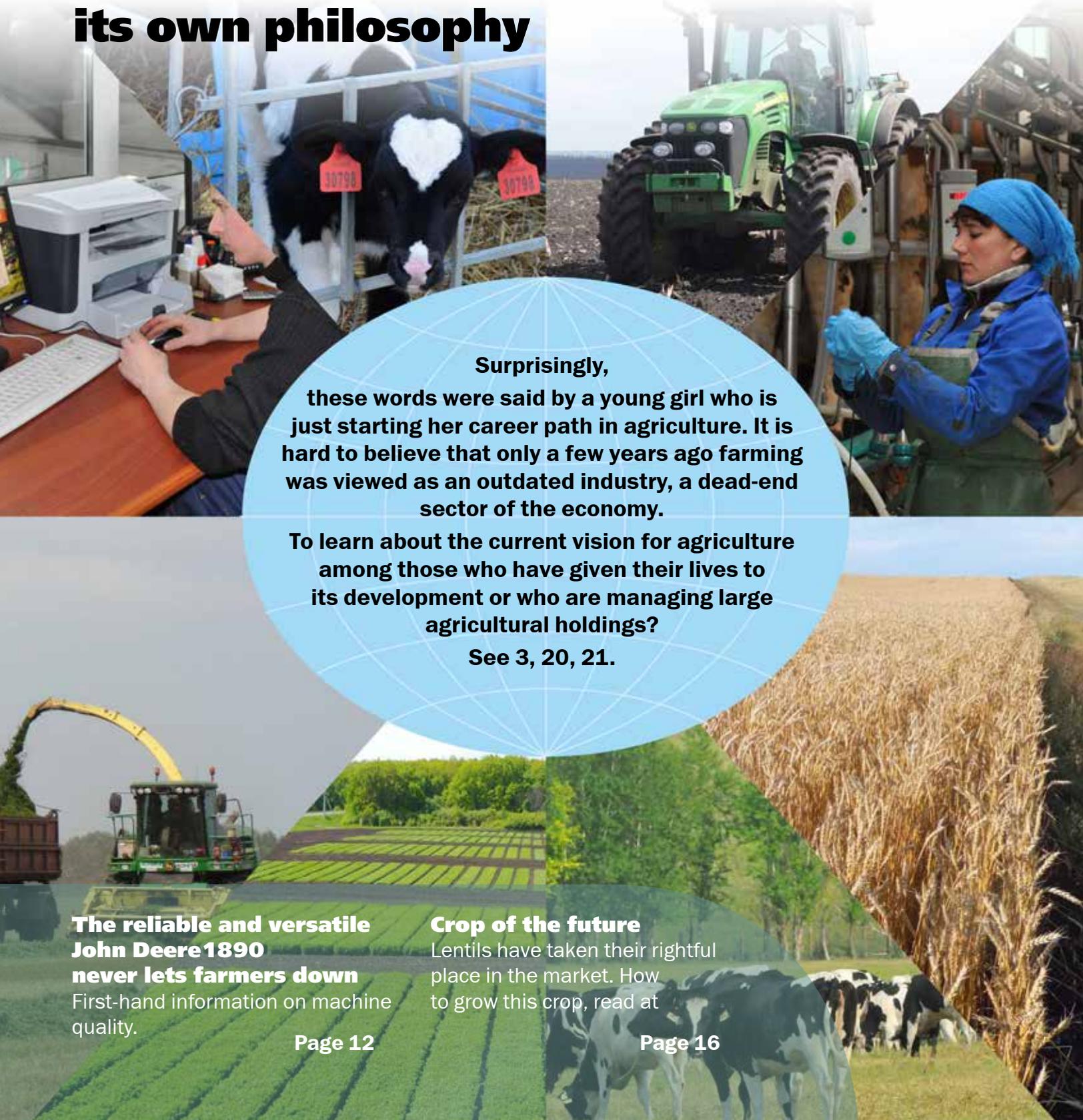


Agriculture

is a whole world in itself with its own philosophy



Surprisingly, these words were said by a young girl who is just starting her career path in agriculture. It is hard to believe that only a few years ago farming was viewed as an outdated industry, a dead-end sector of the economy.

To learn about the current vision for agriculture among those who have given their lives to its development or who are managing large agricultural holdings?

See 3, 20, 21.

The reliable and versatile John Deere 1890 never lets farmers down

First-hand information on machine quality.

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Crop of the future

Lentils have taken their rightful place in the market. How to grow this crop, read at

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A rollercoaster ride: shall we expect a rise after a sharp drop?

The dairy industry seems to be experiencing a rollercoaster ride. The increase in milk prices in the previous year was followed by a dramatic drop. It is remarkable that the prices have decreased in winter, when milk production volumes are traditionally lower and the price is higher than in summer. The purchase price of raw milk is decreasing against a rise in the market price of dairy products and the overall undersupply of milk in Russia.

This situation has been caused by adulterated dairy commodities and so-called 'cheese products', 'sour cream products', etc., which compromise the dairy industry with their very name. Since 15th January, dairy product manufacturers in Belarus are forbidden

to sell products containing vegetable fat under the names of 'cheese product' or 'sour cream product'. Why cannot we do the same in Russia? It would stabilise milk prices and enhance sustainable development of the dairy industry. Currently, we are fighting a losing battle against palm oil and other butter fat replacers. This battle can never be won by conscientious dairy producers! Thus, we feel as if we were having a rollercoaster ride: rushing downwards holding our breaths and fearing to think what will happen in summer.

Our colleagues from the grain industry are also going through tough times: the low grain prices caused by the record crop yield in 2017 are unlikely to rise, unless the ruble rate decreases.

I can see considerable potential in organic production in terms of both export to the EU and domestic market development. Russian consumers have become more conscious of what they eat. However, the organic market is still fairly small, and it is not easy to find true organic meat, fruit of dairy products on shop shelves. However, Russian farmers, unlike their European colleagues, possess the main resource required for organic production — land. The development of new production practices will help agricultural producers to reduce their risks and compensate for the market price decrease so that they could move forward instead of riding up and down a rollercoaster.

*Stefan DUERR,
President of EkoNiva Group*



After a two-year break Russia is back to the largest agricultural trade fair in Berlin. Around 20 companies from 15 regions have presented achievements of the Russian agriculture at Green Week.

Russia is in Berlin again. At International Green Week

The Russian delegation headed by Evgeniy Gromyko, Deputy Minister of Agriculture of Russia, familiarized themselves with the displays and took part in the business program.

The German-Russian Forum focused on capabilities of the two countries in ensuring global food safety. The event was attended by representatives of the ministries of agriculture of Russia and Germany, German Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations, German-Russian Agricultural and Political Dialogue, and businessmen.

Evgeniy Gromyko spoke about the results of work of the Russian farming sector. An impressive harvest — 140 million tonnes of grain — was reaped last year, thus solving the issue of food safety in 10 types of products.

'If in 2001 Russia was the largest importer, then in 2017 export of farming products reached 20 million dollars. The trend is going to continue.'

According to Mr. Gromyko, production of biological products has good market opportunities, since the demand in the global market is growing faster than the

supply. Despite political challenges, the deputy minister believes that Russia and Germany have more common ground than differences. Among promising avenues of cooperation between the two countries, he mentioned farming machinery, plant breeding, seed production, and genetics.

Speaking about agri-business in Russia, Stefan Duerr, President of EkoNiva Group, pointed out the fact that good framework conditions for work had been created in Russia. And in case someone is considering working in Russia, now is the time to start while vacant land is still available. Another point that Stefan Duerr made was that there had been a shift in public opinion in how agricultural sector, overall, and farmers, in particular, are viewed.

'My daughter used to be embarrassed to admit that her dad was a farmer. Now she is proud of my work.'

The Russian farmer with German roots also gave a long-term outlook of the dairy industry. He believes that in five to six years Russia is going to overproduce, so it is important to take action now and explore export markets.

Stefan Duerr also took part in the congress

of German Federation of Rural Youth. He shared experience with the beginning colleagues, elaborated on the specifics of doing business in Russia. The presentation was followed by an hour-long Q&A session.

As a word of encouragement, Stefan Duerr urged the young farmers to be guided by sound judgement, to be responsible for the decisions they take and to be daring in pursuing their dreams. Mr Duerr also shared how he manages to combine work and family life.

'Unfortunately, most of the time, I am away. I spend only two days a week with my family', says Stefan Duerr. 'But when I am at home, the entire family gets together in the evening, we turn the phones off and talk to each other. And then it doesn't matter, even if a governor calls — the time is reserved exclusively for the family.'

Wrapping the session up, Stefan Duerr invited the young farmers to EkoNiva for a visit, an internship or work.

'We are glad to share experience and keen to recruit skilled specialists', summed up the businessman.

By Svetlana WEBER

We are expanding our boundaries

EkoNiva has purchased OkaAgro, an agricultural holding in Ryazan oblast with a modern infrastructure and good prospects.

The large agricultural area and modern dairy farms of OkaAgro impressed EkoNiva, which was invited to enter the region by Nikolay Lyubimov, Governor, who used to work in close cooperation with the company in his previous position in Kaluga oblast. Today, OkaAgro has 49,000 ha of land, five divisions in four districts of Ryazan

region, a 50,000-tonne storage facility with railcar loading, 5,500 head of cattle, including 2,800 cows of Holstein breed, which produce 80 tonnes of milk per day. The company also engages in cereal and forage production.

'It is a good asset, where all the conditions for the development of dairy production have been created', says Stefan Duerr,

President of EkoNiva Group. 'Provided that state support continues, EkoNiva plans to build four dairies with a capacity of 2,800 head each within the next few years.'

Construction of the first of the four 2,800-head dairies in Pitelino will begin already this spring, which proves the company's intention to stick to its commitment.

By Victor BARGOTIN





Milking 1,200 tonnes per day

EkoNiva completed the year 2017 with impressive results: on 26th December the amount of daily milk yield reached 1,000 tonnes per day. Achieving the largest production volume in Russia was a historic event for the company.

Over 500 tonnes of milk is produced at the farming operations of Voronezh oblast, 250 tonnes is produced in Kaluga and the rest — in Novosibirsk, Tyumen and Kursk. 'It is the result of intensive long-term

work', says Stefan Duerr, President of EkoNiva Group. 'We engaged in dairy production in 2006. Frankly speaking, it was not entirely our choice: the decision was prompted by Viktor Shevtsov, Head of Liski district (Voronezh oblast), and I

am very grateful to him.

We have been working hard all these twelve years: building new dairies, implementing new technologies, training specialists. We have gone through challenging times since we had to start from scratch. The economic situation has not always been favourable for dairy business development. However, the governmental support had played an important role in the rapid development of production, especially in the recent years. Our first dairies were built with the support of Sberbank. The intensive growth of the past few years has become possible due to the partnership with Rosselkhozbank which helped us to build 10 dairies. It is hard to overestimate the contribution of EkoNiva's employees which have become a close-knit team of high-class professionals within these years.

Within these twelve years, EkoNiva has built 15 dairies and we are not going to rest on our laurels. Four new dairies are already underway. The construction of another four dairies will start this year. By the beginning of March, the daily milk yield in EkoNiva will have reached 1,200 tonnes. According to Stefan Duerr, by the end of 2019, the company will have passed the 2,000 tonnes mark.

By Svetlana WEBER

Keeping pace with the times!

EkoNivaTekhnika-Holding is launching a new project — online order system for clients.

Now one does not have to spend a lot of time to order spare parts, lubricants and consumables. All orders can be made by loading the goods into a virtual shopping basket in a special internet application.

The online order system has been developed to optimise customer support. It allows the clients to get a prompt review of all goods and services on offer and learn about discounts and special offers.

'The project has been developed specially for our clients. It is a new step towards successful cooperation', says Vladimir Kovalenko, Spare Parts Division Manager of EkoNivaTekhnika-Holding. 'We have done our best to make it easier for our clients to come in contact with us without any routine emails or fax copies. Now all they have to do is file an application in the Internet, and the operator will call the client within a few minutes after the application is filed. The user-friendly interface of the site makes it easy to use for anyone. The high-quality picture of the item and detailed description will help the customer to make the right choice. The new system allows to track the order status and the shipment and delivery dates. It is also important that the customer can

have access to the goods list and receive professional help 24 hours per day 7 days a week.

'To find the required item, the customer can type in the article number or the name of the good needed', continues Vladimir Kovalenko. The new system allows selecting consumables for John Deere self-propelled machines. Clients also can choose the required size of tyres and order them in one click.'

Each user will have his own account featuring the history of all orders placed. This will save the precious time of businessmen which value every second. The new internet service will be launched in the nearest time. EkoNivaTekhnika Holding specialists are sure that their clients will appreciate the non-stop service. To stay on top of the business one needs to keep pace with the times!

By Darya DENISOVA





Earth achievements and cosmic plans

EkoNivaAgro has launched a new modern dairy facility for 2,800 head of milking cows in Bobrov district, Voronezh oblast.

Aleksey Gordeyev, Presidential Plenipotentiary Envoy to the Central Federal District, Stefan Duerr, Director General of EkoNiva-APK Holding, and Aleksandr Gusev, Acting Governor of Voronezh region, took part in the opening ceremony.

‘Agriculture and livestock farming, in the first place, make the basis for the rural economy’, states Aleksey Gordeyev. ‘Only well-balanced sustainable development of both urban and rural territories can ensure good prospects for Voronezh oblast. Young specialists will be willing to move to provincial areas if employers offer favourable working conditions as EkoNiva does, which will solve the overall demographic issue.’

The ceremony became an event to remember, as EkoNivaAgro prepared a surprise – space launch of Marta cow. Specially for the occasion, young Academicians had built a collider and demonstrated how it was designed before Marta getting onboard to jolly songs. When everything was ready for the launch, Aleksey Gordeyev, Stefan Duerr and Aleksandr Gusev pressed the big red

button which launched both the dairy and Marta to conquer the space and promote high-quality milk in our boundless universe.

The event guests tasted the dairy products from the Academy of Dairy Sciences and truly admired their natural flavour. In the course of discussion, Stefan Duerr pointed out that dairy product adulteration had become a normal thing for a lot of producers. Supporting the concern, Aleksey Gordeyev suggested employing European experience involving high

fines in the amount of 3% of the company’s total turnover. Besides, the guests discussed the continuous quality control system for dairy products — from farm to shop shelf.

The company has invested nearly 2.5 billion rubles in the facility construction. The layout comprises 3 barns, a feed centre with the capacity of 50 thousand tonnes and pens and exercise lots for heifers aged from 3 to 8 months.

‘This unique facility is designed for 2,800 milking cows and fitted with a cutting-edge 72-stall rotary milking parlour’, says Aleksandr Rybenko, Executive Director of EkoNivaAgro. ‘Over 95 people are employed here at the moment, the enterprise features shower rooms, changing rooms, a canteen and other conveniences. Likewise, we do our best to ensure the most comfortable and pleasing cow life on the farm.

So far, the dairy houses 1,350 Holstein cows, 30 % of which have been raised by EkoNivaAgro. One cow at the enterprise produces 26 litres of milk a day. Currently, the total milk output of the dairy is 35 tonnes a day. When working at full capacity, the production will reach 80 tonnes a day.

‘EkoNivaAgro’s plans are very ambitious’, continues Aleksandr Rybenko. ‘We are opening another dairy for 2,800 head in Korsevo, Bobrov district, in May, and starting the construction of two facilities in Bobrov district and one facility in Liski district. The work is in full swing and we have grandiose plans for the future.’

By Viktor BARGOTIN



According to the conclusions of the extended session of the Agriculture Ministry of Ryazan oblast aimed at experience exchange and good partnership reinforcement, cutting-edge technologies will ensure farming industry moving to a whole new level.



Farm's secret

Sergey Krupskiy, Director of Ryazan Branch of EkoNiva-Tekhnika, gave a detailed account of the state-of-the-art technologies applied on the region's farms. The John Deere AMS system implies machinery equipment ensuring the highest field work precision. Depending on the navigation type and signal strength, the overlap area can be 99% less. In essence, it is an autopiloting system, which makes operators' job much easier.

The telematic JDLink system maintains remote connection between a tractor and a combine: follows the track, traces fuel consumption and the state of machine components. Nearly 25% of all problems can be fixed right away in the

field without any extra driving.

FarmSight is another tool offered by EkoNiva to cut on maintenance costs. Comprehensive machine efficiency improvement features include diagnostics, repairs and maintenance at off-season time, while machines are in garages.

'Our partners consider precision farming highly potential', says Sergey Krupskiy.

'For instance, the manager of Vyshgorodskiy farming enterprise, who also participated in the meeting, is not afraid of the innovations. On his farm, all machines are equipped with the John Deere AutoTrack guidance system. There is an increasing number of such rational farmers. They understand that the availability of data to analyze and remote

machinery control are important for efficient decision making, which saves crop yields, machine resources and time.'

The session participants passed a resolution on creating a working group to develop and implement a precision farming system in the region. It was also suggested allocating a part of the regional budget to the development of science and agricultural sector.

'Country's food safety is one of our priority tasks', underlines Sergey Dudukin, Deputy Chairperson of Ryazan Oblast Government. 'And implementation of cutting-edge farming practices and crop quality improvement are its essential components.'

By Daria DENISOVA

Heavenly curds

For the first time, the Academy of Dairy Sciences has participated in the Quality Test held by Voronezh Standardisation and Metrology Centre.

The curds were tested for compliance with the existing regulations in terms of organoleptic parameters, fatty acid profile and label.

Apart from the Academy Dairy Sciences, a random choice of brands for the test included Vkusnoteyevo, Ivan Poddubny, Bogdasha, Mom's Palms and Rossosh Milk Company.

'All participating brands showed nearly equal lab test results, but as for the organoleptic parameters, the curds by the Academy of Dairy Sciences became an unrivalled leader and took the first place.

'Our curds consist of pure protein and are produced by traditional technologies, which ensures the highest taste qualities of our product',

says Andrey Pronin, Deputy Manager of EkoNiva-APK Holding Processing Department. 'This year, the curds by the Academy of Dairy Sciences have been awarded the first prizes at WorldFood

Moscow Forum and Golden Autumn trade fair, so the parameters acclaimed by the Standardisation and Metrology Centre are another testament to our product's highest quality.'

By Viktor BARGOTIN





Understanding the Russian soul

For the third time, the German-Russian Economic Association has gathered about 200 German and Russian entrepreneurs for its major annual event — Day of Medium-Sized Business.

The event started with the tour of local production facilities followed by a gala reception at the town hall of Lubeck and continued with the forum in Hamburg where 15 speakers delivered their speeches, all of them having a common appeal to cooperation, mutual understanding and closer relationship between Russia and Germany despite the current international position.

The forum opened with Stefan Duerr, President of EkoNiva Group, solemnly accepting an award for outstanding business achievements in the intercountry economic relations.

Peter Harry Carstensen, ex-Prime Minister of the state of Schleswig-Holstein, underlined Stefan Duerr's contribution to the launch of the German-Russian Agrarian and Political Dialogue Project in the 90s in his congratulating speech.

'Up to this day, it remains BMEL's (Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture of Germany) official project', says Harry Carstensen, 'and an unflinching platform

for experience sharing and cooperation in the farming sector between our countries. Stefan Duerr has always advocated fostering mutual understanding between our countries. Likewise, the project activity covers much more than just experience exchange within the associations and between the political committees.'

Peter Harry Carstensen presented the award together with Thomas Overbeck, President of the German-Russian Economic Association.

'Stefan Duerr embodies the best Russian and German features', says Thomas Overbeck. 'He is a businessman and a talented manager, strategically-thinking and socially responsible, for whom Russia is a home, who has embraced Russian mentality and culture. He has the brains and he has the heart to create something magnificent. That is why he has been honoured to become the first recipient of this accolade, thus setting the highest standard for the successors.

Before the ceremony, all the guests had

watched a film about EkoNiva.

'In the film, you saw images of Voronezh land. This land was crossed by the front line 75 years ago, and Wehrmacht soldiers brought a lot of sorrow to the locals,' says Stefan Duerr. 'I am a Russian citizen now, but I came to the country as a German, and I am sincerely thankful to the people, who made my business in Russia possible, I am highly honoured to be able to work there.'

In his acceptance speech, Stefan Duerr also mentioned other historic landmarks: cold war, thaw period, which caused a tangible improvement in the relationships, and the crisis of 2014, which ruined a lot of things that had been achieved with so much effort. Stefan Duerr pointed out that German companies had suffered from the embargo more than Russian ones. The Russian government had not left entrepreneurs to the mercy of fate, which helped the business to restore its self-confidence.

'I appeal to everybody to look into the Russian history, soul and mentality before quoting somebody's derogatory words about Russia', emphasised Stefan Duerr.

To conclude, Stefan Duerr stressed that, having a dispute, businessmen look for compromises at a negotiation table instead of imposing sanctions on each other, as compared to politicians.

'We, business community, cannot stay out of politics, as we bear a great responsibility for our operations, employees and their families', explained Stefan Duerr. 'Despite the complicated situation, we can't stop meeting and sharing economic, cultural and educational experience. I take this award as an impetus to keep on myself and inspire other people to do it.'

As the participants asserted, the Day of Medium-Sized Business is an event aimed at both commercial networking and personal communication, which is equally important.

By Tatiana SIMONENKOVA





Efficient fodder preparation

Employees of Vladimir branch of EkoNiva-Tekhnika and Willi Drews, PhD in Agronomy held trainings on the farms of Vladimir oblast.

Managers of Ilkino farming enterprise had been looking forward to Willi Drews' visit. The advisor shared his experience, told the farm employees about fodder preparation technologies and new varieties offered by EkoNiva, including perennial ryegrass, festulolium and alfalfa.

'Alfalfa is a new crop for our farm', says Natalia Zinyakova, Agronomist of the farming enterprise. 'We used to have some alfalfa but it did not grow very well and frequently got killed by frost in winter.' To improve the overwintering properties

and enhance the crop development, Willi Drews recommended sowing alfalfa without cover crops and using nitrogen top-dressing.

Employees of Ekoniva-Tekhnika demonstrated cutting edge soil tillage and sowing machinery, including Vaderstad Top Down cultivator, Haybuster 2564, H100, H800, Poettinger fodder preparation machinery, John Deere M7 and M8 Series tractors and Einbock Aerostar 1200 weeder harrow.

'Several farms showed interest in the Einbock Aerostar 1200 weeder

harrow', says Aleksandr Naumov, Sales Department Manager of Vladimir branch of EkoNiva-Tekhnika Holding. 'It is intended for weed control and managing meadows and pastures. The tined spring-loaded Einbock harrow enhances the efficiency of the natural nitrogen balance in the soil.

Ilkino stock breeding farm specialises in livestock and poultry farming. Besides 200 thousand chickens, the farm has 1,600 lactating cows which produce over 60 tonnes of milk per day.

'We put a lot of effort into the development of crop production and vegetable growing', says Yuriy Katin, Chief Engineer of the enterprise. 'We grow table potatoes and varieties for crisps production. Besides, we grow beets, carrots and cabbage.'

Employees of Ilkino showed their operation to the guests, which highly praised the results the farm had achieved.

'Willi Drews has visited our farm for the first time', says Yuriy Katin. 'He did not expect to find such a successful farming enterprise deep in the countryside, in Ilkino village. We will take into account Willi's recommendations and the advice of our colleagues from EkoNiva-Tekhnika. We will apply them in our work to achieve even better results.'

By Darya DENISOVA

Bridging the future

On February 5th, the solemn opening ceremony of the winter session of the student agricultural troop MOST took place at Vysokoye dairy.

For the third year in a row, EkoNiva has organised internship for talented students from all over Russia who view farming as their calling. The cooperation with the student agricultural troop, which has become a good tradition, continues bringing fruit: a lot of young people have already mastered various agricultural professions and obtained valuable experience on EkoNiva's farms.

This time, 35 students from 35 regions of Russia took part in the ceremony.

Ekaterina Shalneva, specialist of non-profit-making organisation Russian Student Troops, opened the ceremony with welcoming words and wished the participants of the project to enlarge their knowledge, gain new professional skills and charge themselves with positive energy and emotions. Ekaterina stated that for each of the students,

the cooperation with EkoNiva is a huge step forward in terms of professional development and career prospects.

'We are happy to see promising ambitious young people at our enterprise', says Vyacheslav Ionov, Chief Herd Manager of EkoNiva Left-Bank Operation. 'We are ready to provide all necessary support, share our experience and train the interns to

be true professionals.'

'EkoNiva has recently reached a historic production landmark — 1,000 tonnes of milk per day', adds Ekaterina Shalneva. 'This result proves the importance of well-coordinated teamwork in farming.'

Traditionally, the symbolic flag of the project was risen over the participants. The event finished with a joyful dancing flash mob.

By Aleksandr KUTISHCHEV





A trend-setting event!

The annual international trade show AgroFarm 2018 has gathered about 400 agricultural companies from 30 countries of the world.



AgroFarm is rightfully considered to be one of the largest and most prestigious exhibitions in Russia demonstrating innovative livestock farming solutions. EkoNiva-Tekhnika and EkoNiva-Semena take part in the event every year.

'EkoNiva-Semena operates all over Russia: from Kaliningrad to Primorskiy area', says Aleksandr Novosyolov, Sales Manager of EkoNiva-Semena. 'Our sales are growing year by year due to the wide range and high quality of products, seed purity and high-yielding varieties. In future, we are planning to start growing five varieties of lentils. This crop has huge market potential, and we intend to work on it intensively.'

EkoNiva-Semena is one of the leading growers of field crop seeds, producing approximately 30,000 certified seeds of cereals, pulses, fodder crops and annual and perennial grasses.

EkoNiva-Tekhnika is planning to continue supplying Russian farmers with high-quality state-of-the-art farm machinery.

'This year, the John Deere 6150M tractor will be launched into the Russian

market', says Sergey Plotnikov, Chief Sales Manager of Tula branch of EkoNiva-Tekhnika. '195 hp tractors, which can be coupled with butterfly mowers are in high demand in livestock farming. I think the John Deere 6150M will be popular in Russia. It is a reliable machine indispensable on any farm. Clients of EkoNiva-Tekhnika have already made their orders, and at the beginning of spring, the happy owners will receive the first machines.'

The John Deere T series grain harvesters, capable of boosting machine performance while increasing the quality of grain and straw, enjoyed

special popularity with the guests of the trade show.

'Last year, the John Deere T Series harvesters were immensely popular with farmers', observes Gennady Nepomnyashchiy, Executive Director of EkoNiva-Tekhnika. 'These drum threshing harvesters fitted with cutting-edge equipment and featuring a large separation area are well-suited to our conditions and capable of harvesting various crops at a high speed. Another popular machine is Tempo planter manufactured by Vaderstad. Due to the high performance and unsurpassed sowing quality these machines will be a perfect match for large farming operations.'

AgroFarm 2018 offered a versatile business programme comprising 50 events of different scale. Among the key events was the 9th meeting of the National Association of Dairy Producers (Soyuzmoloko). The participants of the event observed that within the past years, milk production has demonstrated a sustainable annual growth of over 3% which has made it attractive for investors. In his speech, Andrey Danilenko, Chairman of Soyuzmoloko, stated that the milk production cost index discussed at the previous meeting was successfully implemented and is already used by milk processors for concluding long-term agreements. He also

addressed the representatives of the government with a request to keep the governmental support at the same level.

The participants of the meeting developed a Task List for 2018. The Task List includes suggestions on testing alternative dairy product traceability solutions, increasing penalties for repeated dairy product adulteration, development of demand stimulation instruments and other initiatives of the Association.



By Viktor BARGOTIN

Organic farming – level up

The global market is experiencing an organic boom! The demand for organic food produced in environmentally-friendly conditions without chemicals and GMOs is growing year by year.

The Government of the Russian Federation has recently approved the Organic Production Bill, which, as farmers hope, will bring organic farming to an entirely new level.

The Organic Production Bill was brought in before the Government of Russia by Aleksandr Tkachyov, Minister of Agriculture of the Russian Federation, at the meeting presided over by Dmitry Medvedev, Chairman of the Government of the Russian Federation. Dmitry Medvedev commented on the rapid growth of organic production volumes and the high demand for organic meat, vegetables and fruit. By the estimations of experts, in the nearest future, Russian share of the world food market can reach from 10% to 25%.

Executive Director of Savinskaya Niva organic operation is convinced that the new law will set up the strict legal framework essential for the development of organic farming

'The Organic Production Law will demonstrate that the development of organic farming is encouraged by the government', says Anatoliy Nakaryakov, Executive Director of Savinskaya Niva. 'It will bring order to the organic food market, prove that organic products are in demand and, most importantly, help to fight against organic food adulteration.'

So far, the consumers cannot be sure of the quality of the products they buy since there are quite a lot of dishonest

market players who deceive the buyers by labeling their products as 'ecological', 'biological' and 'organic'.

'We hope that the new law will help us to identify the producers selling adulterated products labeled as organic food and keep them out of the market', says Anatoliy Nakaryakov.

'The new law will allow introducing additional measures of governmental support — subsidies, develop a clear definition of organic product and introduce a single labeling system.'

Voluntary certification of organic products and the development of a unified state register of organic producers are among the important provisions of the new law. Certification in accordance with organic standards is a complicated procedure and only the most committed producers can pass it.

'The certification includes a comprehensive inspection of all production stages, including raw materials, seeds, feed, fertiliser, soil properties and even disposal process', continues Anatoliy Nakaryakov, 'therefore, producers opting for organic farming must be ready for all the steps of certifying authority inspection.'

Upon successful completion of the inspection, the producer receives a compliance certificate. With this certificate, the producer can attract premium class customers, get access to large markets and sell the products at a higher price. For the consumer desiring to buy a high-quality healthy product, the certificate serves as a quality guarantee.

'The consumers at supermarkets start paying attention to the quality of the products', shares Anatoliy Nakaryakov. 'It is important for them to buy milk or meat without GMOs, growth hormones, antibiotics or pesticides.'

However, we need to understand that organic products occupy a more expensive niche. The organic beef that we produce is 40% more expensive than conventionally produced meat; the price of organic potatoes can exceed 60 rub/kg, the price of flour — to 100 rub/kg.

The customer poll showed that the major part of people ready to buy organic products are residents of megapolises.

Currently the organic market in Russia is only starting to gain momentum. However, analysts consider that it has incredible development prospects. Organic farming is gaining its unique niche, and a healthy lifestyle is becoming the hottest new trend!

Russia is sure to succeed in organic farming since it has an undisputable competitive edge — the world's richest natural resources.

By Darya DENISOVA



Aleksandr Tkachyov, Minister of Agriculture of the Russian Federation:

'Within the past 15 years, the global organic market has grown almost fivefold and reached 100 billion dollars. Currently, it constitutes 10% of the total global food market. By the estimations of analysts, by 2022, organic market will have exceeded 200 billion dollars.'



John Deere 1890 demonstrates unfailing performance



The 1890 air seed drill, an efficient seeding tool from the lineup of sowing combinations by John Deere, has proved indispensable on many farms.

Along with reliability and ergonomics of the globally renowned machinery brand, the technical features of the model give it a considerable competitive edge.

'The seeding tool comes in five configurations', says Eduard Ivanov, Head of Sales Department of EkoNiva-Chernozemye. 'It is available in widths from 9.1 m up to 18.3 m. Although the model has been designed first and foremost for high-residue fields, its functionality extends far beyond that.'

The seed drill features the John Deere 90 Series openers with 5 cm of float in the opener system, thus ensuring ground contour following without extra down-pressure.

'The exclusive active hydraulic downforce enables us to set the down pressure to as much as 180 kg', adds Eduard Ivanov. 'And the use of a one-piece seedboot, which is spring-loaded against the disc blade, ensures accurate seed placement.'

The implement is also equipped with clogging sensors which monitor the state of each seed tube, passing the information onto the display, and alert the operator in case of a need of cleanout.

Another advantage of the John Deere 1890 seed drill is its flexibility: the implement folds to a compact size in a matter of seconds for convenient transport from one site to another.

Customers of EkoNiva-Chernozemye have provided first-hand accounts of their experience with the seed drill.

'Last autumn, a demo show of the

machine took place at the premises of our enterprise', says Andrey Zadorozhnyi, Head of the Crop Production project of AGROEKO-Yug (Voronezh oblast). 'We were quite impressed with its performance: both the sowing quality and the emergence exceeded our expectations.'

Currently, mini-till practices are in place on the farm, with the prospect of switching over to no-till. The management is planning to purchase the John Deere 1890 seed drill this year.

'We are using the John Deere 1890 with the working width of 12.3 m', says Aleksandr Pechorkin, Head of the Pechorkin family farm (Kemerovo oblast). 'The implement has been in operation since 2011, and we've had no issues with it as yet. We sow peas, wheat, canola and barley employing no-till the practices. Last year, around 3,400 ha was sown with the use of no-till.'

In CJSC Druzhba (Voronezh oblast), the same model of seed drill with the working width of 9 m has been used with deep soil tillage for four years.

'I know for a fact that the implement is virtually indestructible', says Valentin Babkin, Chief Engineer. 'Over the growing season, we sow around 4,000 ha with it, mainly wheat and barley. We've never had any serious breakdowns, the equipment is very reliable. Routine maintenance is scheduled for this year,

however there is no need to replace any of the hardware, whether coulters, bearings or other parts, as yet.'

A similar sowing unit is in its fifth year of operation at OJSC Voznesenskoye (Novosibirsk oblast).

'With it, we can successfully grow such crops as barley and oats under no-till, in spite of our heavy soil', says Pavel Grevtsov, Chief Agronomist. 'Over the vegetation season, we plant an area of around 2,500 ha. The John Deere 1890 has demonstrated unfailing performance!'

At Letyazhye family farm (Tomsk oblast), the sowing combination has been used since 2014.

'We grow peas, oats, barley, wheat, and canola employing various techniques, from conventional cultivation to no-till, with the John Deere 1890 doing an invariably good job every time', comments Pavel Kulmanakov, an agronomist. 'We sow around 1,700 ha in spring, and about 800 ha with it in autumn. The seed drill is reliable and versatile, it has not failed us a single time over the years of operation.'

There are a lot of factors influencing the harvest, yet it is probably the sowing stage that is crucial. Whatever the farming technique, the John Deere 1890 sowing unit has proved time and time again that it never lets growers down.

By Aleksandr KUTISHCHEV





Always on top!

EkoNiva-Tekhnika has summed up the results of 2017 and shared the trend estimates in farm machinery sales.

The John Deere and JCB machinery continues to enjoy consistently high demand; powerful tractors, combine harvesters and loaders of these brands constitute a major part of farming machinery fleets all over the country, optimising the costs and increasing the performance.

The flagship in the John Deere line-up is the upgraded 8R Series tractor, a powerful machine offering exceptional operator comfort and ease of maintenance. The 360-degree lighting, the AutoTrac system eliminating 90% of overlaps, the PowerShift transmission with 16 forward and 5 reverse speeds, the closed-centre hydraulic system are some of its key features. A wide range of engine power ratings (from 295 hp up to 370 hp) and freedom to add extra features ensure meeting specific requirements of virtually any farms.

The 6155M, 6175M and 6195M tractors come second in the list of most popular models. Featuring the TLS suspension, the 6-cylinder PowerTech E 6.8 I engine with a power ranging from 155 up to 195 hp, a maximum lifting capacity of up to 8.5 tonnes and a comfortable cab with a 310° visibility, the machines are highly versatile and reliable.

The John Deere T670 combine is traditionally among the top-sellers. The model is equipped with the 6-cylinder turbocharged 9 I engine with the

rated power of 431 hp. Thanks to the largest active separation area among the straw-walker counterparts, these machines harvest all kinds of crops, including those with super-high yields. The grain hopper with the capacity of 11,000 l discharges at a record speed — up to 125 l/s. The electronic engine control gives the engine extra 34 hp to ensure smooth unloading into chaser bin on the go.

The 531-70 telehandler remains No.1 in the JCB best-selling chart. A real highlight of the machine is its Smooth Ride System (SRS) which guarantees excellent operator comfort and boom stability during load handling at high speed. The DIESELMAX engine saves fuel even at low rpm due to even power distribution to hydraulic system and transmission. The operator workplace is ergonomically flawless: it has both the 100-percent proportional illuminated servo joystick controls and the adjustable steering column position.

The JCB SSL 225, the smaller version of the telehandler, is also highly sought-after. The lifting capacity of the manoeuvrable mini-loader reaches 1,021 kg, and the DIESELMAX engine complete with optimisation features makes it one of the most efficient and powerful in its class. The model had been designed for hassle-free maintenance and operator comfort.

At the heart of agriculture lies the dialogue

between man and nature which at times challenges the former one. The industry is a high-risk one, so the decisive factor when it comes to machinery purchase is not so much the specification, as the result. Performance of the specified models needs no advertising — it has been proved in action.

'Such services as JD Link and JCB LiveLink give the manufacturers an edge over competitors', says Gennadiy Nepomnyashchiy, Regional Director of EkoNiva-Tekhnika. 'The software enables the farmers to monitor machinery operation remotely, registering and analysing numerous parameters.'

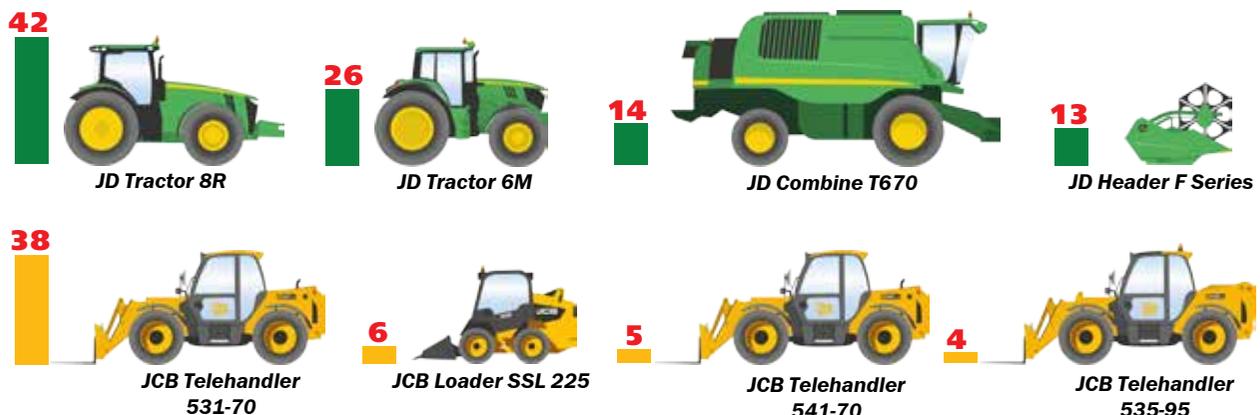
One look at the tablet screen is enough to track a machine down, check its current use and adjust its operation, if necessary. Besides, the services generate fuel consumption reports, log events and alert of potential malfunctions.

'It is noteworthy that JD Link and JCB LiveLink are viewed only as tools for operation optimisation abroad', adds Pyotr Gusev, Head of Smart Farming Department of EkoNiva-Tekhnika, 'whereas in Russia they are additionally perceived as ways of misuse prevention on site.'

No doubt, both the John Deere and the JCB machinery — enhanced with the corresponding software tools — offers farmers total protection against the elements and the human factor.

By Aleksandr KUTISHCHEV

Popular models in 2017 (units sold)





14 Technical inspection

Haybuster bale choppers have been operating on farms all over the world for decades. Russian farmers have also shown an increasing interest in Haybuster lately. The machine combines the functions of a feedmill and a shredder for hay, straw, maize and other crops.

'For the domestic farming sector, this is truly innovative equipment', says Gennadiy Nepomnyashiy, Director of EkoNiva-Tekhnika. 'It has been drawing more attention of progressive farms recently, however, there are still many questions left. So, we hold seminars to let farmers have a closer look at the new options. Several of these processors have recently been purchased by our partners, and now they are putting the machines through their paces.'

As a rule, one Haybuster is enough even for a large farming enterprise for the first time. After completing its work on one farm, the machine is transported to another farm, thus serving the needs of several farms in turns.

'We have been using Haybuster for processing grain, straw, hay, for a year now', says Viktor Ostrokostov, Engineer of EkoNivaAgro — Right Bank Operation, Voronezh oblast. 'Working almost non-stop, five days a week, the machine prepares forages for several dairy farms. Moreover, a John Deere 6220 tractor with a fork working in tandem with the processor has improved the operation rate.'

Pieter Ham, Livestock Department Manager of Krasniy Mayak LLC, Yaroslavl oblast, also notes the advantages of this equipment.

'We use Haybuster for shredding bales twice a week for 3-4 hours', says Pieter.



Haybuster: meets all your needs!

On the initiative of EkoNiva-Tekhnika, a series of seminars aimed at experience exchange in dairy farming were held for the clients in December. The seminars took place at the modern dairy facilities of EkoNivaAgro. Demonstration of Haybuster equipment as the latest innovation in forage processing became one of the highlights of the event.

'Definitely, it is a state-of-the-art, multifunctional machine significantly optimising farm work.'

A Haybuster H800 was purchased by Pakhma farming enterprise, Kostroma oblast, in January, and it immediately got down to work.

'Soon after we had acquired the

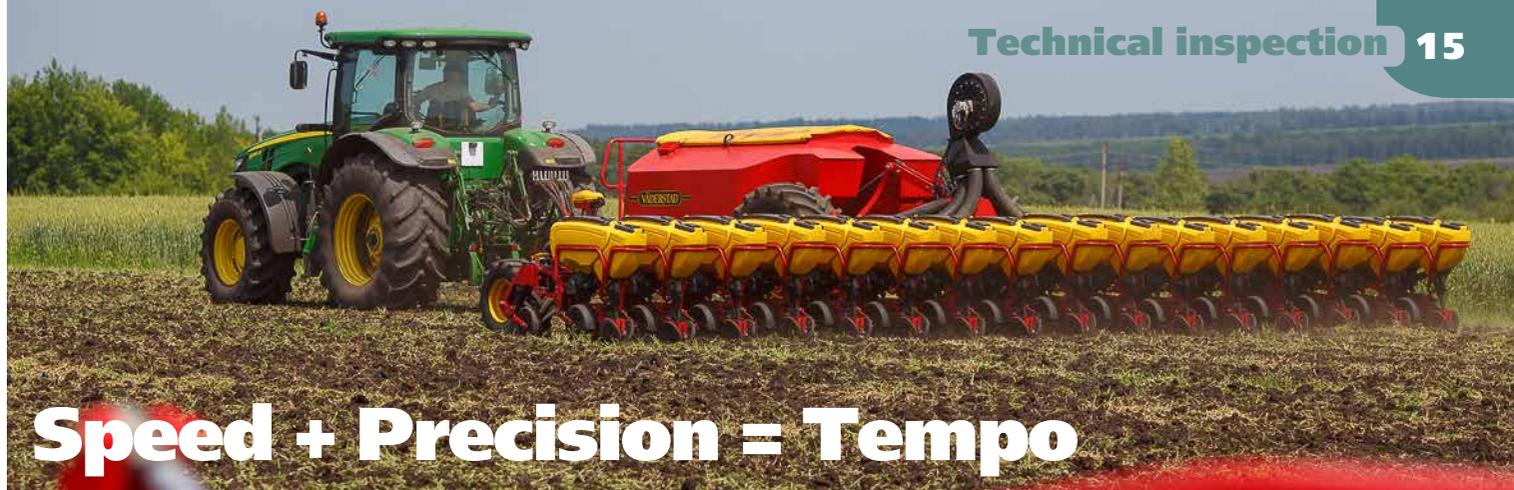
equipment, the specialists of EkoNiva-Tekhnika arrived and trained our two machine operators', says Aleksandr Gromov, Deputy Manager of the farming enterprise. 'Generally, we process dry straw for feeding and bedding. We have installed the largest sieves, and the machine shredding quality is very high indeed, the length of cut is 2-5 cm. We shredded five-six 200-kg bales of straw per hour at the very beginning. Now the output is even higher. It is a new technology for us, so it takes us some time to get the hang of it.'

According to Aleksandr Gromov, the Haybuster H800 in combination with the John Deere 6 Series tractor meets daily needs of two livestock enterprises.

Agriculture is traditionally quite a conservative industry, nevertheless, market demands encourage the most progressive farmers to use advanced practices. No doubt, soon, Haybuster equipment will become an essential part of any successful farming enterprise, as the performance efficiency is becoming increasingly important.

By Aleksandr KUTISHCHEV





Speed + Precision = Tempo

The development of the Vaderstad Tempo seed drill, unveiled globally in 2011, marked a significant milestone for the row-crop seed drilling segment. The Swedish family enterprise has proved the simple truth time and time again: multi-generational family business, with its loyalty to tradition and meticulous selection of solutions, delivers astonishing innovations.

Until the Tempo was developed, farmers had had two options: either sowing precision or speed. For many a year, the combination of the two remained an unattainable dream. The dream came true thanks to Vaderstad. But how could they do it?

One of the key innovations was the patented PowerShoot technology involving electric-drive precision seed meters which maintain full control of the seed all the way down to the soil. The PowerShoot uses the excess pressure in the row unit to shoot the seeds down the seed tube. The press wheel fulfils two important tasks: it stops the seed at the exact intended spot and then presses it into moist soil, thus ensuring optimal seed-to-soil contact and a fast and even germination and preventing the seed from rolling along the seed furrow.

Flexibility of the seed placement system to uneven terrain has been significantly improved, eliminating the need to slow down on sloped areas.

The sowing quality is analysed via the monitor at the bottom of the row unit. The data is transferred to E-Control, which displays precision statistics in the form of graphs.

The weight of the Tempo has been distributed over the row units, making it suitable for both conventional tillage and mini- or no-till. It is a well-known fact that plowless agriculture often leaves the field covered with a large amount of

residue. To achieve good seed-to-soil contact in such conditions, the seed disc can be equipped with a knockout wheel.

Prior to the sowing season, the seed meters can be calibrated for a certain type of seeds — and that not only for the whole seed drill, but for each row unit individually. Besides, a separate electric drive on each row unit makes it possible to shut off separate row units, if necessary.

The seed hopper with the capacity of 70 l enables an 8-row seed drill to plant around 20 hectares of maize before refilling.

‘We first saw the machine in action at Voronezh Field Day in 2014’, says Aleksandr Kugutov, Head of Niva, LLC (Voronezh oblast). ‘It captured our attention with its agility at once. The fact that an 8-row seed drill could do a good job of sowing at up to 16 kmh came as a welcome surprise.’

The enterprise cultivates wheat, barley, sugar beets, sunflower, maize. The performance of the old machinery left much to be desired.

‘The sowing depth wasn’t always perfect, the emergence was far from uniform’, goes on Aleksandr Kugutov. ‘Vaderstad Tempo solved whatever issues we had. Since then, we have been buying a unit each year. Year 2018 will be no exception: the purchase has been planned for March.’

Over the sowing season, each of the

Tempo seed drills plants around 500 ha of sunflower and 300 ha of maize.

Aleksandr Polenov, Head of Polenov farming enterprise (Voronezh oblast), has been using Tempo for just over a year, but he has no doubt as to its high functionality and reliability.

‘Its signature features are precision, uniform seed distribution and sowing depth’, says the farmer. ‘Out of the 1,200 ha of cropland that we have, 450 ha was sown with the Tempo last spring. I must admit we are quite impressed with its performance!’

Judging by all accounts, the Swedish know-how and the Russian black soil make a truly unbeatable combination.

By Aleksandr KUTISHCHEV





Crop of the future

Area under lentil, one of the most ancient agricultural crops, is currently expanding all over Russia. For citizens of many countries it is a major source of protein, capable of replacing many products due to its nutritional properties. Lentils have taken their rightful place at trading platforms advancing to the level of crop of the future, thus driving the Russian farmers to grow them.

Lentils are a warm-season crop, yet during the early stages of growth they do well in cool weather, too. The seeds begin to germinate at the temperature of 3-4 °C. The sprouts tolerate frost as low as -5-6 °C. Not only young, but also adult plants are frost-resistant. The total heat requirement of the major lentils varieties over the vegetation amounts to 1500-1900 °C at the base temperature of +10 °C.

Lentils are more drought-resistant than peas or faba beans. The large-seed forms are less drought-hardy than the small-seeded ones. They require moisture during seed imbibition and germination. The amount of water to be imbibed for seed germination for lentils is 93-119% of the weight of seeds, whereas the same

for pea seeds is 140%.

Lentils produce a rich crop on loamy, sandy black, brown and light podzolic soils. As a pulse crop, they take over 2/3 of the required nitrogen out of the air and only 1/3 from the soil. And still, nitrogen fertiliser in the amount of 20-30 kg/ha of active matter is worth applying on poor sod-podzolic soils and upon straw plowback during pre-sowing tillage. Production of 1 tonne of seeds and the correspondent amount of green mass takes up to 45-60 kg of nitrogen, 14-20 kg of phosphorus, 30-40 kg of potassium, 25-30 kg of calcium, boron, molybdenum and other microelements out of the soil.

Soil herbicides such as 1,6-2.0 l/ha of Dual Gold or 0.8-1.2 l/ha of Frontier Optima may be applied to protect the

lentils stand. However, after-emergence herbicides Imazetapir (Pivot, 0.7-0.8 l/ha) and Metribuzin (Sencor) in the amount of up to 0.6 kg/g are more efficient in actual practice.

The most challenging stage of the entire lentil cultivation technology is harvesting. First of all, lentils mature unevenly, i.e. from the bottom upwards, so harvesting should begin at 18% moisture following which the mass should be gradually brought down to 14% during cleaning and aeration. Secondly, the stem can grow up to 25-75 cm high, it is very branchy, prone to lodging by the harvest time, so low cut of the stand with Flex cutting platforms (see Photo 1) is a mandatory requirement.

For harvesting of lentils — the same goes





for pulses in general — the threshing drum speed needs to be reduced to 500-600 rpm, whereas the fan and sieve settings remain the same as for wheat.

In the recent years, lentils production has significantly increased worldwide to reach 6.4 million tonnes in 2017. The leader in this crop is Canada, which accounts for up to 60% of the world's lentils production. Canadian climate is in many respects similar to the Russian one, so EkoNiva-Semena turned for expertise to their partners from North America when faced with the choice of the best varieties and lentils production practices. Following multi-year lentils trials at Zashchitnoye enterprise, variety CDC Redcliff was chosen. Its originator is the University of Saskatchewan in Canada. CDC Redcliff is an intensive variety for conventional technology (without Clearfield). The testa of the variety is gray, whereas the cotyledons are orange. CDC Redcliff requires an average of 85 days to reach maturity.

The variety is sown at the sowing rate of

2 million seeds/ha, which, considering the thousand kernel weight of seeds of 35–38 g, translates into from 70 up to 80 kg/ha. Due to the tendency to lodge and tricky harvesting, it is better to sow lentils with Rapid seed drills from Vaderstad which ensure perfect soil smoothing.

The yield of variety CDC Redcliff at the Shchigry state testing plot reached 5.1 tonnes/ha in 2016, whereas in production stands it was 3.2 tonnes/ha on an area of 539 ha at Zashchitnoye in 2017. The purchase price was 40 rub/kg in 2016 and 18 rub/kg in 2017.

Lentils have become a much sought-after crop which has proved its profitability. It may be grown on vast territories, on farms with different soil and climatic conditions. And the high-tech approach offered to its customers by EkoNiva is key here. Specialists of the company provide individual consulting covering virtually all aspects of production of the popular agricultural crop.

*By Willi DREWS,
PhD in Agronomy, Consultant of EkoNiva.*



New feeding standards

WinMix is the software enabling farmers to balance feeding rations based on 130 parameters, which is supplied in numerous local versions combined together on a server. The software allows a feeding specialist to put together a ration and upload it onto the server for further online approval by the chief nutritionist of the operation and the chief nutritionist of the holding.

As compared to its counterparts, WinMix provides not only ration calculation, but also easy data exchange. For example, specialists from Siberia can gain insight into the rations of their colleagues in Voronezh and maybe take some know-how on board. Any specialist with access to the software can leave comments, point out mistakes or consult with their colleagues when in doubt. Such flexibility opens up

possibilities for experience exchange.

Next comes the EkoFeed software. It is an in-house development for managing ration batching and feedstuff distribution as well as automation of ingredient inventory. It accomplishes such tasks as on-site monitoring of machinery operators, analysis of compliance with the feeding parameters set in WinMix, generation of analytical data on feed consumption and forage conversion, connection with the inventory and accounting software and automatic deduction of distributed feedstuffs.

'Allowable tolerance is within 3%', says Victor Kosintsev, Chief Nutritionist of EkoNiva-APK Holding. 'Anything beyond this value, and we get a notice of inappropriate machine operator performance. We see the error and draw the operator's attention to it.'

Since the beginning of the year, the herd management software at EkoNiva dairies has been enhanced with WinMix and EkoFeed, two flagship products.

Full transition to WinMix is expected to take around two months. At the moment, the process of input of the rations currently used in the holding is underway. EkoFeed is due to be installed at all EkoNiva dairies within the coming six months. Next, the two services are going to be synchronised, giving a major boost to interaction among nutritionists of different levels and operations.

'The experience of the companies manufacturing similar software, such as DiGi-Star, shows, that even at dairies with good feedstuff management with TMR-tracker installed, deviations upon batching may amount to from 10 to 20%. Our benchmark is 3%. Just imagine: if annual forage costs are in billions of rubles, then every percent saved becomes a significant amount, which we would much rather invest into further development.'

By Aleksandr KUTISHCHEV



Cows don't lie!

A workshop for Russian livestock specialists from EkoNiva has been held at Bushovka dairy within Kaluzhskaya Niva by David Reid, a famous American veterinarian and dairy consultant.

David Reid indicated milking routine and equipment settings as the key factors influencing milk quality and animal health.

'According to David Reid, modifying milking equipment settings towards increasing residual milk in the udder and minimising teat exposure to vacuum helps to prevent mastitis cases in cows', says Vasiliy Tsygankov, Chief Herd Manager of Kaluzhskaya Niva. 'The milking threshold used to be set at 5 seconds, but David recommended changing it to 1 second. Another tip: the minimum amount of residual milk in the udder should be 250 ml.'

Having gained insight into the organisation

of the work processes at the dairy, David Reid drew the audience's attention to the intricacies of milking. For example, he suggested shortening the milk hoses running from the claw to the milk pipe. He encouraged the employees to make small changes that will reap big results.

'The excessively long milk hoses often twisted causing poor cluster alignment on the udder thus increasing mastitis risk', shared Vasiliy Tsygankov. 'We took his advice and shortened the hoses.'

The veterinarian took time to ensure the milk harvesters were doing a proper job, with a few practical tips to aid with milk flow.

'It is necessary to clean the teat end

after stripping the cows', says David Reid, 'otherwise milk quality may drop dramatically. Once you've created comfortable conditions for the animals all the way from the corral to the milking parlour, an increase in milk production won't be long in coming, because cows don't lie.'

Bushovka dairy is currently home to around 3,000 head of Holstein and Brown Swiss cattle. Daily milk yield amounts to 90 tonnes. Overall, David Reid highly praised the way the dairy was run and promised to return to share more know-how with his colleagues from EkoNiva.

By Darya DENISOVA



Rich crop guaranteed

The customer base of EkoNiva-Semena covers over 50 regions of Russia and the CIS countries. In 2017, the company advanced further south and east. KazAgro (Astana) and YUGAGRO (Krasnodar) trade fairs provided a great opportunity to learn how EkoNiva seeds had fared in new climatic conditions.



Kanat Zhantleuov, Director General of LLC AR (Kazakhstan, North Kazakhstan oblast):

'We purchased C1 seeds of winter wheat variety Skipetr. We sowed into spring wheat residue at a sowing rate of 200 kg/ha. We sowed two Krasnodar varieties at the same time for comparison. We skipped fertiliser application in autumn. Skipetr went into dormancy at tillering stage (main shoot and 3 tillers). The temperature dropped below minus 35 degrees Celsius, and the depth of frost penetration reached 2.5 m. The variety overwintered well. Root system rotting occurred in spring due to a thick layer of snow. After a major stress, the tillers were bigger than the main stem. Intensive regrowth started once we applied fertiliser. Skipetr regrew better than other varieties, with the flag leaf visible. The spring was cool, and there was hardly any rainfall throughout the grain filling stage of development.

As a result, the yield amounted to 1.75 tonnes/ha, at a protein content of 14%, thus exceeding the performance of other varieties. But we regard this as a good result considering that this is the first year. We are going to continue the experiment and sow winter crops drawing on our previous experience. For example, we will sow the seeds into lighter soil which gets warm easier than the black soil next time.'



Vladimir Larionov, Chief Agronomist of Vikhaev R.D. farming enterprise (Kazakhstan, Eastern Kazakhstan oblast):

'We purchased seeds of Licamero and Sonore soft spring wheats and the peas variety Jackpot. We were quite happy with the results. Variety Licamero produced a dense uniform stand and a yield of 3.9 tonnes/ha with 30% of high-quality gluten. Note that we had a drought — only 30 mm of rain over the entire period.

Naturally, we paid a great deal of attention to crop protection and applied the necessary chemical treatment, so we expected a good stand, but the reality even exceeded our expectations. As for Jackpot peas, the variety is well-established in Russia, but we have become pioneers with it in Kazakhstan. The variety has good market properties and doesn't lodge. We reaped a good crop without losses. EkoNiva varieties have quite a good potential in our conditions.'

Vitaliy Perstkov, Director of

Perstkova N.V. family enterprise (Krasnodar area, Kurganinsk district):

'We bought seeds of MV Nador winter wheat. The crop has produced a stable yield of 6.7-6.8 tonnes/ha for a second year in a row. The grain is rated Class 3, with gluten content of 24%, and

protein content of 13%. As compared to its Krasnodar counterparts, MV Nador shows much higher lodging resistance thus facilitating loss-free harvesting.'

Yuriy Fedorenko, Head of Purchasing Department of ZAO Vityaz-M (Rostov oblast, Rodionov-Nesvetayskaya rayon):

'I was looking for offers of Redcliff lentil on the internet. I contacted EkoNiva and I was promptly granted the certificate for the variety and its photo. A visit to EkoNivaAgro farm, from which we collected the seeds, made a favourable impression on our agronomist: young, skilled staff, perfect order everywhere. We witnessed modern approach to work at its best: we were able to book the required volume of seeds, the logistics was beyond reproach, and the friendly attitude of the employees — ready to accommodate our needs even in off-work hours — further enhanced our experience. We were quite pleased with the yield of the Redcliff lentils — 2.6 tonnes/ha.'

Andrey Komarov, Director of Niva-Agro LLC (The Republic of Crimea, Krasnogvardeyskoye district):

'Initially, we sowed C1 seeds of MV Nador variety. The crop reached 5.2 tonnes/ha of 3-4 Class wheat — nearly food quality — with protein content of 11.5% and test weight of over 790 g/l. The previous crop was peas, without virtually any fertiliser. As soon as the leaf tips turned yellow after spring frost, we treated the stand with a fungicide. In the end, MV Nador outperformed the neighbouring Krasnodar variety. We are also going to grow variety MV 37-14, alongside Madras and Rocket peas.'

By Tatiana SIMONENKOVA



Anastasiya Barmina: Agriculture is an entire world with its own philosophy

The internship is over, and it is with sadness that the young specialists are leaving EkoNiva farms since work in agriculture has proved interesting, even though complicated.

EkoNiva puts emphasis on working with students, regularly inviting them to their enterprises to take internship and upgrade their skills. Students-trainees gain ample experience and top-level proficiency, which is essential for their future career.

‘A young specialist only becomes a professional when theoretical knowledge is supported by field experience’, points out Stefan Duerr, Director of EkoNiva Group. ‘Theory without practice is nothing, that is why we put in a great deal of effort into the preparation of young workforce for our company.’

Last year alone, 550 students from all over Russia took the summer training course with EkoNiva. EkoNivaAgro, the largest enterprise, became a home and a workplace to 35 emerging agricultural specialists from the Russian Student Agricultural Troop MOST for a few months.

Anastasiya Barmina, a student of Kirov State Agricultural Academy, is one of those lucky enough to have spent the summer as a member of the Agricultural Troop MOST. She shares her impressions with us, tells us about herself and provides insight into her future profession of veterinarian.

‘It was a memorable summer’, says

Anastasiya Barmina. ‘The first work term left a lasting impression on me. I worked at Vysokoye dairy and I particularly enjoyed the way young trainees were treated by the staff. We were all members of one big team, where an atmosphere of friendship and mutual understanding prevailed, and one could always count on the mentors’ help and support in a difficult situation. For example, sometimes animals may have unforeseen complications resulting from administration of certain medicines. Exactly such case happened in my practice, luckily the issue got solved

thanks to the prompt assistance of the veterinary personnel to the animal.

Over the internship, I gained experience in all areas: reproduction, calf barn, hoof trimming and hospital pen. The mentors taught us to analyse work processes, give injections, breed animals, prescribe treatment to sick cows, trim hoofs and much more.

The veterinarian needs to create favourable conditions for the animal, like a psychologist. A true vet is an intelligent, responsible person, constantly seeking to improve their practical and theoretical know-how, possessing optimism and a good sense of humour since these qualities make the work easier. Our profession requires multiple skills: from covering a silage trench to performing complicated surgery operations.

‘A doctor treats the people, while a veterinarian treats the mankind.’ This powerful quote is what drives us. We act locally but through our joint effort we achieve the result that affects the whole world. I don’t regret having dedicated my life to agriculture — it is an entire world in itself, with its own philosophy, science, and common sense wisdom.’

By Victor BARGOTIN





Vladimir Frolov: My destiny is in my village



Vladimir Frolov, a peasant by birth, a laureate of the Book of Honour of Liski district, an awardee of the ‘Gratitude on behalf of Voronezh Land’ Badge of Honour, whose work has been widely recognised, including by the Ministry of Agriculture of Russia, is one of the most respected employees of EkoNiva.



in the fact that all the specialists of the farm are local people and bitterly recounts the late 90s when for months on end salaries were not paid on dilapidated collective farms.

‘In an effort to save the collective farm from demise, and the people — from unemployment and poverty, Aleksandr Rybenko and I went in search of prosperous and responsible investors as far as to Moscow more than once’, continues

Mr Frolov. ‘But, unfortunately, only “benefactors” with absolutely nothing to their name other than a suitcase full of stamps, seeking to grab the land and sell it on, came our way.’

It is a known fact that not all workers of the collective farm received the establishment of EkoNivaAgro in Shchuchye favourably, besides the company whose main line of business at the time was crop production did not intend to take up livestock farming.

‘But when in a dry year it was only through dairies that we survived, whatever doubt we had had as to the value of cattle farming was dispelled’, he recounts. ‘And if before people were purely money-driven, now they are developing a strong work ethic. Respectable salaries have changed people’s attitude towards labour. There are 1,500 head of cattle at my farm, 625 of which are dairy cows. With an average daily milk production of over 1,500 tonnes of milk, we harvest up to 8,500

kg of milk per cow per year. And these impressive figures are easy to explain: improvements in labour management, young stock management and forage procurement practices. Modern milking parlours allow milkers to handle 70 head per milking, instead of the 17-20 they used to milk on collective farms in former times. There is virtually no manual labour on the dairy: everything is automated. And if in the first years of work we adopted new technologies from others both abroad and in other regions of Russia, today people come to learn from us. Many of our foreign visitors cannot but wonder at EkoNiva dairies as they come to Russia with the preconception that this country’s economy is in shambles.

‘I’m glad that we have opened our own school of livestock farming which attracts young people’, concludes Vladimir Frolov. ‘And it is with great pleasure that I pass the know-how on to the young specialists who come here after graduation from institutes in Volgograd, Rostov, and Voronezh. They are drawn by good salaries and career prospects. A lot of the young people, in the capacity of managers of dairies already, point out that the school has enabled them to acquire foundational skills and prepared them for independent work.’

Mr Frolov’s family pride is his two successful children and four grandchildren. Following in the footsteps of his father, the son graduated from an agricultural institute and Moscow Law School, whereas the daughter, who has a medical diploma, now works at the company’s laboratory.

Livestock farming has been an inseparable part of my whole life, with my native village Schuchye becoming my destiny’, says Vladimir Frolov. ‘Out of the entire cohort, only 3 of us boys opted to stay in the village, everybody else streamed into the city. I was not tempted by urban life, so instead, I entered Bobrov Technical Vocational School to become a machine operator and graduated with honours. Then, just like any other young man at the time, I went to the army and upon completion of service entered Ostrogozhsk Agricultural College. I combined studying at Voronezh State Agricultural University and working first in the capacity of a herd manager, then a chief herd manager, and finally a deputy director for livestock production at a commercial dairy farm, a part of my native collective farm Tikhiv Don.

Today, Vladimir Frolov is a manager of a commercial dairy farm belonging to EkoNivaAgro and a consultant in livestock production. He takes great pride

By Victor BARGOTIN

based on material from Liski magazine



Let's go skiing!

The first EkoNivaAgro ski race was held at a ski base in Liski on 4th February. Above-zero temperature, gusty winds and rain did not dampen the competition atmosphere. On the contrary, had the weather conditions been perfect with the temperature slightly below zero and a smooth ski track, the ski race would not have been as compelling and intense.

The contestants were the employees of all subdivisions of EkoNivaAgro. The girls opened the competition by a short-distance race. Soon after the start, the race leaders showed up on the horizon. Alyona Romanova was the first to cross the finish line, Anna Artyumakova was the runner-up, and Liliya Denisova came in third.

'The mood is excellent, though the weather has fallen short of expectations. It has not affected the sports festival, fortunately', shared her emotions Alyona Romanova, the women's race winner. 'It is terrific that the company management cares for healthy lifestyle and holds sports events like this. They have a powerful team-building effect and are important for our unity, because we are a big team both in work and in sports.'

Alyona Romanova, Deputy Chief Herd Manager for Young Stock of EkoNivaAgro — Left Bank Operation, apart from skiing, also plays volleyball and table tennis and is a regular participant of EkoNivaAgro sports events.

Men and boys competed for two sets of medals in long-distance races. Participants from EkoNivaAgro-Vostochnoye Operation

had thoroughly prepared for the contest: they had identical sports jackets and ski equipment. Moreover, they had trained a few days before the competition, which, as well as his good shape, helped Ruslan Biksaliev, Dairy Manager in Verkhniy Ikorets, to win the men's race.

'It is always a pleasure to participate in such competitions', says Ruslan Biksaliev. 'Due to weather conditions, the ski track is worse than yesterday, when we had a training session; however, it is possible to ski on it. The toughest competition was at the start,

afterwards I managed to break away from other contestants and get to the finish line first. I would like to thank EkoNivaAgro for the excellent organisation of the ski race, positive emotions and the opportunity to socialise with my colleagues outside work.'

Aleksandr Timchenko came in second and Sergey Ovcharenko was third in the men's senior race. In the men's junior race, there also was a serious battle. Having shown the best result, Daniil Savchuk came in first, Artyom Stupakov was second and Andrey Veselyev was third.'

Not only adults, but also children were able to take part in the ski race. A Kids' race was organised for the little athletes. Konstantin Kepf was first, Yelizaveta Pluzhnikova came in second and Dmitry Deyev finished third.

'It is the first time we have held a ski competition', says Aleksey Afanasyev, Chairman of Trade Union Committee of EkoNivaAgro. 'Sports life of the company should develop in all directions; therefore, we have moved on to a whole next level and now provide the employees with the opportunity to participate in sports events. I would like to thank Aleksandr Rybenko, Director of EkoNivaAgro, for supporting the corporate sports and including cross-country skiing in our sports agenda. Winter provides as many opportunities to compete outdoors as summer. So, after today, we are starting to prepare for winter fishing contest, which will be held on 17th February.'

By Victor BARGOTIN





Keeping Siberian calves warm



Alina Kosogova, a 15-year-old school-girl, has designed warm jackets to save Siberian calves from frosts.

Then students of dedicated agricultural class of Maslyanino school № 1 (Novosibirsk oblast) provide substantial assistance to Sibirskaya Niva! The girls make jackets for newborn calves so that they could feel warm during severe Siberian winters.

The students are doing their best to protect the animals from cold. Students of 8th – 10th forms meet after school and set to work every day. It takes them 2 hours to make one jacket. Within one month the girls make 50 units and receive payment for their work.

The upper layer of the jacket is made of diagonal cloth. Dense, elastic and wear-resistant, it ensures that the jackets do not lose their shape. The middle layer made of polyester batting helps to keep warm. The bottom layer is made of quilted cloth making the jacket comfortable for the calves to wear.

Elena Khandoshko, Dairy Manager of Sibirskaya Niva, observes,

'Calf jackets are very important especially in Siberia. They keep the animals warm and protect them hypothermia channeling their energy to growth and development. Calves wear jackets from the time they

are born until they are one month of age. At 5 °C degrees below zero, jackets help calves to feel comfortable.

'Students of the agricultural class have provided invaluable help to us. They have improved the existing jacket design making it better suited for re-use without

mending. The worn-out lining can be easily changed without impairing the warming capacity of the jacket.'

Alina Kosogova, a 9th form student, is the founder and creative leader of the Jackets for Calves project. She receives an allowance from Sibirskaya Niva, the social partner of the school, for successful implementation of the calf jacket project.

'I am fond of making clothes for people, so I have decided to try my hand at something different. When we were visiting EkoNiva's dairy, we toured the young stock facility. I was pleased to see that the calves were kept in very comfortable conditions, on dry straw, undisturbed by draughts. However, the temperature in winter can go down as low as 40 °C below zero! So, I decided to protect the calves from severe weather conditions', shares Alina. 'I would like to thank the supervisors of our project: Alexandra Lyakhova and Tatiana Kapishnikova. But for them, my ideas would have remained on paper. In the future, we are planning to improve our product by experimenting with accessories and materials to create the world's best calf jackets! Moreover, after providing all the calves with proper winter wear, we consider making clothes for all the animals in EkoNiva. I am sure that the cows will feel our love and care and continue producing delicious milk for the Academy of Dairy Sciences!'

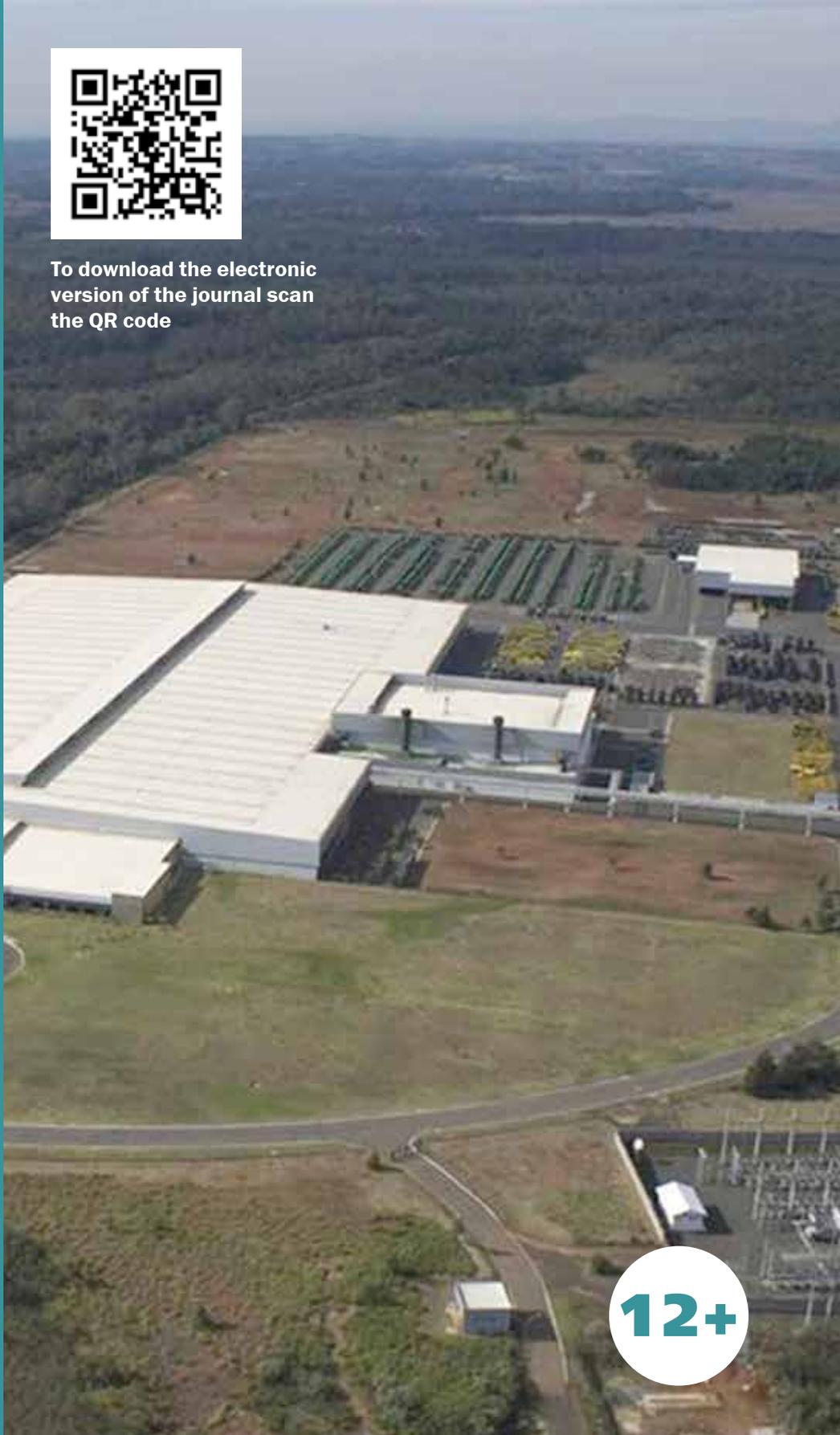
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12+

21 February

Seminar on forage harvester operation and adjustment for engineers and machine operators

Venue: Iskra farming enterprise, Leninskaya Iskra village, Kotelniky district, Kirov oblast

Organiser: Kirov branch of EkoNiva-Tekhnika

27 February

A discussion session for managers of farming enterprises 'EkoNiva-Tekhnika working strategy for 2018 and following years'

Venue: EkoNiva-Tekhnika service centre, Kirov branch

Organiser: Kirov branch of EkoNiva-Tekhnika

14 March

Seminar on John Deere forage harvesters for farm managers and farm specialists

Venue: EkoNiva-Tekhnika service centre, Kirov branch

Organiser: Kirov branch of EkoNiva-Tekhnika

March

Tour of John Deere facility in Domodedovo

Venue: South Gates Industrial Park, storage facility 104, Domodedovo, Moscow oblast

Organiser: EkoNiva and John Deere

12-16 March

Trip to JCB factory

Venue: Rocester, Great Britain

Organiser: JCB, EkoNivaTekhnika-Holding

17-25 March

Trip to John Deere factory

Venue: Catalao, Montenegro, Brazil

Organiser: John Deere, EkoNiva

6 April

Agrovyatka 2018 annual trade show

Venue: trading grounds, 51, Prudnaya street, Kirov

Organiser: Kirov Chamber of Commerce and Industry, government of Kirov oblast

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17-25 March

EkoNiva is inviting you to take part in the trip to John Deere factory in Brazil. Join our team!

EKONIVA
ЭКОНИВА

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