

Russia and Germany: we are closer than it seems

The political relationship between Russia and Germany remains strained. However, the current tension cannot break the long-established ties and weaken the mutual interest in the areas of economy, culture and human relationship. As if to prove this point, two delegations from Germany visited EkoNiva within the past month, and Russian farmers attended the German Field Days and visited BvL production facilities. Besides, the German-Russian Chamber of Commerce arranged a presentation of German companies operating in Russia at the very heart of Moscow. By the way, the number of these companies is impressive — 5,000! For more detail see pages 7, 8, 10, 12, 13.



A perfect duet

John Deere and Vaderstad demonstrated their best talents in cooperation.

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EkoNiva-Student: reloaded

Four winners of the projects are getting ready for an internship at EkoNiva.

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Expert opinion: a Russian entrepreneur with German roots

Excerpt from the speech of Stefan Duerr, President of EkoNiva Group, at the Federation Council on 20th June, 2018



On agricultural policy

It was challenging to work in the 90s... In the 2000s, the Russian government started implementing efficient agricultural policy aimed at innovative development and economic growth. Since then, we have achieved food security in many areas and established efficient enterprises, a lot of which demonstrate a considerable export potential. Currently, the President's task for export expansion is absolutely achievable!

On rural areas

In the north of Norway, rural areas are prosperous and successful because farming is one of the key priorities in the country, while in the north of Sweden — just across the border — there are no villages, only boundless tundra, because there is virtually no agriculture.

We have managed to preserve villages in a lot of regions of Russia. Some people say, 'What is the use of developing agriculture in Kostroma or Arkhangelsk oblasts?' I am convinced that every region must engage in farming because it is the only way to preserve Russian villages. Even though it is expensive and not always efficient, it is very important for the country and its rural areas.

On laws

Russia needs a new Law on pedigree cattle breeding since we cannot keep pace with our colleagues from abroad unless we have a modern efficient law. Agricultural producers are also impatient for the new Law on organic farming to come in force.

Besides, it is extremely important to introduce Amendments to the Law on land regarding vacant land. Very often, a piece of private land, which is not put to any use, overgrows with trees. When at last the land gets into the hands of a conscientious farmer who wants to work on it, the government has to provide subsidies to clear the land and make it suitable for agriculture again. This leads to the thought: why let those trees grow, in the first place? Moreover, some negligent land owners formally resell the land three years after the purchase to avoid confiscation. We need to eliminate this deficiency in the law. Agricultural land must belong to those who want to work on it.

On balanced approach

We will probably not be able to work efficiently without imported machinery, at least for some years to come. I fully understand that we need to take counter measures in response to the sanctions. However, we can do harm to our agriculture by introducing strict limitations on the import of machinery and technologies. Therefore, it is important to assess the possible effect on our farmers when making decision on the import of farming machines and technological systems.

On young specialists

If we want young people to work in agriculture, we must provide them with the same working conditions as in the city. A young specialist working at a farming operation must have the same number of days off, an annual leave and the same living conditions as in the city.

There is a myth that nobody wants to work in agriculture. It is not true! Within the past 4-5 years, the image of agriculture has changed for the better. We can see a lot of young enthusiasts who are willing to study agriculture and work at farming enterprises.

On education

Sometimes, representatives of agricultural universities tell me that they are going to visit our enterprise to learn about new farming technologies. It is strange to hear that: as a rule, universities are ahead of farmers in the areas of science and technologies. Unfortunately, a lot of universities cannot be ahead because they do not have the necessary support from the government. We have arranged agricultural classes in some regions so that children could learn about agriculture from an early age. It is essential to support colleges and institutions of higher education. If we want to be a country with advanced agriculture, then Moscow Agricultural Academy named after K. A. Timiryazev must be as good as Moscow State Technical University n. a. N. E. Bauman, and Voronezh State Agricultural University — as good as Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology. It is the only possible way forward.



On fair competition

Within the past few years, we have built a large number of dairies; we receive subsidies and soft loans. However, all these efforts might prove to be in vain if we do not solve the problem of adulteration of dairy products. We can compete with the USA, New Zealand, even Belarus if we are talking about true dairy products. However, there is no competing with palm oil. If this situation is not solved in the nearest future, EkoNiva will cope with it, but many farming operations won't. It means that next year, the number of dairy cows in the country will significantly decrease. In order to avoid this, we hope for the strictest measures against adulteration.



Organic products of the future

The National Organic Union (NOU) has celebrated the 5th anniversary of signing of the memorandum on its establishment. Since then, it has become the leader of the organic movement in Russia, having united like-minded people in a successful team. So, what has been done over the 5 years and what is the future of organic production?

A strong alliance

A few years ago, the customers had no idea as to what organic products were. However, the situation has recently changed and now members of the public have a greater awareness of good nutrition. Moreover, the customers have shown eager enthusiasm for healthy food.

‘Our most significant achievement is that we have sparked the interest of people in organic production’, shares Sergey Bachin, Chairman of the Board of Directors of AGRANTA Group. ‘Before, the public lacked the comprehension of the term ‘organic’. Conversely, nowadays the consumers have caught up with the notions of organic goods, which are produced without

any food additives, chemical fertilisers, antibiotics and growth hormones.’

Among the major areas of focus of the NOU are the development of the organic agricultural market, and the promotion of organic products in Russia, support for producers and the establishment of a legislative framework governing organic farming and consumption.

‘Over the years of work, three State Standards have been adopted, and the first draft of the Russian law on organic production has been prepared’, says Oleg Mironenko, Executive Director of the NOU. ‘We took an active part in the establishment of this law. Currently, the draft is under review in the State Duma. It is expected to be adopted by the end of year 2018.’

The NOU includes the leading players in the industry and the pioneers of organic production in Russia. Among them Stefan Duerr, President of EkoNiva Group, and Savinskaya Niva, organic farming enterprise.

‘We joined the NOU a year ago’, says Stefan Duerr, President of EkoNiva Group. ‘At first, I was sceptical about it, as everyone was trying to prove their point without making any real sense. Despite all the obstacles and difficulties, the NOU managed to unite us in a strong team.’

Although every member still has their own opinion, now we are trying to achieve a common goal — promotion and protection of high-quality organic products.’

(Continued on p. 11)

A constructive dialogue

Within the framework of the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, Stefan Duerr, President of EkoNiva Group, signed cooperation agreements with the governments of Voronezh and Moscow oblasts.

On behalf of Voronezh Oblast Duma, the agreement was signed by Yuriy Yurchenko, Deputy Governor, Anatoliy Bukreev, Head of Department for Economic Development, and the representatives of Rosselkhozbank — Boris Listov, First Deputy Chairman of the Board and Aleksandr Pereslegin, Director of the Department of Financial Institutions.

Pursuant to the terms of the agreement, EkoNiva will build 2 dairies for 2,800 head each in Voronezh oblast. The expansion of the dairy cluster will be supported by Rosselkhozbank, which intends to grant loans in the amount of approximately 5 billion roubles to EkoNiva. It must be mentioned that EkoNiva has launched 8 dairies and is currently building another 4 in cooperation with Rosselkhozbank.

Moscow oblast will become a new area of operation for EkoNiva. In the next two years, the company is planning to build two dairies for 2,800 head each. The agreement was also signed within the framework of the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum.

Andrey Vorobyov, Governor of Moscow oblast and Andrey Razin, Minister of Agriculture and Food of Moscow oblast, promised to provide a comprehensive support to the development of dairy farming in the region.

The dairies will be built in Stupino district. The expected investment volume is 5 billion roubles.

Over 240 specialists will be employed at high-tech dairies.

Besides, EkoNiva is planning to construct a cheese factory and an

integrated distribution centre in Moscow oblast. The capacity of the factory, producing semi-hard cheeses, dry whey and butter, is 500 tonnes of milk per day. EkoNiva will employ 250 residents of Moscow oblast.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO



Rustem Khamitov, Head of the Republic of Bashkortostan, and Stefan Duerr, President of EkoNiva Group, have discussed the prospects of cooperation in dairy farming.



Broadening the horizons

The meeting was attended by Ilshat Faizrahmanov, Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Bashkortostan, Petr Dubyanskiy, Executive Director of Severnaya Niva, and Heads of Bizhbulyak, Belebey and Ermekeevo districts.

'Bashkortostan and Tatarstan are among top milk producers in the Russian Federation', says Rustem Khamitov, Head of the Republic of Bashkortostan. 'We have the largest cattle stock in the Russian Federation. We produce meat and grow grain and vegetables both in the fields and greenhouses. The total production value amounts to 160-170 billion rubles. Currently, we are modernising the agricultural sector. Our region needs large agricultural enterprises and we will be happy to cooperate with EkoNiva.'

Stefan Duerr, President of EkoNiva Group, responded to this proposal with interest and enthusiasm.

'I think our development in the region will be rapid', shares Stefan Duerr, President of EkoNiva Group. 'It is a pleasure to work in the region, in which we are welcomed with such warmth and open-heartedness.'

Stefan Duerr mentioned that currently EkoNiva produces about 1,400 tonnes of milk per day, which translates into about 500 thousand tonnes of milk per year. By 2021, the company is planning to increase its production up to 1.5 million tonnes of milk per year.

'It is possible to build two or three dairies in Bashkortostan', sums up Stefan Duerr. 'The market conditions in the region are quite favourable, we see an opportunity to provide the entire Volga region with dairy products. The milk produced at our dairies will become high-quality raw material for milk processors from Bashkortostan and the neighboring regions.'

The Minister of Agriculture of Bashkortostan as well as the heads

of the districts signed cooperation agreements with EkoNiva.

'Severnaya Niva Bashkiria has already started operating in the Republic of Bashkortostan', says Petr Dubyanskiy, Executive Director of Severnaya Niva (Orenburg oblast). 'We are planning to locate our facilities in Bizhbulyak, Belebey and Ermekeevo districts. The construction of a dairy with the capacity of 2,800 head is to begin in Ermekeevo district in the nearest time. In 2019, the construction works will start in Belebey and Bizhbulyak districts.'

Representatives of EkoNiva also visited Bugulma, a town in the Republic of Tatarstan.

'We have studied the general operational conditions in Bugulma and Bavly districts', continues Petr Dubyanskiy. 'EkoNiva is planning to establish an enterprise, which will most probably be called Severnaya Niva Tatarstan.'

By Darya DENISOVA

Unrivalled winners!

EkoNiva-Tekhnika has won the Dealer of the Year award for the first time in the company's history at the JCB international dealer conference in the United Kingdom.

About 80 European companies were nominated for the Dealer of the Year award. Overfulfilment of the sales plan and active promotion of the entire line of JCB agricultural machinery enabled EkoNiva-Tekhnika to outdo its rivals. 'We did not expect to receive the award', says Gennadiy Nepomnyashchiy, CEO of EkoNiva-Tekhnika.

'However, it is not undeserved: our share of JCB equipment sales in the areas of responsibility has reached approximately 70%, which is definitely good progress; and our team is setting the bar even higher for the future periods.'

JCB holds the Dealer of the Year award once in five years, which makes the

award even more prestigious.

'This is the victory of the whole team', continues Gennadiy Nepomnyashchiy. 'Qualified specialists both in the Sales and Service departments, high

quality and efficiency of JCB machines, manufacturer support and our loyalty to the clients have helped us to build trust and credibility with our customers and achieve such an impressive result.'

By Viktor BARGOTIN





Expanding to the Far East

A branch office of EkoNiva-Semena has opened in one of the most remote regions of this country — Blagoveshchensk, Amur oblast. High-quality seeds from domestic and foreign plant breeding institutions have become more accessible to the local farmers.

‘We regard this region as very promising’, says Evgeniy Kucheryavenko, Deputy Executive Director of EkoNiva-Semena. The issue of diversification of agriculture in the region is a really pressing one. The expansion of cereal crop production in order to improve the crop rotation might be a good solution.

The current lifting of the ban for Russian wheat import by the PRC and active development of foreign economic relations with China and Southeast Asian countries make it even more important. For example, the mammoth Chinese market of wheat alone is estimated at 1 billion dollars.

‘EkoNiva offers a wide product range’, continues Evgeniy Kucheryavenko, ‘including the seeds of soybeans, spring wheat, barley, oats, maize, annual and perennial forage grasses.’

Growing of such promising crop as maize is currently very important to the region since the Hectare in the Far East programme has enhanced the development of livestock farming. In this context, maize with its high

protein and starch content becomes indispensable.

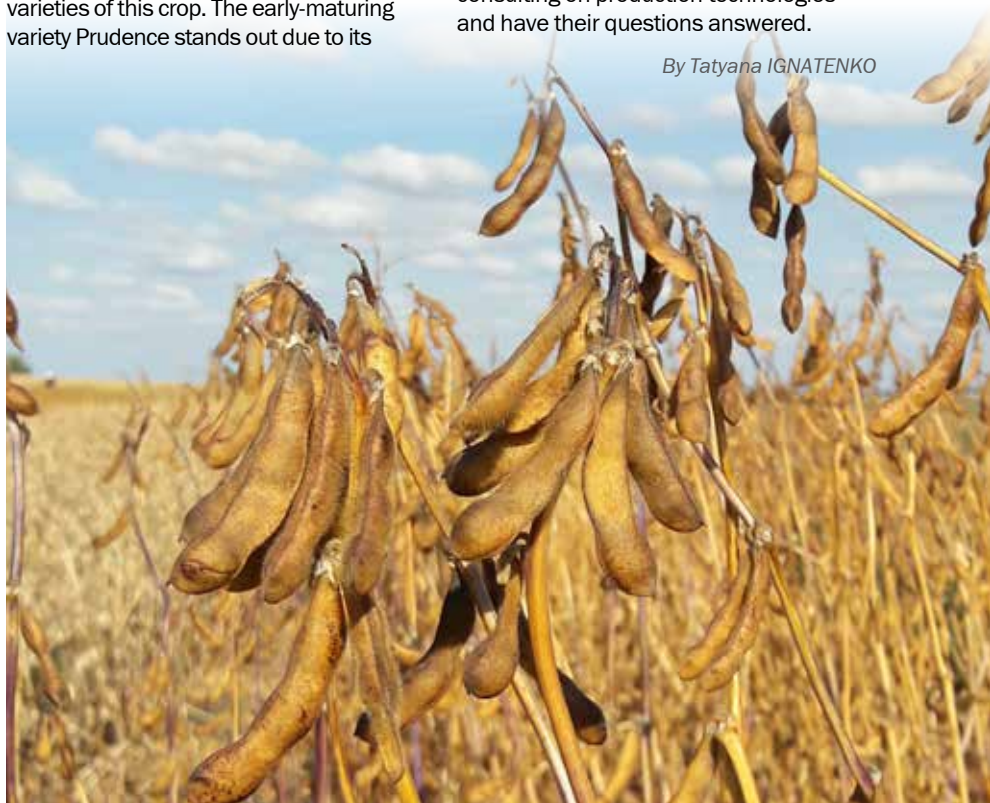
However, soy is still the main crop in the Far East. Currently, EkoNiva offers six varieties of this crop. The early-maturing variety Prudence stands out due to its

rapid moisture release, resistance to diseases and lodging as well as pod shattering.

‘Our region specialises in soybean production’, says Vadim Semykin, Sales Manager of the Far East branch office of EkoNiva-Semena. ‘The farmers have been growing soybeans for a long time, supplying it to the international market, China in particular.’

Prior to being offered to potential customers, the seeds undergo trials at the state variety testing plot and in AgroCentre BASF in Amur oblast. In the coming months, the latter will also become a platform for training seminars and field days enabling farmers to see the wide range of seeds available, receive consulting on production technologies and have their questions answered.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO





This year, the scholarship programme has united graduate students, masters and postgraduates in two fields of study: agronomy and agricultural product processing technology.

'Twelve students in each field of study reached the final stage of the project', says Natalya Zvereva, coordinator of the programme. 'At the screening stage, the contestants took a remote test and afterwards had an interview with EkoNiva specialists: the students told about themselves and shared their plans for the future in agriculture.'

The final test for the students of agronomy who made it to the final was held in the form of oral examination. The students answered tricky questions about modern crop production technologies. The processing technologists dealt with a different final task: they presented their own business projects for the development of a new dairy product.

Based on the results of the final tasks, EkoNiva experts chose 4 worthy winners. Svetlana Gaiday, Voronezh State Agricultural University, and Tatyana Chelobitchikova, Oryol State Agricultural University, were the best among the agricultural product processing technologists. Dmitry Zima and Stepan Pankin, both students of Kuban State Agricultural University, were recognised as the best agronomists.

'EkoNiva-Student programme helped me to acquire a lot of first-hand knowledge



EkoNiva-Student: reloaded!

EkoNiva has once again launched a scholarship programme, which provides the most talented students of Russian agricultural universities with a unique opportunity to do an internship at the leading agricultural enterprises in Europe.

in the field of agronomy and dairy farming', says Dmitry Zima, winner of the programme. 'I look forward to the internship, as it is an excellent opportunity to gain professional experience, get

acquainted with up-to-date technologies in agronomy and plant breeding, communicate with foreign colleagues and learn from their experience.'

By Viktor BARGOTIN

Make yourself at home!

EkoNivaAgro is renowned not only for its delicious fresh dairy products but also for warm hospitality, as visitors from Germany, Japan, China, France, Serbia — almost from all over the world — are always treated as welcome guests at EkoNiva's dairies.

A group of Bavarian farmers visited EkoNiva's facilities in the course of the visit to Voronezh Oblast.

The guests were taken on a tour, during which they visited the processing plant in Shchuchye village, some operating dairies and objects under construction. Besides, the visitors enjoyed the breathtaking view of EkoNiva's fields.

'I was greatly impressed with the competent staff and the high yields', says Joseph Schorer, member of the group. 'Each employee knows their job and performs the tasks with unflinching efficiency. Cleanliness and order at the dairies are the best indications of the conscientiousness of the staff.'

'This is my first visit to Russia and, frankly speaking, I am struck by the scale of the business', shares Franz Bayroff, member of the group. 'German farmers cannot boast of such scales. A standard German farm would have from 30 to 150 head of cattle. However, at

our dairies we use the same equipment, milking machines and software, so we have a lot in common with EkoNiva.'

The tour finished late in the evening, however, the Bavarian guests promised to come back to experience the overwhelming emotions once again.

By Viktor BARGOTIN





Building bridges

The Masters of Russia: Done the German Way. The German-Russian Chamber of Commerce has launched a unique project. Its objective is to demonstrate strong business ties between Russia and Germany and tell about large-scale German companies conducting successful business in our country. EkoNiva was one of the companies on the list.

The world's largest enterprises came together at the very heart of our capital. As a part of the project, the German-Russian Chamber of Commerce arranged a photo exhibition at Old Arbat, the favourite historical site of both Moscow residents and tourists. Large images show Russian operational facilities of Germany's leading enterprises: well-known airlines, major pharmaceutical companies, the largest European automobile manufacturers and the most successful small and medium-sized enterprises. The realistic photographs literally immerse the viewers in the operational activities.

'We are convinced that in the situation of political tension, economy remains a safe bridge between our two nations', says Matthias Schepp, Chairman of the Board of the German-Russian Chamber of Commerce. 'Thirty-six companies have participated in our project. All of them have been conducting successful business activities in Russia. We are very glad that EkoNiva, headed by Stefan Duerr, the legend of the German business in Russia, has become our partner. We present the information on this well-known company with pride and respect.'

According to the CCI, there are approximately 5,000 Germany-based companies operating in Russia. They account for more than 10,000 jobs in the country. In 2017, the trade turnover between Germany and Russia increased

'We are convinced that in the situation of political tension, economy remains a safe bridge between our two nations'

by 22.8% compared with the previous year. Between January and March 2018, the trade turnover between Germany and Russia grew by 22%.

'German business is a localisation champion in Russia', continues Matthias Schepp. 'Over the past year, the amount of direct investment from Germany to Russia totaled over 1.6 billion euro. With the help of the Masters of Russia project, we want to show how much German business contributes

to the Russian economy. The project consists of three parts: a photo exhibition, a modern online portal and a unique gift book titled Masters of Russia: Done the German Way.'

The author of the book refers to Stefan Duerr, the founder of EkoNiva, as the Milk Champion of Russia. Several pages of the book are dedicated to Stefan's success story and the production scale he has managed to achieve.

Quote: 'EkoNiva farms huge areas of land, exceeding in total the territory of German Saarland. Currently, Stefan Duerr has 100,000 head of cattle. Russians do not object to the German origin of one of their largest food producers. Moreover, Stefan is considered a hero in the areas of his company's operation. EkoNiva employs over 7,000 people, builds kindergartens and restores churches. The government also acknowledges his input into the development of agriculture and supports his activities.'

The concept of the book was developed by the famous designer Lois Lammerhuber. The captivating photographs were taken by Hans-Jurgen Burkhard and his Russian fellow photographer Evgeniy Kondakov. The presentation of the project continued at the Red Square, in the historical building of GUM. The event was attended by numerous distinguished guests, including Reinhard Grindel, the President of the German Football Union, who came to Moscow just before the opening of the World Cup to support his German and Russian colleagues.

'A dialogue is better than a boycott', says Reinhard Grindel, President of the German Football Union. 'At tough times, sport and society are the bridges that help to overcome difficulties and unite people.'

By Darya DENISOVA





At the beginning of the new school year, students of School 3, Bobrov district, will be provided with an excellent opportunity to have lessons in the state-of-the-art agricultural classroom, equipped with everything necessary for a full immersion in agriculture. Not all schools in Voronezh oblast can boast of such cutting-edge facilities as direct Internet access, a projector, information boards, comfortable furniture and modern interior design — all the things which distinguish the new classroom from others.

'This is a new page in the history of Voronezh State Agricultural University, which we are writing together with EkoNiva', says Nikolay Bukhtoyarov, Rector of VSAU. 'We have developed an educational curriculum, equipped the classroom with all the tools required. The primary task of the teachers is to convey the information about the opportunities and prospects of modern agriculture to students.'

The agricultural class is characterised by the study of biology, physics and other subjects at advanced level. Once a week, the teachers of VSAU will hold optional classes in veterinary science, agronomy and engineering. Afterwards, the students will apply the knowledge at the enterprises of EkoNiva.

Upon finishing school, all the attendees of the agricultural class will receive additional points, which will increase the chances of enrolling on VSAU.



Early start in agriculture!

The unique project — an agricultural class at School 3, Bobrov district, Voronezh oblast — has been implemented by EkoNivaAgro in cooperation with Voronezh State Agricultural University (VSAU).

'The personnel issue in agriculture remains burning', notes Stefan Duerr. 'For many years, we have been cooperating with agricultural universities across the country, accepting students for internship and teaching them the intricacies and secrets of the profession. Recently, we have started collaborating with schools, as students need to be trained

in agriculture as early as possible — this is the main goal of creating the agricultural class.'

EkoNiva's first agricultural class was organised 4 years ago in Novosibirsk oblast. The company is planning to form three more agricultural classes in Voronezh, Liski and Rossosh districts.

By Viktor BARGOTIN



Business in Russia resembles hockey

Large-scale business players, entrepreneurs and government officials of Voronezh region participated in the Entrepreneurship Forum and the Wilhelm Stoll Award, which took place in Voronezh.

The Wilhelm Stoll Award is a form of merit recognition for entrepreneurs in the economic and social areas of Voronezh oblast.

The programme of the event was varied, including lectures, workshops and plenary sessions. For many participants and visitors, the Mentality of Russian and German Business panel discussion was the highlight of the event. Stefan Duerr, President of EkoNiva Group, told the audience about the history, primary areas of activity and development prospects of the company, and drew a comparison between the domestic and German business.

'In many business matters, Germany is more akin to Russia than to the United

States of America', shares Stefan Duerr. 'But still there are differences. The rules of conducting business in Russia resemble those of hockey, involving a tough power struggle. Conversely, business in Germany is comparable to basketball, where even the slightest contact is a violation.'

Stefan Duerr touched upon the subject of social responsibility, which is strong in Germany and is currently gaining momentum in Russia.

'Our countries are similar in this respect', continues Stefan Duerr. 'I grew up in the country and I was brought up to take care of the neighbours. EkoNiva takes its social responsibility seriously,

improving the conditions of life in the communities of the regions of our presence.'

The matrix organisational structure, which is uncommon for Russia, was another subject of the discussion. The double subordination structure was introduced at all enterprises of EkoNiva seven years ago. For instance, a dairy manager is accountable to both the director of the enterprise, and the chief herd manager.

All in all, the attendees of the panel discussion, which ended with miscellaneous topics, gained a lot of valuable insights.

By Viktor BARGOTIN



From Baden-Wuerttemberg with interest

On May 27th, representatives of the Legislative Assembly of the federal state of Baden-Wuerttemberg headed by Peter Hauk, Minister of Rural Affairs and Consumer Protection of Baden-Wuerttemberg paid a visit to Voronezh oblast. The group of honored guests included Beate Krieg, Head of Union of Rural Women of Baden-Wuerttemberg, Reinhold Pix, elected official of the Green Party faction of the Legislative Assembly of Baden-Wuerttemberg, Werner Raepple, President of the Central Association of Agricultural Enterprises of Baden, Udo Stein, elected official of the Alternative for Germany faction of the Legislative Assembly of Baden-Wuerttemberg, entrepreneurs and representatives of public and governmental organisations of the region.

A tour of EkoNiva's modern dairies and a round-table discussion with the leaders and the representatives of the regional governmental offices were the highlights of the visit.

The guests had an opportunity to see the highest level of dairy production organisation in Voronezh oblast achieved with the support of the local authorities. The delegates visited EkoNiva's dairies in Verkhniy Ikorets and Zaluzhnoye villages and learned about the state-of-the-art technologies allowing the company to keep such a large herd and manage it with maximum efficiency. The guests tasted fresh dairy products from the Academy of Dairy Sciences and visited the unique Museum of Milk — the only one in Russia.

A round-table discussion was held in Shchuchye village, Liski district. On behalf of the regional government, the discussion was joined by Viktor Logvinov,

Acting Deputy Chairman of Voronezh Oblast Government, Nikolay Gaponenko, Chairman of the Committee on Agricultural Policy of Voronezh Oblast Duma, Aleksandr Rybenko, Deputy Chairman of the Committee of Voronezh Oblast Duma for Local Self-Government, Public and Mass Media Relations, Anatoliy Balbekov, Head of Bobrov Municipal District Administration, Igor Kirnos, Deputy Head of Liski District Administration, Head of the Department of Programmes and Development of Rural Areas, Lyudmila Ippolitova, Chairwoman of the Committee on Labour and Social Protection of Voronezh Oblast Duma.

The round table discussion was dedicated to the expansion of further cooperation and experience exchange between Voronezh oblast and the federal state of Baden- Wuerttemberg. Besides, the participants

dwelled upon the prospects for the development of partnership and cooperation at the level of the legislative and executive power in order to implement joint projects in agriculture.

'This is our first visit to Voronezh on behalf of the federal state of Baden-Wuerttemberg', says Peter Hauk, head of the group. 'Although we have already heard about your success in agriculture from our colleagues from other federal states of Germany, we are greatly impressed with the results achieved by Stefan Duerr, and the general development of the agricultural sector in your region.'

According to Peter Hauk, the success of farming enterprises is an indicator of a favorable investment climate in Voronezh oblast and the readiness of the government for dialogue and cooperation in the development of the agricultural sector with the involvement of the best European practices.

Viktor Logvinov, Acting Deputy Chairman of Voronezh Oblast Government, emphasised that Voronezh oblast is the first in Russia in terms of milk production expansion: the annual growth rate varies between 7-10%. This is facilitated by a balanced system of governmental support of farming enterprises. It is planned to increase the annual milk production volume in the region to 1 million tonnes by 2020. Today, EkoNiva is the leading milk producer in Voronezh oblast (33% of the total volume in the regional market).

'It is apparent that the level of bureaucracy in the farming sector of Voronezh oblast is not high', says Werner Raepple, President of the Central Association of Agricultural Enterprises of Baden, 'which is certainly an advantage, since it opens unlimited possibilities for those who possess the will and aptitude.'

Based upon the agreements reached during the meeting, the parties prepared the Memorandum of Cooperation, pursuant to which Voronezh oblast and the federal state Baden-Wuerttemberg committed to encourage cooperation in the agricultural and educational sectors, including student exchange programmes and specialist training.

'Stefan Duerr's experience proves that the words will be followed by actions', sums up Peter Hauk. 'I am convinced that together we will reach considerable results.'

By Aleksandr KUTISHCHEV





(Continued from p. 4)

Law and order

There is a difference of opinion on the draft, which is being reviewed by the State Duma now. According to experienced manufacturers, while the industry is still undergoing a formative period, the law can cause serious harm to organic production in Russia.

'I am not against the law, as it is essential', emphasises Stefan Duerr. 'But it is better to have no law than a bad one. Under the National Organic Union agreement, producers can create their own quality marks, work within the standards of the union and as a result win the trust of consumers.'

Ilya Kaletkin, member of the Union, supports the expert opinion of his colleagues. He also believes that the law enactment should meet the needs of both producers and consumers.

'The process of the law formation was long and complicated', shares Ilya Kaletkin, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Arivera Group. 'The draft, which was introduced and passed the first reading, was rough. The same is happening in the second reading, as the text undergoing approval causes concern. That is why now we are preparing amendments and comments. We hope that the statutory wording will be corrected, as without the good law, we have a slim chance of creating a functioning system.'

Other members of the NOU argue that any law is better than its complete absence.

'Manufacturers definitely need to be supported legally', says Vladimir Sadovin, Director General of Azbuka Vkusa. 'Legalisation of the law for the retail sector will enable us to fight with pseudo-organic production.'

The NOU members expect that the adoption of the law will be followed

by a surge in demand for product certification. However, it would be difficult to control counterfeit goods. Implementation of a rigid system, which would include certification and protection of organic producers from counterfeiters, is essential for Russia.

'I'm not sure that the law will have a positive impact on the growth of this agricultural sector', continues Anatoly Nakaryakov, 'but I'm convinced that it can protect the producers from counterfeit products and the so-called greenwashing.'

Sergey Bachin emphasises the importance of this issue and proposes to use the NOU as a public tool to control the certification centres.

Bio, eco, organic

The term *organic product* was introduced by the Russian State Standard. At the same time, the concepts of *bio*, *eco* and *organic* are not subject to certification

by the law. Experts say that such inscriptions on the packaging of products mislead the customers. In Europe, on the contrary, manufacturers use all three concepts and consider them equivalent.

'As these terms are directly related to organic products, we need to protect them by the law', says Ilya Kaletkin. 'Regulation of these terms by one law would be the best decision in this case, but it will not be an easy thing to do.'

Market driver

What can drive the development of the organic market? Again, opinions on this matter vary.

'The domestic market can be a good driver of the development of organic production', says Stefan Duerr, 'it is risky to rely on the export market. There is a significant share of customers preferring organic products within the country. I am convinced that the Russian economy will develop and the purchasing power will grow.'

Vladimir Sadovin disagrees and suggests several ways of further development.

'It is wrong to think that the domestic market will be ready to buy organic products at any price. In my opinion, to reduce the production and processing costs, we should use both ways of expanding: the domestic and the export market.'

This heated discussion proves that in spite of the fact that organic production is a painstaking and immensely complicated activity, such products will definitely have a great future in Russia. The participants of the meeting assure that if they had returned to the past, they would have definitely started this business again.

By Darya DENISOVA





The future lies with smart farming!

DLG Feldtage, a traditional large-scale event for the European farming community, has taken place in Bernburg-Strenzfeld, Germany. A group of EkoNiva-Tekhnika clients visited the trade show and the John Deere factory in Mannheim, where they saw the full manufacturing cycle of the unique agricultural machines with their own eyes.

The undeniable truth 'Seeing is believing' has found confirmation in the hearts of the visitors. The incredible scale, signature estheticism and simply amazing holiday atmosphere reigned at the exhibition grounds during the days. Almost 350 unions, institutes and exhibitors from 14 countries met in one place in order to share their best practices with their counterparts. This year's DLG Feldtage has gathered a record number of exhibitors in the history. Demonstration plots were in the centre of the area. Plant breeders showed proven and new crop varieties on a 20-hectare trial field. Live agricultural machinery and equipment demonstrations provided the attendees with a unique source of information and a powerful visual experience.

Innovative precision farming and digitalisation solutions became an apparent trend. The main task of modern agricultural sector is giving the products a competitive edge. In his welcome speech, addressed to the group of clients of EkoNivaTekhnika-Holding, Stefan Duerr, President of EkoNiva Group, highlighted the importance of introducing precision farming in the Russian fields.

'DLG Feldtage unfailingly provide an opportunity to see and take a lot of outside-the-box ideas on board', pointed out Stefan Duerr. 'Our top priority at the moment is introduction of precision farming technologies in our fields, they are definitely the future.'

Only a comprehensive high-technology farming management system, which employs up-to-date solutions, can secure

flexibility of agricultural production, providing customers with excellent products and farmers — with high profits.

'European farming is currently developing in the direction of precision farming', says Willi Drews, PhD of Agronomy, advisor of EkoNiva. 'We don't want to fall behind the leading global trends and do our best to keep up with the times. For instance, a precision farming project is currently being successfully implemented at the Left-Bank Operation of EkoNivaAgro.'

One of the leaders in the production of precision farming solutions is John Deere. 'One of the highlights of the trade fair was crop protection spraying', continues Willi Drews. 'At the John Deere display, we have seen an inter-row cultivator working with an RTK station in action for the first time. All operations are carried out with the accuracy of ± 1 cm.'

During the tour of the John Deere factory in Mannheim, the group of Russian clients was shown a full machinery assembly cycle and a presentation on precision farming.

'Each tractor and machine rolling off the John Deere production line is unique', says Aleksandr Gromov, Director of Kaluga branch of EkoNiva-Tekhnika. 'There is no such thing as a standard machine here, for this reason, it is impossible to use robotic technology in the assembly process. According to the guide at the factory, no mechanism can do better than a man.'

The visitors were impressed with the scale of production and the German precise approach. Maksim Lobanov, Manager of Zhupikov Agrofirma (Tambov oblast) looked

at all the technical novelties displayed at the trade fair with keen interest.

'We have discovered and studied more closely a lot of smart solutions', says Maksim Lobanov. 'They are aimed at optimising our work.'

Smart farming is currently a focus point. Stanislav Goryanskiy, Director General of Detchinskoye Agrofirma (Kaluga oblast) is aware of that. His employees always have their finger on the pulse of agricultural developments. According to him, this is achieved largely through the attendance of trade fairs, such as the DLG Feldtage, as they broaden one's technical horizon.

'We got into the genuine John Deere spirit during the factory tour', shares Stanislav Goryanskiy. 'Besides, I have gained insight into the application range of the 6 Series machines so much so that now I am considering their purchase.'

For Sergey Logvinov, Director General of Niva, LLC, Tula oblast, a long standing client of EkoNiva-Tekhnika, it is his first trip to DLG Feldtage.

'For me, maintenance and repairability of machinery always come first', points out the farmer. 'A lot depends on the quality of machinery components. Sufficient service life is also crucial!'

A pleasant bonus for the clients was the extensive entertainment programme. According to the delegates, a foreign country and a different culture are always fascinating. Everyone enjoyed the time spent among like-minded people and the opportunities for networking.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO



Five-star quality

Quality and customer focus are the front and centre at BvL. The specialists of EkoNiva-TekhNika had an opportunity to see the corporate values of the company in action in the course of the training session hosted by Bernard van Lengerich in Emsbueren, Germany.

The BvL feed mixer wagon is an indispensable farmhand at any enterprise. The global leader has developed its own unique software for the specialised machinery production line with the assembly of mixer wagons for particular tasks.

'The manufacturer has a lot of patented developments, which make the machines the best in their class', says Aleksandr Zuyev, Head of Sales Department of EkoNivaSibir.

The patented EDS system ensures precise dosing. The fodder can be discharged consistently and swiftly on either side while maintaining uninterrupted flow due to the asymmetrical positioning of discharge openings. The machine is capable of processing from 13 to 16 rations per day.

'The major part of the assembly is carried out by hand', says Kirill Tagantsev, Sales Manager of EkoNiva-Tekhnika, 'which, even in the age of technology, is a considerable benefit, since no machine can ensure an individual approach and meet all requirements of the customer.'

The distinctive feature of BvL is that no two similar machines roll off the assembly line, instead each unit is made to suit specific needs.

'Around 1,200 makes of mixer wagons with different options are available to date', continues Aleksandr Zuyev. 'One can order a machine which perfectly fits the feeding routine of a given farming enterprise. In addition, the machine comes equipped with a special software

application, making it possible to monitor feed consumption by individual animals, thus saving up to 40 per cent of the fodder. The monitoring system is compatible with the 1C financial accounting software.'

Besides, the in-house fabricated auger is individually tailored to the corresponding tub capacity, thus ensuring uniform mixing and chopping of the fodder despite large batches.

'Another fundamental difference of the mixer wagons from their counterparts is the increased thickness of sidewalls and the floor plate', says Artyom Konoplev, Brand Manager of EkoNiva-Tekhnika. 'The seams are overlap welded by hand at the factory, which ensures their longer service life.'

Another new design feature is the chassis with centerpoint suspension which

improves stability on unpaved roads and eliminates single axle or wheel overload.

'BvL places a high emphasis on the quality of silage removal from the pit in their product range', comments Aleksandr Zuyev. 'The company offers shear grabs and silage block-cutters, which we were fortunate to see in action.'

The training session at the BvL factory included a demo show of the silage block-cutter, which is capable of cutting out 2.5 cu. m of silage at a time leaving a smooth silage face. The attachment maintains superior fodder quality, which is good for animal health.

The BvL has been in the service of Russian farmers for over 7 years and has built a reputation for producing reliable, smart and efficient machinery over this time.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO





Relying on Fliegl

Today, Fliegl occupies one of the leading positions in the agricultural market and supplies its products into 26 countries. How did Russian farmers manage to get a handle on the German equipment and why do they count on this brand?

The Fliegl push-off semi-trailers are in high demand in the Russian market. The multi-purpose trailer is intended for transportation of various agricultural and construction cargoes. It features an extra attachment that makes it possible to turn the trailer into a manure spreader or an overhead screw conveyor in a matter of minutes.

'Due to its versatility, reliability and durability, the ASW trailer has gained great popularity with Russian farmers', says Sergey Gylin, Head of Sales Department of Kirov branch of EkoNiva-Tekhnika. 'Many of our customers have been using Fliegl trailers for a decade now. Had competitors been in their place, they wouldn't have been able to withstand the load and would have collapsed a long time ago. The reasons for the breakdowns of the counterparts are low quality of metal and weak sides, wear of tires and the suspension system.'

The robust suspension system from Fliegl is a must-have in any high-quality equipment. The trailers usually run on bumpy country roads, therefore, only a sturdy machine with a good suspension system can withstand the load.

'The equipment is not cheap, but it is a good value for money', shares Aleksandr

Roslyakov, Director of Oktyabrsky livestock farm in Kirov oblast. 'Our farm has been choosing Fliegl for many years, and we do not change our preferences, as the machines are efficient and reliable.'

Since 2005, Oktyabrsky livestock farm has been testing the robustness of the Fliegl trailers. Over 13 years, the farm has purchased 9 trailers, 4 of which are equipped with a special organic fertiliser spreader. To this day, all the machines run like clockwork.

'Our enterprise operates the ASW 270, ASW 268 and ASW 381 trailers', continues Aleksandr Roslyakov. 'The working load on each machine is enormous, but there are practically no breakdowns, the equipment functions well. Our main tasks are the transportation of silage and grain and the distribution of organic fertiliser in the fields. We can spread about 6,000 tons of organics per day with the help of the 4 machines.'

The Fliegl vacuum tankers and centrifugal tanker trailers, innovative solutions for slurry removal, have gained great popularity with the farmers.

'New farms are being built, the production volumes are growing', says

Sergey Gylin. 'Application of liquid organic fertiliser in the soil has become a trend in the agriculture recently. Many farming enterprises order the vacuum tankers and build their farms specifically for the Fliegl manure removal technology.'

Aleksandr Roslyakov, the young, yet experienced Director of Oktyabrsky livestock farm is no exception: he has also counted on Fliegl. He has bought a VFW 25000 Vacuum tanker with a cultivator and is quite pleased with its performance.

'The machine is versatile', says Aleksandr Roslyakov. 'It pumps liquid organics and spreads it in the fields to a depth of 12 cm with the help of the cultivator. Last year, the work was carried out in the fallow fields and resulted in good, uniform emergence of the winter crops. We are very happy with this equipment.'

Fliegl has been producing agricultural machinery for more than 30 years, therefore, the equipment is associated with high-quality only and is in great demand among farmers all over the world. The process of updating and expansion of the range of products never stops. Perhaps that is why modern farmers rely entirely on Fliegl.

By Darya DENISOVA





installed the app, point the camera of your smartphone or tablet at AR-triggers and make use of the additional visual content.'

The innovative AR technology is a novelty and — unlike conventional media — opens up a lot of levels of useful information for modern farmers.

'With the help of the Vaderstad AR app, you can see how separate parts of the equipment function even if the machine is only on display', says Roman Logunov, Sales Manager of EkoNiva-Chernozemye. 'The visual content illustrates the principles of functioning of a given mechanism or a whole implement.'

Everyone can experience the augmented reality, all you need to do is visit EkoNiva booth during numerous events dedicated to agriculture. Vaderstad AR app is available for downloading, just follow the links:

Another option to install the app is to type the word Vaderstad in the search field in the Apple App Store or Google Play Market and find the Vaderstad AR.



Download the Vaderstad AR app and point your smartphone or a tablet at this AR trigger and experience the augmented reality.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO

Experience augmented reality

Vaderstad introduces Vaderstad AR (Augmented Reality), a free mobile application, due to which, using the camera of your mobile device, you can view the tools and spare parts for Vaderstad machines in action. Besides, you can have a full-size view of the components.

Taking part in any event where Vaderstad machinery is presented, you can benefit from interactive, 'hidden' AR-content at a number of areas on the booth. To take advantage of the application, first you need to install Vaderstad AR on your mobile gadget.

Then, pointing your smartphone or tablet at AR-triggers around the booth, you can make additional content come to life.

'Vaderstad AR app provides you with a great opportunity', says Eduard Ivanov, Head of Sales Department of EkoNiva-Chernozemye. 'After you have

Labouring from dawn to dusk

Time is precious! Knowing the value of this priceless resource, the management of Gavrilovskoe farming enterprise in Suzdal district, Vladimir oblast, has purchased the JCB 527-58 Agri telehandler.

The JCB 527-58 Agri is a compact machine with a minimum tailswing, which is designed for working in confined areas. Due to its versatility, ease of operation and remarkable performance, the telescopic handler can be used all year round in any conditions. 'The JCB 527-58 Agri is somewhat smaller than the bestselling JCB 531-70 Agri', says Aleksandr Naumov, Sales Manager of Vladimir branch of EkoNiva-Tekhnika. 'A manoeuvrable telehandler of moderate size, which is perfect for precise jobs, was exactly what Gavrilovskoye farming enterprise needed.'

Gavrilovskoe farming enterprise is one of the largest in Suzdal district, Vladimir oblast. The overall herd amounts to 3,300 head, of which 1,580 are lactating cows. The use of loading equipment optimises the workflow at the

enterprise. Besides, it helps to reduce the expenditure on human labour, as the feed is loaded and the manure passages are cleaned with the telehandler alone — no extra manual work is required!

'Despite its modest dimensions, the JCB 527-58 Agri can lift heavy loads to a significant height', continues Aleksandr Naumov. 'The lifting capacity of the telehandler is 2.7 tonnes and the maximum reach with the boom fully out is 5.8 m.'

The JCB telehandlers are high-performance machines that combine stability, significant power and impressive lift height.

'We have been using a 531-70 Agri loader for 5 years already at our dairies', says Sergey Pankratov, Director of Gavrilovskoe farming enterprise. 'We were more than satisfied with its work, so we decided to buy one more compact machine by JCB, as we are in no doubt as to the quality and

performance of the equipment. The JCB 527-58 is already busy accomplishing its first tasks at our dairies and from the very start we can see that the machine is a good value for money.'

In addition, Gavrilovskoe farming enterprise acquired two attachments for the JCB 527-58: a bucket brush to clean the pens and a hay bale grab for straw loading.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO





Perfect duet

It was incredibly hot in Novocherneyevo, Ryazan oblast, and not just because the sunshine was ferocious, rising the mercury up to 28 degrees Celcius. EkoNiva-Tekhnika was holding a live machinery demo of the unique Vaderstad tillage equipment coupled to the powerful John Deere 8320R tractors in the fields of Rassvet 1 farming enterprise.

The demo show had an unusual scenario, starting with a presentation on the introduction of precision farming solutions. Bjorne Drechsler, Head of EkoNivaTekhnika-Holding, told the guests about AMS, JDLink, and AutoTrac systems, the use of which enables farmers to achieve high economic efficiency. Willi Drews, Doctor of Agronomy, told about the latest developments in seed production, crop protection and nutrition.

While the farmers were busy with the presentation, the tractor operators were putting finishing touches to the machinery before the demo show and arranging the trailed implements in one line. As for the Vaderstad model range out in the field, it included Carrier 820, Carrier XL, TopDown 500 cultivators and Spirit and Rapid seed drills.

'EkoNiva-Tekhnika has been an authorised dealer of Vaderstad for two years', says Gennadiy Nepomnyashchiy, Executive Director of EkoNiva-Tekhnika.

'The Swedish machines are internationally recognised for their outstanding reliability, efficiency and performance. The operating conditions in Sweden — where the manufacturing takes place — are severe, so Vaderstad equipment is perfectly suited to Russian farming.

The engines of the John Deere 8320R tractors roared to life in combination with the fully compatible Vaderstad tillage equipment and commenced work. The results impressed even the most skeptical farmers, who turned to the representatives of EkoNiva with numerous questions after the show.

'Our friendship with EkoNiva-Tekhnika started 5 years ago', says Petr Lopyrev, Director of Rassvet 1. 'Our machinery fleet is quite large, including John Deere tractors and Vaderstad tillage equipment. The machines run without a hitch, performing all the tasks in due time, and, most importantly, due to their exceptional reliability, they never break down.'

'A Vaderstad Carrier cultivator and a TopDown 500 seed drill have been operating in our farms for a number of years now', says Nikolay Ryazanov, Director General of Agro-C. 'For this reason, we put more focus on the Spirit seed drill during the demo show. We looked into its principle of operation, heard a lot of positive reviews from farmers, and today we saw its excellent performance with our own eyes.'

Such demo shows have always been and still are a platform for direct networking between farmers and machinery suppliers in order to get to know each other and learn about new and proven farming machinery.

'The sowing season is coming to an end', says Gennadiy Nepomnyashiy. 'Farmers should start drawing conclusions and thinking about upgrading their tillage equipment for the next growing season already today, and EkoNiva will always be there to help.'

By Viktor BARGOTIN





Stay connected!

In the age of information technologies, any machine operator can try their hand at IT solution managing. Precision farming, allowing efficient use of every inch of land, is gaining popularity. Cutting-edge software calls for multifunctional displays and modems.

John Deere offers a new state-of-the-art navigation solution — the Mobile RTK Modem 4G LTE. The modem works with a real time kinematic system on the basis of cellular connection. The Mobile RTK 4G LTE modem with an activated SIM-card is attached to the StarFire receiver on

the tractor and continually transmits the high-accuracy +/- 2.5 cm corrections.

‘The new product in the portfolio of John Deere facilitates farm works requiring precision’, explains Anton Grebnev, AMS-specialist of EkoNiva-Sibir. ‘These include, for example, seedbed preparation, inter-row tillage, row crop planting and

cultivation. The machine operator manages the system himself: he sets the route and the working width of the implement. The tractor receives a high-precision signal and drives smoothly, perfectly following the preset route.

The key advantage of the new product is that it solves the problem of connection failure in scattered fields and hilly or forest-covered terrain. The mobile RTK Modem 4G LTE does not require a direct connection with the base station, which can be located tens of kilometres away.

‘It is important that the Mobile RTK correction signal is transmitted via cellular technology’, specifies Anton Grebnev. ‘With two high performance antennas, The Mobile RTK Modem 4G LTE ensures optimal reception and signal stability. The choice of the cellular connection provider is entirely up to the client.’

Currently, the model is being tested at KDV AGRO LLC (Polomoshnoye village, Yashkino district, Kemerovo oblast). The enterprise grows potato varieties suitable for crisps production. The farm works used in the production process are quite challenging to perform without high-precision technologies. The Mobile RTK Modem 4G LTE has proved itself as a reliable assistant to any farmer.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO

Farmers heading North

The first summer days found clients of EkoNiva-Tekhnika Holding in Sweden, where they were attending a large-scale event — Vaderstad Tour 2018.

The guests were filled in on the semi-centennial history of the brand, which started on a 30-hectare farm, where Rune Stark built a steel rigid tine harrow. Employees of the enterprise showed the inner workings of the manufacturing process, including the state-of-the-art equipment and technologies which form an integral part of machinery assembly. ‘The trip has proved to me that Vaderstad is a leader in the development of some of the world’s most innovative agricultural equipment’, says Leonid Kutenkov, Technical Director of Cherkizovo Group (Voronezh oblast). ‘The factory left a lasting impression: it reminds of the sci-fi world, where

everything is automated, and human labour is gradually replaced with robots.’

After the factory tour, the group headed to the area where machinery demonstrations were held. The red machines conquered the hearts of the Russian farmers.

‘The demo show once again made us realise how powerful and reliable the Vaderstad equipment is’, says Nikolay Kharkin, General Director of Sredneivkino Agrofirma (Kirov oblast). ‘There are seed drills and tillage equipment from Vaderstad in our fleet, and what I have seen here makes me proud of owning the machines.’

The group also visited a local farmer, who, after a hearty welcome, told about his farm, his recipe for success and challenging climatic conditions, in which the Vaderstad equipment nonetheless manages to cope with virtually any tasks.

‘I am very grateful to the representatives of Vaderstad’, says Sergey Zykov, Director of Kursk branch office of EkoNivaTekhnika-Holding. ‘The programme of the tour was very elaborate, the customers came away with a lot of useful information and adopted the best practices of European farmers.’

‘We have been cooperating with EkoNiva for several years’, sums up Leonid Kutenkov. ‘The company is implementing a customer-oriented policy, providing us with the best service and even an opportunity to visit manufacturing facilities. Such trips bring us even closer together.’

By Viktor BARGOTIN



Innovations from EkoNiva-Semena

Plant breeding aimed at the development of new highly-adaptive soft winter wheat varieties capable of most fully meeting the ever growing demands of Russian farmers is underway in the fields of Zashchitnoye. The project is carried out by the department of plant breeding and early generation seed production.

The recent years' plant breeding work has resulted in the creation of unique universal-type soft winter wheat varieties, whose genotype strikes a balance of almost incompatible economic traits such as high yield, grain quality and resistance to biotic and abiotic environmental factors. The genetics of the universal-type varieties uniquely brings together the biologically valuable traits of intensive varieties and the adaptive properties of semi-intensive ones, thus ensuring consistently good yields of high quality grain regardless of climatic conditions and previous crops.

In 2016, three new varieties of soft winter wheat were submitted for state registration into State Commission of the Russian Federation for Selection Achievements Test and Protection, including:

1. Alioth (*lutescens*), a medium stature, mid-maturing variety of universal type of use. Potential yield is 11.0 tonnes/ha, maximum yield is 10.4 tonnes/ha (Shchigry state testing plot). Alioth is suitable for growing in various soil conditions and following different previous crops, under both

conventional and intensive technology, but the full potential reveals itself in fertile soil. The variety exhibits high frost tolerance and lodging resistance. In terms of grain quality, it is a medium-strong wheat. It is distinguished by high shatter resistance as well as resistance to kernel sprouting in the ear in case of delayed harvesting and rainfall.

2. Sheratan (*erythrosperrum*), a mid-maturing variety of universal type of use for medium to good soil conditions after different previous crops. The genetic yield potential reaches 11.5 tonnes/ha, maximum yield is 10.9 tonnes/ha (Shchigry State Testing Plot). Sheratan is a short stature variety with improved lodging resistance, high frost tolerance and winter hardiness. It is a strong wheat variety which sells as high-quality food grain. The consistently high, genetically determined yield is secured by the combination of optimum productive tillering (from 670 up to 750 productive tillers per 1 sq. m) with high ear grain content (57-69 kernels per ear). It is very responsive to improved soil conditions. The maximum yield may be obtained by growing the variety in intensive crop farming.

3. Cepheus (*erythrosperrum*), a mid-maturing variety of universal type of use. The yield potential is 11.0 tonnes/ha, maximum yield is 10.7 tonnes/ha (Shchigry state variety testing plot). It is suitable for growing in different soil conditions and preceding crops in both conventional and intensive crop farming. Medium stature, high frost tolerance, lodging resistance, medium-strong wheat in terms of grain quality.

The variety is distinguished by exceptionally high flexibility and consistent yields in different climatic and soil conditions. The maximum output and yield potential is reached in intensive crop farming.

The new universal-type varieties have a genetically determined lower bottom yield threshold, respond to good soil condition with a sharp rise in performance while staying capable of using medium input in a most efficient way, which makes them economically valuable for Russian farmers.

By Andrey ZVYAGIN,
Head of Plant Breeding and Early Generation
Seed Production Department



Shopping for best genetics



The 18th Kursk Korenskaya Fair has gathered local farmers, small- and large- scale enterprises of the region. Zashchitnoye farming enterprise is traditionally among the exhibitors of the trade fair.

Zashchitnoye has the status of a stock breeding farm of Simmental cattle.

Currently the dairy houses 580 cows and more than 500 head of young stock. Up for sale are pedigree and breeding-age heifers as well as bulls, which are in great demand among farmers these days. The cattle are fully adapted to the Russian environment and management at large-scale commercial dairies. Besides, the efficient work on genetic progress has resulted in making the udders suitable for machine milking and enhancing the milk yields, disease resistance and longevity of the animals. When calving, the cows experience less stress. Besides, they are more adapted to free-stall housing, thus, they feel confident in the herd.

The cattle have a high genetic potential

and belong to the elite record class. Their high-quality milk has excellent taste.

'Our heifers weigh 220 kg when they reach the age of six months', says Svetlana Veselova, Chief Herd Manager of Zashchitnoye farming enterprise, 'At 12 months, they already weigh up to 400 kg. Heifers have high daily weight gains of up to 1,5 kg. The heifers are bred when they are 13 months old, so the first calving is planned at the age of 22-23 months. Currently, the average daily milk yield per cow is about 24 kg; in lactating cows, it amounts to about 28 kg per day. In 2018, we expect an average annual yield of over 7,000 kg per dairy cow, which, though coming short of the maximum yield possible for the Simmental breed, is still a significant improvement on last year's figures. Our

cows have a high productive lifetime, as more than 25% of the herd are 4+ lactation cows. There are cows which are from 10 to 12 years old and still highly productive.'

This year, two calves, named Olha and Khlopushka, aged 2.5 months, were presented at Kursk Korenskaya Fair. The calves awakened interest in children and adults alike, including those who know little about dairy farming and regular customers of Zashchitnoye. The farming enterprise was awarded the laureate certificate of Kursk Korenskaya Fair 2018 for active participation in the development of the agricultural sector. Obviously, the award was justly deserved since the booth of Zashchitnoye was one of the most visited throughout the trade fair.

By Darya DENISOVA

Ready for take-off!

Over the years of operation in Orenburg oblast, Severnaya Niva has been focusing on grain production cultivating spring durum and soft wheat, sunflower, peas and other crops. The second key area of activity of the company is beef cattle farming.

The current beef breeding stock of Hereford, Aberdeen-Angus, and Simmental breeds comprises about 2,000 head. In the nearest time, the company is planning a several fold increase of this number.

'The management is intending to expand beef cattle farming' shares Petr Dubyanskiy, Executive Director of Severnaya Niva. 'By 2020, the number of beef cattle is planned to grow to 10,000 head due to the establishment of 4

beef farms in the territory of Buguruslan and Abdulino districts of Orenburg oblast.'

Currently, the herd increase is carried out by adding cattle from other branches of the holding, thus, EkoNivaAgro and Kaluzhskaya Niva have supplied 600 and 200 head of cattle respectively.

'Severnaya Niva is planning to implement a dairy project', continues Petr Dubyanskiy. 'The management has announced the decision to build two dairies with the capacity of 2,800 head each in the Northern district of Orenburg oblast.'

Taking into account the high-level dairy production at other enterprises of the holding in terms of both technology and economic efficiency, the idea of expanding dairy farming activities to Severnaya Niva should be considered appropriate and timely.

By Viktor BARGOTIN





Mission possible!

What is to happen tomorrow? This question becomes a burning issue for all young specialists straight after they graduate and receive the longed-for diplomas. Statistics proves that approximately 80% of university graduates experience difficulties finding their first jobs. EkoNiva breaks the traditions of the present-day education to solve this problem.

EkoNiva is ready to rear young specialists on its farms. The company has already signed cooperation agreements with 15 leading agricultural universities of the country. The Northern Trans-Urals State Agricultural University is one of EkoNiva's partners. Now the students from Tyumen can test their knowledge in practice at the farming operations of the holding. 'The cooperation agreement with the Northern Trans-Urals State Agricultural University and other agricultural universities of the country allows students to do internship on EkoNiva's farms', says Natalia Zvereva, HR Manager of EkoNiva-APK Holding. 'Our specialists will be able to take part in the lectures and master classes to share their extensive experience with students.' The labour market experiences a noticeable lack of qualified specialists, and EkoNiva's goal is to identify the potential of university graduates, train them to apply their knowledge in

practice and develop their professional qualifications.

'We are ready to educate specialists for our farms', says Sergey Kamenev, CEO of Agrofirma Mezhdurechye LLC. 'We believe that we should look for potential candidates at the earliest years of study at the university so that the students could undergo practical training and receive deep knowledge of the profession. Currently, EkoNiva implements the most progressive ideas and technologies. We need people who want to work in agriculture, and we know how to bring their skills to perfection.'

The students of Tyumen will be able to do internship at Agrofirma Mezhdurechye in the nearest time. The young interns will be provided with free accommodation, food and a salary in the amount of 10 thousand rubles. The best students will receive a bonus.

'The internship in EkoNiva resembles regular work of agricultural specialists', says Elena Boyko, Rector of the Northern

Trans-Urals State Agricultural University. 'The interns are basically backups for the employees in certain positions. The topic usually corresponds to the knowledge and skills obtained during the university term. The students receive unique professional experience, which will help them to choose their way in life.'

Nadezhda and Aleksandr Ovchinnikovs, graduates of the Northern Trans-Urals State Agricultural University, have already made their choice. EkoNiva was their first place of internship during their studies. Later, they both came to work for Sibirskaya Niva and got married. The newly-weds jokingly say that they were brought together by the destiny and profession.

'EkoNiva has played an important role in our life', says Aleksandr Ovchinnikov. 'Nadezhda started her career as a regular herd manager, and now she is a successful dairy manager in Sibirskaya Niva. I work as a senior veterinarian. The company is helping us to pay for the flat we are renting. We have everything necessary for a happy family life and we work with a great enthusiasm.'

Another important benefit provided by EkoNiva to its trainees is the compensation of the costs of travelling to their place of internship and back. The agricultural holding takes care of the young specialists and keeps them from worrying about tomorrow.

By Darya DENISOVA





Practice makes perfect

EkoNiva remains committed to supporting social initiatives.

Development of ecotourism and rural areas, support of young talented people and various projects, promotion of proper nutrition — all these activities traditionally complement the key areas of activity of the company. Sport is also an integral part of EkoNiva's life! The employees do competitive indoor and outdoor sports, so they often play football and take part in extreme relay races, canoeing and kayaking. However, the reason for writing this article is a matter of a separate talk.

Russian Swimming Championship 2018 among athletes with lesions of the musculoskeletal system took place in Ruza (Moscow oblast) on 10-17 May. Darya Maiborodina, a young athlete from Liski, participated in the championship as a member of Voronezh oblast team. The young swimmer has been persistently exercising under the patronage of EkoNiva Group since 2012. Practice makes perfect, so at the competition she achieved the desired result: Darya is to be awarded the title of Master of Sports of Russia.

Complete dedication, great willpower and passion for swimming allowed the athlete to succeed despite the congenital injury of the hand.

'It took Darya 34.47 seconds to cover the 50-metre distance', says Anton Vereshchagin, Darya's coach. 'In Liski it is the first time when the young athlete with disability has met such swimming time standards. I consider that there are not so many examples of such success in the whole country.'

Anton Vereshchagin and his wife Oksana Akhmarova are professional swimming coaches who devoted two decades to their job. In 2012, they met a girl with a congenital hand injury.

'The Paralympic games had just ended in London', shares Anton Vereshchagin. 'Both my wife and I weren't able to bear the thought that almost no attention is paid to the children with musculoskeletal system disabilities in our town. They could go to the local children centres and the theatre for young audience, but there were no opportunities at all to take up sports. So, we talked to Darya's parents and started working.'

In spite of her young age, Darya is 14 years old, she has considerable experience in swimming. She took part in the Russian Championship, Aleksander Popov Cup swimming tournament in Moscow and other competitions. Darya has been training at the Sports School of Paralympic Reserve in Voronezh since September

2017, when she was awarded the title of a Candidate of Master of Sports.

'Darya is as fast as lightning, so she is still unrivalled in Voronezh oblast', says Anton Vereshchagin. 'She is a leader; therefore, it is important that she sets an outstanding example to her peers. Many children and teenagers with disabilities can realise that the disease doesn't mean that life is over and all they can do is just stay at home.'

The primary goal of the coach is to involve children in swimming, awaken their interest and joy of systematic training from the very beginning. As soon as the swimmers mastered the stroke, they can participate in tournaments, starting at the regional level. We are extremely grateful to EkoNiva for supporting Darya in taking part in the competitions.'

Documents about Darya's achievement have been already sent to the Ministry of Sport of the Russian Federation. Soon Darya will receive an award — a badge and a certificate of the Master of Sports. Despite her impressive achievement, Darya does not stop practicing, as new swimming tournaments will be held in the near future.

'The Championship of Russia 2018 in September is the next important competition for Darya', says Anton Vereshchagin. 'I'm sure that our young athlete will win First Prize!'

All the employees of EkoNiva Group will support and cheer Darya!

By Aleksandr KUTISHCHEV





A creative race

A large-scale corporate race was held in Walldorf, Germany. 125 corporate teams — more than 500 amateur runners representing different companies and organisations — participated in the competition. Employees of the Walldorf office of Ekosem-Agrar, parent company of EkoNiva, and employees of Ekosem-Agrarprojekte, a subsidiary of Ekosem-Agrar based in Berlin, demonstrated one of the best results.

Running currently is on trend and so are the corporate running initiatives. The Walldorf race became a true fest of corporate spirit and healthy lifestyle.

The large-scale running team building brought a surge of positive emotions and a well-deserved silver award to the employees of Ekosem-Agrar.

'Ekosem-Agrar was represented by two teams with four runners in each', shares Natalia Bilous, participant of the competition. 'The teams consisted of the employees of the company and their children. It was our first corporate race, and we enjoyed it immensely!'

The amateur runners had to cover a serious distance of 5.1 km. The team is especially proud of its youngest member, Max Simonis. It took him no more than 17 minutes 45 seconds to cover the required distance, which was a challenging task considering the 28 °C heat.

'It was hot in every sense of the word', continues Natalia Bilous, 'and we are very grateful to the viewers who supported us throughout the race. Some of them even poured water on the runners from their balconies, which was very pleasant in this hot weather.'

The corporate race was a success. Ekosem-Agrar came second, having outdone 56 other teams. Only 1.5 minutes separated the team from the winner — the team of SAP, world's leading concern specialising in software production. A good shape not only improves your mood but also helps to succeed in business. The special prize of the competition for the most creative outfit became a pleasant addition to the silver award received by the team of Ekosem-Agrar.

'We were dressed in the costumes of cows', says Natalia Bilous laughing. 'We wanted to draw attention to our company and our achievements in the area of agricultural business on the whole and dairy farming in particular. And we did it!'

The awards were handed to the teams by Christine Staab, Mayor of Walldorf, Matthias Zander, Chairman of the Board of Volksbank Kraichgau, and Klaus Bieler, Board Member of Volksbank Kraichgau. However, the best awards for the runners were the good mood, the positive emotions and the healthy corporate motivation.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO





On 1 June, Alye Parusa park in Voronezh hosted an event dedicated to Children’s Day, and the Academy of Dairy Sciences arranged entertainment for young guests and their parents.

Children’s Day with the Academy

Astasting of fresh dairy products is an indispensable part of any festival with the Academy of Dairy Sciences. This time, the guests were also treated to a new product in the Academy’s range - ultra-pasteurised milk, the excellent taste of which they greatly enjoyed.

The little visitors and their parents boosted their energy and positive emotions with delicious dairy products, and, after that, they had lots of fun taking photographs with the Academy characters, playing various outdoor games, such as Twister, Frisbee, beach ball games, and riding on toy cows. The programme also

included various educational quizzes. For instance, the children had to find 10 differences between two portraits of our lovely cow Marta. Besides, the characters of the Academy of Dairy Sciences gave an improvised dance master class for children.

Getting presents is the most pleasant part of the festival, so the Academy of Dairy Sciences prepared a lot of gifts for all little guests. The happy participants of the celebration got colouring books, frisbees, non-spill cups and the main prize – a tour of a dairy facility with the Academy.

By Aleksandr KUTISHCHEV



The unique cafe



One can hardly find a resident of Voronezh oblast who has never been to City-Park Grad, one of the largest shopping and entertainment centres of Black Soil region. Now, there is a good reason to visit it more often, as a unique healthy food cafe under the Academy of Dairy Sciences brand opened its doors and welcomed the first visitors.

The cafe is a perfect place for relaxing after shopping. Everyone can try delicious, nourishing and, most importantly, healthy food made from fresh milk produced at EkoNiva farms. Milkshakes, soft ice cream, buns, crepes with curds, omelette and other delicious creations of our chefs produce an overwhelming impression. Here you can learn a lot of interesting facts about milk, take part in cooking classes and other educational and entertainment family activities.

At the Academy of Dairy Sciences cafe, you can not only have a great time and enjoy fresh dairy delicacies, but also buy highest-quality dairy products to your taste. We will be happy to see you at our cafe again and again.

By Aleksandr KUTISHCHEV





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5-7 July

Russian Field Day

Venue: Lipetsk Variety Testing Station, Ruslanovka village, Lipetsk oblast

Organiser: Ministry of Agriculture of the Russian Federation, Administration of Lipetsk oblast

13 July

Yaroslavl Field Day

Venue: Krasny Mayak LLC, Semibratovo v., Rostov district, Yaroslavl oblast

Organiser: Department of Agricultural Sector and Consumer Market of Yaroslavl oblast

13 July

Tula Field Day

Venue: Bogoroditsky Alliance LLC, Bakhmetyevo v., Bogoroditsk district, Tula oblast

Organiser: Ministry of Agriculture of Tula oblast

July

Tula Field Day

Venue: Dairy Department (Tula Agricultural Research Institute), Plavsk district, Tula oblast

Organiser: Agency for Agricultural Development, Kaluga Agricultural Research Institute and Centre LLC Exhibition Company

19-20 July

Perm Field Day

Venue: trial field of Agricultural Research Institute, Lobanovo village, Perm, Prikamskiy Agrofest 2018 Interregional Specialised Exhibition-Forum

Organiser: Ministry of Agriculture and Food of Perm oblast, Praktika, LLC

24 August

Ryazan Field Day 2018 Innovative Agricultural Exhibition and Forum

Venue: Vyshgorod Agricultural Production Cooperative, Vyshgorod v., Ryazan district, Ryazan oblast

Organiser: Ministry of Agriculture and Food of Ryazan oblast, Centre, LLC

August

Amur Field Day

Venue: Orletsk v., Tambov district, Amur oblast

Organiser: Ministry of Agriculture of Amur oblast

August

Kirov Field Day

Venue: 48, Zapadnaya st., Orichi variety testing station, Orichi v., Kirov oblast

Organiser: Ministry of Agriculture and Food of Kirov oblast, AgroInfo Association

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5-7 July

Russian Field Day in Lipetsk. Visit the major summer event with EkoNiva-Semena!

EKO NIVA
ЭКОНИВА

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