

Best Product 2022

EKONIVA products awarded gold medals at Prodexpo 2022

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Kristina Romanovskaya:

‘People in Russia should remember that we are historically agricultural country’

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Pedigree cattle with high genetic potential

Offered by EkoNiva

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Stefan Dürr: 'Resuming dialogue as soon as possible is the best solution'

The events at the end of February launched rapid and profound changes in the global balance and order. None of us could have foreseen the current developments. In the time of sanctions and countersanctions, dairy production as well as other businesses are facing grave challenges.

Devaluation of ruble, sharp growth of the key rate of the Central Bank of Russia, soaring prices, limited access to materials, breaks in supply chains, unwillingness of some contractors to deliver paid goods to Russia have caused a large number of issues businessmen have to handle on the go now.

Nevertheless, we, agricultural producers, bear a huge responsibility to ensure uninterrupted availability of food at the most affordable prices. Therefore, we invest all our efforts in maintaining continuous operation of our enterprises. At a car factory, you can stop the conveyor and place the workers on leave. On a farm, however, you can't stop a cow or place it on leave, it expects its feed to be distributed on time every day.

So, we keep on feeding and milking our cows to produce tasty dairy products. In late March, we started the spring field work with fertilising the autumn-sown crops. Currently, we are planting spring crops

to assure that our cows have something to eat next year. As they say, one spring day feeds you for the rest of the year, so mistakes in agriculture are extremely costly. I am genuinely grateful to EkoNiva team for their hard work and constant loyalty to the company even in the toughest times.

We live our lives and do our job; at the same time, we can't but feel heart-broken about the escalation of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine and the anguish and sufferings it inflicts on millions of people.

For almost 30 years, EkoNiva has been a symbol of successful cooperation and constructive dialogue between Germany and Russia and also a platform

for knowledge and experience exchange between these countries. Unfortunately, this dialogue has been suspended, hopefully, for the time being.

The recent events have definitely proven that the world is a fragile substance, especially today's world which is based on interaction, international cooperation and dialogue. We are so much integrated and interdependent, that a breach in our relations is equally distressing for all sides.

Therefore, I firmly believe that resuming our dialogue as soon as possible is what we all need to find the solution to the current situation.

Stefan Dürr,
EkoNiva Group President

New export horizons

At Gulfood 2022 trade fair, Dmitry Patrushev, Minister of Agriculture of Russia, has paid a visit to EkoNiva's booth. The Group's representatives talked about the company's performance in 2021 and its goals for further development including export.

EkoNiva started exporting dairy produce in June 2020, predominantly to the PRC. In 2021, the Group increased its export sales more than ninefold in both volume and cash terms. Currently, EkoNiva is working on entering the markets of the Persian Gulf countries and the Middle East.

Aside from dairy production, EkoNiva is one of the key players of the Russian crop farming market. The company is the largest grower and distributor of Canadian red lentil seeds, as well as a leading supplier in the commodity market. In 2021, EkoNiva produced over 17,000 tonnes of lentils, which is a four-time

increase on the previous year. The seeds have already been delivered to the UAE, Turkey and Pakistan. In 2022, the Group is planning to boost the export sales and expand the sales territories of lentils and pulses in general.

In 2022, Gulfood trade show offered a large business networking programme. EkoNiva team took part in numerous roundtable discussions and meetings with the representatives of domestic and overseas state authorities, prospective



contractors and international business partners.

At the Group's corporate booth, a wide range of EKONIVA dairy produce was available for sampling: UHT and ORGANIC milk, Professional Line milk and

cream developed specifically for the HoReCa industry, Shchuchye and Kolybelka semi-hard cheeses. The company also presented its seed portfolio of foreign, domestic and in-house bred field crop varieties.

New machinery for sowing campaign

EkoNiva's machinery dealing holding is expanding its partnership with Rosagroleasing AO to enable more farmers to purchase various equipment for the upcoming season on flexible lease terms.

Today, Rosagroleasing offers the most affordable tool for technical and technological upgrading of the agricultural sector. Despite the tough economic situation, the company has managed to keep all farm machinery leasing programmes. Fully digital transaction can be carried out in Rosagroleasing mobile application or on the official website.

'Taking into account the increasing demand for farm

machinery in the previous two years, EkoNiva has prepared for the high season in 2022. Our warehouses are fully stocked with equipment which usually tops the farmers' lists', says Gennadiy Nepomnyashchiy, Commercial Director of EkoNivaTekhnika-Holding.

All regional companies of the holding – EkoNiva-Tekhnika, EkoNiva-Chernozemye and EkoNivaSibir – have the

status of Rosagroleasing dealer-agents authorised to provide consultations on leasing products and accept applications from agricultural producers.

Another advantage of Rosagroleasing is the option to lease trailed implements only, if necessary, while other companies offer implements exclusively with self-propelled machines.

A year ago, Russian Ministry of Industry and Trade

issued a confirmation that the ROC RT 1000 bailer is a piece of equipment with no equivalents in Russia.

'EkoNiva has a price agreement with Rosagroleasing, according to which our clients can be granted a reduced lease rate on the bailer', says Yelena Pashenka, Customer Financing Department Manager at EkoNivaTekhnika-Holding.

Please refer to your regional sales representatives for full details of the lease programme.

By Svetlana WEBER



Three stars out of three

The 6-month aged Dürr hard cheese has received the highest rating from Europe's most renowned chefs. The experts from the International Taste Institute, Brussels, awarded the cheese three stars out of three possible, giving it 93.4 out of 100 points.

The blind sampling featured over 200 jury members from over 20 European countries, including prominent chefs from restaurants listed in Michelin and Gault & Millau guides. For the evaluations, they employed a method based on the international hedonic sensory analysis, which relies on 5 criteria: first impression, vision, olfaction, taste and texture.

Following the sampling, the product receives a grade, which is an average of 5 above-mentioned criteria. Foods and drinks rated between 70 and 80 points get one star and are defined as 'notable'. Samples that score



80-90 points and 2 stars are viewed as 'remarkable'. Finally, products which earn more than 90 points deserve the right to be called 'exceptional'.

The 6- and 12-month aged cheese of the Bergkäse type is a premium hard cheese, the recipe of which has been developed in Russia. It is produced in Voronezh region from the cheese milk supplied by EkoNiva's own dairy farms only. The Brevibacterium linens used in the recipe impart an intense aroma and a piquant taste with a hint of herbs to the finished cheese.

The International Taste Institute also evaluated EKONIVA Professional Line UHT milk 3,5%, which scored 88.5 points and two stars. The experts praised its soft silky texture and expressed but not excessive sweet creamy taste with floral notes.

Seed novelties

Two winter wheat and two soya bean varieties developed by EkoNiva's Plant Breeding and Variety Maintenance Centre have been entered into the State Register of Plant Breeding Achievements Approved for Use.

EN Photon and EN Mars, winter wheat varieties with a genetic potential of 12 tonnes per hectare, have been added to the Register for the Central Black Soil region. Their maximum yields reached 11.8 t/ha and 11.7 t/ha, respectively, as documented at Shchigry state variety testing plot in Kursk oblast. These varieties deliver high plasticity and consistent yields in various climatic and soil conditions. Their

distinctive traits include high cold and winter hardiness, drought resistance and compliance with high-value wheat grain standards.

New soya bean variety EN Argument is adapted to the West Siberian region according to the State Register. This very early-maturing variety ripens in 100 – 105 days at Maslyanino state testing plot in

Novosibirsk oblast. It has a yield potential of 2.5-3.0 t/ha, which is impressive for its maturity group, and high protein of up to 42.5%.

EN Akcent soya bean has been entered into the State Register as adapted to the Central region. The early maturing variety ripens in 100-110 days and has a yield potential of 3.5 t/ha (Plavsk state variety testing plot, Tula oblast). It has high protein of up to 44% and TGW of up to 200 g. The yellow-coloured seeds are big and have a yellow hilum – these features are highly valued in the food industry.

According to Yevgeniy Kucheryavenko,

Executive Director of EkoNiva-Semena, these soya bean varieties have good commercial prospects.

'The Central and Siberian regions are the areas of rapid livestock production development, however, there are few soya bean varieties that can be cultivated there. Our early-maturing varieties will provide a good

source of high-protein feed for livestock farming.'

The State Testing Commission has received for trials six more EkoNiva's winter wheat varieties and two soya bean varieties created using the marker-assisted breeding method.

'The registration of four our varieties proves good performance of the Centre's plant breeding programme. In winter wheat breeding, the focus was given to high plasticity and consistent yields in various climatic and soil conditions; in soya beans – to early maturity in order to extend the area of soya growing further to the north and east of the country in the future', says Vitaliy Voloshchenko, EkoNiva Plant Breeding and Variety Maintenance Centre Director.

The varieties of EkoNiva breeding listed in the State Register of Plant Breeding Achievements in 2020 – 2021 include winter wheats EN Cepheus, EN Albireo, EN Taygeta and soya bean EN Argenta.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO



Winter wheat EN Photon



EkoNiva farm tour project rated highly

The Agency for Strategic Initiatives (ASI) has announced the results of the National Industrial Tourism Accelerator Programme. EkoNiva farm tour project in Kaluga oblast has received an award for the best interactive content.

EkoNiva farm tour was rated highly by a board of experts consisting of ASI specialists, representatives of the government authorities and the business

community. In total, more than 350 enterprises from 53 regions of Russia took part in the competition. The numbers speak for themselves: over 100,000 guests, including

school pupils and agricultural university students, groups of tourists and business partners of EkoNiva Group, have visited the dairies in Voronezh and Kaluga oblasts since 2013.

At the dairy, visitors can see with their own eyes all the stages of the top-grade milk production from in-house fodder preparation to cow milking in the rotary parlour. To immerse themselves into the dairy farm atmosphere, the attendees can make fodder for the cows and even bottle-feed the calves.

'Our target audience is mainly children and teenagers. Participation in the EkoNiva farm tour programme enables our young visitors to develop a positive image of agriculture as a booming industry. And maybe in the future, when it comes to choosing their own career, this experience will encourage them to opt for a job in the agriculture', points out Yekaterina Bartseva, EkoNiva-Food Tour Project Manager.

EkoNiva is constantly improving the tour programme, complementing it with various workshops, interactive tasks for children and thematic festivals. Plans are underway to launch additional tour projects on one of the farms in Moscow oblast and at the cheese plant in Voronezh oblast.

Best offers for Volga farmer

EkoNiva-Semena, a seed growing and plant breeding company within EkoNiva Group, has presented its in-house varieties and pedigree cattle to agricultural producers of the Volga region.

Saratov farmers showed a keen interest in winter crop varieties as preparation for sowing is underway.

EkoNiva specialists offered soya bean and winter wheat varieties of own breeding – EN Argenta, EN Albireo, EN Taygeta and EN Cepheus – and the best domestic, European and American varieties from the commercial portfolio.

Volga region is considered a zone of risky agriculture. Nevertheless, EkoNiva winter crops perform well. For example, in Saratov oblast, EN

Cepheus demonstrated the productivity of about 4.4-4.8 t/ha, which is three times higher as compared to the average across the region.

'EkoNiva-Semena has gained credibility with local farmers over the years of operation. Last year, we sold over 6,000 tonnes of seeds. It's a good result, therefore this season, we're planning to increase the sales in this area', comments

Viktor Prostyakov, EkoNiva-Semena Sales Representative.

EkoNiva is also ready to meet the steadily growing demand for cattle. The company sells Simmental,

Red-and-White and Holstein black-and-white heifers and guarantees that all animals have a high genetic status and are well adapted to large commercial dairy environment.

By Viktor BARGOTIN



Seeding campaign full steam ahead



In early April, EkoNiva commenced the spring seeding campaign. Kursk and Voronezh oblast enterprises were the first to start the fieldworks.

In 2022 farming season, the Company Group is going to sow about 455,000 hectares in 13 regions of crop production: 290,000

hectares – with spring crops, the remaining area – with winter and perennial crops.

In February, EkoNiva adjusted its cropping plan

for the current season: the spring barley and spring rapeseed areas were increased by more than one and a half times, up

to 23,100 and 4,800 ha respectively, and the soya bean area – by more than 60%, up to 35,200 ha.

‘Soya is one of the priority crops for livestock farming. The issue of its import substitution is high on the agenda’, comments Aleksandr Anpilov, Crop Farming Director, EkoNiva-APK Holding.

EkoNiva enterprises have enough seeds in stock for the spring sowing. Almost 2,500 agricultural machines including 1,100 self-propelled units will drive out into the fields during the spring seeding campaign.

In late March, EkoNiva enterprises started fertiliser application to winter crops. This year, winter crops occupy 71,000 ha, including the winter wheat area of 57,000 ha. All the crops emerged from dormancy in good condition due to the snowy winter.

By Aleksandr KUTISHCHEV

Drought-tolerant varieties for risky farming zones

At MAK-2022, Interregional agricultural conference held in Chelyabinsk, EkoNiva-Semena, a seed growing division of EkoNiva Group, offered local farmers its varieties of spring fodder and food crops regionally adapted for the Urals.

Last year, the Southern Ural suffered a severe drought, that is why a considerable emphasis at the conference was placed on minimum tillage, retention of soil water and choice of spring varieties’, says Willi Drews, EkoNiva Consultant, Doctor of Agronomy. ‘To meet the needs of local growers, EkoNiva-Semena presented drought-resistant varieties – Explorer and Margret barley along with Licamero, Cornetto and Toccata wheat.’

‘The demand for our products in the Ural keeps growing year by year’, says Yevgeniy Kucheryavenko, Executive Director of EkoNiva-Semena. ‘The farms based in Chelyabinsk and Tyumen oblasts account for the largest share of orders followed by Kurgan and Yekaterinburg oblasts. In total, the uplift in spring crop sales during this season was roughly 80 per cent as compared to the same period in the previous year.’

EkoNiva-Semena has been operating in the

Russian market since 1998 delivering the output of over 80,000 tonnes of seeds per year. The company’s cooperation with more than 40 seed breeding centres located in the USA, Europe and Russia results in about

70 crop varieties available in the portfolio, including 36 spring varieties featuring high genetic potential.

By Aleksandr KUTISHCHEV



Green light for high-margin crops



EkoNiva-Semena has participated in the Interagromash Agritechnologies 2022 trade fair in Rostov-on-the-Don. The company presented high-yielding varieties, including those of own breeding, and pedigree cattle.

An increasing area of high-margin crops such as peas, soya beans, lentils is a recent trend in the Southern Federal District.

'In-house pea varieties sown in this region yield 5 tonnes per hectare, red lentils – 2 tonnes per hectare. EN Argenta soya beans

delivered impressive 3 tonnes per hectare considering tough climatic conditions last season', underlines Maksim Golovanev, EkoNiva-Semena

Sales Representative.

The trials of Belmondo yellow peas in the fields of Rostov oblast with an average of 5.6 t/ha confirmed its high productivity potential. Variety Rocket also showed good performance – 5.7 t/ha, Madras – 5.5 t/ha. Pea variety Trendy delivered the highest yields – 6.5 t/ha.

The winter wheat varieties of EkoNiva breeding EN Taygeta and EN Cepheus demonstrated productivity of about 8 t/ha in some regions.

Producers from Rostov oblast and Stavropol area are the major buyers of seeds from EkoNiva portfolio.

EkoNiva pedigree heifers and seeds generate growing interest from local farmers. More than 3,000 head of cattle were supplied to the southern regions of Russia last year, another 1,000 head are planned to be delivered soon. In Krasnodar area, the Chechen and the Karachay-Cherkess Republics, EkoNiva's dairy cattle has earned an established reputation for its high genetic quality.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO

EkoNiva expands the organic range

The company is the first in Russia to launch the production of ultra-pasteurised (UHT) organic milk.

The UHT milk, 3.2% fat, under the EKONIVA ORGANIC brand has already hit the shelves of Perekrestok and Auchan retail chains, Utkonos online store and EkoNiva's own brand shops.

The raw material used for the production of the EKONIVA ORGANIC UHT milk is certified in compliance with the organic farming regulations. The MosMedynagroprom dairy plant, where the milk is processed and packaged, is certified in line with the European and Russian organic production standards.

To ensure a convenient customer experience, EkoNiva prints information about organic production on the packaging. For more details, you can go to the company's

official website by scanning the QR code. The consumer-facing side of the carton features the ORGANIC logo confirming the accordance with the Russian organic food requirements.

Thanks to the aseptic Tetra Pak packaging and ultra-high temperature treatment – the milk is heated up to 140°C for a few seconds followed by flash cooling – EKONIVA ORGANIC UHT milk can be stored for up to 6 months retaining its health benefits and taste properties.

'In search of top-notch ingredients, catering industry specialists and baristas show a keen interest in the organic milk because its properties have a strong impact on the taste and texture of the drink. EKONIVA ORGANIC UHT milk has a distinctive creamy flavour, smell and

melt-in-your-mouth texture. It is easy to whip into the foam of the desired consistency thanks to high protein. The UHT milk stays fresh for a long time

in the closed packaging and doesn't require refrigeration, which is convenient for the HoReCa industry', emphasises Yekaterina Dürr, Marketing Division Deputy Manager, EkoNiva-Food.



EkoNiva's plant breeder graduates from Skolkovo

Darya Litvinova, Agronomist and Plant Breeder at EkoNiva-Semena, has successfully completed the third module of the course in modern plant breeding methods at Skolkovo. During this final stage, the attendees studied genomic breeding.



The lectures addressed to employees of commercial companies and plant breeding centers along with plant breeding, genetics and biotechnology specialists from various Russian research institutes and universities were delivered by accomplished experts of leading Russian and European scientific schools.

'The implementation of the techniques presented in the course will not only substantially accelerate the breeding progress, but also reduce crop areas

and respective resource consumption', says Darya Litvinova, EkoNiva-Semena Agronomist and Plant Breeder.

For instance, having carried out a thorough research on climatic conditions and a genome-wide association study of the seed material, we can predict how a specific hybrid or a variety will perform in a given zone without actually sowing it. It considerably simplifies the breeding process. This approach is based on the statistical analysis,

which takes into account interactions of different factors. It is also possible to foresee the crop response to some climatic conditions relying on its genotype data only.

Apart from theory, the curriculum included practical and laboratory sessions. The students had an opportunity to apply new techniques in practice and adapt them to their own needs. The laboratory sessions involved preparing DNA for sequencing to determine the sequence of DNA nucleotides

essential for intracellular communication, energy storage and other functions.

'We'll be able to employ all the knowledge acquired at Skolkovo in our production process and adapt it to plant breeding projects at EkoNiva. In the future, we're also planning to cooperate with Skoltech experts specialising in biotechnology and bioinformatics. Plant breeding takes intensive teamwork, which should run like clockwork', believes Darya Litvinova.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO

EkoNiva star in Agroplem asterism

Agroplem company has awarded EkoNiva for 'The greatest contribution of accumulated phenotypic data to the cattle genomic evaluation'.

Agroplem, an independent laboratory cluster engaged in raw milk quality control on breeding farms, has created the Stars of Agroplem rating, which includes 25 companies out of the 140 Agroplem cooperates with. Agroplem experts granted EkoNiva an award for 'The greatest contribution of accumulated phenotypic data to the cattle genomic evaluation'.

Genomic technology made it possible to predict the breeding value of an animal at birth, accelerate the breeding process and produce new generations of cattle with enhanced traits faster.

The phenotypic data set collected by EkoNiva has been contributed to the laboratory's database for developing

a reliable total performance index and genomic evaluation. On EkoNiva farms, milk is sampled on a monthly basis. The samples are sent to

Agroplem breeding quality control laboratory to be tested for fat, protein, somatic cells, lactose, casein, etc. – a total of 12 parameters. Afterwards, the data received is carefully analysed. Such systematic work ensures reliability of each animal's data set on the farm.

EkoNiva has been engaged in pedigree cattle breeding

since 2008, propagating Holstein, Red-and-White and Simmental breeds. To build a highly productive herd, the cows are bred with semen of bulls of foreign genetics. Insemination with sexed semen provides a large percentage of female births reaching 80-98%.

'We've managed to build a 216,000-head herd with a high Total Performance Index. All cows have a good genetic status. Furthermore, they are well adapted to commercial farm environment', comments Valeriya Pavlova, Cattle Breeding Department Manager, EkoNiva-APK Holding.

Moreover, each company in the rating has been assigned a star named after it. Now in the sky, there is a new asterism – the Agroplem – in the constellation of Ursa Major. It comprises 25 newly named stars that shine brightly, one of them being EkoNiva.



Profitable farming with EkoNiva



EkoNiva Group has taken part in Agros 2022, an international trade show, which gathered 350 companies from 26 countries.

This year, EkoNiva offered the attendees everything they need for a profitable farming business – pedigree cattle with outstanding genetic potential, highly productive seeds of forage grasses and efficient agricultural machinery.

EkoNiva has been engaged in pedigree cattle breeding for more than 15 years. The herd

of Holstein, Simmental and Red-and-White cows is perfectly adapted to the Russian conditions and commercial farm environment. These cattle already performed well in Tatarstan, Chechnya and Karachay-Cherkessia as well as in the Central, Volga, Siberian and Far Eastern federal districts. In total, the company sold 6,800 heifers

in 2021. This year, EkoNiva has delivered about 300 cows to Krasny Mayak, an agricultural enterprise operating in Yaroslavl oblast. Plans are afoot to ship another 3,400 heifers to other customers. In total, the company expects to increase the sales of pedigree cattle up to 15,000 head in 2022.

'Twelve years ago, EkoNiva supplied us with our first

tractor of a foreign brand. Since then, we have ordered approximately 50 machinery units from this dealership. We also purchase seeds of cereals and forage grasses from EkoNiva on an annual basis. Besides, keeping in mind that this is the largest dairy producer in Russia and Europe, we've opted for its pedigree cattle and have placed the first order for the cows this year', explains Vasilii Finogeyev, General Director of Krasny Mayak.

In addition, at the trade fair, EkoNiva-Semena presented 25 varieties of forage grasses featuring consistently high yields, substantial energy value, resistance to drought and frost. The varieties are favoured by enterprises from the European part of Russia, Ural and Western Siberia.

Agros 2022 served as a productive platform for industry representatives to network, exchange their experience and discuss topical issues of the upcoming season.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO

Tough seeds for harsh weather conditions

EkoNiva-Semena has taken part in Ural-Agro 2022, a trade fair in Yekaterinburg oblast, to present seeds of varieties delivering high yields even in risky farming zones.

EkoNiva-Semena, a seed growing company of EkoNiva Group, has brought superior imported varieties and in-house bred releases – 5 winter wheat and 3 soybean varieties.

'In the run-up to the growing season, the trade fair is an excellent event for the farmers to replenish their immediate seed stock and select winter varieties for planting in autumn, therefore EkoNiva's own soft winter wheat varieties sparked growers' great interest', says Sergey Shchuchko, EkoNiva-Semena Sales Rep.

EkoNiva offers frost-resistant varieties

fitting the Urals climatic conditions. EN Taygeta winter wheat ensures consistently high yields due to good environmental stress resistance.

Out of spring wheat varieties, Licamero is a top choice among Ural farmers. According to Russian Agricultural Centre's data, the variety is ranked number 7 in the rating of top 10 most planted crop varieties in Russia in 2021. In the Ural area, the variety shows consistently high yields – from 4 to 6 tonnes/ha depending on the weather, which is 20-30% higher than the local varieties' performance.

The lentil is one of the most profitable crops and its area has been expanding lately in the Ural Federal District, therefore the guests of the trade fair were offered CDC Redbow lentils adapted to the region. High-yielding Rocket and Trendy with 24% protein at least are preferred pea varieties as they feature good harvestability and

resistance to lodging.

Dakota and Paola are alfalfa varieties favoured by livestock farmers as they have high nutritious value, frost resistance and early regrowth in spring.

EkoNiva customer base in the Ural region includes over 500 farming enterprises, which is not a limit.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO



Field peas Trendy



This year marks the 20th anniversary of EkoNivaAgro foundation in Voronezh oblast. It was the first enterprise of the Group to pave the way in the agricultural sector, and today, EkoNivaAgro is the largest subdivision in the holding.

It all started with Tikhii Don dairy farm based in Liski district. The farm with 5,700 hectares of land, 400 cows and 120 employees was in a difficult financial state when Stefan Dürr decided to invest in it. The head of the district set a condition: 'Cows mean jobs for people. You can have business in our area only provided that you keep the cows!'

Today, five production enterprises of EkoNivaAgro operate in seven districts of the region - twenty-eight farms in total, including sixteen modern free-stall dairies. The dairy herd has over 44,000 head, and the gross yield in 2021 reached more than 460,000 tonnes, which is over 50% of milk produced in the region. The crop land amounts to 146,760 ha.

How has EkoNiva impacted the areas of operation?

To provide the employees with comfortable accommodation close to their workplace, the company launched its own housing project. Over the past 20 years, EkoNiva has built or bought 133 dwellings for the specialists. After joining the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme, the company also co-invested in the construction of 66 more houses (28 in Liski and 38 in Bobrov districts). Besides, EkoNiva workers are granted corporate loans for housing improvement.

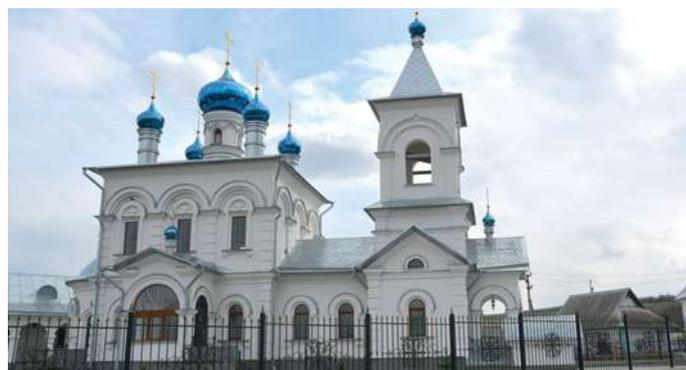
As the operations are growing, the number of employees keeps increasing as well, exceeding 3,600 people at present. More and more young specialists are welcomed by EkoNiva every year – the share of professionals under 40 years old makes 43%. To encourage young people to stay and start their families in the rural area, it is essential to create appropriate conditions for them, for instance, to open modern schools, kindergartens, cultural institutions, provide quality health services and so on.

In 2009, EkoNiva in cooperation with the district administration constructed a kindergarten for 40 children in Shchuchye village. Back then, the kindergarten seemed to have ample space, but later it became clear that it needed to be expanded as the number of kids had grown. In the past five years only, the workers of EkoNiva have become parents of 577 children. So in

2021, the kindergarten was renovated with the help of EkoNivaAgro and increased the capacity up to 70 kids. The upgraded facility features a painting studio, a scientific lab, a centre for social integration, an open-air theatre and even an individual weather station.

Schools located in the villages where EkoNiva operates are also sponsored by the holding.

'Thanks to EkoNiva, our school can provide the students and teachers with free meals twice a day', says Natalya Soloshenko, Principal of the Shchuchye public school. 'We have gradually renovated the entire building, equipped the classrooms, gym and canteen to meet the modern standards, restored the Museum of Local History. Now, our students can take extra-curriculum classes in martial arts or choreography, join football and volleyball teams free of charge. In 2017, EkoNiva purchased a school



bus for us. Their support has always been very substantial, and we are profoundly grateful to this company and personally to Stefan Dürr.'

At the regional contest in November 2021, Shchuchye was recognised as the most beautiful village in Voronezh oblast. EkoNiva's contribution can't be overrated – it helped to restore the Cathedral of the Nativity of Blessed Virgin Mary and the Victory Park. Besides, in 2020, the Museum of Local History welcomed its first visitors, and by the end of 2022, a new Community Centre is expected to be commissioned under the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme.

EkoNiva always puts focus on local communities. The enterprise supports schools, kindergartens, culture and sports institutions and other social facilities. For example, Pereyetzhe, Shchuchye and Vladimirovka villages now have local medical and obstetrical stations.

'We are committed to taking care of people and improving their life in the first place', says Stefan Dürr, EkoNiva Group President. 'I am happy that EkoNiva is involved in the rural development programmes. It gives us more opportunities to benefit the local communities and make the rural area a truly attractive place to live in. Our goal is to make young people choose to settle down and start families here and not to leave their homes in search of a better life somewhere else.'

EkoNiva's contribution to the social projects was recognised at the federal level. The enterprise has taken numerous prizes in the category 'For Involvement in Solving Social Issues and Developing Corporate Charity' at the regional and federal stages of the National contest 'Russian Business of High Social Efficiency'.

'We are responsible for the people and the land that we work on', comments Aleksandr Rybenko, EkoNivaAgro Regional Director in Voronezh oblast. 'This approach has been an integral part of our mission from the very first day of the company.'

By Aleksandr KUTISHCHEV



In line with organic standards

The specialists of Kiwa BCS Öko-Garantie have conducted an annual inspection of Savinskaya Niva organic farm.

As part of the audit, the inspectors evaluated soil, crop and feed quality compliance, cow health and housing conditions. The laboratory tests confirmed that Savinskaya Niva enterprise fully meets the requirements of the European organic farming standards.

'The audit results prove that our production

processes are in line with high international standards, regulations and requirements necessary to ensure our consumer safety', points out Olga Laminskaya, Manager of Technical Regulation and Standardisation Department at EkoNiva-Food.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), organic farming is a holistic

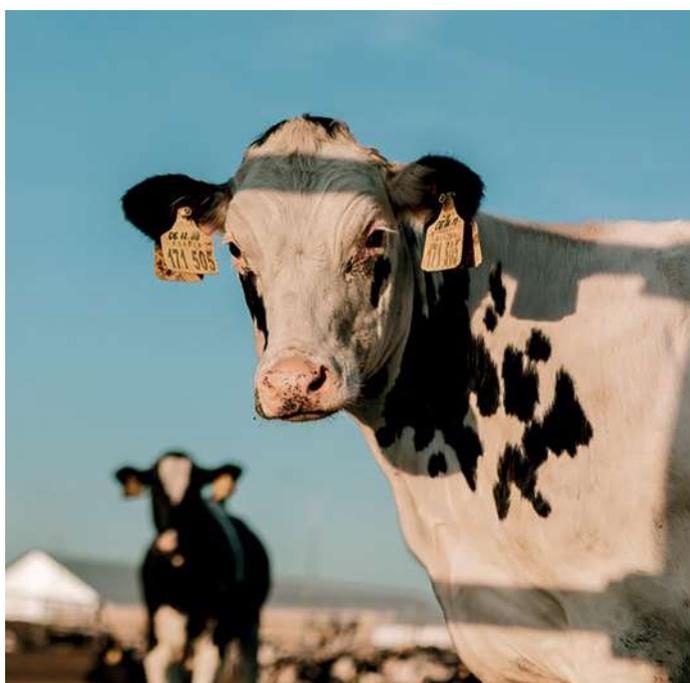
production management system that promotes and enhances agro-ecosystem health, including biodiversity, biological cycles, and soil biological activity. All production processes are subject to the stringent regulations and rules. For instance, the application of crop protection chemicals is strictly forbidden, and cows

can live only in a natural environment.

The enterprise is also certified in accordance with the Russian organic certification standard. Besides, Savinskaya Niva is a member of the National Organic Union and an affiliate of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM).

EkoNiva expands its herd

Savinskaya Niva has increased its dairy herd – 139 new heifers of Black-and-White, Red-and-White, Swiss, Simmental and Ayrshire breeds have been delivered to the farm from Kaluzhskaya Niva.



Every day, the farm produces 2.3 tonnes of milk. The expansion and new cows joining the main herd will enable the enterprise to increase the daily milk output by 50% – up to 3.5 tonnes.

To adapt to the clean environment, the cows go through a conversion period of six months. The management system on organic farms includes free stalls, grazing on natural and cultivated pastures, feeding on exclusively organic fodder grown in Savinskaya Niva.

'At present, there are no organic cattle on the market. For this reason, we have received an official permit from the certifying authorities to relocate cows from our commercial dairy facilities', says Karolina Vasilyeva, Manager of Milk Quality Control Department for Processing and Organic Farming at EkoNiva-APK Holding.

Now, the heifers are kept separately from the main

organic herd. The calvings are expected to begin by September. By then, their milk will fully meet all the organic standards.

'Over the past six months, sales of EKONIVA ORGANIC milk have doubled. Plans are afoot to expand the brand line-up of organic products,' says Yekaterina Dürr, Marketing Department Deputy Manager, EkoNiva-Food.

Laboratory tests have confirmed the excellent properties of EKONIVA milk.

'EKONIVA ORGANIC pasteurised milk features high fat (over 4-4.1%) and protein (at least 3.3-4%). It boasts high vitamin D3, phosphorus (over 30% of the recommended daily intake for adults per 100 ml); it is also a source of vitamins B2, B12 and iodine (more than 7.5% of the daily requirement per 100 ml)', continues Karolina Vasilyeva.

By Darya DENISOVA

Kristina Romanovskaya: 'People in Russia should remember that we are historically agricultural country'



Charming and charismatic, with a radiant smile, shining eyes and a confident walk, she catches the eye immediately being natural and at ease as a real Russian lady.

This is all about Kristina Romanovskaya, the owner and managing director of Lazarevskoye livestock breeding enterprise based in Tula oblast. EkoNiva and Lazarevskoye have a long-lasting partnership, the foundation for which was laid by her father.

Lazarevskoye was started by your father, Fyodor Romanovskiy. Now, you are following in his footsteps – is it what you dreamt of in your youth?

The farm was developing and growing before my eyes – I remember operational meetings held right in the living room of our house. When I was young, I wasn't thinking about becoming a farmer. Unfortunately, at some point, my parents had health problems and couldn't put as much effort into the business. That's why I took charge of Lazarevskoye in 2020. At the very beginning of my career, I was viewed as the director's daughter and people were sizing me up to understand if I was up for the job. Now, the employees say that I'm a living image of both my parents rolled into one, and I'm very proud of it!

What challenges do you and your company face?

Lazarevskoye, one of the largest companies in Tula oblast, is a livestock breeding enterprise that has been operating for 40 years. It is engaged in crop and meat production and processing. The twenty-five thousand hectares of farmland are planted with barley, wheat, peas, buckwheat, maize, potatoes, sunflower and canola. The machinery fleet features 83 tractors and 31 combine harvesters. The meat-processing facility annually produces 10,000 tonnes of high-quality sausages, smoked and semi-finished meat products.

- 60,000 pigs • 45,000 tonnes of fodder per year
- 3,500 head of cattle • 31 branded retail shops

Currently, it's critical to adapt to the changing situation. Anticipating that we can lose our long-term suppliers, we are looking for options in China and other countries. My team has ambitious plans, and 'we will keep on going' as my dad would say. We continue evolving and are not going to slow down. So, we need to manage our efforts carefully.

How are new technologies implemented at Lazarevskoye?

Digitalisation is my favourite topic. It is the most efficient way to enhance business processes providing you with tools for increasing profitability by reducing production costs. We place great emphasis on management accounting; we apply modern digital solutions for data collection, processing

and evaluation, which, ultimately, influences the strategy and financial result.

You continue cooperation with EkoNiva-Tekhnika started by your father. How important are modern equipment and maintenance for you as a manager?

EkoNiva is the most client-oriented company I know. It's hard to overestimate timely maintenance in modern farming. I'm happy that my father started this partnership many years ago. We cannot afford losing a minute, and EkoNiva renders the most convenient and fastest service. EkoNiva has never let us down; all our sowing and harvesting campaigns have gone by schedule. I'm especially grateful to Gennadiy

What motivates you personally through the life?

Contributing to my community is truly important for me. People in Russia should remember that we are historically agricultural country. The labour of rural workers should be properly rewarded – these people deserve high standard of living. This is my primary motivation today. To attain my goals, I follow certain rules: keep my head cool and energy high and sort out my priorities to manage my time more efficiently. I have a large family, a business and lots of hobbies, that's why I stick to self-discipline and a reasonable balance between work and rest.

How do you incentivise your employees?

We've implemented a private health insurance programme for those who have been working for us for over 5 years. Also, we're reviving the tradition of a competition aspect at work to inspire people to new achievements as well. In addition, we grant housing and home improvement loans to our specialists. Personally, I stand for family-like relationship in the company - full of mutual understanding, respect and support. This is what I try to convey to my employees and expect the same from them.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO





Second life

The specialists of EkoNiva machinery dealing holding give equipment a second life. Within a few hours, service technicians can restore worn-out holes and articulated joints in farm machines using methods of metal overlay welding and boring.

The specialists at EkoNivaSibir, Kirov and Kostroma branches of EkoNiva-Tekhnika were the first to apply these restoration methods. This year, due to high demand, this technique has been adopted by other branch offices in 9 regions of operation.

Portable WS2 Compact welding and boring machine by Sir Meccanica is the tool that helps technicians to promptly fix a range of problems without transportation to workshops. With extreme precision, each single machine performs on-site repairs of articulated joints of big and small dimensions, whose disassembly would result in the equipment downtime.

'Due to wear and tear during the operation, bush and pin holes increase in the diameter which leads to backlash, shock and damage of internal components. Our task is to identify the problematic spot in the machine, restore the nominal diameter and get the machine running again', says Vladimir Kovalenko, Maintenance and Service Department Manager

at EkoNivaTekhnika-Holding.

Body parts and frame elements of trailed machines are affected by damage most frequently; loader carriage arms, tractor rear linkage axle mounts, seed drill and cultivator wings are especially subject to wear and tear. Many parts are difficult to find on the market and are costly to buy.

'Restoration of elements by welding and boring saves farmers money and extends the equipment lifetime by three years at least. The repair of one affected area takes from four to eight hours', explains Dmitriy Lukin, Maintenance and Service Department Manager of EkoNiva-Tekhnika Kirov branch.

Often it is mere neglect, such as breach of lubrication schedule, unintended use and impact load, that causes excessive wear and tear followed by major repairs of planters, tractors and loaders.

'At the moment, we are repairing a loader carriage. Replacing it would cost the farmer around 400 thousand rubles, meanwhile restoration by our method will cost him around 40 thousand rubles – obviously, the difference is

considerable', underlines Dmitriy Fedotov, Kostroma Branch Technical Department Manager at EkoNiva-Tekhnika.

Thus, over 500 units have been given a second life thanks to overlay welding and boring methods used by Maintenance and Service Department of EkoNiva machinery dealing holding.

'Due to the compact dimensions and portability of the machine, a technician can take it to the customer's farm and restore mechanism holes with a diameter from 20 to 400 mm right there on site', states Igor Linnik, Kaluga Branch Manager at EkoNiva-Tekhnika.

By Darya DENISOVA





How to prevent soil compaction



Though soil compaction issue is quite common, Russian agronomists sometimes fail to come up with effective solutions. The consequences of soil compaction can be quite serious, including a yield reduction by 30-40%. Willi Drews, Doctor of Agronomy, EkoNiva Consultant, has shared the tips for managing soil compaction.

Soil compaction occurs as a result of long-term use of heavy machinery and improper cultivation. Upon continuous tillage to the same depth, a layer is formed in the topsoil commonly referred to as 'a plough pan'. Compaction leads to stunted root growth, poor aeration, moisture shortage and restricted oxygen supply to the root zone. Particularly sensitive to plough pan are sugar beets, rapeseed and sunflower. These crops have a tap root system, which struggles to break through the compressed subsurface horizon.

'Before driving into to the fields in spring, an agronomist should monitor the soil density with a penetrometer or a spade by digging out a small survey pit up to 40 cm deep. If compaction is detected at a depth of 20 cm, then tillage needs to be done 25 cm deep. If the hard pan is at 25 cm, then subsoiling needs

to reach the 30-centimetre layer', points out Willi Drews.

For early fieldwork, the best options are tracked self-propelled machines or tractors with twin wheels. While the crawlers are ready to go, the wheeled units require optimisation.

'First and foremost, the tractor needs to be ballasted with a counterweight, namely the minimum possible weight needed to handle a

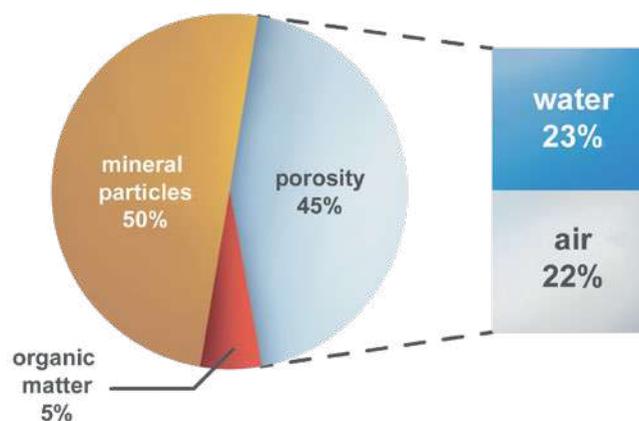
particular trailed implement. Then, the tyre pressure needs to be reduced and twin wheels installed, thus increasing the footprint area', continues Willi Drews.

The choice of tillage tools depends on the functionality. For example, the Vaderstad TopDown is a multipurpose unit combining intensive stubble incorporation with discs, tillage with three rows of tines to a depth of

up to 30 cm, levelling and rolling. All the operations are performed in a single pass, as compared to up to four passes with other machines. The John Deere 915 V-rippers are a perfect solution for breaking up compaction and loosening the soil below the top 30 cm. The implements with an operating width of 2.5-6.6 m can work the soil up to 58 cm deep.

'So, farmers should comply with the following recommendations to avoid causing compaction. Avoid driving on wet soil in spring is number one. Dry land surface in autumn, on the contrary, supports weight well. Ensure greater contact area via tracked running gear, broader wheel width, twin wheels to reduce the pressure on the ground. Bring the number of passes down to a minimum by using tillage combinations. Rotate crops with different root system types. Leave as much organic matter in the soil as possible, carry out liming and crop residue mulching. All these measures minimise the risk of soil compaction, save costs and increase crop yields', sums up Willi Drews.

By Viktor BARGOTIN



Perfect aeration rate is 25% of air pores in the soil. Optimum soil texture is 50% mineral particles (loam, sand), 45% porosity (air and water), 5% organic matter (humus, etc.)



Getting to the core of soil health

How can a farmer determine the main agrochemical parameters of the soil? Specialists of EkoNiva-Tekhnika Holding recommend taking samples!

EkoNiva's smart farming team equipped with the FarmLab portable laboratory by Stenon offers farmers a new service of evaluation of key agrochemical properties of the soil. Together with custom-tailored consulting, the service helps to reduce

customer's production costs.

'The solution enables us to carry out accurate real-time soil survey, monitor soil temperature, moisture, pH value, type and texture. We keep track of the availability of such nutrients as nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, magnesium,

organic carbon and humus', says Artem Novikov, Head of Smart Farming Department of EkoNiva-Tekhnika Holding.

Portability is a great benefit of FarmLab. It looks like a compact sensory shovel, so all it takes is to stick it into the ground of the programmed area. The measurement is taken at three points within a radius of 50 cm.

oblast, plans to carry out variable-rate sowing of maize in a field with different productivity zones this year.

'The field is complex, ununiform in terrain and moisture content. Last season, the maize yield here varied from 6.5 up to 12.0 t/ha. In order to do a proper variable-rate sowing this year, I invited EkoNiva specialists to do the analysis.

**Artyom Novikov,
Manager of Smart Farming Department of
EkoNiva-Tekhnika Holding:**

'The FarmLab enables us to identify the differences in soil properties in high and low productivity zones, get to the core of the issues, adjust the fertiliser application and sowing rates or take reclamation measures.'



'The system has a built-in GPS-module to determine the precise coordinates of the explored area, which is key to establishing the differences in the nutrient content across the field. Besides, the lab features embedded field mapping software which provides fertiliser application guidelines. All the data is immediately uploaded to the server and promptly processed. The user has an instant access to the records via a dedicated app', continues Artyom Novikov.

Igor Rozhnov, Head of Rozhnov farming enterprise, Ternovka district, Voronezh

They took samples of plots with various yields using FarmLab', says Igor Rozhnov.

A month after fertiliser application, the analysis can be carried out provided that the soil is not frozen or dry – at least 20 mm of prior rainfall is required.

As the soil calibration has almost been finished, the service is going to be available in the Black Soil region already this season. In the future, EkoNiva-Tekhnika Holding is planning to extend its agrochemical soil analysis coverage to the 26 regions of its operation.

By Darya DENISOVA

No time to waste

Quick tyre service is crucially important during field works as farm machinery downtime is not an option in high season. EkoNiva-Chernozemye dealership offers farmers an effective method of hot vulcanisation for tyre repairs and restoration, which helps to avoid loss of time and money.

Specialists of Dobrino Service Centre in Voronezh oblast are fully equipped to service farmers' machinery quickly and efficiently and eliminate major tyre defects in tractors, combine harvesters, sprayers and other units.

Hot curing is a process of natural rubber interaction with a vulcanising agent. Natural rubber melts easily at a temperature of 150°C and gets the consistency of liquid glue and, thanks to its properties, can fix any punctures and cracks in tyre casing.

'A lot of clients apply for tyre repairs during sowing and harvesting campaigns. Often, tyres get seriously damaged at plough or cultivator turns. As a rule, foreign objects hiding in the soil cause sidewall cuts. We restore

tyres with a diameter from 20 to 50 inches to their normal condition', says Aleksandr Bogomolov, Engineering and Service Department Manager at EkoNiva-Chernozemye.

Restoration of large tyres is a meticulous task. The procedure includes a diagnostic checkup, applying multiple layers of natural rubber to the problematic area and working with air compressor. After this, the tyre needs to be thoroughly dried.

'One tyre can take from 12 hours to three days to mend. Natural rubber ensures high quality of repaired tyres and their durability. After restoration, the tyres can serve for another three or four seasons', explains Vladimir Galizin, Technician at Dobrino Service Centre.

By Darya DENISOVA



Pioneer in Siberia

Letyazhye farming enterprise, Tomsk oblast, is one of the leading agricultural businesses in Siberia and a long-standing partner of EkoNiva. At the beginning of 2022, EkoNivaSibir delivered the first JCB 536-95 Agri Plus in the region to Letyazhye farm. A good start of the year.



Last year, Vladimir Selikhov, Manager of the farming enterprise, took first place in the category 'Farmer of the Year' at the annual national award '2021 Agroinvestor of the Year'. Employing cutting-edge technology, the enterprise reached a 30% revenue growth and increased profit by 40%. The JCB 536-95 Agri Plus Series III is equipped with a new more economical JCB EcoMAX engine generating 126 hp and the automatic Powershift gearbox.

'JCB machines have always been a valuable all-rounder tackling various tasks in livestock and crop production and construction or removing snow from roads', states Aleksandr Burmak, Lead Sales Representative at EkoNivaSibir.

The hydraulics system has become 'smarter'; it boasts a new option of bucket shaking, the automated boom shock absorbing system and the hydraulic carriage lock. With a push of the brake pedal, switchable transmission can be disconnected for redistribution of power to the hydraulics and improved loading and rehandling.

The machinery operators on the farm enjoy greatly an upgraded cab: it is 12% more spacious and twice as quiet, the cab window is increased by 14%. The ergonomic design features no front crossbar, which ensures improved visibility when the 9.5-metre boom is up.

By Aleksandr KUTISHCHEV



Sowing with highest precision



To deal with tough conditions of the new farming season, Russian producers focus on modern technologies. Innovative smart solutions, such as FJDynamics offered by EkoNiva-Tekhnika Holding, enhance the efficiency and productivity of fieldworks and help to cut costs on fuel and chemicals.

The FJDynamics auto-guidance and steering system is compatible with standard machinery of multiple brands. The Mobile RTK signal ensures high navigation steering accuracy reaching 2.5 cm, improved yields and reduced operating costs. The RTK base station does not imply any additional fee for RTK signal activation. The navigation system facilitates various farming operations: tillage, cereal sowing, fertiliser and chemical application.

'With the FJDynamics, farmers get high signal accuracy and functionality of top brands at an affordable price. The navigation system is independent of foreign service and does not involve high subscription fees for the RTK technology. Besides, the smart digital solution includes convenient route patterns, generates operating reports in shp and isoxml formats and, in addition to that, one RTK base station can communicate with up to 20 vehicles simultaneously', comments Sergey Sidorenko,

Smart Solution Sales Department Specialist at EkoNiva-Chernozemye.

The FJDynamics operates based on the Global Navigation Satellite System signals. The kit provides abundant high-performance guidance and autosteering hardware. The main components include a display and control terminal, a GNSS antenna, an IMU attitude sensor, a wheel angle sensor and an electric steering wheel consisting of a steering motor and a steering wheel. The display and control terminal ensures automatic

driving along straight line, automatic turning at headlands and precise control of each implement.

The FJDynamics electric steering wheel can be installed on almost any type of machinery. The IMU module provides terrain compensation to enable agricultural machinery to maintain high accuracy in undulating terrain and slopes.

'Before the start of sowing, EkoNiva-Chernozemye offered us to try the FJDynamics system. The kits were installed on our self-propelled machines. With this system, we can avoid skips and overlaps, reduce consumption of fuel, seeds, chemicals and fertiliser. In total, we expect to save up to 10-15% of sowing costs', says Aleksandr Ryadnov, Manager of the farming enterprise.

The FJDynamics system can be provided the dealership for demonstration by first, and after the purchase of the autosteering system, the company technicians install all the necessary equipment, do the software settings and train local operators to ensure smooth operation.



By Viktor BARGOTIN

Season 2022: route calculated

The machinery fleet must be fully ready before the start of the farming season. The more work is ahead, the more meticulous preparation is required. Despite all the challenges, the engines must start in the fields in time and run smoothly till the end of harvesting as each minute of downtime costs a lot.



To grow a good crop and enough forage for the herd, EkoNiva needs to cultivate over 454 thousand hectares in 2022. All the company's divisions across 13 regions are going to run about 8 thousand machines and implements, including 1,200 tractors, 180 spreaders, 170 seed drills, 118 row planters, 140 sprayers, 250 grain combines, 120 forage harvesters and over 70 self-propelled windrowers.

The majority of the fleet consists of cutting-edge machines by leading global manufacturers (John Deere, Vaderstad, Kverneland, etc.) featuring optional remote control, telemetry and other smart farming solutions. After winter maintenance, before driving into the fields, all the units had been checked

for good order and proper functioning.

'Despite the current concerns related to the machinery market situation, our fleet is almost 100% ready for the fieldworks', states Roman Kopytov, EkoNiva-APK Holding Technical Director, 'thanks to a good reserve of spare parts in stock at our partners' warehouses. After performing major maintenance and repairs, we ordered additional spare parts at operating warehouses of our suppliers, for example, John Deere. The biggest challenge was to ensure uninterrupted telemetric functioning.'

'Tractors and combines operate well with the current software versions so far, meanwhile we are negotiating on timely updates', adds

Roman Kopytov. 'The smart farming options are also up and running integrated in the units; the AutoTrac SF1 navigation signals do not require adjustment. So, we can move on with the sowing campaign without a hitch.'

According to Roman Kopytov, this year's plan does not involve large-scale upgrading of precision farming tools, but if needed, the company is going to prioritise the implementation of the domestically developed Cognitive Pilot system. It is a great example of IT technology import substitution in the farming sector. EkoNiva signed the cooperation agreement with the developers back in 2020. Cognitive Pilot is a system of autonomous farm machinery control that can identify obstacles

and maintain the optimum trajectory. EkoNiva technicians have been trained to install and set the system. Successful on-farm testing has confirmed the decision to increase the share of grain combines fitted with the system.

Apart from domestic solutions, there are imported products still available despite the issues with foreign servers, for example, GPS/GLONASS base stations with RTK modems that ensure precision for any crop.

'Regions with developed oil industry, such as Orenburg oblast, the Republics of Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, already have an extensive RTK network, so we can switch to its signals at any moment and enjoy full autonomy based on the existing network', says Roman Kopytov. 'As for the other regions, if necessary, we can acquire such hardware and put it in operation quickly. The station is placed in the farm's territory, the machinery connects to its signal and the foreign server is no longer required for adjustment.'

Having a highly qualified technician team is essential if you need to set and optimise such a large and sophisticated machinery fleet. EkoNiva has a programme of continuous specialist training to ensure quick and competent response to any challenge.

'In 2021, 350 technicians and operators completed the training programme', says Boris Morev, EkoNiva Corporate Academy Manager. 'This year, 500 employees are expected to upgrade and hone their skills.'

The company also supports continuous internal mentorship and experience exchange. The Engineering Department accumulates all relevant knowledge in the Russian cloud storage. The specialists can access this information at any time and update it based on their on-farm experience.

The machines, hands and minds fully ready ensure a bumper crop.

By Aleksandr KUTISHCHEV

Vole control for high yields

A lot of farms lose a significant crop share due to failure to take timely rodent pest control measures in autumn as it is the time of mice population boom. Special attention should be paid to mini-till or no-till winter crop fields.



Sergey Chernenko, Chief Agronomist of EkoNivaAgro East operation

Rodents cause damage all year round. The cereals at ripening stages suffer the most as mice gnaw on the stem causing it to fall and then feed on the ear grain or take it to the burrow.

Voles have a voracious appetite and prolific reproductive cycle. They can produce up to 8 litters per year, with 5 to 8 young per litter, and each of them reaches sexual maturity in 60 days. According to estimations, if late in May one hectare of land is populated with 5 pairs of meadow mice, by autumn, under favourable conditions, there will be 8,500 specimens, each of them consuming up to 11 kg of plants per year.

Proper agronomic management is imperative to reduce the mice population. Timely harvesting, straw removal and minimised losses leave the rodents with nothing

to feed on. Weed control in the areas of vole activity on non-cultivated land makes the animals more susceptible to predators and birds of prey.

Barrier treatment is also instrumental in rodent pest management done near the areas of intensive vole breeding directly in the fields as well as on adjacent grassy borders and in the forest lines, which prevents mice from moving into the crop and helps to avoid losses.

Rodenticide-treated baits distributed over the fields are the most effective and economical method for reducing vole populations. Anticoagulant rodenticides causing internal bleeding in voles in 3-8 days are the most common type.

EkoNivaAgro East operation uses Isotsin™ (brodifacoum) treated baits. The toxicant is effective in controlling

high populations (over 300 burrows/ha). The baits are formulated at a rate of 20 ml of the anticoagulant to 1 kg of grain as an edible base with some virgin vegetable oil added to make them more attractive. At the temperature higher than 10°C, damp baits based on

infestation. The rodenticide is slow to degrade (up to a month in the soil), which ensures a long-term population control even with existing burrows reoccupied by migrants.

Hand-baiting is the most effective and eco-friendly way of application. The baits are placed in the burrow, then the opening is sealed with earth and trampled on tightly, which prevents voles from accessing the crops for a while and wild birds – from eating the bait. In this case, the efficacy of the second-generation anticoagulant reaches 80-85%.

Besides, EkoNivaAgro East operation applies mechanical spreading to cover thousand-hectare areas. Then the application rate of the treated grain depending on the population amounts to 8 kg/ha.

The evaluation is carried out 10-15 days after the treatment. If above-zero temperatures are expected in the following 2-3 weeks, one treatment usually is not enough therefore regular crop examination and infestation



Willi Drews,
EkoNiva Consultant, Doctor of Agronomy:

'Apart from rodenticides, agents of biological rodent control are also gaining in popularity. Bactorodenticide based on Salmonella enteritidis var. Issatschenko strain is a well-known bacterial product that can be applied by hand or mechanically at a rate of up to 3 kg/ha or 5 grammes per burrow. It is safe for the warm-blooded, birds and fish. However, to reduce the environmental impact, it is recommended to place the baits based on this strain in special boxes or directly in the burrows.'

soaked wheat grain have better palatability. The application rate is usually 1-3 kg/ha but can reach 10-15 kg/ha in grassy areas with heavy

control are an integral part of the rodent pest management programme.

By Sergey CHERNENKO
Willi DREWS





EkoNiva reaching new heights

EkoNiva is boosting sales of pedigree cattle. The company offers heifers with high genetic potential adapted to Russian conditions and management on commercial farms, which guarantees a herd uniform in conformation and production.

EkoNiva agricultural holding is the largest raw milk producer in Russia and Europe. Its total herd exceeds 216,000 head of cattle, half of which are dairy cows. The daily output of all enterprises amounts to 3,200 tonnes – the result ensured by high-yielding pedigree cattle.

For sixteen years, the company has been engaged in pedigree cattle breeding. EkoNiva's enterprises in Voronezh, Kaluga, Novosibirsk, Orenburg, Ryazan and Tyumen oblasts are certified as breeding farms and reproducers of Simmental, Holstein (black-and-white), Red-and-White, Hereford, Aberdeen-Angus cattle and provide all holding dairy farms with pedigree calves. Since 2006, over 162,000 fresh cows supplied by own operations have joined the main herd.

EkoNiva has been selling surplus young stock to third

farms for over ten years. Its partners buy pregnant and breeding-age heifers as well as Holstein, Simmental and Red-and-White sires. Black-and-white Holstein is a priority breed on EkoNiva farms. The average daily

choose the most appropriate sire semen for a given stock. The North American and European sexed semen ensures receiving a high percentage of heifer calves. Every animal has a pedigree certificate with full details

**Alkhast Saraliyev,
Director General of Kavkazskoye Zdorovye
dairy company:**

'We used to import heifers from Denmark. EkoNiva cattle are on a par with Danish cows and in some respects even superior. They have excellent genetics and good dairy traits.'

milk per cow is over 30 kg, while the annual output at EkoNiva's enterprises reaches 10,327 kg of milk with 3.74% fat and 3.43% protein.

On the farms, specialists monitor and record the data on control milkings, milk quality, insemination, calving and calf growth. They also carry out linear estimation of the cows' exterior and DNA-tests to

on its parentage and the productivity of its female ancestors. Thus the company has filled a distinctive niche in the pedigree cattle market offering high-quality cattle. Pedigree cows from EkoNiva Group are highly rated in the regions of the Central, Volga, Siberian and Far Eastern federal districts as well as in the Karachay-Cherkessia, Chechen and Tatarstan Republics.

Kavkazskoye Zdorovye, a milk producer from the Chechen Republic, has purchased a total of 740 Holstein heifers. The cattle were delivered from the enterprises in Voronezh and Ryazan oblasts.

'We used to import heifers from Denmark', explains Alkhast Saraliyev, Director General of Kavkazskoye Zdorovye. 'EkoNiva cattle are on a par with Danish cows and in some respects even superior.'

These cows boast excellent genetic traits and production. Besides, EkoNiva can ship a batch of any size the customer requests, which is a great competitive advantage. So, for Privolnoye farm, Ryazan oblast, it was a decisive factor.

'We have purchased a batch of pedigree heifers from EkoNiva's dairy in our region – OKA Moloko', says Aleksey Yeryomin, Deputy Director General for Livestock Farming at Privolnoye. 'We already see impressive performance – the average daily milk yield exceeds 27 kg per dairy cow, and we expect it to keep growing.'

By Tatyana IGNATENKO



Academy of Livestock Production



The enterprises of EkoNiva-Agro (Voronezh oblast) and Sibirskaya Niva (Novosibirsk oblast) have hosted EkoNiva Spring Academy of Livestock Production.

Thirty-two students from 25 leading agricultural universities have participated in the training session. The curriculum featured a week's intensive course of seminars and practical training in modern livestock management.

'Supervised by EkoNiva experts, we performed routine checkups of the herd and treatments of fresh cows, worked in breeding pens, calf barns and hoof-trimming area. Besides, we had two days of intensive training in forage management, studied various types of forages and their composition, evaluated different rations and their quality', recounts Yulia Borisova, a student of Altai State Agricultural University.

A special focus was given to modern farm management software – Dairy Comp, which plans, monitors and analyses all the processes on the farm. EkoNiva specialists also demonstrated the in-house developed Eko.Feed. This software optimises the feeding process: from

mixer wagon loading to feed distribution. Afterwards, all the information is

consolidated into one data base accessible to all herd managers.



**Boris Morev,
Corporate Academy Manager:**

'Today, EkoNiva is running around ten educational projects to find and support young specialists. Each of them is unique in its own way, but all of them share the same goal – to ensure high competence of young professionals and reinforce the positive image of the agricultural industry.'

'It is a pleasure to pass on your experience to the next generation. They are highly committed and hard-working. Of course, there occur mistakes at the beginning, but we are always there for them to help and explain. Due to projects like this, today's students realise that agriculture is a booming industry offering great career opportunities, and as a result, a few years later, we can employ young specialists who come to our company after graduation with a lot of drive and passion', underlines Andrey Peretokin, Chief Herd Manager of EkoNiva-Left Bank operation.

EkoNiva Academy was launched in 2015 for students studying Herd Management, Veterinary Medicine, Agronomy or Engineering.

About 300 young professionals have taken the course in seven years, many of them have been employed by the company.

By Viktor BARGOTIN



Young workforce in priority



EkoNiva-APK Holding HR Department specialists have participated in the strategy session 'Priority 2030: Development of Agricultural Universities' hosted by Kuban State Agricultural University.

Among the guests of honour at the event were Veniamin Kondratyev, Governor of Krasnodar area, Valeriy Falkov, Minister of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation,

Dmitriy Patrushev, Minister of Agriculture of the Russian Federation, and rectors of 15 institutions of higher education.

At the meeting, the participants discussed the

issues of state support of the agricultural institutes and universities, promotion of farming and agricultural education as well as ways to enhance the interaction between science, power and business.

EkoNiva experts shared their hands-on experience on engaging young people – students and university graduates – in work at the modern farming operations.

'For over a decade now,

EkoNiva has been running training programmes to upgrade the knowledge of graduates and select future employees. Since their launch, about 4,000 students have done an internship at our facilities, 1,000 of them are currently employed with the company', comments Boris Morev, EkoNiva-APK Holding Corporate Academy Manager.

By Viktor BARGOTIN

Three stages of mastery

EkoNivaAgro has hosted the first stage of the corporate training programme 'Master's Course for Technicians'. Over the course of the year, 15 young employees will be offered to complete 3 stages of the advanced course.

On the first day of the session, the attendees took part in a corporate culture training. The second day involved a workshop on the machinery by John Deere, the world's leading manufacturer of farm equipment. Following a detailed review of the products and principles of their operation, the specialists discussed routine maintenance and shared their hands-on experience with their colleagues.

'Participation in the advanced course will enable our employees to expand their technical expertise as well as

gain significant experience in economics and human resource management', points out Maksim Potapov, Deputy Manager of Personnel Training and Development Department, EkoNiva-APK Holding.

The technical service specialists spent the closing day in EkoNivaAgro repair shops to hone the skills based on the knowledge received in previous days.

'A professional team of technicians is in charge of ensuring smooth operation and maintenance of more than 7,500 machinery units and vehicles within EkoNiva Group's fleet', notes Roman



Kopytov, Technical Director of EkoNiva-APK Holding.

The master's course for technical specialists comprises three training stages. Upon completion, the attendees

will receive the in-house training certificates which will open up career advancement opportunities at EkoNiva Group's enterprises.

By Viktor BARGOTIN

EkoNiva-Bobrov on winner's podium



EkoNiva-Bobrov hockey club from Voronezh oblast has finished the second season in the National Junior Ice Hockey League (NJIHL). The team advanced to the semifinal and took home the bronze.

The opening of the modern ice hockey rink in Bobrov in 2010 became the springboard for the development of this sport in the district. Within ten years, the young team of local athletes has taken part in the regional, national and international competitions winning gold, silver and bronze medals. In 2020/2021 season, EkoNiva Group became an official sponsor of the team enabling the players to participate in the NJIHL. In

the first tournament season, EkoNiva-Bobrov took seventh place and managed to book a place in the playoff quarter-finals.

The Bobrov squad finished the second regular NJIHL season 2021/2022 of the Eastern Conference in first place having 70 points. The team played 40 games winning thirty-three of them and losing seven.

The most thrilling part of the contests for the Cup began in the playoff of the NJIHL,

featuring sixteen strongest teams from the Western and Eastern Conference. In the last sixteen, EkoNiva-Bobrov celebrated a convincing win over Dinamo-576, a club from Saint-Petersburg. At the next stage of quarter-finals, Bobrov players decisively defeated their contenders from Bryansk with a score of 3-0.

The clash between EkoNiva-Bobrov and Polyot hockey clubs was meant to decide the fate of the NJIHL

Cup. The squad from Rybinsk won silver medals in the regular season of the Eastern Conference. Thus, the series of the two strongest competitors was expected to be intense.

In the first and the second games, the players from Rybinsk overcame the home team 5-4 and 3-1. In the away game, EkoNiva-Bobrov scored a victory 2-1 – an unexpected twist in the series. However, in the fourth match, Polyot chalked up a 4-3 win, qualifying for the final.

According to the NJIHL tournament rules, the higher-ranked semifinalist received the bronze medals. Since EkoNiva-Bobrov was in the first place at the end of the season, bronze medals went to the athletes from Bobrov.

'EkoNiva's support in the past two years has enabled our team to scale new heights. The company helps to organise home and away fixtures, providing the team and the specialists with all they need – from meals to pay. The third NJIHL season lies ahead, and we will go all out to take the trophy and bring joy to our devoted fans', promises Aleksandr Krysanov, Senior Coach of EkoNiva-Bobrov hockey club.

By Viktor BARGOTIN

EkoNiva family relay race

EkoNiva has held a sports festival for its employee families in Voronezh oblast. Ten teams representing all the regional subdivisions of the company competed for the titles of gold medalists and EkoNiva's sportiest family.

The athletic competition consisted of ten relay races. The participants demonstrated their strength, speed, agility as well as creativity. The teams gave it their all and kept the spectators and judges on the edge of their seats until the very last minute.

In the two-child family category, the vigorous team of the Kovzalovs won the gold. The father

of the family Ivan is a herd manager for young stock at EkoNivaAgro-North operation. The close-knit Voskoboyniks' team was the first in the category of one-child families. The head of the family Nikolay is a chief herd manager at EkoNivaAgro-Left Bank.

'It feels so good to enjoy not only your work, but also corporate family fests. I'm grateful to EkoNiva for

creating a festive mood and spreading positive vibes', says Nikolay Voskoboynik.

All the participants were awarded memorable gifts, medals and certificates of participation. EkoNiva's

family fest turned out a heart-warming event reverberating with children's joy and laughter.

By Viktor BARGOTIN



EkoNiva volleyball tournament



and winter fishing contests, family relays and billiards, table tennis and volleyball championships later. Last year, we had our first mini-football tournament and now we are training hard for the upcoming competition.'



EkoNiva's individual championships are on a par with team contests in terms of the number of participants as they both gather scores of contenders ranging from 3 to 60 years of age and older. According to

EkoNiva corporate volleyball championship has been held in the Ice Sports Palace named after Vyacheslav Fetisov in Bobrov, Voronezh oblast. In total, seven teams competed in the event.

Employees from ENA-South Operation defeated ENA-Left Bank Operation in both final sets,

thus securing their victory. ENA-North Operation, in its turn, won the bronze. 'The tradition to arrange

sports competitions between EkoNiva's enterprises originates from 2019', says Roman Volodin, First Deputy Regional Director of EkoNivaAgro. 'That's when the company management lent us solid support and we organised the first ski race at the instigation of the trade union committee. The event was followed by summer

Roman Volodin, the importance of sports is recognised at the company level as they promote a healthy lifestyle and bring the contestants closer lifting their team morale and taking their productivity to new heights. No wonder competitions always spark genuine interest and are highly welcomed by the staff.

By Aleksandr KUTISHCHEV

Tactics and speed

The first EkoNiva corporate minifootball tournament has been held in Bobrov district, Voronezh oblast.



In total, ten teams from all the enterprises of EkoNiva Group operating in Voronezh oblast took part in the competition.

In the group stage, each team played four games. The teams which were placed first and second continued to compete for the Big Cup, the other teams – for the Small Cup. The squads of EkoNivaAgro Right Bank Operation and EkoNivaAgro East Operation met in the final match. The football players demonstrated an exciting face-off with lots of potential goal-scoring moments and beautiful combinations. As a result, EkoNivaAgro East Operation defeated the opponent with a score of 2-0. Employees from EkoNivaAgro North Operation won the bronze.

EkoNiva-Chernozemye clashed with EkoNiva

Moloko Voronezh in the final match for the Small Cup. The match ended in a draw in regulation time, but EkoNiva-Chernozemye took first place with a score of 3-2 in the penalty shoot-out. EkoNivaAgro Left Bank Operation was ranked third.

'Corporate tournaments are always breathtaking. They provide an excellent opportunity to experience positive emotions, socialise with the colleagues and have a good time. Sports competitions per se produce lasting impressions irrespective of the final ranking. It is very encouraging that the company management is always so mindful of such events', shares his emotions Vyacheslav Prostyakov, Director of Animal Product Sales Department, EkoNiva-APK Holding.

By Viktor BARGOTIN



Best product 2022

EKONIVA dairy products were awarded gold medals at Prodexpo 2022 international contest.

EkoNiva Group, the largest raw milk producer in Russia, has participated in the 29th international trade fair for food and beverages Prodexpo 2022 held from 7 to 11 February in Moscow.

EKONIVA dairy received top awards in the contest 'Best Product 2022'.

In the category 'Dairy Products and Ice Cream', the judges gave the highest scores to EKONIVA pasteurised

and whole pasteurised milk, EKONIVA ORGANIC pasteurised milk, raspberry and wild strawberry quark desserts as well as Shchuchye and Kolybelka semi-hard cheeses. The 6-month premium Durr hard cheese was awarded in the category 'Import Substitution'.

EKONIVA dairy is made from natural raw milk produced on the company's own farms in 11 regions of Russia. The product range consisting of 71 items includes kefir and ryazhenka, traditional dairy fermented products, conventional and organic milk, curds, quark desserts, drinking yoghurts and bioyoghurts, butter, ice cream, EKONIVA semi-hard and Durr hard cheeses.

This is the fourth time EkoNiva Group has taken part in Prodexpo. The trade show is an excellent platform for establishing new business contacts, looking for new markets and unveiling the novelties. The company selects the best of its products to be evaluated in the contest 'Prodexpo Best Product: Tradition. Quality. Innovation.' Prodexpo is a large-scale and significant event for the industry. In 2022, the show featured a total display area of about 100,000 sq. m. and about 2,050 companies from 54 countries.

EkoNiva at World Expo 2020 Dubai

EkoNiva has taken part in the Russian Agricultural Week at the World Expo 2020 in Dubai, UAE. In the Russian pavilion, the company offered its natural dairy produce and the premium-quality hard cheese Durr.

Expo 2020 Dubai is the first World Expo taking place in the MENA & SA region (the Middle East, Africa and South Asia).

Throughout the Russian Agricultural Week, business meeting participants had an opportunity to enjoy a cup of coffee with a dash of EkoNiva Professional Line milk designed specifically for the HoReCa industry. Along with conventional milk, the company presented the first organic UHT milk from Russia. Besides, Durr hard cheese complemented the welcome cocktail appetisers and gala dinner dishes prepared by Igor Grishchechkin, Chef at CoCoCo restaurant (St. Petersburg), and Yevgeniy Vikentyev, Executive Chef at

Beluga restaurant (Moscow).

'Being the largest raw milk producer in Russia, EkoNiva Group is also open to supplying other countries with top-grade dairy. Alongside dairy production, the company is actively developing its crop farming business. The focus is on lentil and chickpea areas since these niche crops have a considerable export potential', comments Ivan Vorobyov, Deputy Director General of EkoNiva-Food.

EkoNiva started exporting dairy produce in June 2020. In 2021, the Group increased its export sales more than ninefold in both volume and cash terms. So far, the company has predominantly delivered to the PRC. Currently, EkoNiva



is working on entering also the Middle East and Southeast Asia markets as

international cooperation is one of priorities for the company.

EkoNiva at Bar Camp 2022



Bar Camp 2022 is a crash course on efficient business running held by thirty most influential bar managers of Russia. As this year EkoNiva has partnered up with the event, baristas and bartenders concocted their fancy drinks for the participants using Professional Line 3.5% milk.



Participants of Bar Camp 2022 have been treated to coffee with EKONIVA Professional Line milk while honing their management skills.

With its extensive expertise in milk, EkoNiva has created a product line specifically for the hospitality industry – EKONIVA Professional Line UHT milk and cream. By careful balancing of cow rations, the farms can produce milk with higher protein. Such milk is best for coffee making as it ensures

easy frothing and consistent quality in any coffee machine.

EKONIVA Professional Line 3.5% milk is a perfect match for coffee of intensity similar to arabica. It is also an excellent choice to serve with muesli, mix with dark cocoa powder or make pastry enriching it with its creamy flavour.

‘EkoNiva is always excited to sponsor the industry events as it is a tremendous opportunity to present the Professional Line to the leading specialists of the hospitality sector. Such conventions of professional community provide the best environment to demonstrate our product quality – the quality that we put great emphasis on’, says Yulia Katatova, Manager of Event Department.

Food bloggers exploring farm

Kaluzhskaya Niva enterprise has been toured by members of FOODOVIK, a food industry social network. The group included Zaur Dzakhmishiev, the founder of the web platform, representatives of food productions, restaurant chains, retailers, distributors and food experts.

EkoNiva tour project operates in Voronezh and Kaluga oblasts to implement the concept of full transparency in milk production and processing. About 100,000 guests have visited EkoNiva farms since 2013. EkoNiva operations also welcome representatives of food industry and retailers: Auchan, Globus, Okay, Magnit, Tvoe Dom and many others.

Before going to MosMedynagroprom milk processing plant, the guests took a tour of Ulanovo dairy farm to learn about cows’ daily routine. The highlights included visiting rotary milking parlour and bottle feeding newly born baby-calves. Later, the food industry experts participated in a blind tasting of dairy products and cheese of different brands including EKONIVA. They noted the original pungent flavour of the new Dürr hard cheese made using Brevibacterium linens. The food specialists also sampled items from professional and organic lines. Professional Line UHT milk is created specially for hospitality industry, contains higher protein for better and more stable foaming and is suitable for any type of coffee machines. Organic milk

produced according to specific requirements is rich in D3 vitamin and phosphorus.

‘This visit is more than just an entertainment for us, it is also a new experience providing our experts with

deeper knowledge in milk production and processing. We are also impressed with EkoNiva employees’ expertise and passion for what they do’, says Zaur Dzakhmishiev, founder of FOODOVIK network.



EkoNiva in focus



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**ЕКОНИВА
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Publisher and founder of journal «ЭкоНива-Вести»/
EkoNiva-News»: IA EkoNiva-Media LLC

Registered office:
79A Radishchev Street, 305004, Kursk

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publisher:
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The journal «ЭкоНива-Вести/EkoNiva-News» is registered
by the Federal Service for Supervision in the Sphere of
Communication and Mass Communications. Registered Certificate
for Mass Media ПИ № ФС77 - 34820 of 23 December 2008.
Signed for printing
According to the schedule: 22.06.2022 at 15 pm,
In fact: 01.07.2022 at 15 pm.
Issue date: 10.07.2021

Translated by the International Projects Department
of EkoNiva-APK Holding, LLC

Printed by VIP Publishing House LLC, 51st Mokovsky
lane, 305007, Kursk
The circulation of the issue: 695 copies. Order №
Distributed free of charge