

The corporate journal of EkoNiva Group

## Expanding into Moscow oblast

EkoNiva launches new dairy farm  
designed for 3,550 milking cows

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Serving breakfast to residents  
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## Stefan Dürr: Russia can produce enough milk for the whole world

**H**aving turned challenges into new opportunities, EkoNiva enters the new year strong and determined to excel. Thanks to the great performance of the entire team, the company has enhanced its position in all production areas.

In 2023, EkoNiva-APK harvested a bumper crop, prepared enough high-quality feed for the cows and produced 1.26 million tonnes of milk. EkoNiva-Tekhnika solved the issue with machinery and spare parts delivery, found new suppliers and continued expanding its areas of operation.

In the milk processing segment, the company

demonstrated a rapid growth proving its impressive potential. Despite the difficulties faced by the dairy industry in 2023, EkoNiva processed over 400,000 tonnes of milk produced on its own farms, increased its product range and stepped up its cheese production sevenfold, obtaining a good position on the shelf. Besides, every third cup of coffee sold in the country is made with EkoNiva milk, which makes it a leader in the HoReCa sector.

Based on the operational results of 2023, EkoNiva may become a top-10 milk processor in Russia. Therefore,

I consider dairy export an extremely important topic for the year 2024 for both Russia and the entire world.

Since 2020, EkoNiva has been exporting its products to China. The Chinese market offers significant potential for Russian dairy producers. At the beginning of 2024, we opened a representative office of EkoNiva in Xi'an, which enables us to sign export contracts with customers directly and expand our sales geography within China due to good logistics. The first batch of our dairy has set off for China by rail. Rail transportation is faster than shipment by sea, which ensures deliveries of a

wider product range in larger volumes.

South-East Asia and Middle East are also important export regions. We can see a keen interest in our produce in these areas because Russian dairy has a competitive edge over other market players in terms of price-to-quality ratio.

I hope EkoNiva will celebrate its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary showing a substantial progress in export markets and proving that Russia can produce enough healthy and delicious milk for the whole world.

Stefan Dürr,  
EkoNiva Group President



## EkoNiva expands into Moscow oblast

EkoNiva has launched its first dairy farm in Moscow oblast. The Bortnikovo project is designed for 3,550 milking cows and 5,100 head of young stock. The farm is open to the public as part of the company's tour project.

The infrastructure of Bortnikovo dairy comprises four barns, three young stock housing sites, a warehouse, silage storage area, hygiene station, rotary milking parlour and other facilities. The farm has a production capacity of 34,000 tonnes of raw milk per year. The herd is mainly represented by high-yielding

Holstein cows. Bortnikovo has created 135 new jobs for the region, and the project investments totalled 4.1 billion rubles, with Rosselkhozbank being the financial partner.

The launching ceremony was attended by Andrey Vorobyov, Governor of Moscow Oblast, Denis Konstantinov, Deputy Chairman of the Management Board of

Rosselkhozbank, and Stefan Dürr, President of EkoNiva Group.

'Here in Stupino, there used to be an abandoned state farm. Thanks to the company's team and dedication, as well as the use of cutting-edge technologies, we now have a new milk production facility. And it is nice that EkoNiva Group is expanding its operations both

in Moscow oblast and in other regions', notes Andrey Vorobyov.

'The Bortnikovo project will make a valuable contribution to the development of milk production in Russia and provide the market with fresh natural products. Its implementation is another example of effective partnership between Moscow oblast authorities, EkoNiva Group, Rosselkhozbank and the Ministry of Agriculture', comments Denis Konstantinov.

'The commissioning of Bortnikovo dairy is of great importance for strengthening the presence of EkoNiva Group in Moscow oblast. Its residents, along with those of neighbouring regions, will now be able to come to the farm and see for themselves how natural, high-quality milk is produced based on the 'from field to shop shelf' principle. As an industry leader, we strive to explain the ins and outs of modern dairy production to citizens. By doing so, we both emphasise the transparency of EkoNiva's activities and increase people's overall interest in dairy products and trust in their quality', says Stefan Dürr.

By Eleonora DUBININA

## Breaking records

EkoNiva has published operating results for 2023 for its core business segments: dairy farming, milk processing and crop growing. In 2023, EkoNiva produced 1.26 million tonnes of raw milk and 279,500 tonnes of finished dairy produce.

### Dairy farming

In 2023, the raw milk yield reached 1.26 million tonnes in bulk weight beating the 2022 record by 65,500 tonnes. The Group remains the only producer in Russia to have passed the milestone of 1 million tonnes of raw milk per year. Over the reporting period, the mean output grew to 3,440 tonnes and the raw milk yield per dairy cow rose from 29.3 kg to 30.6 kg. The increase in livestock performance of EkoNiva Group can be attributed to the herd structure optimisation, proper ration formulation and continuous work on improving

the feed efficiency. In 2023, the mean cattle herd size on all EkoNiva's farms totalled more than 235,300 head, including over 112,500 dairy cows.

### Milk processing

Over January-December 2023, EkoNiva's processing facilities manufactured 279,500 tonnes of finished dairy produce, which is 70% more than in the previous reporting period. The production of drinking milk and traditional dairy items grew by 68% year-on-year to 265,000 tonnes, yoghurt and dessert group (including ice cream) – by 41% to 6,200 tonnes,

cheese – 7-fold, topping 8,300 tonnes. EkoNiva's dairy produce is available for purchase in 70 regions of Russia. The company continued expanding its own retail business by opening over 20 branded shops. By the end of 2023, the Group operated a total of 76 own brand stores.

### Crop growing

The 2022-2023 agricultural season was rated by the Group as successful despite the

delayed harvest in Voronezh and Ryazan oblasts. The Group collected 1.33 million tonnes of cash crops in standard weight, namely 690,000 tonnes of cereals, 140,000 tonnes of pulses, 62,600 tonnes of oilseed crops and 440,000 tonnes of sugar beet. Besides,

a total of 985,000 tonnes of forage crops in dry matter (DM) was harvested in the reporting period.

By Eleonora DUBININA



# Guests from Celestial Empire



A delegation from Weichai LOVOL Intelligent Agricultural Technology Co. has visited EkoNiva Group's enterprises, meeting with its president Stefan Dürr and the management of EkoNiva-Tekhnika.

The cooperation between the dealer and LOVOL has been going on for a little over a year. All through 2022, Russian farmers were being introduced to the tractors of this brand, and 2023 saw an

impressive start of purchases. More than 8,000 LOVOL self-propelled machines currently operate in Russia.

'We are quite pleased with last year's sales. Together with our Chinese partners,

we have recently presented the new LOVOL GK120 grain harvester and the LOVOL P7240 tractor. Some farmers have already opted for these units, which means our clients trust us, choosing reliable

cutting-edge machinery offered by the manufacturer', points out Vladimir Gurov, LOVOL Brand Manager at EkoNiva-Tekhnika.

At the meeting, the partners discussed the brand promotion strategy in the Russian market. The focus will be on participation in trade fairs, in-field demo shows and other marketing activities.

As part of the visit, the guests were given a tour of EkoNiva's dairies and milk processing plant, where they were welcomed by Stefan Dürr, President

of the Group. This was a great opportunity for the Chinese partners to learn first-hand about the needs of Russian farmers as well as the machines and the technologies they choose.

By Viktor BARGOTIN



## 25,000 tonnes of sugar from EkoNiva



Belsakhar plant, one of EkoNiva's subdivisions in Kursk, has completed the 2023/24 season, processing a total of 179,300 tonnes of sugar beet and producing 25,000 tonnes of sugar.

Belsakhar sugar plant became part of EkoNiva Group in 2018. It was modernised and relaunched in

September last year. Currently, its processing capacity is 2,050 tonnes of sugar beet per day, which is equivalent to

about 300 tonnes of sugar.

The 2023/24 season at Belsakhar lasted 120 days. The plant mainly processed sugar beets grown in the Group's own fields occupying 2,700 hectares in Solntsevo and Shchigry districts of Kursk oblast. The enterprise also accepted sugar beets from other local farms for processing.

'This season, the plant processed 179,300 tonnes of sugar beets producing more than 25,000 tonnes of TS2- and TS3-grade sugar. The product in 50-kg packaging is offered for sale in both Russian and foreign markets. The Group has already entered into a number of export contracts with partners from Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan, with shipments scheduled for the first quarter of 2024. The by-products – beet molasses and deep-pressed pulp – are used for the company's livestock needs and partially sold to other enterprises', says

Boris Tereshchenko, Managing Director of Belsakhar.

This year, the blueprint is to reach full capacity and process around 240,000-250,000 tonnes of sugar beets. The plant is already gearing up for the new season: cleaning of the evaporator stations, preheaters, saturators and other equipment is in progress. In addition, it is planned to install a pulp drier, which will maximise the use of the enterprise's own product – dry pulp – at the Group's dairies.

Belsakhar has great social significance. Its launch and continuous operation are essential to the economy of Belya district and the entire Kursk oblast. In the 2023/24 season, 346 people, mostly local residents, were engaged in various types of work at the plant. Over 200 people will be employed for off-season jobs.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO

# Path to success



Kaluzhskaya Niva, an enterprise within EkoNiva Group, has become a winner of Kaluga Business regional award in the 'Agricultural Sector' nomination.

**S**ince 2017, the event has been held annually to recognise the achievements of local companies in more than 15 nominations covering various economic and business sectors. The winners are traditionally selected by an expert council consisting of the leading representatives of the local business community and social entities. The award evaluation criteria comprise economic performance, participation in social projects and contribution to the positive image of the oblast.

Kaluga Business is the first independent business award in the region initiated by Kaluga News online media.

Its main objective is to determine the strongest entrepreneurs and highly efficient companies operating in the region and contributing to its economic growth. The award is also aimed at attracting investment in the local economy and helping the nominees expand their businesses, establish reputation and improve competitiveness in the market of Kaluga oblast and Russia on the whole.

The farming enterprises of EkoNiva Group, located in six districts of Kaluga oblast, house approx. 45,000 head of dairy cattle, thereof over 21,000 milking cows.

By Eleonora DUBININA

## EkoNiva opens a subsidiary in China

In early January, EkoNiva launched a subsidiary in Xi'an, China. The trading house EkoNiva (Xi'an) Dairy Co. is to carry out commercial activities aimed at boosting exports of dairy to the republic, increasing the EKONIVA brand awareness and expanding the product range.

**H**aving its own subsidiary, the company can now negotiate and sign contracts for the supply of dairy products more efficiently, without the help of intermediaries. The establishment of the trading house also makes for EkoNiva's broader participation in industry-specific events in China.

The choice fell on Xi'an because of its convenient geographical location and logistics. The city is the heart of Shaanxi province and plays an essential role in the economic and cultural interaction between the central and northern regions of the country. It is also a major land transport hub – railway routes connect Xi'an with Russia, European countries and other Chinese regions.

EkoNiva started supplying dairy products to the Celestial Empire in the summer of 2020. The Group offers conventional UHT milk

with a fat content ranging from 1.5% to 3.2% and the Professional Line UHT milk with a fat content of 3.5%. EkoNiva's total exports to China amount to about 1,400 tonnes, of which over 400 tonnes were supplied in 2023. The products are available in Heilongjiang, Jilin and Liaoning provinces, as well as in Shanghai and

Beijing, in supermarkets such as the Epinduo chain, Ant warehouse in Changchun and on the Tmall marketplace.

EKONIVA dairy is delivered by sea and by road. The opening of the subsidiary in Xi'an makes it possible to use railway transport to save time, resources and extend the product range. Currently, EkoNiva is undergoing

certification to supply short-life dairy to China, in particular yoghurts and desserts.

'China is one of the most promising export destinations due to its potentially high consumption of dairy products. Here, milk from Russia is valued for its naturality, taste and health benefits. The location of our production facilities and the developed transport routes give us an added advantage over other exporting countries', says Stefan Dürr, President of EkoNiva Group.

By Eleonora DUBININA





## From EkoNiva to Uzbekistan

EkoNiva's cheese plant in Shchuchye village, Voronezh oblast, has been certified to supply dairy products to Uzbekistan. The Group currently exports conventional and Professional Line UHT milk to the country.

The plant produces semi-hard and hard cheeses, curds and sour cream. When carrying out the certification, the employees of Rosselkhoznadzor Department for Voronezh, Belgorod and Lipetsk oblasts audited the dairy processing operation. They assessed the condition of the production and auxiliary facilities and finished product warehouses. In addition, there was a thorough inspection of the plant's food safety management system, frequency of lab tests for production

control, compliance with the requirements for equipment and premises cleaning and disinfection. The audit results were approved by the competent authorities of Uzbekistan, and the enterprise was entered into the register of exporters.

EkoNiva started supplying dairy to the republic in spring 2023. The range initially included conventional UHT milk with fat contents of 1.5 and 3.2% and Professional Line milk with fat contents ranging from 1.5 to 3.2% produced at the certified plant in Anna, Voronezh

oblast. Certification of the processing facility in Shchuchye will enable supplying a wider range of EkoNiva's natural dairy, including premium hard cheeses Dürr Classic and Dürr Zeller, to Uzbekistan. Preparations are underway to launch deliveries from Shchuchye plant. Earlier, the enterprise had been certified for supplies to the Customs Union countries.

EkoNiva has been engaged in export activities since 2020, selling its products to Kazakhstan, China, Belarus, Armenia

and Uzbekistan. The Group is tapping into the markets of South-East Asia and the Middle East. It also exports pulses and field crop seeds.

'Uzbekistan is a promising market – natural milk and dairy are very popular there', says Denis Ishmayev, Sales Director at EkoNiva-Food. 'We saw it for ourselves while taking part in Food Week & HoReCa Uzbekistan trade show held in Tashkent last October. Representatives of the gastronomy industry and potential consumers were impressed by our dairy, in particular milk, which is ideal for making coffee as it whips into a thick stable froth. Expanding the range of exported goods, the company will further drum up interest in them in the local market.'

By Talgat MUSAGALIYEV

## Getting to the top

EkoNiva Moloko Voronezh has won the Best Industrial Enterprise of Voronezh Oblast 2023 contest. The laureates were selected by a trilateral independent jury, and the award ceremony took place in the regional government office.



The company runs two of the Group's processing enterprises in Voronezh oblast – plants in Anna and Shchuchye villages producing drinking milk, conventional dairy, semi-hard and hard cheeses. Both enterprises are certified for export.

The contest is organised by the Industry and Transport Department and the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of Voronezh oblast every year. In 2023, it brought together 40 leading

businesses of the region engaged in various areas of activity. When determining the winners, the jury considered sales volumes, work performance, tax payments, average monthly salaries, availability of quality management systems and internal documents regulating the welfare of employees.

By Talgat MUSAGALIYEV



Cows from EkoNiva's Ryazan subdivision have been awarded the top medal at the 25<sup>th</sup> Russian agricultural trade fair Golden Autumn 2023. At the event, Oka Moloko farming enterprise showcased two Holstein cows – Kislaya and Ami.

The participants from Ryazan oblast were pre-selected at the regional level. Oka Moloko was invited

to join the Golden Autumn trade fair following the breeding trade show Best Ryazan Cows held last summer. Back then,

a Holstein cow Gadalka from Shatsk dairy farm became the vice champion in the Best Body Frame Cow category.

Distinguished by a regular build and high milk yields, Kislaya and Ami are also worthy representatives of their breed. Kislaya's average milk output is 40.6 kg per day and Ami's is 42.3 kg. The animals have been pre-trained to walk calmly alongside humans during demonstrations in the arena. According to Dmitry Syazin, Chief Plant Breeder of Shatsk dairy, both cows behaved perfectly. At the end of the trade fair, the enterprise was awarded a diploma and a gold medal for outstanding performance in developing pedigree and commercial cattle breeding.

Golden Autumn is Russia's biggest farming event and is usually timed to coincide with the celebration of the Agriculture and Processing Industry Workers' Day. The trade fair presents technological and scientific achievements in the sector, the largest regional investment projects, the best breeds of farm animals, etc.

By Natalya SHARPOVA

## Approved by nature

Savinskaya Niva organic farm and MosMedynagroprom processing plant have confirmed full compliance with the EU organic standards. The certification allows the producer to label the packaging with the Euroleaf logo.

The certificate was issued by ECOGLOBE with over twenty years of experience in certification of products for European market. Specialists inspected EkoNiva's facilities and assessed the organic management system. Furthermore, the whole production process, from seed and veterinary medicine purchase to finished good manufacturing was audited. The certificate covers pasteurised and UHT milk of the EkoNiva Organic line produced at MosMedynagroprom as well as raw milk and crop farming products from Savinskaya Niva.

'Organic production implies adherence to strict rules and tender care for nature. Brand reliability and responsibility play a crucial role in the whole thing. EkoNiva has proved its

right to place the Euroleaf label on its organic milk packaging to show the compliance with both the Russian and international standards', says Lyubov Aksyonova, Manager of GR&ESG Division of EkoNiva Group.

Stringent standards are applied to organic livestock farming and crop growing at Savinskaya Niva. The free-stall-housed cows are kept in a near-natural environment. Milk from the farm is transported in dedicated milk tankers to MosMedynagroprom, where it becomes the raw material for the EkoNiva Organic products. The processing line for organic dairy and the farm itself have undergone a respective certification. The EkoNiva Organic line includes 3.3-6% pasteurised whole milk and 3.2% UHT milk. The products



boast a distinct creamy flavour and aroma, a high protein (not less than 3.2 g per 100 g of the drink) and vitamin D3 content.

In addition, Savinskaya Niva and the dairy plant also

confirm their compliance with organic agricultural standards set by the Russian Quality System (Roskachestvo) every year.

By Talgat MUSAGALIYEV



EkoNiva is unlocking its trading potential by selling milk, butter and skimmed milk powder in the commodity market. The company intends to develop this business area, involving more and more counterparties from different regions of the country.

Initially, only the farms from two districts of Voronezh oblast (Bobrov and Liski) were used as the source of milk available for bidding. Now the offer includes all milk produced in Voronezh and Ryazan oblasts. Plans are afoot to extend commodity trading

practices to all farms in 11 geographies.

Along with liquid milk, EkoNiva trades skimmed milk powder and butter with a fat content of 82.5%. The products are delivered to customers by road or rail transport. The first shipments were made from a storage facility of the Group's

counterparty in Tula oblast. Now, EkoNiva works with two more partners: in Omsk for butter shipment and in Domodedovo, Moscow oblast, – for skimmed milk powder deliveries.

'In cooperation with EkoNiva, the National Mercantile Exchange (NAMEX)

demonstrates the advantage of commodity trading, which allows setting fair prices for any asset, including the newly introduced milk and dairy products. The liquid trading platform for new commodities ensures equal access of all market players, standard contract signing procedures and transparent price formation', says Nikita Zakharov, Director of NAMEX JSC.

'Commodity auctions have become a good tool to systematise sales of raw milk, our key product. Long-term contracts are concluded by the sales department, while the majority of short-term contracts with deliveries within one month will be handled through the exchange. This approach improves forecasting for both producers and processors, which is very important in the highly volatile raw milk market. Exchange trading is a transparent instrument for market price formation', says Mikhail Matveyenko, Deputy Director General of EkoNiva.

By Eleonora DUBININA

## Join us for breakfast



EkoNiva has joined the Russian Breakfast initiative in cooperation with Lenta federal retail chain and the Gastronomic Map of Russia nationwide project. The residents of 20 cities across the country have been treated to delicious breakfast prepared based on traditional recipes of different regions of Russia with EKONIVA dairy. Following the results of the first stage of the project, EkoNiva has become a top 10 supplier of Lenta.

The first stage of the Russian Breakfast cultural and gastronomic project was held from May to November, 2023. Twenty participants – chefs, restaurateurs and hoteliers – had a task to devise four breakfast recipes typical of their home regions. The project covered cities in Central Russia, Siberia, the Arctic, the Urals, Volga region, South Russia and North Caucasus. Now, all the recipes are available in the text and video formats on the official website russkiyzavtrak.ru.

The initiative has already embraced over 400,000 attendees. In total, over 20 million people have learnt about the project via mass media.

Over six months, the project participants demonstrated the art of cooking at culinary workshops held in Lenta hypermarkets. The attendees had an opportunity to see how Arctic

curd fritters, pancakes with Taiga dessert, Samara-style omelets, Vladimir-style porridge and other regional dishes were made and try various Russian breakfasts. The chefs used local products – berries, mushrooms, fruits, cereal grasses, nuts, fish and meat – and natural EKONIVA dairy as basic ingredients. Delicious breakfast was served to over 5,000 workshop attendees.

'We have shown the gastronomic diversity and the culinary traditions of Russian regions', says Yekaterina Dürr, HoReCa Brand Director at EkoNiva-Food and Russian Breakfast Project Manager. 'This initiative highlights the versatility and originality of our traditional dishes. I hope they will become part of menus in every house and restaurant.'

By Yekaterina ALEKSEYEVA



# Top trends for Siberian farmers



Throughout the three days at the Siberian Agricultural Week 2023, EkoNiva hosted over 300 business meetings at its booth concluding numerous cooperation agreements and signing several contracts.

**A**t the leading industry event beyond the Urals, EkoNivaSibir presented modern domestic and foreign farm machinery and equipment. The 26 hp to 100 hp TAFE tractors of Indian make and SANY telehandlers by a Chinese manufacturer made the highlights of the event.

'It is a debut for TAFE and SANY brands not only at the trade fair but also in the region. They are only starting to gain local farmers' interest', says Aleksandr Burmak, EkoNivaSibir Senior Sales Rep. 'TAFE tractors are made for small homesteads, gardens and ecoparks. It is a fully fledged tractor in miniature featuring all necessary elements: a robust transmission, a 4WD, hydraulic outputs, a mechanical gearbox, a PTO and a 3-point rear linkage. SANY telehandlers are specially designed to meet all the needs of farmers. The SANY STH742 Agri with a lifting capacity of 4.2 tonnes and a boom length of 7 metres was the model showcased at the booth.'

'The machine is fitted with all the features necessary for farm work: an axial piston

hydraulic pump, a reversible fan, bucket tipping cylinder protection, a traile implement in the front and rear of the loader, an engine, axles and an automatic transmission from European suppliers', continues Aleksandr Burmak. 'We already observe demand for the Chinese novelty and are planning to run a series of demo shows on Siberian farms soon.'

Another premier of the Siberian Agricultural Week 2023 was AGROZNAK.

'AGROZNAK, EkoNiva's official spare part brand, was launched in autumn. AGROZNAK offers components

for sowing and tillage equipment, spare parts for self-propelled and traile implements, F&L and consumables', says Ruslan Gib, EkoNivaSibir After-Sales Maintenance Department Manager.

The company displayed various machines and solutions to improve the business margin.

'Machinery accounts for about 60%-70% of a farm's profitability', points out Denis Beiford (OOO "Farm", Altai area). 'We can't do without high-power efficient machines that require regular maintenance, at which EkoNiva

is unrivalled. In the current situation, we pay our attention to machinery from Asian manufacturers. We have just started operating Chinese machines, but we already understand that they are reliable and easy to use and maintain.'

Andreytsev's farm (Omsk oblast) chose EkoNiva as its dealer due to high machinery quality and dependable service.

'EkoNiva always has the necessary spare part in stock and offers excellent maintenance. The team is ahead of the game to prevent failures and downtime in high season', underlines Sergey Polguyev, Chief Agronomist. 'They often invite us to seminars to teach a lot of useful information. Thus, we learn and develop together with EkoNiva.'

The company welcomed the guests at its booth to share the expertise. Offering a great platform to network, explore and discover something new, evaluate the performance of the previous season, design new plans, discuss the existing and rapidly changing trends in the farming market, the trade fair allows EkoNiva to bring cutting-edge machinery, necessary spare parts and quality service closer to clients.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO



# Going south



For the first time, EkoNiva-Chernozemye has taken part in YUGAGRO 2023, a major international agricultural trade show held in Krasnodar. The company presented its technical innovations to local farmers. EkoNiva's booth also featured seeds of in-house and global breeding and highly productive pedigree cattle.

This summer, EkoNiva-Chernozemye opened a branch in Dinskaya stanitsa, Krasnodar area. The new dealership centre has office premises, a spare parts warehouse storing up to 10,000 items and a modern machinery repair shop. From now on, EkoNiva-Chernozemye can offer Kuban farmers efficient solutions for successful agribusiness.

In the Russian market, significant changes are taking place in the telescopic handler segment. More and more competitive Asian and Turkish machines, coming to replace the western counterparts, are already winning the hearts of many farmers.

At YUGAGRO 2023, EkoNiva-Chernozemye showcased one of its major novelties – the SANY

STH742 telescopic handler. The machine by a Chinese manufacturer is ideal for carrying out various farm operations. It is fitted with a 100 hp Deutz engine providing high performance and fuel efficiency.

'The maximum lift height of the telehandler is 7 metres, and the lifting capacity is 4.2 tonnes. It operates perfectly in limited spaces due to a compact wheelbase of 2.75 metres and a small turning radius of 3.6 metres. The SANY STH742 can be coupled with different attachments thanks to a universal carriage and extra hydraulic circuits', says Stanislav Dolbin, After-Sales Service Department Manager at EkoNiva-Chernozemye.

The company offered the visitors of YUGAGRO

2023 a digital novelty – the NAVMOPO navigation system, which can be installed on conventional machinery of any brand. The use of the Mobile RTK high-precision signal in the system ensures a 2.5-cm accuracy.

The demonstration of the SP-30 plane intended for aerial application of chemicals came as a surprise to everyone at the trade show. The machine carries up to 160 kg of payload and makes for covering more than 1,000 hectares per day without refilling at a ground station.

As part of YUGAGRO 2023, EkoNiva-Semena showcased over 70 crop varieties of Russian, foreign and in-house breeding. In Krasnodar area, farmers focus on growing winter wheat, so the company's varieties EN Cepheus, EN Taygeta, EN Albireo,

EN Photon and EN Mars became the centre of attention. For instance, EN Cepheus can yield about 10 t/ha in southern regions.

The in-house bred legumes, in particular, Trendy, Belmondo and Madras peas are sought-after in the south of Russia. These varieties have proved to be high-yielding and tolerant to extreme weather conditions.

EkoNiva's experts also presented the holding's pedigree dairy cattle to the farmers, elaborating on the key features and advantages of Holstein and Simmental cows.

'This year, we plan to supply over 13,000 head of breeding cattle to our clients. Each animal has a pedigree certificate with full information on its ancestry including lactation performance. Based on customer feedback, our fresh cows produce up to 36 kg of milk per day provided that they are well-fed and comfortably housed', says Pavel Chernyshov, Pedigree Cattle Sales Department Manager at EkoNiva-APK Holding.

The company's participation in YUGAGRO 2023 was highly productive, as evidenced by the concluded contracts and preliminary agreements for the supply of seeds, cattle, machinery and digital solutions.

By Viktor BARGOTIN





# On the same page with EkoNiva

For the fourth time, EkoNiva-Semena has presented its products to Kazakh farmers at KazAgro/KazFarm international agricultural trade show in Astana, offering the world's best genetics and technologies to ensure consistent yields even under harsh weather.

This year, the republic's farmers have gone through a serious challenge. In the adverse climatic conditions, the average yield across the country reached only the modest figure of 0.9 t/ha. Seeds from EkoNiva's portfolio helped some enterprises to avoid losses caused by severe drought in the growing season and high humidity during the harvesting. The Group has been supplying seeds to Kazakhstan for over nine years, starting with cereals – spring wheat and barley and later adding soya beans, peas and winter wheat, which have become quite popular with local farmers recently.

'The main favourites in Kazakhstan are spring wheats Licamero, Cornetto, Toccata and Odeta. Even in this hard season, their yields were quite stable and amounted to 1.2-1.5 t/ha. Some farms, though, where seeds were sown on fallow land and the crop was harvested before the period of heavy rains, reaped around 4.5 t/ha. Barley varieties – Kazakhs opt for Calcule, Eifel and Grace – also performed well despite the weather challenges', says

Aleksandr Suntsov, Sales Rep at EkoNiva-Semena.

Under good climatic conditions, the average yield of EkoNiva's cereal varieties in local fields reaches and even exceeds 5 t/ha, which is significantly higher than that of competing varieties.

The wet weather during the harvesting of cereals in the country has created another problem this season – grain sprouting.

'On the farms in Kostanay oblast, one of the popular local varieties had 19% sprouts, which is critical. For the variety Licamero from our portfolio, this parameter was only 0.5%, giving it a decided edge over its counterparts. Besides, awnless varieties, which make up the majority of our lineup, germinate much less than awned ones', says Willi Drews, Doctor of Agronomy, EkoNiva's Consultant.

The company continues promoting varieties developed



within its in-house breeding programmes. The trial batches of winter wheat seeds were planted in 2023 on a number of farms in southern Kazakhstan. In the north of the country, the test sowing of EN Argument, an early ripening soya bean variety with the fastest maturation period, resulted in a crop of 1.5 t/ha – a good one for harsh weather. Next year, the variety is planned to be used for large-scale production.

'We offer our partners world-leading genetics and technologies that enable them to reach a new level of farming and get stable yields even under adverse soil and climatic conditions. In addition, we put a premium on consultations in agronomy

and flexible approach to each client', comments Marina Balashova, Marketing Department Manager, EkoNiva-Semena.

Kazakhstan is one of the key export destinations for the holding, and local farmers are interested in the cooperation. This challenging year has once again shown that proper selection of varieties and application of appropriate agritechnologies enable advanced farms to overcome problems and gather a good harvest.

'We have been working with EkoNiva for over six years, purchasing seeds of wheat, barley, oats, peas, soya beans and alfalfa. Quality seed material ensures a bumper crop under any weather conditions, which is essential in our areas. The company continues to evolve, constantly introducing innovations, so it is great to learn and develop together. We are on the same page with EkoNiva', emphasises Ruslan Utebay, Manager of EtalonAgroKhim, North Kazakhstan oblast.

Over the years of the partnership, EkoNiva-Semena has supplied about 30,000 tonnes of seeds to the local farmers. It keeps expanding its customer base and its footprint in the Kazakh market.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO





## Building a talent pool

Sponsored by EkoNiva-Chernozemye, Novoanninskiy Agricultural College has opened a specialised classroom where future machine operators and engineers can study the design of farm equipment more efficiently.

EkoNiva-Chernozemye has expanded its reach with a new region – Volgograd oblast – and has started cooperating with local educational institutions, one of which is Novoanninskiy College. Now, its students can not only do internships at the holding's facilities but also learn theory and develop practical skills in a modern setting.

'The collaboration with the college enables us to create an external talent pool comprising

individuals who are interested in joining the Novoanninskiy service centre team in the future', says Sergey Storozhev, Executive Director of EkoNiva-Chernozemye.

The students have already started attending lectures in the new classroom equipped with everything they need to fully immerse themselves in the educational process. The renovated space with comfortable furniture features information boards on unit design and assemblies. But

most importantly, there is an engine and a gantry crane in the classroom to facilitate the students' practical training.

'This year, our company has welcomed the first students from Novoanninskiy College for internships, providing them with accommodation, free meals and workwear. They demonstrate deep theoretical knowledge and will learn more practical skills from their personal mentors. It is the combination of our experienced specialists'

conventional approaches and young employees' outside-the-box thinking that makes us a leader in many areas of the farming sector', points out Sergey Storozhev.

Human resources have always been and remain the key in agriculture. For many years, EkoNiva-Chernozemye has been partnering with specialised universities and colleges, giving students work experience opportunities and teaching them the ins and outs of the profession. In 2023, about 30 students completed internships at EkoNiva-Chernozemye; some of them are now part of the company's engineering department.

By Viktor BARGOTIN





# Global innovations in Kuzbass



EkoNivaSibir has participated in the AgroKuzbass 2023 specialised agroindustrial trade fair. The event took place at the Kuzbass convention centre in Novokuznetsk, Kemerovo oblast. The company's display featured a large machinery lineup to capture the visitors' interest.

The trade fair showcased the latest models by manufacturers and suppliers from Russia, China and Belarus. The attendees were presented all kinds of innovations: machinery, equipment and consumables for agricultural and processing industries.

'Farmers are engaged in a wide variety of agribusinesses, therefore self-propelled machinery and tillage implements are in high demand. We did a tour of our bestsellers for the clients', says Aleksandr Latsviev, Leading Sales Rep at EkoNivaSibir.

First, the guests were shown the reliable LiuGong 385B Skid Steer Loader with an impressive 110-litre fuel tank. Equipped with the 78 hp Yanmar engine (Japan), the machine has two acceleration control modes – foot-operated and manual – as well as a radial arm lift of 3 m. The basic equipment includes a cab heater and an air conditioner, the standard equipment additionally features a full LED-package. One more key benefit is that LiuGong provides a wide range of purpose-designed attachments.

Another model of the Chinese brand is the LiuGong 835 front end loader, which falls into the mid-sized loader category. It features

its worth, particularly at the enterprises that value its high performance combined with good manoeuvrability in confined areas.

#### Aleksandr Latsviev, Leading Sales Rep of EkoNivaSibir:

'Farmers are engaged in a wide variety of agribusinesses therefore self-propelled machinery and tillage implements are in high demand. We did a tour of our bestsellers for the clients'



an articulated frame, with a rated lifting capacity of 3 t and an operating weight of up to 10,250 kg. Besides the three packages available for the machine, it can be custom-tailored to suit farm's individual needs. The model has already proven

'The highlight of our display is the Turkish MST 7.42 telehandler, an excellent solution for a wide range of jobs. At the heart of the unit is the time-proven 125 hp Perkins engine. The lifting capacity is 4,200 kg, the boom lift height is 7 m. Operators

will enjoy the spacious cab with excellent visibility and easy-to-use controls', continues Aleksandr Latsviev.

The PVT RHINO 4004 self-propelled sprayer is another machine that is confidently gaining ground in the Russian market. PVT Agriculture is a leading Brazilian manufacturer selling its machinery all over the world. The machines are available with a 3,000 or 4,000 l fuel tank, as well as a choice of booms: 28, 30, 32 and 36 m. The RHINO 4004 MultiSet comes complete with both the dry and liquid application systems. This option provides you with 2 machines in 1: a fertiliser spreader and a sprayer. It takes around 30 minutes to exchange the systems.

The attendees were also introduced to the Bednar Omega 006000L, a versatile and high-performance grain drill with fertiliser application. Some farmers are already familiar with its concept design and would gladly acquire one for their operations. It offers a disc working section, two hoppers in either a 50/50 or 60/40 ratio, a wide range of optional equipment, including two inter-row spacing options – 12.5 and 16.7 cm.

Over the three days of the trade show, EkoNivaSibir had hundreds of meetings with partners to conclude a number of contracts and reach numerous preliminary cooperation agreements.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO



## New solutions for new time

With a wealth of experience in the domestic agricultural market, EkoNiva-Tekhnika holds a leading position when it comes to the supply and maintenance of machinery of top brands. This year, the company has increased the variety of manufacturers and expanded the range of equipment on offer. The exciting novelties include SANY telehandlers and upgraded LOVOL tractors.

### Asian tractors with European roots

'European roots' is not a metaphor, but a real fact. The LOVOL P7240 tractor is based on the design of Arbos, an Italian manufacturer, whose production rights and facilities LOVOL purchased a few years ago.

The tractor's key benefit is its continuously variable transmission (CVT), enabling it to operate within the speed range from 0 to 40 km/h. No creeper gear is required. With this powertrain, it can reach up to 40 km/h forward and up to 30 km/h reverse. It is the first Chinese tractor in the Russian market with this kind of transmission.

'The tractor is equipped with an engine from Weichai, a member of the global Weichai Lovol corporation. The rated output of 240 hp fully meets the current farm needs. The hydraulic system features the axial-piston pump with a capacity of up to 100 l/min. The PTO has 3 speeds: 540, 760 and 1,000 rpm',

says Vladimir Gurov, Brand Manager of EkoNiva-Tekhnika.

As a bonus, the standard equipment of the tractor includes an extra set of twin wheels. All the machines come with an adjustable rear axle and Trelleborg tyres.

### SANY

In the telehandler segment, EkoNiva-Tekhnika offers SANY machinery. SANY is the largest Chinese manufacturer of construction, lifting and agricultural units.

The SANY STH742 is the first choice for farming. The machine is equipped with the 100 hp Deutz engine. High torque in the low engine speed range delivers superior performance whilst guaranteeing low fuel consumption.

'The maximum lifting height is 7 m, while the maximum capacity is 4.2 t. The SANY STH742 is perfect for confined areas due to a compact wheelbase of 2.75 m and a tight turning radius of 3.6 m. The telehandlers come with three steering

modes: front-wheel (transport mode), all-wheel (main mode) and crab steering. Besides, the unit can be coupled with various attachments due to the universal carriage of the same type as JCB and extra hydraulic lines. All these features make it suitable for multi-purpose use', says Aleksey Gorshkov, Sales Manager of Road and Construction Machinery at EkoNivaTekhnika-Holding.

In the new market conditions, EkoNiva-Tekhnika

stays committed to its core mission: offering the Russian agribusiness efficient modern farming tools and delivering excellent dealer support. The company maintains close links with growers, identifying their needs and carefully choosing the most appropriate and affordable solutions for them. The expansion of the portfolio with reliable machinery of proven brands is an important step to this end.

by Viktor BARGOTIN





# Soil testing for increased efficiency



The experimental database of EkoNiva's Precision Farming Division is expanded annually. The statistical information analysis has encouraged specialists to look at the existing background from a slightly different perspective. This has led to finding new solutions, which did not seem obvious before, allowing farmers to considerably increase their crop farming efficiency.

This year's results have proved that taking decisions on the distribution of fertilisers and plant protection agents based solely on satellite space segment data is not always reasonable. On-site post-calibration of the data derived from remote Earth sensing by means of soil analysis is required.

Practical experience has shown that productivity zones can shift under the influence of weather conditions, soil

tillage system, anthropogenic factors. For more accurate prediction of their 'migrations' within a certain growing season, it is necessary to study in detail the processes taking place in the soil, the effect of precipitation, solar radiation, terrain structure and so on. For this reason, the company management has decided to establish a soil monitoring department and employ cartographers, agrichemists and soil scientists.

## A step to innovation

The specialists got down to work in summer 2023: trial fields in EkoNivaAgro Left-Bank Operation (Voronezh oblast) were divided into sectors based on a specific principle. Within their boundaries, soil profiles, by-pits, half-pits and wells were dug. Next, a morphological description of the soil horizon is made and a sensory analysis of each genetical horizon is carried out. Afterwards, specialists perform soil sampling to determine its physical and chemical properties.

'Once we divide the field data into sectors, we can build statistical models of crop yield distribution and later make more precise yield predictions for other land plots with an identical agrichemical composition', comments Sergey Kapustin, Precision Farming Director, EkoNiva-APK Holding. 'Scaling up this practice to many other regions will allow the company to enhance its performance in crop farming and reduce the production costs.'



## What are the benefits?

According to Sergey Kapustin, just employing satellite data for field zoning makes it possible to cut down expenses through using variable rate sowing and fertiliser application system, which makes for a higher margin for one of the largest agricultural holdings in the country.

Furthermore, studying the processes taking place in the soil, its response to different practices will enable specialists to make more and more precise predictions about productivity zones.

In 2023, in EkoNivaAgro-Left Bank Operation, 2,800 soil samples were taken to examine 500 ha. After the study algorithms are perfected in Voronezh oblast, they can be adapted and applied in the fields outside the Black Soil region. A systematic approach to learning about productivity zones, mineral nutrition, impact of sowing rates on yield can speed up farm transition to new technologies.

Currently, the soil monitoring department is building a database combining physical, chemical and geospatial information, including digital models of the terrain and yield maps. During the growing season, students doing their internships and teachers from agricultural institutions are expected to be involved in the work of the department.

## What are the prospects?

In 2024, the samples obtained will be scrutinised in EkoNiva's own laboratory for further yield modelling.

'This will help us to reveal the ways in which a multitude of natural and anthropogenic factors impacts the yield', adds Sergey Kapustin. 'We will also be able to predict the economic efficiency of every field more precisely and objectively.'

By Aleksandr KUTISHCHEV



## EkoNiva's soya beans awarded diplomas at Privolzhye 2023

EkoNiva's in-house bred varieties have been awarded laureate diplomas at the event organised at Privolzhye 2023 testing ground. EN Akcent was rated as the highest-protein variety, while EN Argument became the best in terms of ripening time, beating last year's leader by a week.

In 2023, different varieties of five crops – both irrigated and rainfed – were presented on 300 demo plots of the testing ground with various protection schemes and nutrition patterns. EkoNiva-Semena showcased soya bean varieties of its own breeding – EN Argument, EN Akcent and EN Argenta.

'The Volga Federal District grows more and more soya beans every year. This crop is cultivated on over 265,000 hectares, the district ranking third in the country. The climate there is good only for early varieties, so we offered ultra-early and early varieties for sowing in the experimental fields', says Willi Drews, Doctor of Agronomy, EkoNiva's Consultant.

The Privolzhye testing ground based in the real production site of the large enterprise Sev-07, Samara oblast, is the biggest demonstration platform in the Volga Federal District and the major project of the Soya Bean Grain Association. Hundreds of trial plots under irrigation and rainfed conditions were systematically monitored by agronomists and scientists during the entire farming season. In addition, all varieties of the participating

companies were sown on the same day and received equal treatment.

'We have debuted in this large-scale project and are happy with the result. Our variety EN Akcent has been awarded a Laureate Variety diploma in the Highest-Protein Rainfed Variety category. The value of this parameter amounted to 44.7% during the demonstration tests. Another in-house variety, EN Argument, became the best in terms of ripening time, beating last year's leader by a week', says Marina Balashova, Marketing Department Manager at EkoNiva-Semena.

EN Argument is one of the very early maturing varieties

with a consistently high protein content. For ripening, the variety requires a sum of active temperatures of 1,900°C. Being photoperiod insensitive, it can

### **Willi Drews, Doctor of Agronomy, EkoNiva's Consultant:**

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be grown in the northernmost area of soya bean cultivation. It has a good lodging and pod shattering resistance and is distinguished by high attachment of lower pods and a protein content of 39-42%.

included in the register for the Central Black Soil, Central and Middle Volga regions.

'For its maturity group, the variety has the maximum yield potential – up to 5 t/ha. An important feature is increased branching, which stabilises the yield by evening out crop nonuniformities. EN Argenta provides consistent yields despite the lack of precipitation, which is essential for the southern part of the Volga region', emphasises Denis Goloyenko.

Currently, the soya bean seed market is highly competitive. However, EkoNiva's early maturing varieties have a decided edge over their competitors providing high yields and grain quality.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO



'The variety is entered into the State Register for the West Siberian region, where it matures within 100-105 days, showing a yield potential of 2.3-2.8 t/ha. In the Black Soil region, particularly in Kursk oblast, the variety ripens faster – in 82-85 days – and can be harvested in mid-August. In other areas, including the Volga region, the variety makes a reliable predecessor for winter crops and performs well even in adverse climatic conditions', comments Denis Goloyenko, Soya Bean Plant Breeder.

EN Akcent is registered for the Central region, where it matures in 100-110 days. It is a consistently high-protein variety with a seed protein content amounting to 45%, which is confirmed by the results obtained at the Privolzhye 2023 testing ground. EN Akcent is resistant to lodging, and the stubble losses do not exceed 5% due to the high attachment of lower pods. The yielding capacity is 2.8-3.5 t/ha. EN Argenta, another high-yielding intensive soya bean variety, is also of great interest to farmers. It is



## Transition diet

EkoNiva specialists are positive that proper nutrition of transition dairy cows improves their lactation performance and productive life helping to unlock the genetic potential of their offspring. So, what do cows eat on EkoNiva farms during the transition?

The transition period takes five weeks: three weeks before calving and two after. The transition from dry period to lactation is considered a key factor for dairy cows' health and impacts the profitability of the whole enterprise.

Cow diet in this period is of essential importance. Cows start eating less prior to calving. If the initial feed intake was low, their appetite would be even worse, which may result in post-partum problems, increasing the risk

of abomasum displacement, ketosis, hypocalcaemia, milk fever and other diseases. The consequences can range from poor milking, reduced feed intake and low yields in the future to reproduction issues and even death.

'During the transition period before calving, we give the animals a special ration containing a moderate amount of nutrient-dense feedstuffs to prevent increased body condition score – silage, grass haylage, straw and concentrates, as

well as high-quality soya bean and rapeseed meals as protein sources. There should be about four to five kilogrammes of concentrates in the cows' diet, which makes for consuming maximum amount of fodder without any further problems, provides all the required nutrients to the developing fetus and strengthens the animal's body before giving birth', says Viktor Pisarenko, Deputy Manager of the Nutrition Department, EkoNiva-APK Holding.

Overall, a dairy cow's ration three weeks before calving is the same as in the first days of the post-partum period, which helps it to adapt to the next lactation stage.

After calving, the maternity pen operator takes care of the newborn calf, collects colostrum and transfers the cow to the fresh cow pen, where the housing conditions resemble those in the maternity pen. All these sections are stocked by no more than 80% to ensure maximum comfort, minimise stress and create optimum environment for the animals.

The feeding at the dairies

starts from the fresh cow pen. Before that, herd managers make rounds, recording data about the feed leftovers, the animals' appearance, body condition score, rumination and manure. Analysing the information obtained, the specialists adjust the ration, which is usually made up of silage, straw, meals, crushed maize, alfalfa haylage and mineral supplements like during the close-up period. The total amount of concentrates is greater than in the close-up ration, but still less than that fed to highly productive groups.

'The arrangement of animal nutrition during the transition period is aimed at a smooth shift from the low-nutrient ration of the dry period to the high-nutrient ration of milking cows and preparation of the gastrointestinal tract and rumen microflora for quantitative changes in the diet. Proper feeding, disease prevention and comfortable housing in the transition period contribute to high lactation performance in the future and formation of a healthy herd', sums up Viktor Pisarenko.

By Viktor BARGOTIN



# Go for it, Agrogen



For the second year in a row, EkoNiva has been the industrial partner of Voronezh State Agricultural University in the Advanced engineering schools federal project in the fields of plant breeding and genetics. The holding has hosted lectures and practical training sessions with postgraduate students.

The main goal of the Advanced Engineering Schools project is to provide high-performance export-oriented sectors of the economy with fully skilled staff to achieve technological self-sufficiency. Along with other large holdings of the country, EkoNiva has come forward as an industrial partner of Voronezh State Agricultural University (VSAU) in the Agrogen plant breeding and genetics project. The initiative is aimed at training geneticists and plant breeders according to individual educational programmes that meet the pressing needs of the farming sector. The project also calls for boosting the efficiency of scientific research via modernisation throughout the breeding process.

The lectures and practicals for the Advanced Engineering Schools postgraduates are given by EkoNiva Group's professionals.

'The on-site training format at the company's premises in Zashchitnoye village, Kursk oblast, is optimal as it enables us to demonstrate our plant breeding equipment, seed

production facilities and laboratory to the students. In addition to theory, the young specialists need to see and experience everything in practice by deeply immersing themselves in the workflow of our centre', says Vitaliy Voloshchenko, Director of EkoNiva's Plant Breeding and Variety Maintenance Centre.

The classes provide young specialists with insights into the scope of tasks which can be performed with the use of cutting-edge plant breeding equipment and technologies and the application of modern plant breeding methods.

Climate chambers and special seed growing zones are viewed as instrumental since they speed up the process.

'During the training, we discuss the issues of intellectual property and cost efficiency of the plant breeding process, talk about the commercial value of a variety or hybrid, the limiting technological, organisational and economic factors influencing the success of a would-be plant breeder or seed grower', continues Vitaliy Voloshchenko.

To Igor Shatalov, a master's student at the



Advanced Engineering School of VSAU, agriculture has always been attractive because of its great development potential and diversity. 'I gained a lot of interesting and useful insights at EkoNiva. I've had some training experience at other agricultural enterprises, but only EkoNiva has taught me the aspects of plant breeding and seed growing I was unaware of before', emphasises Igor Shatalov.

Valeriya Kononenko, another postgraduate taking the Agrogen course, came to study at VSAU from a small district centre over five years ago. 'While still at school, I got into farming and decided to pursue this interesting and promising career. Now, I am looking for a future workplace. EkoNiva has impressed me with its scale, it is a prominent representative of high-tech agribusiness, there is so much to learn here', shares Valeriya Kononenko.

Vladislav Makarov joined the Advanced Engineering Schools project following his studies at the Department of Applied Mathematics.

'I was offered to try my hand at bioinformatics, and I was excited to accept the offer. What I liked about the training with EkoNiva is that the specialists put a lot of effort into sharing their knowledge and practical skills', he says.

As an industrial partner, the Group passes on its in-house developed practices for seed growing, plant breeding and genetics and its wide experience to students and graduates from universities across the country. The company, in its turn, benefits from attracting young professionals. In 2023 alone, 16 master's students completed internships in plant breeding and seed growing at EkoNiva's subdivision in Kursk, with four of them staying on to work at the Plant Breeding and Variety Maintenance Centre. Now, these talented young people will have a chance to pursue their career dreams.

by Tatyana IGNATENKO



## Science of Processing

Academy of Processing, a training programme taking place at EkoNiva's enterprises in Voronezh oblast, has come to an end. The project welcomed fourteen students from twelve universities and colleges.

The future technologists and food safety inspectors did a three-day crash course which included a

tour of a farm, team building activities, educative lectures and practicals at a modern milk processing plant.

'Academy of Processing comprises seminars and workshops on milk processing technologies. Here, the young people learn the ins and outs of dairy production and gain plenty of new and useful information', says Natalya Zvereva, Deputy Head of HR Department at EkoNiva-Food.

During the theoretical part, Andreas Allerberger,

Manager of Milk Processing Projects, lectured the students on cheese markets in Russia and Europe. He elaborated on the cheese production technologies used by EkoNiva.

The course attendees also listened to lectures about Honest Sign (a special marking of quality), cattle nutrition, organic production and raw materials control at milk processing facilities.

Inside the cheese plant laboratory in Shchuchye village, the project participants had their practical classes on how to carry out physical and chemical milk tests and analyse results.

Upon completing the Academy of Processing, all the students were awarded souvenirs and diplomas by the company's employees. This initiative allowed the young people to take a fresh look at their professions. Some of them have already applied for a traineeship at EkoNiva with a prospect of getting a full-time job at the company.

By Viktor BARGOTIN

## EkoNiva awards best employees of Voronezh oblast

The Government House of Voronezh oblast has hosted an award ceremony for the top performers of EkoNivaAgro. The event was timed to coincide with Agriculture and Processing Industry Day and reviewed the results of the farming year.

Aleksandr Nesterenko, Director of EkoNivaAgro-Right Bank Operation, received a letter of appreciation from the President of Russia. The following employees of the same subdivision were awarded certificates of merit from the Ministry of Agriculture: Natalya Vasilyeva, Food Warehouse Manager, Vladimir Kaplin, Machinery Repair Shop Manager, Svetlana Rybalkina, Canteen Manager, Natalya Frolova, Record Keeper, and Natalya Veretennik, Paperwork and Land Registration Specialist at EkoNivaAgro-East Bank. Lidiya Sologub, Dairy Farm Manager at EkoNivaAgro-East Operation,

was given a badge of honour for services to the development of the region's farming.

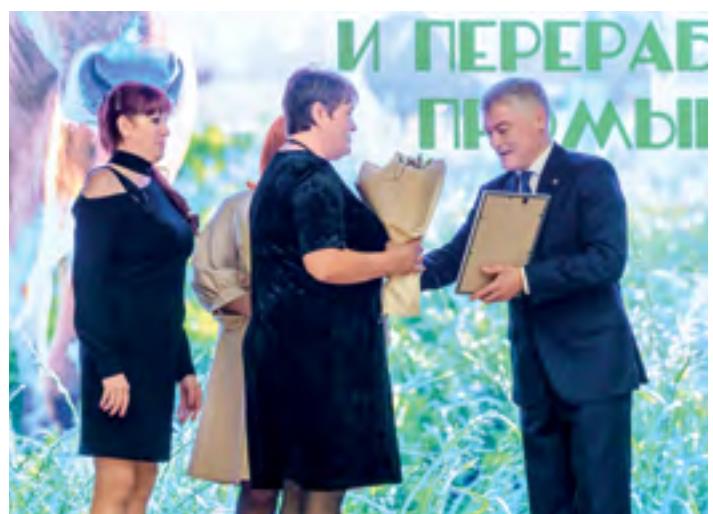
For high production performance, the best industry workers were presented with state and regional awards and certificates for new cars. Yelena Khaperskaya, Milking Machine Operator, and Lyubov Ilyinykh, Reproduction Specialist, became the owners of Lada Grantas, while machine operators Leonid Moshurov and Yuriy Volnov received the keys to Lada Niva off-rovers.

Following an economic competition, same-shift milking machine operators of EkoNivaAgro-East Nadezhda Zinchenko, Natalya Plaksina, Inna Raspopova, Yekaterina

Strelchyunene and Olesya Klaponina were awarded the Best in Profession title.

'The rigorous approach of each employee to the work and the tight-knit team result in excellent production performance. It is pleasing that the efforts of our frontrunners have been appreciated at a high level. Their love for the village and profession and responsible attitude to business makes them a role model for the whole company', says Aleksandr Rybenko, Regional Director of EkoNiva Group for Voronezh oblast.

By Viktor BARGOTIN



# Uniting to produce wholesome milk

Verkhniy Ikorets dairy has provided the venue for EkoNiva's 3<sup>rd</sup> Youth forum. The large-scale event brought together 90 aspiring specialists of EkoNiva-Food, the Group's processing subdivision. They listened to lectures by the holding's top managers, took part in team building activities and immersed themselves into a large spectre of the company's operations.

The annual forum was attended by technologists, laboratory technicians, sales representatives, economists, logistics managers, technicians, HR and IT department specialists. The activities played an important part in the company's efforts to raise the staff's awareness of the 'from field to shop shelf' concept, the key principle of EkoNiva's work.

'Creating natural dairy products is not just about farms and plants but hundreds of interrelated production, logistics and marketing processes. When

machinery to increase the production profitability. Natalya Starkina, Manager of Marketing Department at EkoNiva-Food, spoke about the importance of marketing and advertising in brand development. Denis Ishmayev, Sales Director, elaborated on the role of building up retail trading and cooperation with federal networks, and shared the company's plans and prospects for the upcoming year.

'The young specialists' engagement in the learning process is palpable – they are so engrossed in the



it comes to the final result, the job of a retail specialist is as important as that of a herd manager, technician or technologist. That is why we placed the emphasis on demonstrating the interaction among the holding's associated departments as well as its work as a whole', says Tatyana Drozdova, Head of Human Resources Division at EkoNiva-Food.

The holding's top managers delivered lectures as part of the event. Sergey Storozhev, Executive Director of EkoNiva-Chernozemye, gave a presentation on the use of cutting-edge farm

lectures, asking relevant questions, sometimes even arguing to defend their point of view. Team building and communication in an informal setting are the cornerstones of EkoNiva's corporate culture', says Denis Ishmayev.

The forum also featured a strategy session dedicated to the construction of a dream milk plant. The participants were divided into teams and offered to plan the enterprise from scratch: the product range, location, capacity, logistics, target audience, marketing activities, unique features of products, etc. The jury evaluated all the projects,



and the winners were awarded business literature that would contribute to their personal and professional development.

'This is the second time I have taken part in the EkoNiva Youth forum. To me, the project helps employees to unlock their potential, exchange experience and learn a lot more about the company. Successful interaction is of utmost importance since, after all, we all work for one goal – to make wholesome and delicious milk', says Maksim Minavnin, Process Optimisation Specialist at EkoNiva Moloko Voronezh.

Stefan Dürr, President of EkoNiva Group, joined the youth forum, communicating with the participants, discussing plant design cases, noting their upsides and points where there is still room for improvement.

'Young specialists are the company's future, so we should pay attention to their opinions, goals, desires and needs to be able to create the most comfortable working conditions for them. EkoNiva Youth is the platform that brings us closer together', sums up Stefan Dürr.

By Viktor BARGOTIN



# The power of motherhood

Several thousand mums work at EkoNiva Group's enterprises, and more than 600 of them have a multi-child status. We asked our female employees about their family traditions, the best leisure time together and finding balance between work and motherhood.

**N**adezhda Borovkova, Baker at EkoNivaAgro, Voronezh oblast, dreamt of having twins since childhood. Two years ago, her wish came true – her sons Timofey and Gordey were born.

'My twins are very small yet, but each of them is already demonstrating their personality. One son is active and diligent – he adores construction play. The other one is quieter, more affectionate and dreamier. However, both are fond of dancing, and they insist on doing it with us, their parents. They enjoy when we dance as a family', says Nadezhda.

The Borovkov family like to do everything together. They always go shopping with their sons. In winter, the father Yevgeniy usually builds a sledding hill in the backyard. The boys with parents slide down it together. In summer, Yevgeniy sets up an inflatable swimming pool which is also fun for the whole family to swim in. Nadezhda's husband is the main helper in raising the kids. He also works at EkoNiva as a driver.

'It is important to me that my sons grow into kind and



decent citizens and maintain a lifelong friendship and love for each other. We do our best to cultivate traditional values



at home is no different, all the more so

baking habit in me. My small sons are also familiar with the nature of my work. They enjoy tasting my culinary delights', says the twins' mother.

Nadezhda Borovkova believes that the most vital skills for a woman who combines work and motherhood are energy, self-discipline and attentiveness. Moreover, Nadezhda says that the kids have taught her to be more patient, never get bored and enjoy every day.

Yekaterina Timoshina, another employee of the company, also has a big family. She works as the calf tender at EkoNivaAgro-North. On the farm, Yekaterina takes care of several hundred calves, while at home, she happily raises five children, two of whom are adopted.

'Motherhood has brought many bright colours into my life. I never get bored with my children – my eldest daughter is twelve and my youngest is only five. They are all different, and each one needs an individual approach. At the same time, they are very united, responsible, always willing to help. Doing everything together – work or rest – is our main family tradition. Our favourite leisure time is snow tubing in winter, and picnics by the river in summer. Besides, every holiday we gather with the whole extended family around a big table at our grandfather's house and have a good time', says the mother.

Yekaterina has never dreamt of a multi-child family, all she wanted was just two children – a son and a daughter. But life turned out differently. Now, there is much more children's joyful laughter in their house.

'The kids are curious about my work and know a lot about it. We went on tours to Dobrino dairy a few times. The children were delighted. My youngest daughter, little Yevgeniya, is particularly interested in my working life. She says that when she grows

## At EkoNiva:

- Over 50 mothers raise more than five children in their families.
- Mother heroine works at EkoNivaAgro-Severnoye. Yulia Talalueva brings up 13 children.

in them. For example, bread is revered in the Russian culture. Our attitude towards it

that I am a baker and love my profession. It was my grandmother who instilled the





up, she will help me take care of the calves', comments Yekaterina.

The Dzambulatovs are fans of Dobrino dairy tours too. Working as a marketing specialist in one of the divisions of EkoNivaTekhnika-Holding, Yekaterina Dzambulatova is a mother of a daughter and two sons. The family visits the dairy farm twice a year – in winter and in summer. They also enjoy travelling around Voronezh and to the neighbouring Lipetsk oblast. What matters is to spend together as much time as possible. Yekaterina shares her secret of balance between motherhood and employment:

'It's necessary to love your family, your job and life in general. I really enjoy what I do. As in any large family, all my children have different characters and interests. My eldest daughter is a creative person, her hobby is music. The middle son is keen on gymnastics and is already a member of children's Olympic Hopes team for the Central Federal District. The youngest child practices martial arts and is preparing to start school', shares Yekaterina.

In the Dzambulatov family, it is customary to equally respect the interests

of the children and the adults, to support each other, and to

#### **Yekaterina Dzambulatova:**

'My goal is to open my children's eyes to all the opportunities out there, to teach them to look for their calling and just be happy. As for me, I feel blessed when I see their smiles.'

share important moments of the day over evening tea.

'My goal is to open my children's eyes to all the opportunities out there,

to teach them to look for their calling and just be happy. As for me, I feel blessed when I see their smiles', emphasises Yekaterina.

Another established mother is Yekaterina Alekseyeva, Marketing Department Specialist at EkoNiva-Food. She raises

in the household: the way she feels affects the mood of the entire family. Since I gave birth to the children, I have become more active and sportier. Our new hobby is sports orienteering. The whole family goes out of town and to other regions for competitions. It is an inexpressible feeling

#### **Yekaterina Alekseyeva:**

'There would be nothing in this world without love. It motivates us: love for our children, family and the work we do. And also love for ourselves, because every mum is the 'emotional barometer' in the household: the way she feels affects the mood of the entire family.'

three sons, the senior two are twins. Yekaterina strongly believes that a positive attitude towards the world, physical activity and a lot of love help to cope with the role of a mum with many children.

'There would be nothing in this world without love.

of unity with nature, family and like-minded people', says Yekaterina.

Her sons have already participated in the Group's corporate competitions. And since the time their mum joined the company, they have also grown to really like EkoNiva's dairy products.

'After eating delicious yoghurts, my boys are always ready for new activities, sports achievements and victories. Looking at them energises me', says Yekaterina.

Mum is a very important person in everyone's life. She is not just a woman who gave us life, she is also our main friend, advice-giver and protector.

By Tatyana IGNATENKO





# Angelina Zveryako: EkoNiva is a company that draws you in

Angelina Zveryako's career story can well become a plot for a find-your-calling film or book. The 23-year-old girl has worked her way up from an intern at the Herd Management Department of Petersburgskaya Niva to a successful dairy farm manager at Tyumen subdivision of EkoNiva. In the interview with *EkoNiva News* Angelina tells her fascinating story.

## Did love for animals drive your career decisions?

I felt love for animals when I came to Petersburgskaya Niva for an internship as a student of St. Petersburg Agricultural University. It was actually the first time I had seen a cow up close. After two months of working at the Herd Management Department, I liked my work so much that I didn't want to leave. Luckily for me, the management offered me a job as a nutritionist. EkoNiva is a company that draws you in! It is a large close-knit family with warm-hearted colleagues in every part of Russia.

## What encouraged you to move from St. Petersburg to Tyumen oblast?

I thought, why not try something new? Tyumen oblast has become a home for me! Last March, when I came to Yarkovo village, the first thing that caught my eye was the dazzling white snow extending to the horizon. Picturesque Tyumen with its frosty weather was a discovery for me compared to the grey, slushy St. Petersburg. Most of all, however, I liked the people, who are so smiling and cheerful. Strangers would come up to me and start

talking – it was so unusual for me at that time. One day, when I was carrying a heavy bag, a cyclist passed by and offered to help me. He carried the bag all the way to my house.

## What have you achieved as a dairy farm manager?

It would be hard to assess my individual achievements because successful operation of our dairy depends on joint

effort of all employees: herd managers, machine operators and others. It is all about teamwork.

Nowadays, there is 1,800 head of dairy cows and the same number of young stock on the farm. The daily milk yield per cow amounts to 29 litres, the overall milk



yield of the dairy is 47 tonnes per day. Increasing gross milk yield and improving the quality of young stock for sale are important goals of our dairy today.

## You have about 100 subordinates, most of whom are men. How do you motivate them?

People in Tyumen are motivated by the result of their work. All employees, even those who are not directly involved in milking, like machine operators, are interested in increasing milk yields.

## Do you have enough time for your hobbies?

I enjoy doing something with my hands.

Yesterday, I finally made a fly agaric-shaped clay mug. Now, I'm knitting a hat.

## What would you advise to young specialists who are making their first steps in livestock farming?

The first thing is to develop your skills and never give up! Read books, watch educational videos, exchange experience with colleagues, and don't be afraid to voice your ideas. Livestock farming is not about reading just one book and becoming an expert. It is about continuous development throughout your life!

By Irina KRASNOSHCHYOKIKH

# Team of winners



The 2023 sports season has come to an end at EkoNiva's enterprises in Voronezh oblast. This year, over ten events brought together about 500 fans of active recreation. EkoNiva's employees and their families took part in table tennis, futsal, volleyball, skiing, billiards and fishing competitions.

Year by year, EkoNiva's employees are becoming more and more enthusiastic about sports games. Specialists from EkoNivaAgro, EkoNiva-Food, EkoNiva-Chernozemye, NivaStroy and EkoNiva-APK Holding compete in volleyball, table tennis, ski races, ice fishing, billiards, futsal and relay races.

Fishers and skiers were the first to open the sports season. Over 200 amateur athletes and their families contended for the winner's title.

The fishing event took place on three ponds in Liski and Bobrov districts and covered several categories: Veteran Fisher, Youngest Participant, First Fish, Biggest Fish, First Hole and Smallest Fish.

The ski races held on a modern ski track in Buturlinovka district were equally exciting. All the participants were awarded medals, certificates and souvenirs from the company.

In spring, the major sports event was the table tennis tournament organised in a fitness and health centre in Bobrov. It gathered over 50 tennis enthusiasts from



several subdivisions of the Group.

'Table tennis is especially popular with our employees. We take part in competitions and train in gyms a couple of times a week to keep fit. The company rents sports grounds so that everyone could play table tennis in their free time', says Aleksandr Novosyolov, Senior Sales Rep at EkoNiva-Semena.

The futsal tournament brought together eight teams. EkoNiva-Chernozemye's specialists won in a tense struggle.

There appeared to be even more volleyball lovers at the holding's enterprises.

simultaneously on two courts. EkoNivaAgro-North team snatched the victory.

The season closed in November with table tennis, billiards, volleyball and futsal competitions.

Sergey Krivyakin, Mechanic at EkoNivaAgro-East, became the best tennis player among the men. Olga Dmitriyeva, Breeding Herd Manager at EkoNivaAgro-Right Bank, won the gold medal in the women's category.

The great sensation of the futsal tournament was EkoNivaAgro-North team, which defeated the athletes from EkoNiva-Chernozemye in the final. The winners of the spring season lost a crushing 3:0 to the 'northerners'. The bronze medal went to the team of Anna dairy plant.

The volleyball cup also 'moved house'. In spring, the athletes of EkoNivaAgro-Left Bank were close to beating their opponents from EkoNivaAgro-North, but they only managed to win the return match in autumn. The final game was the jewel in the crown of the tournament.

'EkoNiva's corporate culture places special emphasis on sports and a healthy lifestyle. We believe that such events are perfect for both encouraging teamwork and strengthening family relationships. And above all, sports competitions create a warm and friendly atmosphere', says Anatoliy Kovalyov, Chairman of the Trade Union Committee at EkoNivaAgro.

By Viktor BARGOTIN

# Breaking into new grounds

EkoNiva is expanding its own retail chain in Russia – over the last two months of 2023, four new sales outlets were opened in Siberia, Samara, Moscow and Moscow oblast. In total, as per the end of 2023, the Group managed 76 shops in 14 regions of the country.

In November 2023, two outlets were launched in the capital and its suburbs (in the Kvadrat mall in Moscow and in Mikhnyovo village). Moscow and Moscow oblast have a strategic meaning for the company – fifteen EKONIVA shops already operate in the region: two of them are located in Moscow, while the remaining thirteen are in Stupino, Odintsovo, Kubinka, Zvenigorod, Golitsyn and Serpukhov. Due to the high population density, a significant part of EkoNiva's target audience is concentrated in the metropolis, including consumers, current and potential employees and students of agricultural universities.

'We have challenged ourselves to open our own retail outlets in all 13 regions where we operate, and so far we have done so in 11 of them. Such shops are crucial for the business since they deliver not only the products but also the corporate culture and brand values. Consumers appreciate the opportunity to purchase wholesome and high-quality dairy directly from us', says Irina Neschayeva, Head of Retail Sales Department at EkoNiva-Food.

In early winter, the fourth branded shop opened its



doors in Novosibirsk. One of the Group's processing plants is situated in Novosibirsk oblast, which enables quick delivery of fresh products to its local outlets.

Five EKONIVA shops currently operate in Samara

oblast, with three outlets located in the capital of the region.

Every new shop ensures that more and more customers can enjoy a wide range of natural dairy produced from the highest-quality milk.

By Vera USTINOVA



## All over the Customs Union

EkoNiva has started exporting dairy products to Kyrgyzstan, which means the company's dairy is now available in all the countries of the Customs Union.

Currently, EkoNiva's exports to Kyrgyzstan include 1-litre Professional Line UHT milk with different fat content

and 200 ml UHT cream with 10% fat. The products are transported in refrigerated trucks from the dairy plant in Anna, Voronezh oblast.

In addition, in May 2023, the milk processing plant in Shchuchye, Voronezh oblast, was certified for export to the countries of the Customs

Union to include semi-hard and hard cheeses in the company's export range.

The produce is distributed in the local market through a partner company. EKONIVA dairy can now be bought in Bishkek, Kara-Balta, Tokmok and other cities in shops such as Globus supermarkets. The milk and cream are also supplied to hotels, restaurants and cafes.

'Last year, EkoNiva strengthened its market position in the Customs Union. We are working on raising brand awareness in the CIS states, which will help create a steady demand for high-quality dairy products from Russia. In the future, we are planning to expand the export range and enter new markets. Export is one of the main growth drivers for our company', says Denis Ishmayev, Sales Director of EkoNiva-Food.

By Eleonora DUBININA

# Feast of taste



For the third time, EkoNiva has participated in MEGUSTRO, which took place in Saint Petersburg. MEGUSTRO is a gastronomy festival welcoming both restaurant industry professionals and gourmets.

**S**ince its launch, the event has been attended by 10,300 people, including chefs, restaurateurs, etc. Along with interesting lectures and roundtables on trends, marketing and restaurant management, the programme

also includes a unique Chefs' Challenge show during which chefs from different countries demonstrate their cooking skills in front of spectators.

Traditionally, the festival gathers professionals from the restaurant segment to let them



exchange their experience and find some inspiration. This year, gastrotourism and wine tourism were the topics in the limelight. The event visitors could sample premium hard cheeses aged for 6 and 12 months combined with delicious toppings along with a novelty of 2024 – Momente aus Schollbrunn semi-hard cheese. At EkoNiva's booth, chef Vyacheslav Migas shared his culinary secrets with the guests and treated them to raclette, a national Swiss dish.

Apart from the raclette, all the attendees could also taste coffee-based beverages whitened with EKONIVA Professional Line milk, which was designed by the company's experts specifically for baristas. Its increased protein content of no less than 3.2 grammes per 100 grammes of milk ensures easy frothing into a thick and stable foam and guarantees consistent quality when used with coffee machines.

By Natalya SHARPOVA

## Novelties for hospitality industry



EkoNiva has improved the parameters of its Professional Line UHT milk – now, the protein content is 3.4 g per 100 g versus the former 3.2 g. The changes apply to all the products in the line with the fat content of 0.5, 1.5, 2.5, 3.2 and 3.5%.

Impressive results have been achieved through consistent breeding work aimed at enhancing milk quality, in particular increasing the protein content, and improving cow rations. By the end of 2024, the new package will show the updated information – 3.4 protein.

EKONIVA Professional Line milk is designed by the company's experts specifically for professional use in the hospitality industry. The increased content of protein not only improves organoleptic properties of milk but also ensures a more stable and fluffy foam when frothing. Such milk is very popular with baristas to make coffee-based craft drinks and for latte art. Besides, high-protein milk has an increased nutritional value and a well-balanced creamy taste matching both

cold and hot beverages. The pasteurised and UHT milk in EKONIVA conventional range has 3 grammes of protein per 100 grammes.

'Scientific research and cooperation with professional communities play an enormous role in developing EKONIVA product line', says Yekaterina Dürr, Deputy Head of Marketing Department, EkoNiva-Food. 'We closely interact with the representatives of the hospitality and gastronomy industry, scrutinise the needs of our customers to offer dairy of improved quality. If we take a look at sales figures in the HoReCa segment, we can see that milk is the driver, that is why its quality is always in focus.'

By Eleonora DUBININA

# EkoNiva in focus



## 14 March Agromaslenitsa 2024

Venue: 1/13 km, Kirov (Novovyatsk)  
Yuzhniy Obkhod road territory, Kirov service centre  
Organiser: Kirov branch of EkoNiva-Tekhnika.

## 12-14 March 19<sup>th</sup> AgriTek/FarmTek Astana International Trade Show

Venue: 53/1, Mangilik Yel Avenue,  
EXPO International Exhibition Centre,  
Astana, Republic of Kazakhstan  
Organiser: TNT EXPO LLP, EkoNiva-Semena



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