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As the farm progresses, the village lives on

Today, the EkoNiva Group of Companies is a leading trio in Russia's dairy industry. Each day the company's farms turn out 180 tonnes of milk. The demand for quality products keeps growing, and this is why the enterprise does not want to rest on its laurels. This year, EkoNiva started building a further three dairy production facilities.

By Yulia SALKOVA

A high-technology dairy production facility of EkoNiva is due to appear in the Tyumen Region on the site of the Mezhdurechye Agricultural Production Enterprise (Gilevo village, Yarkovsky district), one of EkoNiva's latest ventures. The new facility will be provided with highly productive pedigree Holstein-Friesian cattle. The region is looking forward to the opening of the EkoNiva facility with great optimism.

"Today the largest stock breeding facility of our region has 3,000 head of cattle. I suppose EkoNiva will pick up the torch in stock breeding," says Vladimir Cheimetov, Deputy Governor of the Tyumen Region and head of the Department of Agriculture. "The first step is to build a huge farm for 1,800 head of dairy cattle. The second is development of meat production and the increase of the herd in Mezhdurechye to 5,000 head of cattle.

According to Stefan Duerr, EkoNiva president, the decision to build the facility in Western Siberia was a logical response to the propitious investment climate and unprecedented support provided by the State. In the Tyumen Region large investments in cattle and equipment procurement and the construction of engineering networks are 90% subsidised.

In five years, EkoNiva has renovated 10 dairy farms and facilities and built three stock breeding complexes for 1,800, 1,200 and 1,900 head of cattle. Two of them, at EkoNivaAgro in the Voronezh Region, contribute daily more than 120 tonnes of milk to the district's "milk pool." This figure will at least double shortly given that this year EkoNivaAgro has laid the foundation of a further two dairy facilities, each for 1,900 head of cattle.

Today's dairy production is a steady, paying business. It is strongly subsidised by the State. The large-scale construction of dairy facilities by EkoNiva results from hard work and serious investments. Around 700 million rubles is earmarked for each of the planned facilities.

The rural saying tells us that the "farm and village go together." New farms mean jobs and steady wages for rural workers. On average, each new "milk producing factory" will employ 50 workers. In parallel with development of agricultural production, EkoNiva is building the infrastructure. Only a good village with an adequate school, kindergarten, and shops can attract and hold specialists from the town.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

July. Seminar on John Deere fodder harvesters
Venue: EkoNiva-Tula Servicing Centre, Bogoroditsk, Tula Region
Organisers: EkoNiva-Tula

July. Field Day in Novosibirsk Region
Venue: Kochenevsky district, Novosibirsk Region
Organisers: Novosibirsk Region's Department of Agriculture, Novosibirsk Regional Administration

1-2 July. Kaluga Field Day 2011
Venue: Opytnaya pilot plant, Peremyshlsky district, Kaluga Region
Organisers: Kaluga Region's Ministry of Agriculture, Russian Farming Academy's Kaluga Research Institute of Agriculture

7-8 July. Voronezh Field Day
Venue: Khrenovsky horse breeding farm, Bobrovsky district, Voronezh Region
Organisers: State-owned Voronezh Regional Centre for Informational Support of Farming Industry, TsENTR Company

7 July. Field Day of New Seeds, Equipment and Technologies
Venue: Zashchitnoye village, Shchigrovsky district, Kursk Region
Organisers: EkoNiva-Semena LLC, Zashchitnoye LLC

July. Siberian Field Day 2011. Demonstration of agricultural equipment
Venue: Altai State Agrarian University, Prigorodnoye state-owned unitary enterprise, Barnaul
Organisers: Altai Territory's Chief Directorate of Agriculture

July. Demonstration of John Deere grain combine harvesters
Venue: Pavlovsky CJSC, Vyshetravino village, Ryazansky district, Ryazan Region
Organisers: EkoNiva-Ryazan

August. 9th International Exhibition of Pedigree Livestock and Animal Breeding Equipment
Venue: Voronezhskoye Pedigree Animal Breeding Farm OJSC, Novousmansky district, Voronezh Region
Organisers: Voronezh Regional Department of Agricultural Policy, Voronezh Regional Centre for Informational Support of the Farming Industry

September. John Deere 6130D tractor demonstration
Venue: EkoNiva-Tula LLC Servicing Centre, Bogoroditsk, Tula Region
Organisers: EkoNiva-Tula LLC

EVENT

For new and better servicing

EkoNiva opens a new John Deere dealer centre in the Novosibirsk Region.

By Anna BORDUNOVA

EkoNiva was one of the first companies to start developing the foreign-made farm equipment market in the Novosibirsk Region. Among the Company's customers are agricultural producers and major agricultural holdings of the Novosibirsk, Tomsk and Kemerovo Regions. This year alone, the Company has supplied the farmers with more than 80 machines.

The servicing centre will house four heated repair shops for diagnosis, repair and maintenance of machines. Two gantry cranes have been installed for unloading and repairing heavy machines. The maintenance shops are fitted with modern equipment for all types of work. A proprietary storehouse of spare parts and fast-wearing components has a storage registration system that slashes maintenance time. The state-of-the-art diagnostic equipment, rooms with samples of machinery for master classes and a conference hall round out the company's capabilities. On the servicing centre site, there is a trade hall for selling spares, expendables, oils and souvenirs.

The pride of the new centre is its own washing facility designed for cleaning the largest tractors even on double wheels, e.g. John Deere 9630. Right after "the shower," a farm machine enters the repair area through the double gate for inspection.

"The development of a servicing network is one of EkoNiva's chief businesses," says Aleksandr Zuyev, head of the Kemerovo division. "The new servicing centre will make the company one of the region's leaders in maintenance and spare parts supply."

In addition, this year EkoNiva is starting the construction of another John Deere dealer centre in the Liskinsky district, Voronezh Region. On an area of 3,000 sq km, it plans to locate maintenance workshops (over 600 sq m), a spare parts and expendable components depot (over 800 sq m), an exhibition site and offices. The facility will be conveniently located along the M4 federal highway. The commissioning of this large-scale object is scheduled for December 2012.

NEW PROJECT

Potato European-style

This year, in association with the German company EUROPLANT, EkoNiva has launched a new enterprise at Zashchitnoye LLC in the Shchigrovsky district. The project seeks to produce seed potatoes.

By Anna BORDUNOVA

The project will start running at full capacity in 2013. The plans are to produce each year up to 6,000 tonnes of elite and reproduction varieties of potatoes.

"This season, we are growing six types of potatoes," says Irina Kolyubayeva, EvroNiva LLC Deputy Director General for Quality. "Among them are ultra-fast ripening varieties like Colette, Bellarosa, and Rosalind, with a yield of 40-45 tonnes per hectare; the early ripening Vineta, which resists drought; and the mid-ripening Roxana and Jelly. We shall also try new varieties like Rumba, Europrima, Omega, Viviana and Red Fantasy. Today, demand for potatoes is high and the market seeks high quality seed potatoes. We are prepared to produce them for the Kursk farmers."

A new European-type potato storage facility with a special ventilation and humidity control system is under construction at Zashchitnoye.

"The potato is one of the most demanding crops. It must be treated with a certain skill and practical cultivating knowledge," says Thomas Bottner, EUROPLANT Director for Exports. "Of course, there are regions in Russia with more favourable conditions for growing potatoes than those in Kursk. Zashchitnoye was not chosen at random. That's where real professionals work, people who know their job and are able to transform theory into practice. For us, it's important that EkoNiva not only produce high quality potatoes but also win for itself a good name as a reliable seed supplier on the Russian market."

EUROPLANT specialists regularly visit farms to provide consultations on potato production and storage.

The varieties offered by EUROPLANT account for 40% of Russia's potato market.

IN BRIEF

On 30 May, a session of the round table "German-Russian Agro-Political Dialogue, the Evolution of Relationship" took place in Moscow. Representatives of the agrarian committees of State Duma and Federation Council, agriculture ministries of Russia and Germany and of German Embassy in Moscow took part.

Valentin Denisov, chairman of the State Duma Committee for Agrarian Issues, noted:

"Turning 18, this year the project came of age. It has grown from youth exchange programmes into large-scale projects in education, science, economy, production and expertise in legislative initiatives."

One indisputable advantage of the project is its wide geographic reach, from the Altai Territory to the Kaliningrad Region. The regular gatherings of Russian and German parliamentarians on the subject of farming contribute enormously to the economic development of both countries. The round table participants also pointed out that the project urges German companies which support Russia's farming to invest in the Russian economy.

EVENTS

John Deere Field Day: pinpoint accuracy

This year for farmers of the Black Earth Belt a Farmers Day coincided with a John Deere Field Day. Over 100 guests celebrated their professional holiday on a demonstration field along with the EkoNiva-Chernozemye and John Deere companies.

By Yulia SALKOVA

Twenty agricultural machines were presented: novelties as well as service-proven apparatus well established in the region. The JD 6130D tractor was the major new product from John Deere. Some participants called it an "unbeatable" alternative in terms of price-quality ratio to the MTZ-1221 tractor, which is widely used among Russian farms. The 130 hp JD 6130D tractor has no rivals in its class as far as performance concerned; it is used in handling crops, forage harvesting and transportation. As usual, John Deere took care of driver's comfort: an air-conditioner, airproof and ergonomic cab with broadened frontal field of view, a transmission with electro-hydraulic reverse gear switch. Among service-proven equipment, the JD 455 mechanical grain seeder, a "Labour Veteran» from the Yermolovskoye Company, drew the guests' attention. The farm's Executive Director, Andrey Galkin, personally presented the machine and mentioned that the seeder has been working in his farm for over five years, saying it's simple in operation and maintenance, and it seeds with pinpoint accuracy.

During the Field Day, a self-propelled JD 4930 spraying machine was demonstrated. It is supplied with a SprayPRO system which turns off the nozzles once outside the field and on already processed plots. Its BoomTrac Pro system maintains constant spraying height. A bar automatically moves up or down, following the relief of the field surface.

Despite being a tradition of EkoNiva workshops, the demonstration of the AMS precision farming system installed on a self-propelled JD 4930 sprayer became the hit of the event. Upon making one passage to get the path "memorised" by the machine, the driver began spraying while reading a copy of *New Agriculture* magazine.

The native land's seven miracles

Not by magic, but through efforts of people fascinated by history of the native land, the Shchuchye village in Voronezh Region has gotten a local history museum. It would be safe to say that it offers extremely interesting exhibits, as unique as the history of the land they represent.

By Svetlana WEBER

One of the classrooms of the Shchuchye high school contains artefacts and other testimony to the ancient history of this land.

Today each visitor of the museum can learn that the first people in these parts appeared before the Ice Age, as we see from the remains of a mammoth and stone implements. The chief attractions are ancient canoes from the late Stone Age recovered from the bottom of the Don in the middle of the last century. They are kept in museums of Moscow and Voronezh, but the locals consider them by right to be their "miracle to the world," the same as cave temples, a wonder stone, ancient mounds, the freak of nature locally referred to as the Spire, and, of course, the Quiet Don river. Local flora and fauna, too, offer their rarities, such as the holy scarab, Russian desman, sturgeon and amazingly beautiful dream-grass.

The Shchuchye land is also proud of its countrymen. Among them are the archaeologist and enthusiast of local history, Vladimir Tevyashov; the Russian poet and thinker, Nikolai Stankevich; and Karl Vulfert, an urban designer who rearranged the village's layout.

The exhibits for the museum were gathered, so to say, from every corner of the country. EkoNiva helped acquire a collection of German glassware from the World War II period. The local inhabitants pride themselves on some of their former possessions that are now museum exhibits. The first of them were collected 30 years ago by Pavel Pivovarov, a local teacher of history. His pupils continued his cause. Nikolay Safronov, though a medical man by profession, is a researcher of local lore by calling. He has written several books on local history. In addition, he became the caretaker of the museum exhibits. He admits that there is still much work to be done. Among other outstanding questions are the exact date of the village's founding and the discovery in archives of pictures of prominent countrymen. The issue of ecology must also receive its due attention in order to preserve the astounding beauty of local nature.

Global AgInvesting 2011

Farming is an industry that brings good profits but is associated with high risks and acts of God. In case of emergency, diversification of agricultural production could be a sort of insurance. That was one of key subjects dealt with at the Global AgInvesting 2011 exhibition of farming investments held in New-York.

By Yulia SALKOVA

EkoNiva representatives participating in the conference pointed out that diversification is fully in line with their company's policy. Each of the company's farms is simultaneously involved in several agricultural activities: stock breeding, crop production, and seed growing. Among those also taking part in the event were representatives of key investment foundations, investors and experts from private and state-owned companies and research institutes from various countries. The Russian delegation, headed by Sergey Korolyov, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, delivered a presentation on the state's measures favouring investments in the country's farming.

Participants of the conference also heatedly discussed the global food crisis. Somewhat to surprise of the Russians, most of those attending promoted the use of genetically-modified organisms (GMO) as the sole chance of "feeding the planet." The issue of "what generation will live on the planet after GMO" remains, regrettably, open...

On cattle breeding

FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE

In April, the Academy of Herd Management, Consulting and Servicing (Hofheim, Germany), a successful operator on the international market of veterinary and cattle breeding, held sessions on the premises of EkoNivaAgro (Liskinsky district, Voronezh Region).

By Yulia SALKOVA

"from the horse's mouth"

For several years now, the Academy has provided consulting to the EkoNiva cattle breeding farms, while their specialists have on more than one occasion visited Germany for training. But this time the veterinarians and zoological technicians have a unique opportunity to receive advice without leaving the country, including authentic advice from Doctor George Eller himself, a fellow of the Academy.

The training programme was of a practical nature. The trainees spent most of the time at the company's cattle breeding farms. The rich subject matter of the training covered veterinarian care, reproduction, feeding, hormone-aided milch cow breeding and the organisation of labour. The common goal of all these aspects of work is to establish efficient milk production using a loose housing system. In this connection, Doctor George Eller drew the specialists' attention to detection and prevention of diseases in animals "at the invisible stage" before obvious symptoms appear, especially with a transit batch of animals, i.e. heifers 30 days prior to calving and newly pregnant cows. These are the most-at-risk animals.

A separate training module dealt with composing rations for each age group of cows and the study of the fodder quality and recipes. George Eller devoted much time to investigating special cases on EkoNiva farms and gave recommendations on how to address them. He also briefed a team of veterinarians formed on his initiative at EkoNivaAgro. Now the team of four will monitor, organise and plan insemination, treatment, and inoculation of animals. It will also operate as a field team if the veterinarians of some division fail to handle an emergency on their own.

As "a bonus," George Eller presented a hormone-use programme developed specifically for cattle breeding divisions of EkoNiva. Its application will minimise omission of the rut-heat periods, thus increasing the number of inseminated animals and reducing the service period.

George Eller believes that the cattle breeding farm in Shchuchye village can serve as a model modern dairy production facility. The participants of the seminar noted its professionalism and application of clear-cut instructions and recommendations.

"More than 50 specialists attended the seminar. Each of them had a lot of questions and problems," said Vitaly Yozhikov, head of the dairy farms in Shchuchye. "In three days, there was hardly anyone who did not receive skilled help from doctor Eller in addition to a bulky package of information on cattle breeding. It's worth noting that due to the long-standing cooperation, the training course was fully adapted to meet the specific needs of EkoNiva."

REFERENCE:

The Academy of Herd Management, Consulting and Servicing is a team of veterinarians, agrarian engineers and specialists looking after of the hooved livstock. They operate at home and abroad. The Academy's specialists address the issues of increasing efficiency of dairy production. They offer new approaches to herd management, helping customers to do a better and faster job while maintaining a healthy herd.

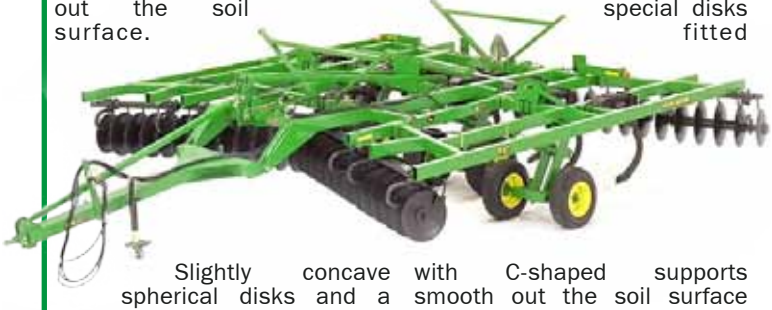
TECHNICAL INSPECTION

John Deere can do anything

High-quality treatment of soil is all-important to farming. John Deere offers farmers equipment that resolves all their soil treatment problems. Now the machines under consideration are the JD 512 deep tiller and the JD 2210 cultivator.

By Anna BORDUNOVA

The John Deere 512 disk tiller is suited to basic soil treatment. Due to a special design of parabolic loosening tines and a spring trip, the harrow loosens soil and cuts, crushes and mixes the stubble. The rear disk batteries smooth out the soil surface.



Slightly concave spherical disks and a fixed angle of harrow of the front disk battery ensure the machine's high operating speed. After a pass of the combined system, the soil becomes smooth and fully covered with vegetation residues. Thus the soil is protected against erosion and evaporation.

"We use the harrow two seasons," says German Byzov, Director General of Pizhansky Stock Breeding Farm OJSC (Kirov Region). "The machine is fine for our swampy soils. Previously we treated most of the fields using boardless cultivators, which necessitated a subsequent chisel plough treatment of the soil. The tiller resolved this problem. In a single pass the machine crushes compacted soil layers down to 41 cm, while special disks fitted with C-shaped supports smooth out the soil surface and do the para-ploughing. This prevents water-logging and over-saturation of the fields. For us, this is a solution to the problem. This season, we have treated around 1,500 ha. In terms of soil treatment, the JD 512 disk tiller and the plough are identical."

Pizhansky Stock Breeding Farm OJSC (Kirov Region). The farm is involved in meat and dairy production, produces high-quality grains and grows elite and reproduction grain seeds. The total area of the farmland is 5,000 ha, that of arable land – 4,334 ha. The farm employs a John Deere 9430T (430 hp) tractor, 730 seeder (coverage 11 m) and JD512 disk ripper.

Specifications:

- Combined soil treatment machine
- Efficient treatment of thick layers of vegetation residues
- Dura-Flex wear-resistant ball bearings
- Operating speed of 8-10 km/h
- Distance between disks 28 cm
- Maximum disking depth 15 cm
- Maximum loosening depth 41 cm

2210 field cultivator cwith a floating bar easily treats the soil before seeding. The machine tines are arranged in a staggered fashion. This makes it possible to treat a large amount of stubble residues and mixes the soil to the maximum. Furthermore, the cultivator is fitted with the AccuDepth system that ensures the optimum soil treatment depth, saves moisture and reduces fuel consumption. The front terrain-hugging wheels operate in conjunction with the floating bar, ensuring a steady soil treatment depth.

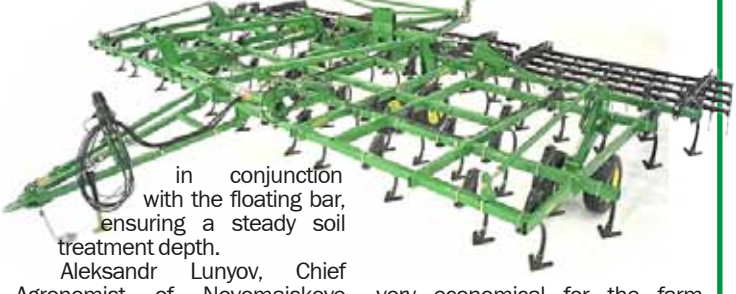
Aleksandr Lunyov, Chief Agronomist of Novomaiskoye CJSC (Novosibirsk Region), believes that it pays to use John Deere cultivators:

"The performance of these machines is amazing. They can do several jobs at once. They finely loosen the soil, smooth it out and do the weeding. This is very economical for the farm. The cultivators are matched with series 9 John Deere tractors. We find them remarkably efficient and have no complaints over their maintenance."

Novomaiskoye CJSC (Krasnozersky district, Novosibirsk Region). This farming company produces meat and dairy products, and it also grows grains and beans. The arable land area is 23,000 ha. The total stock of horned cattle is 2,450 animals; forage-fed cattle amount to 860 animals.

Specifications:

Frame (bar)	102x102 mm
Maximum loosening depth:	127 mm
Standard distance between tines:	152 mm
Maximum tine pressure on soil:	up to 90 kg
Recommended operating speed:	8-12.8 km/h
Recommended tractor power:	25-28 hp per meter of cultivator coverage (when matched with John Deere 8430 300 hp tractor the required cultivator field coverage is 10.8 m)



GUEST OF THE ISSUE

Aleksandr Komarov:

Last year, despite the freakish weather, Novopetrovskoye OJSC (Kamensky district, Tula Region) brought in a good harvest. Aleksandr Komarov, head of the company and a longstanding friend of EkoNiva, believes that it was the use of the latest technologies that contributed abundantly to the success.

By Anna BORDUNOVA

"Our land is our strength"

New technologies against freaks of weather

Considering the weather of 2010, 32 tonnes of sugar beets and 4 tonnes of grain per hectare was a fairly good result. However, Aleksandr Komarov says the normal figure is up to 60 tonnes of sugar beets and 6 tonnes of grain per hectare. This year, the company has increased the sugar beet sowing area 1.5 times (1,750 ha). It pays to grow this crop. According to him, up to 50,000 rubles of profit can be obtained from one hectare.

In addition, Novopetrovskoye grows seed and brewing types of barley. The latter has been the company's specialty for Baltika Brewery over the last six years.

"Baltika has chosen our company with good reason," says Aleksandr Komarov. "We have all the assets required for growing this crop, i.e. modern equipment, a 20,000-tonne elevator with a throughput capacity of 100 tonnes per hour and seed drying facilities. Baltika's specialists visit us regularly to monitor all the stages of barley production. The company's task is to grow barley which fully meets all standards. Our land is our strength and we shall attain the goal."

The company has 1,750 head of cattle. It runs an animal farm with a loose housing system and electronic herd management. The cows are of the black-spotted breed. The animals are provided with well-balanced fodder. Daily milk yield exceeds 5,000 litres per one forage-fed cow.

Machines that ease work

Aleksandr Komarov speaks with pride about the machines used on the farms. Those are four series-8 John Deere tractors, a John Deere 36-meter sprinkler, Rapid (Vaderstad) and Monopill (Kverneland) seeders. All of the equipment was bought from EkoNiva-Tula.

Aleksandr Komarov bitterly recalls the time when sugar beets were harvested by hand and then processed using antiquated machines. The work schedule recommended by agricultural science was not observed and the harvests were miserable. People worked in appalling conditions. In the Soviet era, a machine operator did not live to be fifty. This dragged on till early in the new millennium.

EkoNiva was one of the first companies to introduce foreign-made farming equipment to the Russian market. This has made farmers' life much easier.

"I first saw John Deere tractors and Rapid seeders at work on the neighbouring Otkormochnoye farm," says Aleksandr Komarov. "I got interested and decided to pick up the new technologies. EkoNiva supported me with actions and advice. We acquired our first tractor fitted with a navigation system seven years ago. The results were stunning. The seeding quality was superb, the yield was excellent and the economy impressive. Now, all John Deere tractors on the farm operate using the Autotrac navigation system, which ensures automatic treatment of parallel adjoining rows."

According to Aleksandr, the machine operators are delighted, saying that they hardly need to touch the controls except when turning or bypassing an obstacle. The machine goes ahead along the preset route all on its own.

"Of course, this is costly equipment, but it's worth our money," explains Aleksandr Komarov. "Using it, we've sown up to six thousand hectares of winter and spring grain."

Servicing makes life easy

Aleksandr Komarov is pleased with servicing provided by EkoNiva-Tula.

He says: "The servicing specialists are always on guard. Before sowing, they do all adjustments on time and prepare spare parts. Should even a minor failure occur, they come in two hours and solve all our problems. The operators and engineers willingly attend seminars arranged by EkoNiva specialists."

Spirit of education

Aleksandr Komarov is pleased that EkoNiva pays so much attention to informational support and the education of its customers.

"Together with my colleagues, I've been to the US," continues Aleksandr. "I also visited Germany several times, attending farms and exhibitions and watching how people work."

Such trips did not pass without effect. Today, Aleksandr is planning to create "a smart farm" where cows will be milked by robots.

No formalities

Aleksandr believes that the chief asset of the company and its pride are its people.

"Today, amidst the financial collapse, our prime goal is to preserve the team and create good working conditions. One hundred sixty people work for us. All are adequately paid."

At Novopetrovskoye, the specialists are provided with lodging. Two-story houses with a plot around them are being built for young families. The kindergarten and school are aided on a regular basis. Recently, 200,000 rubles were made available to repair the medical centre.

"I deal with my workmen informally, as with my equals," says Aleksandr. "We are one big family and our relationships are like those between family members."

EN-NEWS DOSSIER

Aleksandr Komarov was born in 1953 in the Tambov Region. He graduated from the Michurin Institute of Vegetable and Fruit Production (the former Moscow-based Goryachkin State Institute of Agricultural Engineering). After the army, he worked for three years as an agronomist in his home town. Then he was transferred to the Tula Region where he works as chief agronomist of the Petrovsky farm. Since 1986, he has headed the Novopetrovskoye OJSC. His son and son-in-law work together with him. His seven-year old grandson dreams of becoming a farm director like his grandfather. Aleksandr's free time is spent in his family circle.

Novopetrovskoye OJSC

- **Business lines include crop production and stock breeding**
- **The farmland totals 13,000 ha, including 10,000 ha of arable land**
- **The livestock totals 1,750 head of cattle, of which milch cows are 600 head**

EXPERT OPINION

Two machines, one goal:

The Maxtron self-propelled harvester from Grimme has earned a good name among Russian farmers even though it appeared on the Russian market much later than its beet harvesting competitors. It is a reliable, highly efficient machine which is gentle with the soil and with the crops. However, if a company does not grow sugar beets on an extra-large scale and its beet fields do not exceed 400–500 ha, then the Rootster trailed harvester manufactured by Grimme would be the more convenient and profitable choice.

By Yulia SALKOVA

efficient harvesting of sugar beets

Due to mechanical drives and small number of hydraulic systems, the Rootster 604 is simple to use and maintain. It easily matches tractors with over 185 hp capacity.

The machines have a single or two-phase system. In the two-phase type, the top cutter BM 300/330 prepares beets row by row, removing and picking the leafy tops of roots over the entire width of the machine. A single-phase system is made in two versions. The first one has the FT 300 leafy top cutter. Its patented design prevents pre-cutter jamming. This ensures optimum distribution of crushed beet tops. They are laid down only following freely suspended cutters, thereby ensuring clean cutting. The second version is an innovation from Grimme. The FM 300 compact top cutter fully cuts off leaves without leaving any green stuff and not removing the excess due to the combination of the patented multiple shaft (on top) and a cleaner shaft (on bottom) rotating in opposite directions. After such careful treatment, the Rootster 604, placed behind, securely digs up the beets. As a result, the yield is increased (by up to 10% per hectare) as compared to the usual top-cutting methods.

Even on uneven fields and in all weather conditions, the Rootster 604 optimally maintains accurate depth due to the stump puller's hydraulic cylinder with a limiting rest and two extra support wheels.

During harvesting, the beets are reloaded using a conveyor from the bin to a vehicle, even if the latter is with high boards.

About Maxtron

For farms specialising in beet production and having sown areas larger than 500 ha, the self-propelled Maxtron 620 would be the right choice. Its well-thought-out design favourably compares with beet harvesters of other brands.

The Maxtron features a semi-caterpillar running mechanism. Unlike a wheel type, it exerts lower pressure on the soil and allows you to work on the field even in the bad weather which frequently occurs during beet harvesting. Other harvesters often skid and get stuck in the mud. The shaft cleaning system with an automatic reverse and a smooth speed adjustment cleans the crop thoroughly but carefully. The Grimme INLINE harvester system is unique in accurately laying the leafy tops in between the rows over the entire coverage width, but not under the harvester as is the case with other such machines. Thanks to this capability, the machine ideally "hugs" the terrain.

No matter which machine suits your farm better, the Rootster 604 or Maxtron 620 are both excellent beet harvesters having active disk diggers, a unique feature that no counterpart has. With them, this arrangement is non-active, which affects the carefulness of beet digging, especially when soil is wet or dry. Using a specific machine you efficiently harvest sugar beets, getting "an ideal cutting performance." This is very important since "cutting above the line" or cutting of green matter are faults in handing the material over to the sugar production plant, whereas a low cut entails yield losses.

EXPERT OPINION

Yuri Puchkov, Grimme-Rus Company regional director

Rootster is the optimal choice for farms specialising in sugar beet production but not on a global scale. The machine is profitable when used for harvesting areas measuring 400 to 500 hectares. In many ways it's like its self-propelled "brother," the Maxtron. It also has active disk diggers, Grimme's patented INLINE leafy top removing system and the shaft-aided beet cleaning capability. All drives except the overload elevator hydraulic system are mechanical, which means minimum servicing and low operating costs. In short, this is a good harvester in the economy class.

PRACTITIONER'S VIEW

Aleksandr Pyatakov, EkoNivaAgro chief engineer

Maxtron is reliable like a tank. We have two such harvesters on the farm. The first one has served us irreproachably for five years now. The second one was acquired last year. Both are running without a hitch. One should only remember about maintenance. Due to the semi-caterpillar capability, the Maxtron offers superior off-road performance. It negotiates all soils in all weather conditions! This really matters given that beet harvesting normally proceeds in bad weather. The machine does its normal job easily, i.e., it digs without injury to soil, cuts accurately without touching "the crux of the soil matter" and, overall, produces excellent results.

LESSONS OF HISTORY

Riebensdorf:

looking back with reflection, ahead with hope

Wonders are near at hand! This truism has been confirmed once again. A seemingly ordinary village in the Voronezh region became the source of unfathomable miracles which even surprised many locals. The history of Rybnoye village made us hit the road. But let's not rush the story!

By Nikolai Safronov and Svetlana WEBER

The Russian-German company EkoNiva is based not far from here. While on a visit to EkoNiva one day, the Governor of the Voronezh Region Aleksey Gordeyev told us that the nearby village was once a German settlement Riebensdorf . We decided to look into the matter given that Russo-German relations have included not only bitter wars but also enduring cooperation.

And so we started our search!

From the archives...

The history of Riebensdorf began in the golden age of Catherine the Great. On 22 July 1763, the Empress issued a manifesto under which all Germans wishing to settle in Russia were granted privileges such as material aid, benefits in duty payment and exemption from military service. In 1765, being short of land, several German families from the state of Baden-Wьrttemberg left for Russia.

Sixty families of new settlers arrived in Rybnoye village, close to Ostrogozhsk. They were given 3,341 dessiatines of land. Thus, Riebensdorf came into being. The settlers started growing crops and livestock. Fruits, vegetables, sausages, superb cheese and tobacco produced in Riebensdorf began to appear on the markets of Ostrogozhsk and Voronezh. The colonists were among the first in Russia to produce sunflower seed oil. Over time, Riebensdorf became one of Russia's three major tobacco suppliers, being second only to Poltava and Chernigov.

In addition, the Germans built their own school there. For more than a century it was a parish school funded by the general population. Only after 1875, when the colonists agreed to teach Russian at their school and to allow the local administration to appoint teachers did the school get the status of a Zemstvo school, i.e. one supervised by the district council. This is one of the oldest schools in our country. It will turn 245 this year!

According to the 1897 census,


The church in Riebensdorf back then…

the Germans were the third largest ethnic group in the Ostrogozhsky district after Ukrainians and Russians. In all, Voronezh province had eight German villages. Among them were Ruenthal, Zentral, Petrovka, Johannovsky and Artyushkino. Riebensdorf was the largest of them.

The residents of Riebensdorf were affected by WWI. By then they no longer enjoyed an exemption from the military draft. Considering their nationality, most of them were shipped to the Turkish theatre of operations. Some, however, had to do their service on the Western front. There's no getting away from fate.

In 1916, Riebensdorf was renamed to Rybnoye. After the revolution, some Rybnoye residents sided with the Bolsheviks, while others remained neutral. Still others returned to Germany or emigrated to Canada.

After collectivisation, some of the residents supported reprisals while others were converted into collective farmers. Among them were Stakhanov shock workers and model farmers. In 1935-1937, a new wave of repressions rolled over their heads. The year 1941 was especially harsh. All of the settlers were deported to the Novosibirsk and Omsk regions. The people lived in barracks and dugouts and men were drafted for tree-felling.

In 1955, their displacement status was cancelled. But it was only in 1961 that they were allowed to return to their former place of residence. Few Soviet Germans used this opportunity. Their houses had fallen into decay or were occupied by strangers.


… and now

The Germans started returning to Germany. In the period between 1956 and 2006, a total of more than 2 million Germans and their family members returned to their native land.

The current state of affairs

Today Riebensdorf-Rybnoye is an unexceptional village of 200 houses. Few things bear witness to the bygone days. The only reminder is the old church. Without a dome and in a sorry state of repair, it still shows traces of its former grandeur. The German churchyard is empty but for ancient stones. True, some houses are still standing on German stone foundations.

The locals could tell us nothing, except that «at one time it was a place of Germans.» And we wished to discover some family history here! So we made the journey to Zulzfeld, a town in Germany whence the settlers in Russia had come nearly 250 years ago.

Recalling the travel...

We were agreeably surprised when Sarina Pfruender and her deputy Bernfried Hettler, without much ado, fixed an appointment for us. We were received at the Mayor's Office, where we were introduced to the history of the town. It emerged as a community of bricklayers. Today, Sulzfeld, with its castles and wine production, is an indisputable tourist attraction. In a town of only 5,000 people, there are two large factories for production of thermal regulators and sanitary engineering appliances. The local history museum carefully preserves and constantly replenishes its stock of exhibits. A book on the history of Riebensdorf was a welcome addition to the museum's assets. Of course, it will supply us with new knowledge!

We were somewhat aggrieved to learn that upon their return to Germany no one from Riebensdorf settled in the ancestral homeland of Sulzfeld from where their forefathers had left for Russia. However, we were very glad that Mr. Hettler plans to look for materials at the museums which would throw light on the fate of settlers from Riebensdorf. It means there is a chance of finding descendants of the Riebensdorf residents there! And then the history will live on. Strictly speaking, our trip as such was a continuation of the Russo-German relationship. Our German partners would have willingly visited Riebensdorf-Rybnoye and are prepared to play host to guests from Russia.

P.S. In Sulzfeld we left behind a bit of Riebensdorf in the form of a candlestick made from an oak-tree that grew in a place where 175 years ago the people from Sulzfeld had lived.

Focus ON US!

PHOTO EXHIBITION

Please, send your photos marked FOCUS ON US! to:
305004 Kursk ul. Radishcheva, 79-a 000
EkoNiva-Media or e-mail them to: vesti@ekoniva.com
Please, feel free to contact us on the telephone:
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EkoNiva continues a 'FOCUS ON US!' photo competition. We invite the participation of anyone who thinks that the best moments from the life of a village and of the peasants are moments worth capturing as history. The photos will compete in one of the following categories:

1. Russian Field... (You can send photographs featuring fieldworks or pictures of beautiful landscapes featuring fields)
2. Field Machinery of the XXI Century! (We are expecting photographs of state-of-the-art agricultural machinery and equipment required for implementation of advanced agricultural techniques)
3. The Renaissance of Livestock Breeding. (Send us pictures of livestock farms)
4. Farmers of Russia – we expect portraits of your neighbours, friends and relatives... and any other persons who work on the land
5. My Native Village and My Home (Send us photos featuring the most interesting moments in the life of your native village)

The best photos will be published in *EkoNiva-News* and awarded prizes. Moreover, most interesting and attractive pictures will be demonstrated at the exposition.

Twists and turns to the right end.

EkoNiva-Tula engineers work without cease

This may happen even to John Deere!
EkoNiva engineers repair a series 9 JD tractor

Small, but strong! Seeding in miniature.

Wheat being sown at a Shchigrovsky pilot plot

We shall overcome! Through fire and water, off to seeding!

Talking it over in the field.

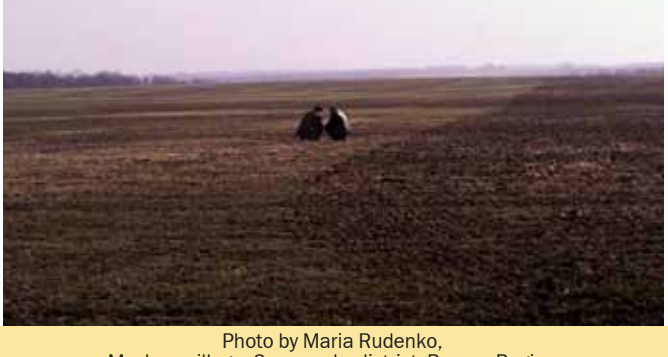

Photo by Maria Rudenko,
Mozhary village, Sarayevsky district, Ryazan Region

REGIONAL NEWS

Joy for EkoNiva staff, surprise for Kirov residents

For the first time at the AgroVyatka 2011 inter-regional exhibition in Kirov, the EkoNiva-Vyatka Company came up with an highly automated John Deere 8320R tractor.

By Liudmila ZYKOVA and Anna BORDUNOVA

Each year, farmers of the Kirov region participate in the specialised AgroVyatka exhibition, at which they learn about state-of-the-art agricultural equipment, plant protection chemicals, mineral fertilisers and crop seeds. This year, EkoNiva-Vyatka surprised the farmers by what it presented. The farmers were introduced to the Russian-assembled John Deere 8320R tractor fitted with the Autotrac automatic control system that enables automatic adjoining passes in parallel. Thus, the operator doesn't need to handle the controls except during turns and for bypassing obstacles. Once the latter operations are performed, he can again activate the Autotrac mode and the machine will move on its own along the chosen route.

"We are glad we can offer our farmers such efficient machines which are so pleasant to use," says Sergey Mosunov, head of the EkoNiva servicing department. "All the machines at Russia's John Deere factory in Domodedovo are rolled out with this component package. You just fit the cabin with the StarFire signal receiver and a display and then activate the system."

EkoNiva-Vyatka also presented on its demonstration site the JCB 531-70 Agri telescopic loader, RAU EXPLORER A 28(24m) motor-drawn boom sprayer, Rapid RDCS 400 OffSet combined stubble seeder, Einboeck AEROSTAR mounted weeder, original spare parts and seeds.

The bulk of the EkoNiva-Vyatka show has left for various districts of the Kirov region. This modern, efficient equipment, which in the past was just a dream, will be a big help for the region's farmers.

Bearing a sign of quality

By the beginning of the harvest, a new seed production mill with an output capacity of 8 tonnes per hour will operate at the Zashchitnoye Company.

By Anna BORDUNOVA

Zashchitnoye is one the major professional seed producers working for the EkoNiva-APK Holding Company. It produces seeds of grains, grain legumes, oil-bearing crops and European-selected fodders. This farming enterprise is a member of the Kursk Region Council of Seed Producers. In terms of equipment, this is one of Russia's leaders. This year the farm will make a step forward by launching a seed production facility.

"The seed production facility will enable us to improve each the quality of more than 15,000 tonnes of seeds year, bringing us to European standards," says Aleksey Bibikov, director of Zashchitnoye. "The farm will use modern Spanish, and US-made equipment for cleaning and treating seeds (JUBUS and LMC)."

As Berndt Hoerschelmann, director of the GRAINTEC Company, a supplier of the equipment, says, the new line will not only raise the quality of seeds, but also will improve the seed production and shipment system.

The seed production unit will soon open its doors to the newly gathered harvest.

Links of the same chain

Over the last two years, the John Deere Company has regularly provided engineering assistance in sowing for farms using its equipment. This year, this programme was attempted in the Siberian region.

By Anna BORDUNOVA

John Deere specialists dealt directly with the Siberian farmers, helping them to prepare machines right in the field. They demonstrated all the capabilities of the equipment, did troubleshooting and advised on how to make the fullest possible use of the machines.

"Such events foster trust in John Deere products," says Aleksey Burkhovetsky, EkoNiva-Siberia sales manager. "The customers shed all doubts when choosing equipment and supplier. To us, the dealers, this is very important since the producer, supplier, and customer are links of the same chain. By joint efforts, we can build long-term partner relationships and resolve all problems of farming equipment maintenance."

Siberian farmers expressed strong approval of the John Deere specialists' work.

"We have to respect such equipment," says Anatoly Stepanov, head of the Sokolovo Company (Kolyvansky district, Novosibirsk Region). "These are highly efficient machines that help us achieve excellent results."

Such programmes are also useful for John Deere.

"Based on customer feedback, we improve our equipment and introduce new technologies," says Vyacheslav Galkin, John Deere territorial manager.

OUR PEOPLE

The head, an engineer's chief tool

A servicing engineer's job is not just a job; it's a way of life. Work in rain or sunshine, in heat or cold, plus dear ones disgruntled that they heavily depend on the telephone for contacts: such are the inevitable features of an engineer's job. One has to love one's job with heart and soul to be able to abandon a cosy office for lengthy trips to cities and villages.

By Yulia SALKOVA

At one point, Sergey Krupsky, one of EkoNiva's regional directors, voiced a bright idea: "An engineer is like a high-class test pilot. He should be able to fly anything that flies, and fly fairly well what can't fly at all."

This means that a real engineer can repair any machine, even one he sets his eyes on for the first time. Without hesitation, Sergey named two such "test-pilots" among his engineers. They are Aleksey Priskoko, an engineer from EkoNiva-Tula, and Sergey Oskin, his colleague from EkoNiva-Ryazan.

Aleksey and Sergey have been on the job since the establishment of EkoNiva divisions in Tula and Ryazan. Aleksey is 27 year old, Sergey - 41. They have much in common though they are from different generations. Their colleagues refer to them in almost identical terms, saying they are equally hardworking, universally handy, smart and eager for self-education.

"An engineer's chief tool is his head," says Aleksey.

Sergey fully agrees with him, adding: "Skilled hands also mean something, but one can't do without theory. Modern farming equipment has gone far ahead farming education. So one must overtake it on one's own and keep on learning."

Sergey Oskin has lived all his life on the Ryazan soil. He graduated from the Ryazan Agrarian University, taking a degree in mechanical engineering. Since 2007, he has been successfully working for EkoNiva-Ryazan. Aleksey Priskoko, a native of Bogoroditsk, Tula Region, earned a degree in operation of tractor fleets from the Moscow-based State University of Agricultural Technologies. In his last year at university, he underwent practical training at the EkoNiva division in the Moscow Region. But unlike most young and promising specialists who got a chance to remain in Moscow, he returned to Bogoroditsk as soon as EkoNiva opened its division there. The cause for such loyalty in the case of Aleksey and Sergey is the same: "there's no place like home."

"I shall always remember the time when I worked at the Moscow division of EkoNiva. I learned a lot there and that's where I became a real engineer," recalls Aleksey with gratitude. "Back home I've got more work and it's diverse. In addition, I associate with interesting customers and can learn how to use farming machines from various manufacturers."

The values of both engineers are also much alike. Their families are their top priority. Aleksey admits that thus far his heart is not occupied, so he channels all his energy into improving his professional skills, spending much of what he earns on his beloved nephews.

Sergey has a son and a daughter, with a year's difference between them. They recently finished the first grade. His chief goal is to raise his children. The biggest difficulty here is to find the golden mean, i.e. to love like a parent without spoiling. When asked what his children wish to become in the future, he answered:

"I asked Yulia and Ilya about their future profession. They said: 'Dad, when we watch TV we don't know what we want to be. Being a president is hard, being a deputy is boring. But your job appears to us to be jolly!"

FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE

Agroferma 2011»: animals need proper care

What determines success in stock breeding? How to care for animals and prosper? These issues were discussed by experts at the AgroFerma 2011 exhibition.

By Anna BORDUNOVA

Over 200 Russian and foreign companies displayed their pedigree cattle, modern technologies and new products for all branches of stock breeding. The experts carefully examined machines for and technologies of cattle care.

At its exhibition "Hygiene in Dairy Production," the GEA Farm Technologies Company showed a section of its farm with cows. Six cows were placed in modern stalls and milked by Mobimelk milking machine made by GEA Farm Technologies. Also on display were several types of stalls and various lying arrangements for cattle. GEA employees conducted a master class in cow hoof care. The farmers could see how to use hoof care devices correctly and learned what tools are needed for this. The GEA Farm Technologies Rus Company advises on how to care for animals' health correctly and offers LuxDip, LuxPre, SensoDip compounds for treating the udder before and after milking, special paper and fabric tissues for cleaning the udder and appliances for treating nipples.

Once again, Agroferma proved to domestic and foreign stockbreeders that without the latest technologies and professional care of animals no success is possible in animal husbandry.

OUR PEOPLE

Happy house-warming!

After the work day ends, it is pleasant to come back to a comfortable home where loved ones await you and gather at a large table. This is what young specialists of the Zashchitnoye Company can enjoy now that they have moved into homes of their own.

By Anna BORDUNOVA

The big house was built for two families. Tatiana and Sergey Kupriyanov (chief veterinarian and economist) and Liubov and Aleksandr Kopayev (logistics manager and chief engineer) have already moved into this new house with all modern conveniences and a plot of land around it. The families each received three rooms full of light. The new settlers have already planted vegetables and made flowerbeds near their house.

"Now we have more things to look after," says Tatiana Kupriyanova. "But these are pleasant cares. More than anything else, I enjoy tending my house and turning it into a comfy place to live."

"At first I didn't believe my eyes," says Sergey, sharing his impressions. "We are happy to have gotten a home of our own."

Kopayev's family

The farm allocated a settling-in sum to the young family. Thus the home has acquired furniture and domestic appliances.

"We had long dreamed of a house of our own," say Liubov and Aleksandr Kopayev. "And the company has realised our dream! Soon we'll have a house-warming party!"

"Young specialists are the pride of the farm," says Aleksey Bibikov, Zashchitnoye director. "Using our own funds, we build lodging for our workers so that they can live well and work efficiently on the farm. We are glad to see our workers' daily life become comfortable and enjoyable. It's good they are building support facilities for their livestock and household needs."

The positive experiment at Zashchitnoye is drawing the attention of other EkoNiva farms, which plan to start building cottages for young specialists.

Tatiana and Sergey Kupriyanov

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