

## Mineral deposits from modern age

By Olga Bekhovets

### Russian, American and Estonian companies keen to develop oil shale deposits in Belarus

The Deputy Director of the Geology Department at Belarus' Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Ministry, Vladimir Varaksa, informs us that Belarus is negotiating with several foreign companies. "Each has its own advantages, so it's too early to say which will become our main partner," he explains. Geologists are yet to determine the scope of Belarus' oil shale reserves, without which it's impossible to set up a new enterprise to extract and process these minerals.

In line with Belarus' strategy for energy development, a mining and chemical enterprise to extract and process oil shale (with an annual capacity of 5m tonnes) is to be built by 2014. Belarus' commercial reserves of oil shale are concentrated on two deposits: Lyubanskoe and Turovskoe. About 30 percent of these sites has already been surveyed and, according to estimations, Lyubanskoe alone may yield 1,223,000,000 tonnes (prospected reserves exceed 900m tonnes). Turovskoe's reserves are estimated at 2,684,000,000 tonnes (with prospected reserves standing at about 700m tonnes).

Belarus has already announced its desire to acquire investors to develop its shale gas deposits. Theoretical evaluations are being made, with Belarusian experts holding consultations with experienced companies from Poland, Lithuania, the USA and elsewhere. Shale gas prospecting could soon be launched near Brest, overseen by Belorusneft Production Association and a Polish company. According to the National Academy of Sciences, no deposits of shale gas have previously been found in Belarus.

## Idea aiming to bring business, society and state closer to each other

By Yekaterina Markova

### International Social-Economic Fund — Idea — launches its operation in Belarus

The Idea Fund has been established as a centre of communication between businesses, civil society and the state. "This three-sectoral scheme of partnership will enable businesses to meet the social needs of society, with help from the state, while promoting a company's image and gaining commercial profit," notes the Fund's Director for Corporate Social Responsibility, Victor Radkov. He adds that, at present, many fail to understand that businesses must be socially responsible and that charity activity is important.

"These basic principles have pushed us to establish the Fund. Its foremost task — at least for the near future — is to promote a culture of



Grain harvesters commonly used by Belarusian agro-industrial complex in August

# Relying on rich harvest

The steady hum of engines along the Polotsk-Vitebsk motorway, the rich smell of a MAZ truck filled with freshly harvested grain and the sparkling headlights of lorries carrying bread are a true joy to farmers — finally rewarded for their long months of hard work

By Yevgeny Bestemianov

"You might not believe it but my heart is singing!" cheerfully admits the Director of Polotsk Agroservice JSC, Vladislav Vysotsky. "Here, in the fields, we can really feel our importance, having fulfilled our duty and been personally involved in a great deed. I sincerely envy my harvester operators, who are responsible for the most vital work. The closer they are to the process of making bread, the more responsible their mission..."

This year, Polotsk Agroservice needs to harvest over 1,000 hectares of grain and, so far, local har-

vester operators lead in the district — both for speed and volumes. Like all self-respecting farmers, they don't tend to guess at future harvests, since bread volumes rely not on grain collected from the field but that stored in warehouses.

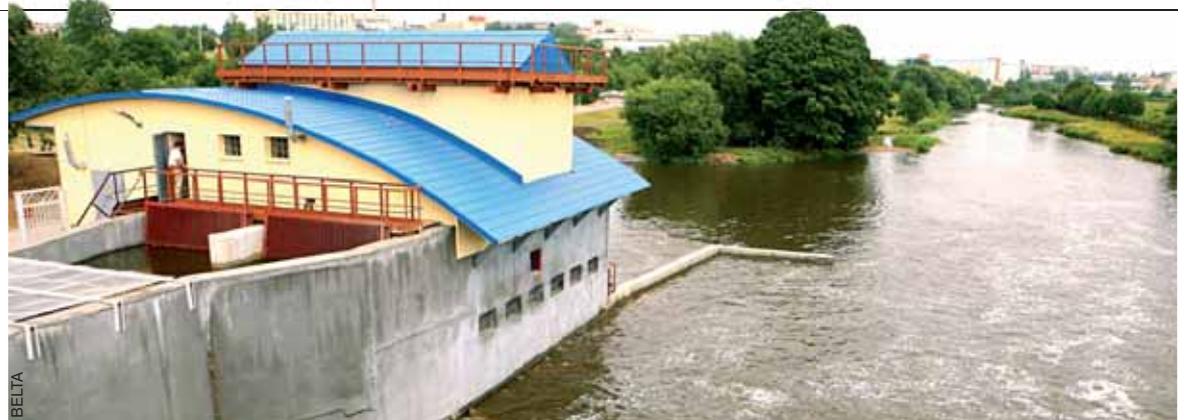
In fact, initial results are pleasing, with some winter rye fields yielding 53 centners per hectare. Over 500 tonnes of grain have been de-husked. Of course, harvesting is conducted with military precision, every stage being well organised. The harvesters move in line, each followed by heavy duty trucks, while fire-fighters and technical

services work nearby. A quarter of fields have been harvested, allowing locals to assist at neighbouring farms. Private households are also soon to start harvesting.

"We can work in villages now," admits one of the best harvester drivers, Alexander Rogovoy. At our request, he makes a short stop across the field, explaining, "Look at our machinery. In the past two years, we've almost fully updated our tractor and truck fleet, as well as our trailed devices. It's now a true pleasure to go into the fields, operating such highly efficient vehicles. Moreover, we are motivated by the possibility of earning good

money during the peak of the harvest season. We're also given grain as a bonus. To save time, our meals are brought directly to the fields. How can we not set records under such conditions!"

"Alexander is our hero," confirms Mr. Vysotsky. "He's been harvesting grain for about ten seasons. Such people are the major wealth of our district, producing stable results for our joint stock company. We'll thank all our grain growers after the harvest is in, and will invite journalists for a press conference. However, at the moment, we have no time for interviews, sadly. The grain awaits us..."



Small energy generators contribute to country's electricity saving programme

## Dnieper and Bug Canal influences its surroundings

By Olga Kobayak

### Mini hydro-electric power stations further developed

"Belarus enjoys rich potential of water resources, which should bring economic benefits, enhancing cheaper cargo transportation and water tourism. Additionally, water can be used to generate electricity at a profit, via our existing mini hydro-electric sta-

tions," explains the Deputy Prime Minister, Anatoly Kalinin.

Visiting water sites in the Brest Region, the official noted that hydro-power is to be further developed along the Dnieper and Bug Canal in the coming five years, with two mini hydro-electric stations being built — to double the output of the existing three stations.

In the Zhabinka District, Mr.

Kalinin attended a launch ceremony for a mini hydro-electric station at Zaluzie — the third in the Brest Region (working along the Dnieper and Bug Canal). He toured reconstruction works at the Trishin hydro-electric shipping lock (Brest Region), Brest's River Port and Kobrin's hydro-electric station. Meanwhile, in Pinsk, he visited the local Shipbuilding and Ship-Repair Plant.