

Casting plant for Mogilev

By Sergey Kulyagintsev

Technologically advanced plant to focus on car castings

The Mogilev free economic zone is to host the factory, having suitable logistic facilities, although the Vitebsk Region was originally considered. A site has been chosen and investments are currently being sought for the \$150m venture.

The first facility is due to be launched in two years' time, providing Belarusian Railways and the country's wagon building industry with good quality carriages and wagons. Existing technologies are being studied, to guide our own methods, with Russian and Chinese experience drawn upon.

Belarus urgently requires such a facility, as the plants in Mogilev and Osipovichi experience difficulties with importing wagons and carriages. Mogilev's plant currently purchases from China and demand appears to be growing worldwide. Specialists believe this will continue into the future.

Ideal machinery for orchards and vineyards

By Andrey Gusinsky

Moldova eager to assemble more 'Belarus' tractors

Chisinau recently hosted an intergovernmental Moldovan-Belarusian commission on trade and economic co-operation, focusing on how best to raise assembly volumes of 'Belarus-921' tractors — to be used to service orchards and vineyards (using Belarusian tractor sets).

Two years ago, Smorgon Aggregate Plant (a branch of Minsk Tractor Works) began working with Moldova's Agromotekh and a pilot tractor was successfully tested in Moldova. It became the basis for the joint production of tractors in Moldova, with a modernised 'Belarus' tractor now perfectly suiting local orchards and vineyards. In the first half of 2011, Moldova assembled 30 tractors but plans to produce no less than 50 in 2012.

In 2010, an improved 'Belarus-921' won a Grand Prix at the *Moldagrotekh* international specialised exhibition, inspiring increased assembly volumes. Moldova-made 'Belarus' tractors for orchards and vineyards are expected to be sold both in Moldova and in the EU — in particular, to Romania and other Balkan countries.

Positive balance preferable

Extended governmental session focuses on ways to enhance economic competitiveness on the account of the expansion of range of import-substitution goods

By Boris Yurevsky

As Prime Minister Mikhail Myasnikovich has informed, in 2012, Belarus aims to achieve a \$1.8bn positive balance in its foreign trade of goods and services. It will be a challenge, so the structure of the economy needs careful analysis, to reduce costs incurred during GDP formation. The economic situation is such that import-substitution is now a vital element of state security, shifting from the category of economic issues. The exchange rate of the national currency, inflation, people's income, alongside the trade balance and the balance of payment, are major topics of discussion.

The Prime Minister notes that Belarus began this year with 'a very bad' negative foreign trade balance — of 17 percent of GDP. By August, the deficiency in foreign trade had fallen to 8 percent of GDP — mostly due to monetary factors and changes in the exchange rate. Mr. Myasnikovich stresses that it's too early to speak about any serious structural



Minsk's Atlant domestically produces a refrigerator every 17 seconds

changes in the economy and congratulate ourselves on falling import dependence, as certain managerial decisions must be made to sustain movement in the right direction. He urges the Government to be constructive in enhancing exports and reducing im-

ports. According to Belarus' Economy Minister, Nikolai Snopkov, certain positive aspects are already evident in the import-substitution programme. Over the past ten years, Belarus has manufactured \$14bn of import-substitution goods,

while realising about 1,500 import-substitution projects. Over \$3.8bn has been invested into programmes, while 12 percent of imported products have been substituted.

Mr. Snopkov asserts that two basic conditions are required to ensure that

import-substitution is successful: a capacious inner market and domestic raw and financial resources. However, according to the Minister, we currently lack both. With this in mind, Belarus is gradually developing import-substitution measures.

Mineral resources still available for investigation

By Igor Bestemianov

1.5bn investment agreement between UK's GMC Global Energy plc and Belarusian Government to build new potash facility in Belarus opens new possibilities for the branch

A second potash facility is to be built by 2017, annually producing over 1m tonnes of potash fertilisers and creating about 1,500 new jobs. Global agricultural producers are greatly in need of fertilisers, ensuring a buoyant market.

The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Ministry's Geology Department tells us that the investment project envisages production of potash fertilisers from an as yet undeveloped site in the Minsk Region: the eastern part of Nezhinskoe section. In addition, the Smolovskoe and Lyubanskoe sections of the Starobinsky potash salts deposit are to be mined for the new facility. Large deposits of potassium ore will be developed by the new facility: over 1bn tonnes of raw salts. No final geological explora-



Investors are in demand for raw material sphere

tion has yet been conducted at the Starobinsky potash salts deposit — so even greater volumes may yet be found.

The Gomel Region is also believed to be rich in potash salts — in particular, at Oktyabrskoe and Petrikovskoe (Mozyr District) deposits.

The first stage of a contest has been announced for the latter, aiming to find an investor for further industrial development of the deposit and the construction of an ore mining and dressing plant. Known deposits of raw salts at Petrikovskoe account for over 1bn tonnes.

Holding keen to partner

Russian Machines sends proposal to Belarus on co-operation with MAZ

The General Director of the Russian Machines Corporation (a major shareholder of GAZ Group), Alexander Filatov, informs that his company has sent a package of documents to the Belarusian

Government offering various routes of co-operation between GAZ and the Minsk Automobile Works. "The documents are currently being studied by top level Belarusian managers," he tells journalists, stressing that Russian Machines is hopeful of major collaboration with MAZ.

Sweet taste of useful sweets



Useful sweets

Belarusian scientists develop confectionery for those with special dietary needs

The General Director of the Scientific-Practical Centre for Food at Belarus' National Academy of Sciences tells us that new recipes are being used to produce sweets from fructose and isomalt, especially for those suffering from diabetes (and for others who are not recommended to eat sugar).

Every year, the branch produces over 500 tonnes of sweets, meeting increasing demand for diabetic products. Recently, a wide range of chocolate and caramels, boiled sweets and those serving therapeutic pur-

poses have been developed for Slodych JSC, Konfa JSC, Kommunarka JSC and Spartak JV.

New industrial technologies for producing sweets and food concentrates (for pre-school and school age children) are being developed, rich in vitamins and minerals to meet dietary needs. Spartak and Vitebsk's Vitba factory have already mastered their production while domestic technology for soft caramel production is being developed. Sweet smelling herbs and other fragrant plants are being used as ingredients for other recipes: propolis, mint, lemon, sage, lemon balm and liquorice.