

Significant innovative event

National Centre for Genome Biotechnologies opens in Minsk

By Tatiana Chumakova

The Director of the Institute for Genetics and Cytology at the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, Alexander Kilchevsky, tells us that services are being provided in the field of genome biotechnology to the ministries of Agriculture and Food, Sports and Tourism, and Natural Resources and Environmental Protection. Other legal entities and individuals, in-

cluding those from abroad, are able to make use of the National Centre of Genome Biotechnologies, which is a unique multi-field innovative agency — unrivalled in the CIS.

The Centre has been founded from the accredited Centre of DNA Biotechnologies at the NAS' Institute of Genetics and Cytology and the Genome Centre for Collective Use — as part of the current state innovative development programme.

It aims to determine the

presence of genetically modified ingredients in raw foods, agricultural products, feeds and seeds, while identifying DNA-markers for the certification of crop varieties. It will also work on identifying the genes responsible for positive characteristics and hereditary diseases in animals, alongside those responsible for the individual characteristics of people.

Preparatory works are complete, allowing accreditation for marker-assisted selection of agricultural plants, DNA-typing of rare and disappearing plant and animal

species, and the molecular-genetic identification of bacteria. A Health Ministry license has been given for medical activity.

The Centre and the Institute have successfully passed international STB ISO 9001-2009 quality management certification, with a corresponding certificate already received. The Centre should reach its designed capacity in December 2013: 7,000 tests per year. Mr. Kilchevsky believes that this will bring commercialisation of genome research in Belarus, while laying the foundations for domestic genome biotechnology,

fully meeting the country's needs.

The Chief Scientific Secretary of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, Sergey Chizhik, notes that the establishment of the Centre is a great innovative achievement, bringing the opportunity to attract non-budgetary financing and allow employees to earn more

under current conditions.

Manufacturing own electricity

By Valery Sidorchik

Belarus' first solar powered fuel station opens in Gomel

The fuel station is owned by Belorusneft Production Association and is able to generate 10-12KWh — depending on weather conditions. This is enough to ensure its uninterrupted operation, with excess supply diverted to the city network. Pumps accepting bank cards have been installed for drivers' convenience, alongside energy efficient LED lighting and heat pumps for heating and hot water supply.

Belorusneft plans to construct two more such fuel stations, using solar power, on either side of the M-3 Minsk-Vitebsk highway, near Silichi. At present, Belorusneft owns the largest chain of car refuelling stations in Belarus — almost 500, selling over 70 percent of the country's automobile fuel.

'One region — one customs' principle

From 1st January 2012, two customs offices — in Mozyr and Pinsk — have been closed, with that of Mozyr joining Gomel and Pinsk via the Brest customs office

The restructuring is guided by the 'one region — one customs' principle, allowing a reduction in administrative apparatus and allowing staff to be redeployed to most effective use along the Belarusian-Lithuanian and Belarusian-Polish borders, where the greatest passenger and cargo inflow is evident.

Customs clearance at Pinsk and Mozyr is now united with that of Brest and Gomel, sharing the same services and daily schedule. Nine customs houses are now operating in Belarus: Brest, Grodno, Oshmyany, Vitebsk, Gomel, Mogilev, Minsk Regional, Minsk Central and Minsk-2 (at Minsk National Airport).

Travelling in new carriage along old road

Ten thousand passengers travel to Baranovichi in new electric trains from Minsk and Brest

Belarusian Railways launched business class electric trains on regional lines several weeks ago, with modern and comfortable trains now daily servicing the Minsk-Baranovichi and Brest-Baranovichi routes. As Belarusian Railways notes, these enjoy popularity among passengers, with the volume of transportation rising by 20 percent (for the second week in a row). On working days, electric trains are 70 percent occupied, with the figure rising to 100 percent at weekends.



Centre for Genome Biotechnologies can detect genes responsible for our individual characteristics



BELTA

National Bank has decided to 'turn back the clock'

National Bank of Belarus confident that country's banking system has longer history than it was previously believed, asserts Deputy Chairman Sergey Dubkov

By Alexander Nenashev

Until recently, it was believed that the country's national banking system was established on January

state's first bank, in Gomel. "Technologies and currencies change and new countries appear, yet the strategic functions of banks remain. Analysis of 150 year old documents

"We're only just initiating this. The company which won the tender to rebrand us has already presented its colour scheme, alongside various logo ideas, and we've begun using these on some of our internal stationery — such as folders and notebooks," notes the Deputy Chairman of the country's major financial institution.

He notes that the National Bank's logo was officially registered over a decade ago, so any changes won't be too drastic. The logo is most prominently seen on Belarusian banknotes, so the new image will eventually find its way to future notes. In the first three months of 2012, a new banknote — worth Br200,000 — is to come into circulation.

Mr. Dubkov emphasises that image strategy is vital across the whole financial system, since it generates trust. He adds that the public have been raising their volume of savings in Belarusian Roubles and in foreign currency in recent months — both in relative and absolute value. This is happening not at the expense



National Bank's main entrance

of the capitalisation of interests but through a natural inflow of money.

"The major task of the National Bank and other banks is to preserve and reinforce this trend," asserts Mr. Dubkov. "Recently, interest rates on Belarusian Roubles have been very profitable; it is the National Bank's response to events on the domestic market and worldwide."



Minsk's State Bank on a postcard from the early 20th century

3rd, 1922, when the Belarusian Office of the State Bank, established by the Council of the People's Commissars of the BSSR, began to operate in Minsk. However, the National Bank now believes that January 8th, 1870 may mark the foundation of the

shows that they haven't altered at all — still offering loans, and attracting savings and payments," explains Mr. Dubkov.

The new foundation date may be used by the National Bank during its bold rebranding strategy.