

Straw bio-fuel in use

Agro-town in Kletsk District heated by straw harvest for two years



Agro-town of Zaostrovechie, in Kletsk District, using straw eco-fuel

By Nina Stasova

Straw is very useful, being suitable as litter and livestock food, as fertiliser and as a building material, besides making hats and baskets, and filling mattresses and armchairs. It is also an excellent bio fuel, being used to heat the agro-town of Zaostrovechie in the Kletsk District.

Energy from collective farms' fields

Alexander Novitsky, the director of Kletsk housing and communal services, tells us, "Boilers operate exclusively on straw until January; only as the severe frosts set in do we use woodchips. This project has taken blood and sweat, as we developed it without assistance."

How did such a boiler-house appear in Zaostrovechie? Its predecessor burnt coal for nearly thirty years, opening in 1984, as a four-storey building with almost full mechanisation. Only one other similar existed in Belarus but age takes its toll and the equipment started to fail. Repairs were labour-intensive and

expensive, so it made sense to build a new boiler-house.

One hundred stacks for warm winter

The experimental boiler-house has been operating for two seasons, providing heating for housing and several organisations, including a kindergarten. However, some improvements are needed: a private transport link for the straw; and storage facilities for the 3,000 tonnes of straw needed for the heating season. At present, bales are stored on collective farms' fields; if humidity exceeds 30 percent, the straw can rot. Last year, the snow melted in the middle of winter, proving disastrous.

Bio-fuel of the future

Although there are obstacles to overcome, the new project allows domestic straw to replace expensive imported fuel; it is also a cost-effective use of plant waste and, naturally, is environmentally friendly.

Mr. Novitsky adds, "The smoke from the old boiler-house was dark

while that from the new one is almost invisible."

In fact, one tonne of straw replaces 550kg of coal or 350 cubic metres of natural gas. The boiler-house produces nearly 3,600 gigacalories of heat per year while the use of straw (rather than coal) saves over one billion roubles. In comparison with peat, it saves four hundred million.

Everyone knows how quickly dry stalks blaze and the same is true in a boiler: a great deal of ash is generated rather quickly, which can prevent airflow and the efficiency of the system. Accordingly, a special fan is used to keep air circulating, blowing out the ash and allowing oxygen in. Even the waste ash has a purpose, being used to enrich farm soil. The new boiler-house is almost completely automated, needing only two personnel at any time.

Mr. Novitsky comments, "Practical Europeans have been using straw as fuel for a long time, especially in the countryside. If straw can be transported efficiently and funding found, we should see more



Boiler house burning wood chips such boilers set up in Belarus."

Energy saving and efficiency are a priority so the use of straw as a natural energy source can only benefit us.

Happy journey on Lida bus!

'Neman' bus soon to join fleet, made in Lida

Late last year, Lida presented a new, compact bus produced using some components made by well-known European companies: Deutz, Raba and ZF. Its latest model, the 'Neman' bus, uses a Euro-4 class engine, made in Germany, as well as domestic components, explains Andrei Myakish, the Deputy Director of JSC Lida. He tells us, "The new bus is designed for intercity routes, with an attractive design inside and out, conforming to world standards."

He notes that Lida does not have an overstocked warehouse, having more orders than its production capacity can cope with. "As soon as a bus rolls off the production line, there is a client to buy it. In the near future, the factory plans to produce ten buses a month. About 60 - 70 percent of our vehicles are currently sold on the home market, while the rest go to Russia and Ukraine. Co-operation with Kazakhstan is also being considered, as they are keen to enjoy our high-tech goods."

Comfort and convenience of electronic service

Belarus aims for top 100 countries in World Bank Taxation Ranking

"We're doing everything possible to move up in the rankings," notes Sergey Nalivaiko, the First Deputy Minister for Taxes and Duties. "Our goal is to reach the top 70 countries." Last year, Belarus ranked 129th, having climbed 54 points.

Taxation reform is being noticed not only by the World Bank but by Belarusian tax payers, with electronic declaration proving very popular. As of 1st July, 2013, more than 120,000 tax payers had used the system.

"We're planning new electronic services by the end of 2013," Mr. Nalivaiko explains. He notes that the main focus is on minimising direct contact between taxpayers and tax authorities, by using IT to good effect.



The optimisation of tax remissions and modernisation of tax deduction procedures and VAT are also on the agenda, while profit tax declaration is to be amended to allow non-operating income and expenses to be extracted directly from book keeping documents. This will allow payers to avoid updating tax records through the year.

A cake at the end of a flight

Minsk National Airport receives one million passengers since the beginning of the year

Last year, the millionth passenger was registered by August. Accordingly, it's likely that Minsk National Airport should see over two million passengers this year, returning its 'turnover' to that of Soviet times.

The press service of the airport notes that growing passenger traffic this year has enabled the national airport to move closer to figures seen in Soviet times, when 2.2 million people travelled through the airport each year.

The millionth passenger this year was on Belavia's Amsterdam-Minsk flight; he was presented with a certificate for free entrance to the VIP lounge for the year, as well as with souvenirs and a celebratory pie.

Bandaging materials with silver meet European standards



Mogilev's Lenta JSC launches the production of hygiene masks
Mogilev's Lenta JSC to produce medical bandages with silver ions

"After starting industrial production of bandaging materials in 2010, we've expanded our

range to over 20 varieties. One such innovation is medical bandages with silver ions," notes Director General Sergey Petrov.

The new bandages may be applied to wounds of all types

and boast a range of advantages, being impregnated with a solution of silver nano-particles. Of course, silver is known for its anti-bacterial characteristics. It also deters fungal infections and is odourless and non-toxic.

"The innovation has been successfully tested in medical institutions so we're now launching it on the domestic market, while studying how best to export to neighbouring states," adds Mr. Petrov. He underlines that the new bandaging materials manufactured by Lenta meet European standards and come in various widths and structures, for particular purposes. Their 'pulled-in' edge avoids the ends penetrating the wound while being easy to reel out and use. In addition, the bandages allow wounds to 'breathe', and are comfortable and highly absorbent.