

Apples from wonderful garden

Farming experiences in the Republic testify to the fact that this sector is currently displaying dynamic development, yet its share in agrarian production continues to be insignificant. At the same time, examples of successful farms with an efficient economic approach and love of one's endeavour convincingly show that farming can be efficient and profitable.

By Marina Borodavko

Being asked whether farms have a future, Victor Ashurkevich, from the Minsk Region's Volozhin District, answers without hesitation. 'Yes'. Seven years ago, together with his friend and partner, Boris Adamovich, he founded a farm. At first, they were engaged in growing vegetables, but simultaneously started to develop a new area — gardening (their wish for many years). In this way, their hobby grew into a professional occupation and is now the core of the farm with the romantic title — Divny Sad (Wonderful Garden).

At present, the farm occupies 55 hectares, and includes a young garden and some vegetable plots, primarily green manure crops. A breeding nursery has been laid down while the farm was registered into the state register of manufacturers of planting material of fruit and berry crops. The garden is really wonderful, and specialists note that this is an example of technology. Others simply enjoy the well-cared-for planting and low-rise

trees with their wonderful, full-flavoured fruits.

The farmland offers a wide range of crops: apples, pears, cherries, sweet cherries, currants, gooseberries, raspberries, blueberries, and strawberries. Most of the produce are fruits, berries and drupaceous which grow in our country, alongside a number of southern guests. Moreover, various varieties presuppose vari-

ous technologies. "Presently, the garden is young and is only just entering the active fruit bearing stage, with many trees bringing their first crops this year. We don't plan to expand so far. Our major dream is to raise this garden, to stand more firmly on our feet, to get the maximum from this territory and then to think about further development," the head of the farm, Victor Ashurkevich, tells us. "Growth is evident. Last year, we sold 9,000 seedlings and 52 tonnes of fruit and berries, compared with this year's 20,000 and 70

tonnes correspondingly?"

The farmers don't feel ashamed of the quality of their produce, which sells well in the market. "Today, people take more care about their health, and they understand that it's better to buy Belarus-produced fruit and vegetables. People from Minsk and other cities often come to us. It's probably cheaper to go to a hypermarket than to spend money on fuel; however consumers still come to us. People especially enjoy the opportunity to collect fruit and berries themselves. It is fun, and also recreational. For example, this year, we didn't harvest any cherries, except for our own consumption," adds Victor.

The farm delivers its vitamin packed produce to kindergartens, schools, boarding schools, clinics and a range of Minsk shops. This autumn, their goods are also available at trade fairs in Minsk.

The farm is also remarkable for its position on labour mechanisation. Boris Adamovich is responsible for this. Although he isn't an engineer by profession, is an engineer in his heart in this particular business. The 'Less Manual Labour — More Technique' slogan is actively brought to life at this enterprise. The latest innovations include a device for processing strawberries which replaces the labour of two dozen people.



Mr. Adamovich and his wife Marina work at Divny Sad farm

Over seven years, the farmers have managed to find their way in business. They also received state support: a power line which was run to the farm using funds from the republican budget, and assistance for the enterprise's technical modernisation. Four tractors have been purchased with long-term lease agree-

ments.

According to Mr. Ashurkevich, the mission of the farmers is to supplement and diversify the range of goods and services while also making life in rural areas brighter, thus reducing the outflow of people from villages — a wonderful and promising idea.

Contribution to common business is mutually beneficial

By Andrey Svetlov

Belarus and Serbia plan to expand trade turnover to \$500m

After a meeting with the Serbian Minister for Regional Development and Local Self-Government, Igor Mirovic, Belarus' Deputy Prime Minister, Piotr Prokopovich, noted that over the last three years, the trade turnover between Belarus and Serbia has tripled, reaching \$150m in 2012.

However, according to Mr. Prokopovich, this figure is insufficient. "It is a small figure for our countries," he said. "More effort should be put into fulfilling the instruction given by our presidents to raise the mutual trade turnover to \$500m in the near future." Mr. Prokopovich assured that the Belarusian Government and all the government agencies

are ready for the breakthrough in the bilateral relations.

He pointed out that high-level and top-level visits of representatives of Belarus and Serbia had become regular. The present visit of the Serbian delegation also coincides with the opening of a direct air service between Minsk and Belgrade. A fact, according to the Deputy Prime Minister, that proves such meetings are held against the background of the implementation of individual projects. He also expressed hope that the visit will make its own contribution to the development of the bilateral relations, too.

Mr. Prokopovich remarked that Serbia is the only non-CIS state that enjoys free trade with Belarus. "It enables us to constantly enhance our economic relations, as well as trade, cultural, and other ties," the Deputy Prime Minister concluded.

Steam tying Dnieper banks



Ferry crossing will connect banks of Dnieper River in Loev District

The first ferry, constructed by the Belarusian River Steamship Company's branch, is launched from Rechitsa port, the starting point of the route servicing the Loev District

The ferry's construction is one of the largest orders for the Belarusian River Steamship Line recently, a true landmark event.

Now complete, it was launched at the port. The non-self-propelled, double-hulled vessel, which is to be pulled by motor boat, is 24m long and 17m wide and is capable of carrying up to 60 tonnes and transports both people and cargo.

The Loev District has needed a ferry for fifteen years to connect

the two banks of the Dnieper, the city of Loev and over two dozen villages of the Karpovka and Staroduby rural councils, which are home to over 700 people. The District Executive Committee's Deputy Chairman, Andrey Stepanchenko, explains that a major problem would be solved as a result, "This is a long-awaited project for our people. At present, they need to make a 130km detour to reach Loev, but it would save several kilometres once the ferry route over the river is launched."

In Soviet times, a number of ferries, all owned by the villages, serviced this area, but over the course of time, they fell into disrepair and their owners failed to overhaul them. Accordingly, this new ferry route brings a welcome smile to Loev citizens. Apart from carrying passengers, the ferry will also contribute to the economy: transporting workers, cargo and machinery. In addition, it will carry food for local shops, first aid teams, social workers and mail.