

Imports are successfully substituted in Ivatsevichi

Woodworking is a major economic sector for Belarus: with a third of the country covered by woodland, it makes sense to capitalise on this natural resource and modernise production

By Alexander Fiodorov

Last year, Ivatsevichdrev OJSC completed construction of its new wood-chip board and laminated board production lines, able to make 250,000 cubic metres annually. The 150 million Euro+ investment has paid for a new factory of automated production, meeting the world's highest standards, and three new lines are soon to be launched.

Major progress

One of the main objectives of modernisation has been to increase exports of goods made from local raw materials, as Vladimir Shulga, Director General of Ivatsevichdrev, explains, "Our

export volume is growing: worth \$45.5 million between January and September 2013. The amount spent on imports is just a third of this amount, creating a foreign trade surplus of \$30.4 million."

The launch of a new wood-chip board production line has huge import-substitution potential within Belarus, offering a wide assortment of board once only available from abroad.

Onwards and upwards

Ivatsevichdrev's plans continue, with over 20 million Euros of investment still to be launched, as Mr. Shulga comments, "We'll update our old platform over coming years and plan to build a wood mill



Ivatsevichdrev JSC produce enjoys stable demand abroad

with a capacity of 60,000 cubic metres annually, allowing us to double our productivity and improve quality. Manual labour and inefficiency will be a thing of the past, with materials used rationally. Wood boards are in steady demand

abroad, allowing us to raise export volumes and generate additional foreign currency earnings."

Reconstruction of the furniture parts shop, with two new production lines, will be another important

step, bringing manufacture of high-gloss finish and wood particle board for frames. Finishing work will be completed at Ruzhany furniture factory, where complete units of furniture will be produced for retail sale.

Railway carriage parts to be produced using new equipment

By Victor Krotov

Mogilev's Metallurgical Works preparing for production of new goods

Mogilev's Metallurgical Works have bought new equipment for the production of black collar axles for railway carriages' sets of wheels. Currently, the new equipment is being installed at the plant. Among the equipment there is an Italian line designed for working on crude foundry work pieces which costs about 18,000,000 Euros.

When the line reaches capacity it will produce 40,000 pieces annually, completely meeting the demand for these units of the Mogilev's Carriage Works. Their neighbours at the Belarusian Steel Works in Zhlobin will provide the raw materials to Mogilev's Metallurgical Works JSC, and its own laboratory will provide the quality control.

Hydrocarbon prices set to rise

Belarus should be ready to face a significant increase in oil and natural gas prices over the coming four years, due to Russia's strategic policy aimed at securing equal profits from selling hydrocarbons in the country and abroad



The statement was made by Belarus' First Deputy Prime Minister, Vladimir Semashko, at the plenary session of the 18th Belarusian Energy and Ecology Congress in Minsk.

Mr. Semashko explained that, due to arrangements made by the heads of state and the strategic level of Belarus-Russia partnership, for now Belarus can purchase Russian oil and gas at prices which are much more advantageous than those Ukraine and the European Union pay. "The level of prices was secured in 2010,

but it will not last forever," noted the official.

Mr. Semashko underlined that the expected increase in prices will affect both Belarus and Russia. "For several years, Russia has been raising the domestic price of natural gas and oil following its equal profits policy, and intends to reach the global level of prices by 2015." However, according to Mr. Semashko, the process has been slowed down since Russian domestic customers are suffering from the higher energy prices and tariffs.

"Now, Russia intends to reach the global prices by 2018, and Belarus will have to do the same. The available time has to be used as best as possible to raise energy effectiveness levels in Belarus," explained the First Deputy Prime Minister.

Speaking about energy effectiveness achievements in Belarus, Mr. Semashko reminded that Belarus looks good in comparison with neighbouring countries with regard to the GDP energy intensity, energy effectiveness, the application of local fuels, the deterioration of the key assets and the modernisation of energy sources. Belarus also intends to get closer to the energy effectiveness demonstrated by global leaders, primarily Canada where climatic conditions are similar. A lot will have to be done in both large-scale and small-scale energy generation, as well as in the production sector and the social sphere in order to keep the Belarusian economy competitive. The First Deputy Prime Minister of Belarus underlined that both the government and the country's leadership understand what improvements have to be made in order to raise energy effectiveness. It is important to help manufacturers, businessmen, and the nation as a whole to understand and share the views too.

Computer experts top income ratings

By Yuri Chernyakevich

National Statistical Committee publishes data on September average salaries: Br5,375,000 or \$592

As in August, experts working in the sphere of computer science and technology were in first place, earning Br12,476 million (about \$1,374) on average, with bankers ranked second. The Belarusian Statistical Committee notes that the average salary in banking reached Br8,21 million (or \$904) while those working in the sphere of extraction of fuel and energy minerals closed the top three, earning an average of Br7,909 million (\$871).

Those in the field of scientific research and development are also well-paid, with salaries up 15.8 percent in comparison with August, to reach Br7,473 million (\$823). Manufacturers of office equipment and computing machinery saw salaries rise by 11.9 percent in comparison with August, to reach Br7,187 million (\$791) while those working in the sphere of chemical manufacture enjoyed a similar salary: Br7,222 million (about \$795).

It is relatively easy to catch the sun

By Yelena Semenova

The region of Grodno is planning to produce solar panels

During the *Grodno Region at Intersection of Borders* international investment forum, Vladimir Nistyuk, Acting Director of the Renewable Energy Association, announced their plans to invest in the production of flexible and small solar panels. He stated that this region of Belarus has more advantages than other regions, that the Grodno Region is a pioneer and a leader in the field of renewable power generation. The first hydroelectric power plant has been launched on the river Niemen, in the Novogrudok District, a wind farm, one of the most effective plants in Europe, is running. Other parts of the region are also being considered as places for the construction of new wind farms. The Grodno Region also has experience in using solar power as an alternative source.