



High-quality flax is grown in Belarus

When you sow flax, you reap gold

Flax has dressed, kept warm, treated and fed our ancestors for centuries. Its dark blue flowers are interwoven on the Belarusian coat of arms with good reason! Some years ago, raw flax exports and rolls of cloth were providing some income, but the industry as a whole suffered losses, leading the state to intervene to revive the former glory of northern silk. Flax linens are used in making uniforms for firemen, builders, power engineering specialists and doctors, as well as dressing women of fashion and housewives.

By Olga Krivosheeva

Processing enterprises were the first to receive attention. Orsha Linen Mill, which occupies eight percent of the world's market for technical and apparel fabrics made from flax, has been completely modernised, thanks to about Br250 billion of investment over the past three years. The Director General of the enterprise, Vladimir Nesterenko, tells us, "The initial stage of modernisation allowed us to considerably improve our quality of fabrics, as well as expanding our range. By installing new equipment, we've extended our production to include clothes, furniture and decorative fabrics, alongside

fabrics for footwear and the haberdashery industry, decorative plaids, scarves, tablecloths, bed sheets and soft terry towels — all made from linen."

Mr. Nesterenko notes that the second stage, scheduled for 2014-2015, will increase the processing of long flax fibre from 7 to 10 thousand tonnes, and raise output of clothing fabrics to 22 million metres annually, doubling worker output; naturally, this will bring higher salaries. Modernisation at one of the enterprise's factories, which processes long flax fibre for export, is nearing completion. Having installed 170 new looms, it can now weave higher quality cloth to almost double the width: to Euro-

pean standards. A finishing shop is also being discussed, with Orsha workers sewing the enterprise's fabrics into premium-class clothes.

High-quality, thin linen fabric is made from long flax fibre, while 70 percent of Belarusian flax fibre is short. Even that which is considered to be long (numbered 11) is not suitable, producing a real challenge for the industry. Of course, it's frustrating to need to import suitable quality flax.

Alexander Kosinets, the Chairman of Vitebsk Regional Executive Committee, emphasises that the technical re-equipment of the linen mill should inspire similar modernisation at other mills, since they need to update their equip-



Flax goods — at Orsha Linen Mill

ment in order to supply Orsha with the necessary long flax fibre. A linen holding may be created, to include Orsha Linen Mill and other linen mills across the region, as well as Vitebsk State Technological University and a specialised seed station. He explains, "Such unification relies upon competent management and profit making, at each stage: from field to counter. It's the only way to bring our flax branch

to the highest level."

Of course, it's not reasonable to create a holding from unprofitable linen mills, so the regional programme for innovative development includes a sub-programme entitled *Vitebsk Flax*, aimed at improving quality. Modernisation is underway at Dubrovno Linen Mill, at Postavy Linen Mill and at Orekhovsk Linen Mill, with seven more mills receiving investment next year.

Energy never superfluous

By Sergey Mitskevich

First solar power station built at Kraisk farm in Logoisk District, to serve own needs and supply grid

Dmitry Mitskevich, the Director of Glavenergo, which built the solar power station in the Logoisk District, tells us, "This is the first industrial enterprise to sell electricity to the national grid." Speaking at a press conference in Minsk, he noted that the components were ordered from Europe: solar panels from Lithuania, fastenings from Belarus, and cables from Finland.

The solar panels were installed on the farm at the end of August, with the station working in test mode for one month. The necessary documentation



Installation of solar panels

for linking to the power grid is nearing completion, so that surplus can be sold on. The station has a capacity of 70 kW, while the farm needs only 60 kW; revenue generated from the surplus will help pay for the initial cost of installation, reducing repayment time from 12 to 5-6 years. In summertime, it will be possible to sell about 30 percent of its electricity.

Five autos within an hour

BelGee starts mass production of new range of car models

By Andrey Fiodorov

This is the Borisov enterprise's second Chinese car model, following on from its Geely SC7 sedan. Alexey Krichmar, the Head of BelGee's Sales and Service Department, tells us, "We've now launched mass production of hybrid cars: 30-35 per day."

About 40 Geely SC7 sedans are also produced daily: five per hour. However, the two models are not assembled simultaneously, rather alternating with each other.

So far, over 150 Geely Emgrand X7 hybrids have rolled off the production line, while 1,450 Geely SC7 sedans have been made since launch in March 2013; by the end of 2013, full



New model assembled in Borisov

capacity will have been reached, at 800 cars per month. In 2014, new production capacities will allow this to rise to a thousand.

The enterprise is now work-

ing towards certification of another model, the Geely LC hybrid hatchback, with production to begin in February or March 2014.