

Changes on assembly line

Motorcycle and scooter production enables Gomel Motor Repair Plant to master new markets

By Sergey Velikhov

Two years ago, the future of the plant was in question, having been up for auction. Focusing exclusively on the repair of agricultural machinery, its market was shrinking. A year later, Belarusian private Horse-Motors — which sells motorised machinery — showed interest and,



Chinese scooters assembled at Gomel Motor Repair Plant

in late 2011, purchased 48 percent of the company's shares

(with a Chinese investor taking the remainder). The Gomel plant has been revived, employing over two hundred people.

Support for similar small enterprises in the Gomel Region has been announced as an economic priority. Such companies account for 30 percent of all production facilities, while employing 85 percent of workers. The Chairman of the Gomel Regional Executive Committee, Vladimir Dvornik, is convinced that further growth in salaries and raised standards of living 'are impossible without the devel-

opment of small enterprises.'

The plant is situated in the regional centre, occupying a large site, which is an evident advantage in solving production tasks and in establishing relations with our Russian neighbours. Exports of motorised machinery are likely to be oriented in this direction, so the enterprise tries to use these factors to the uttermost.

The first scooters and motorcycles have been manufactured following major modernisation. Each was assembled from start to finish initially, but this restricts production volumes. Our Chinese partners have now supplied a production line able to manufacture up to 2,000 such vehicles a month.

"We launched the line last November and are now working on tightening the technical process, polishing our production logistics," notes the company's chief engineer, Vitaly Babichev. "We already produce a thousand motorcycles and scooters monthly and plan to achieve our target by July: up to 15,000 vehicles by late 2013. This volume will satisfy our domestic needs, while ensuring a fully-fledged presence on the Russian market. If we don't occupy this

niche, someone else will. We now produce eight models, offering various technical and design features."

Apart from technical improvements to production, which have raised quality, bringing certification on the Russian and Belarusian markets, staff employment and training is under focus. Young people are sought to undergo apprenticeships, with 76 new jobs available; further production plans envisage even more employment.

Sales of the new manufactures began in January and are expected to peak in March and April, through wholesale firms. At present, motorcycles and scooters account for half of all production volumes but the company is continuing to repair agro-diesel engines and wishes to extend its range of services to agrarians. "I'd like to remind everyone that our company is among the few in Belarus which repairs engines by famous Western producers — such as Detroit, Deutz and Caterpillar," notes Mr. Babichev. "Our specialists have trained abroad, obtaining the necessary certificates. This improves the image of our plant, while enabling us to annually increase our volume of repair works."

Mozyrsalt moving forward

By Valery Sidorov

Mozyrsalt JSC is first CIS enterprise to manufacture granulated salt

Specialists from Belaruskali JSC, who boast great experience in working with equipment for granule production, have assisted Mozyrsalt in producing its new salts.

These are to be used

in the preparation of soft drinks, as well as at dairies, breweries, tobacco factories and pharmaceutical enterprises. The salts will also find a niche at boiler houses and for use in household water heating devices.

The new technological line is able to produce up to 10,000 tonnes annually, fulfilling the Republic's needs many times over,

and alleviating the need for EU imports. Moreover, it opens up great opportunities for expanding export supplies.

The first batch of granulated salt — 25 tonnes — is being prepared for dispatch to customers. This year, Mozyrsalt plans to supply the domestic market and abroad, in packets as small as 1kg, up to one tonne bags.

Everything should be obvious to borrowers

By Denis Kopylov

National Bank gives commercial banks guidance on transparent lending

Consumer lending rates currently fluctuate between 40 and 50 percent per annum. Taking into account the relatively stable national currency exchange rate, it offers banks good profitability, even after the updates to the Banking Code.

The National Bank has given commercial banks several recommendations, to ensure that borrowers re-

alise the full extent of their commitments. Foremost, banks are being asked to abstain from 'hidden fees' of which customers may be unaware. Packaged products sometimes unite more than one service, incurring penalty fees on customers if they redeem any single part. In fact, the National Bank is eager to see more lending in non-cash form and for banks to use clear annual interest rates. It also suggests that services are diversified and that customers are aware of where they are being charged 'set up' fees for products.

It wishes to see 'socially responsible behaviour towards banking consumers' and the creation of loan products with 'transparent costs', which are 'understandable for those without special financial knowledge — ordinary people'.

Plenty of people are taking out loans, despite interest rates remaining quite high. In January, Br2 trillion 172.6 billion was borrowed, against almost Br6.3 trillion, \$663 million in savings. Current rates on savings in local currency are certainly attractive.

Attractive sector serves as new starting point

Republic of Korea showing interest in investing into Belarusian petrochemical complex

By Vladimir Matveev

The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Republic of Korea to Belarus, H.E. Mr. Kang Weon Sik, has told a press conference that Belarus boasts a high level of development in its petrochemical industry. According to the Ambassador, Korea is fully aware of Belarus' high level of oil processing and production of petrochemical goods. "Taking into account that these products are in great demand in South Korea, Belarus' expertise and knowledge may be useful," the diplomat emphasised.

Korean companies are also interested in other spheres of Belarusian industry, including automobile production and machine building. "We're already discussing and elaborating several projects," the Ambassador explained. He declined giving the names of specific companies attracted to Belarus but noted that several are 'among the most famous' in



Laboratory of chemical analysis at Naftan JSC

his country.

"Negotiations are intensive so I think we'll see results in a year or two," the diplomat added. Kang Weon Sik notes that, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Republic of Korea experienced an economic boom, leading it to seek new sales markets and production locations. "Looking at Eastern Europe,

Russia, Belarus and Ukraine, Belarus has among the lowest production costs in the region. Belarus is famous for its excellent education system and qualified personnel, while boasting well-developed logistics and transport infrastructure. These and other factors naturally attract Korean companies," the diplomat asserts.