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Shchekinoazot: ahead of our time

The outgoing year was a time of great achievement for the Shchekinoazot United Chemical Company. At a press conference for the regional media, the company's leaders shared the results of 2017 and the plans for 2018.

IN THE RHYTHM OF DEVELOPMENT

The company is simultaneously engaged in implementing several large projects, which will be completed in the coming year. The first project is a combined production, which will produce 450,000 tonnes of methanol and 135,000 tonnes of ammonia per year. The commissioning work on this production will start in the first half of 2018. It is assumed that after even an incomplete year, it will boost profits by RUB 500 million. Investments in the project amount to RUB 18.5 billion.

"This is the first plant in the world with such a distribution of capacities," said Vyacheslav Kurganov, Technical Director of Shchekinoazot. "Haldor Topsoe (Denmark), our old partner, is the licensor, the developer of the project and the supplier. Energy-efficient and resource-saving technologies are being used, and environmental aspects are being given special attention."

Another project is a sulfuric acid production facility, which is being built by Chinese partners of Shchekinoazot.

"After launching this plant, we will work only with acid which we have produced," noted Anatoly Surba, Director General of the company. "In addition, we plan to re-orient the Efremovskaya site for the production of acid to work with KuibyshevAzot after its commissioning."

The third project — construction of a dimethyl ether production facility — is unique for Russia: Widely used in perfumes, dimethyl ether is not produced anywhere else in the country.

In addition, in 2017 Shchekinoazot began to produce compacted ammonium sulfate.

"This is a high-quality fertilizer with no comparable analogs in Russia," Surba stressed. "Compacted ammonium sulfate has larger granules and is more advantageous than crystalline."

Finally, it is very important for the company to commission new treatment facilities. Shchekinoazot will be able to clean all its industrial wastewater with them.

"A new way of biological treatment lies at the core of their work," said Kurganov. "The wastewater will be sent to a bioreactor with an ultrafiltration membrane, and up to 600 cubic meters of purified water per hour will be able to re-enter the enterprise for reuse. This will help reduce consumption of water from Upa by Shchekinoazot."

FUTURE TASKS

These projects are the task for the near future. But according to its strategy, Shchekinoazot sets long-term goals. In the future, Shchekino-



The management of Shchekinoazot considers the stable operation of the enterprise to be the main achievement of 2017

chemists will be working with new ideas which are gradually becoming a reality. One of those ideas, is to construct a carbamide and ammonia plant.

"World consumption of carbamide is growing by 5 percent per year, and our planned 600,000 tonnes is trite on an international scale, but very significant for the Efremovskaya site and for the Tula Oblast," Surba said. "We hope that the state will support us, as it did with the methanol and ammonia plant. And the second carbamide production facility with a capacity of 3,500 tonnes per day is planned to be constructed in Shchekino. Moreover, we are very attentive to the environmental consequences of our actions: we use technology that will reduce our emissions to a minimum."

Just last week, another project was launched — a nitric acid and ammonium nitrate production plant. This production will allow Shchekinoazot to open new sales markets. Implementation is slated for the fall of 2020.

"One unique feature is that now we will be able to process all ammonia

produced at our production (135,000 tonnes) into ammonium nitrate," Surba said. "This is a product with a higher added value. Besides, the market is now down on ammonia, and the prospects for it are not the best."

BET ON PROFESSIONALS

People are behind every accomplishment at Shchekinoazot. Thanks to the skills and competence of the company's employees, the company is growing and developing.

"The requirements for personnel have increased significantly in recent years," said Irina Podchufarova, HR Director. "Modern equipment is complex, and therefore the operators and machinists must be highly qualified. In order to attract strong staff, we cooperate with universities — Ivanovo State University of Chemistry and Technology, the Russian University of Chemical Technology and its Novomoskovsk Institute, as well as Tula State University. Now we are working with the Dmitry Mendeleev University of Chemical Technology of Russia on joint training programs — from career-oriented activi-

ties to the creation of a chemical class in Shchekino."

Shchekinsky Polytechnic College remains the talent foundry. Students take annual practice at the enterprise and sometimes, even before they get a diploma, they become employees of Shchekinoazot. A lot of them continue their studies in universities.

"All our new production facilities are already fully staffed," noted Podchufarova. "We have set a benchmark that 80 percent of our employees should have higher education. Most of those who come to us are young employees under 30. In each shop and division, there are lists of personnel in reserve."

Shchekinoazot is attractive as a place of work, as it is a socially responsible enterprise. Over the past five years, employees' salaries have increased by 49 percent, including growth of about 6.5 percent in 2017. Chemists are fully provided with social guarantees, and there is also a collective agreement implying, in addition to the guarantees established by the Labor Code, a number of other payments: for anniversaries, wed-

ding, the birth of children, retirement. Young specialists are compensated for the cost of rented accommodation.

"Our collective agreement is being fully implemented," said Dmitry Kozhenkin, Deputy Director General for Social Policy and Head of the trade union organization.

"In addition, we organize leisure time for our employees as well as free tickets to theaters and museums. About 600 employees participate in our Spartakiads. We attach great importance to improving one's health: about 300 people take their holiday each year at the sea, and about 60 people receive sanatorium treatment. Approximately 90 children of our employees also take summer holidays at the company's expense. We do not forget the veterans either; we always give them gifts for the holidays."

The contribution of Shchekinoazot to the improvement of the Pervomaisky settlement is great: the facades of nearly 30 houses have already been repaired, and this work will be continued. In addition, large-scale repairs were carried out in the Palace of Culture and the Yubileiny Sports Center, where a pond with a beach area has been set up. With the help of Shchekinoazot, Pervomaisky is quite capable of becoming the most comfortable settlement in Russia.

Very soon, the Shchekino chemists will be celebrating the New Year along with the rest of the country. What are the enterprise's results going into the New Year?

"Our main achievement is the stable operation of the plant," stressed Anatoly Surba. "For all types of products, we are surpassing our plan, and the responsible work of our team is making it possible to provide material resources for all industrial projects implemented by Shchekinoazot. I hope that we will successfully complete all undertakings. I wish all of our employees health and well-being. May all their thoughts and dreams come true."



The new methanol and ammonia production plant will be unique



The renovated Yubileiny Sports Center opened a boxing club