BELARUS

NATIONAL JURY MOTIVATION

The farm "DAK" is one of the first private agricultural enterprises in Belarus. It was founded in 1992. Throughout almost 30 years of activity, the farm has changed its profile several times from cereal to vegetable growing and later to pig farming. The last 15 years the farm has been engaged in goat breeding. Since 2012, the farm is organic and certified according to European Union standards. According to the requirements of the standards, the use of chemically synthesized pesticides and fertilizers in the farm "DAK" is strictly prohibited. Adhering to the rules of the organic standards, the farm reduces greenhouse gas emissions, including at the expense of those amounts that are formed during the production of the above chemicals. In addition, due to the technologies used, the pesticide load on the soil, water resources and the environment as a whole is reduced. By avoiding the use of chemically synthesized fertilizers, the migration of nutrients into groundwater and surface water is reduced. At the same time, water bodies are protected from eutrophication and drinking water sources are protected from nitrate pollution.

In the agricultural technique used in the cultivation of fodder crops, there is little use of heavy machinery and practically more than ¾ of the farm is under green cover. This method allows to minimize erosion processes, as well as contributes to soil moisture conservation. All this optimizes the rate of humus mineralization if compared with the classical ploughing with the rotation of the layer.

Goat bedding manure of the farm is naturally fermented in piles and is used as the main fertilizer. At the moment, equipment for processing manure into compost in closed conditions is being adjusted. Temporary manure storage and the equipment itself is located on a concrete pad near goats houses. Short distance of the manure storage and processing equipment from the goat housing will save energy resources, which were spent for transportation of fresh manure for storage in the field. It will also reduce the production of greenhouse gases produced by the work of agricultural machinery. In addition, the quality of compost will increase and, as a consequence, the infiltration of nutrients into groundwater and surface water will be reduced.

The farm widely uses leguminous crops (clover, alfalfa), which due to symbiotic and associative nitrogen fixation provide nitrogen-deficient plant cultivation without the use of mineral fertilizers. Legumes occupy a significant share in the field crop rotation.

The farm preserves natural areas (ravines, woods, bushes) next to cultivated lands, thus creating conditions for birds' nesting and increasing the number of useful entomofauna. In addition, bird houses are built. Such measures, in turn, contribute to the preservation of bio- and landscape diversity.

Due to the closed cycle including the processing of goat's milk into cheeses, yogurts and other dairy products the loss of quality, spoilage of products and food waste is minimized. Milk whey is offered for sale or used to feed animals.

The farm's activities have a positive impact on the social aspects of life in the region, as a significant (about 30 people) number of jobs were created, which is very important for rural areas in Belarus.

It is also important to note the presence of systematic strategic planning for the further development of the farm, using the best international experience.

Jury members:

- **Kononchuk Tatiana Petrovna**, Head of the Main Department of Environmental Policy, International Cooperation and Science, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus
- **Viktor Vladimirovich Ermolenkov**, PhD in Biology, Associate Professor of the Department of Regional Development Management at the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Belarus
- **Vitaly Ivanovich Belooky**, director of organic agricultural enterprise “Zdorovaya Strana” (LLC)