

Russian agent impressed with Isegen's malic acid

Following up on the initial order for malic acid to Russia, Robert Fowlds visited ISEGEN'S appointed agent in Moscow. During the visit, Gleizer Valentin, the managing director of MCD Chemicals, Isegen's appointed agent in Russia, remarked how impressed they were with the first delivery of malic acid from South Africa, and that it was "exceptional"! When asked to expand on this he confirmed that Isegen's unique granular malic acid was the best quality that they had tested. They have subsequently placed a further order which is to leave shortly.

Robert Fowlds has been invited to return during September to address the Food Ingredients Convention where local food technicians would be interested in learning about new applications using malic acid. Apparently the Russian food manufacturers are becoming more sophisticated with top European producers becoming established in the Russian market.

"Fortunately autumn will be a lot more pleasant in Moscow than this past trip in winter. Apart from the cold weather, the traffic in Moscow is horrendous. Although there are a number of ring-roads around the city, if one needs to travel from one side of the city to the other one is forced to cross the Moscow River over one of only three bridges. This results in huge traffic jams for hours on end. It is just not possible to undertake more than two customer calls per day."

There is great concern this winter for the 86-year old Shatura power plant that supplies 10% of Moscow's electricity, built on Lenin's order in 1920, but now with aging turbines that suffer from a lack of investment. A high demand and a shortage of gas prompted the station to switch to coal and peat or "whatever else they had to burn". The country's power grid is notoriously inefficient and few buildings have meters to read electricity usage and the power stations are outdated. The buildings themselves are not energy efficient. Last winter expensive diesel had to be pumped into Shatura and burnt when the gas supplies ran out.

Nonetheless, companies manage to survive and prosper. One of these is SAB's successful Russian operation called Door-Kaluga Brewing.

Isegen is enthusiastic about the potential in Russia and despite the hardships the food industry is becoming much more sophisticated, which is a good sign for superior food acids like malic acid.

[The picture shows Robert Fowlds near the Kremlin.]