

Easy to calculate 'personal' inflation

National Statistical Committee offers every Belarusian the chance to calculate own consumer price index

By Timofey Vinyaminov

Few can deny their interest in the dynamics of prices for basic goods and services. The topic of rising utility prices, alongside those for food, fuel and public transport, is one seemingly on everyone's lips. Of course, since everyone's weekly 'basket' differs, estimates offered by the National Statistical Committee apply only to an imaginary average. However, everyone now has the chance to calculate their own index, entering prices for items we buy regularly. The 'Personal Inflation Calculator' is available online (via the NSC site) to allow us to compare our 'basket' with that used nationally. No doubt, some will find that their situation is somewhat better and others perhaps worse. Those who don't smoke will be unaffected by price rises on cigarettes, while regular users of public transport manage to avoid hikes on fuel prices.

"It uses the same formula as that of the consumer price index, which collates data on retail prices and service tariffs," explains the Chief of the General Office of the National Statistical Committee of Belarus, Alexey Yarkovets. "However, this simplified version looks at price changes for personal sets of goods and services." Calculating inflation, specialists at the National Statistical Committee use two sets of information: data on the structure of expenditure (from a sample survey of farms); and consumer prices in shopping centres. In all, 450 items are monitored across 7,000 trade and service outlets, comprising goods and services with a share of at least a 0.01 percent of consumer expenditure.

After studying the experience of a number of European countries, the National Statistical Committee chose the same model as that used in the UK and Netherlands, rather than the Russian version. Mr. Yarkovets



'Personal Inflation Calculator' takes into account all consumer spending

explains, "Our eastern neighbours use prices from the same store every month but this only works if items are available on the shelves. It's easier to look at how much has been spent on food, or how much on transport or new clothes, as a whole."

The Belarusian calculator will use the amount of expenditure on various product groups rather than individual prices. So, users simply need to enter the amount spent on meat in one month in total, how much on fruit and vegetables, how much on fuel, and so on. Several pe-

riods of comparison are accessible: monthly — for regular expenses; yearly; and every three years — for durable goods and long term services. Expenditure on hairdressing or holidays is likely to fit best in a yearly calculation. In addition, the programme requires users to name their region of residence. Without doubt, prices differ across the nation. Users can save the programme on their home computer to look at how their income is being spent (even viewing within graphs and tables). It will allow us to see our 'personal' inflation

over various time periods and may even inspire people to alter their spending habits. "If you look at your individual data it may be more accurate than using averages," notes Mr. Yarkovets.

Data entered into the 'Personal Inflation Calculator' won't be available to outside users, or to the National Statistical Committee, but the latter will monitor use of the programme online. It also welcomes feedback on the usefulness of the innovation and hopes to refine the database to become even more effective.



Brest Stocking Mill shows interest in foreign market

Various paths examined

Bellegprom Concern looking at possibility of liaising with foreign companies

By Lilia Krapova

In January 2013, representatives of six Bellegprom companies visited Bangladesh — from Marko, Belwest, Polesie, Alesya, Brest Hosiery Factory and Romgiltext. The delegation toured knitwear, leather and footwear factories. "There are three possible areas of collaboration: direct supplies of Bangladesh

yarn to Belarus; orders from Bangladesh for our knitwear items; and our purchase of their leather goods," notes Alexey Anfimov, chief specialist for foreign economic ties at Bellegprom Concern.

Mr. Anfimov notes that negotiations are at a preliminary stage, with aspects of the Bangladeshi proposal being of concern: delivery schedules and minimum or-

der quotas. Samples of Bangladesh products are being studied, and Minsk is set to host a delegation of Bangladesh partners in early March, to continue talks. He hopes that the placement of orders for Belarusian light industry goods to Bangladesh will promote our competitiveness, with future co-operation going from strength to strength.

Future joint project under discussion

By Lilia Krapova

Manufacture of dried potato puree among areas of possible co-operation between Belarus and Bangladesh

"We're seriously considering it," notes the Head of Promagroleasing JSC's Department for Promising Projects, Eduard Besprozvanny. "The Bangladeshi side has asked us to construct a factory able to turn a profit."

Bangladesh is keen to

have such production which would promote the provision of the country's food security.

A proposal is now being discussed regarding the supply of Belarusian communal machinery to Bangladeshi cities. Belarus is taking part in a state tender, organised by the Bangladeshi Government, to supply some types of machinery for communal purposes. Technical conditions, proposals and a financing scheme have already been agreed.

A representative from Promagroleasing notes that their leasing company is working with other Belarusian enterprises in interaction with Bangladesh, to help acquire new technologies. As the state lacks an abundant budget, new technologies and specialists are sought under affordable loan conditions. Future joint projects are already being discussed, including the construction of a dried potato puree factory and a joint dairy product venture.

Venues for new expansion

Industry Ministry enterprises plan new service and dealership centres in Kazakhstan

Belarus' Industry Minister, Dmitry Katerinich, recently met the Governor of the Kostanay Region of Kazakhstan, Nuraly Saduakasov, to discuss further expansion of co-operation in the area of agricultural and automobile machine building. The possibility of promoting Belaru-

sian vehicles on Kazakhstan's market via leasing schemes was also high on the agenda.

The Kazakhs are delighted with the high quality of Belarus-made vehicles being used in the region and are eager to collaborate more closely with Belarusian companies, implementing new projects in industrial production and establishing joint ventures.

Heads of leading enter-

prises took part in the negotiations, including those from Gomselmash, Minsk Tractor Works (MTZ), BelAZ, Minsk Automobile Plant (MAZ), Lidselmash, Lidagroprommash, and Minsk Motor Plant.

According to the Industry Ministry, in 2012, its enterprises exported over \$250m of vehicles, products and spare parts to Kazakhstan — up 143 percent on 2011.