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“Golden Age” For Lambumiz Corporation: Domestic Production Of Dairy Packaging

The Russian dairy packaging sector has completely recovered after the flight of foreign manufacturers from our country. Nikita Demidov, Deputy CEO of PAO “Lambumiz”, spoke to the BM.Moscow Foresight magazine of how the corporation managed to cover product shortages and what will dairy packaging of the future look like.

Your enterprise has been operating since 1973, and back then it was named “Moslambumiz”. What does this abbreviation stand for?

“Moslambumiz” stands for Moscow Laminated Paper and Polymere Product Plant. In 1992 the enterprise changed its ownership type and it became a Closed Joint-Stock Company, operating across Russia, and the “Mos” prefix got lost, and that’s when we changed the name to CJSC “Lambumiz” – “Laminated and Paper Products”. Decades have passed since then, and our company, now named PAO “Lambumiz”, keeps on developing and improving in the direction, highlighted in our corporate name.

What effect has the exit of the Swedish-Swiss Tetra Pak transnational corporation and other foreign players had on the Russian market?

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And who told you that Tetra Pak has gone from Russia? Indeed, after February 2022 it was announced that due to the European sanctions the corporation would “hand over its Russian division to the local top management”. Shortly after this, the production of aseptic packaging for liquid food products in our country had resumed.

To make it clear for the readers, the dairy packaging segment could be divided into aseptic (with long shelf life of up to 180 days) and non-aseptic packaging (with shelf life of up to 30 days). Any packaging for dairy products is a quite complex multi-layered design, preventing fast product spoilage and ensuring long shelf life without any preservatives.

After the exit of Western companies, domestic business, including the dairy packaging sector, had started gradual recovery.

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Nevertheless, in 2022 due to the exit of major foreign players there was a challenging situation on the Russian market - essentially, dairy producers were left without any packaging. What was the actual situation like?

It had turned out that Russian packaging companies just could not operate with domestic carton, because they used to receive semi-finished goods and technologies from abroad. It also became clear that most Russian companies did not have in-house production of carton packaging! During this challenging period for dairy producers, “Lambumiz”, with its complete production cycle, domestic raw materials base and competencies, had increased its production of non-aseptic packaging by almost two times, thus providing the dairy industry with packaging.

Moreover, with support from the Ministry of Industry and Trade and Mosprom we undertook to launch our own production technologies to manufacture Tetra Top packaging analogs at our production facilities. For this purpose, we had purchased equipment and ran comprehensive R&D activities together with researchers from the Novosibirsk State Technical University (NGTU). In 2024 “Lambumiz” plant launched mass production of packaging that was new for our market and was named “TOPROLL” on the domestic market.

Today our production facilities operate on an industrial scale. This is how we are shifting over from pressing import substitution issues to a broader product mix.

What kind of feedback are you getting from your major customers – Russian dairy producers?

Dairy producers were perfectly aware of the dangers, faced by the industry. We in Russia had somehow started forgetting about domestic production development, and this is a key indicator of efficient economy management and technology security! Today everyone has finally realized that trust should be put in domestic manufacturers.

In 2022-2024 Lambumiz not only produced dairy packaging, but also kept on investing into production asset development. Our investments into equipment amounted to over 400 million.

Our quality, performance and equipment are now in line with the leading global industry practices.

Let’s assume that the international situation has improved, and former Western competitors of “Lambumiz” are once again seeking to operate in Russia. Do you think there will be Russian manufacturers willing to resume cooperation with Western companies?

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Well, first of all, the process of quiet return is already underway. Then again, the Russian business is firmly standing on its own feet! Furthermore, a local manufacturer with domestic raw materials will always have an advantage. Our customers know all too well that strong time-tested relations with Russian full cycle manufacturers can ensure a high level of technology security for continuous production. A friend in need is a friend indeed.

Just recently milk used to be sold in the famous “triangle” packages. Why these packages, once so popular, are now gone from Moscow stores?

This may come as a disappointment to you, but this product, somewhat symbolic of the Soviet era, was not designed in the USSR – the “triangle” package was invented by Tetra Pak designers, which patented it in 1950. In the West this milk package format had been in use up to 1959. The “pyramids” were totally abandoned due to huge logistics costs. Product transportation required special hexagonal baskets, meaning extra expenses. Moreover, a liter of milk in a “triangle” package took almost two times more space than any other package both in transport vans and at store shelves.

But resourceful Swedes still found a way to make a profit – they sold their invention to trade representatives of the USSR. The key argument in favor of the triangle package for the domestic manufacturers at the time was cheap production, because folding a pyramid required just one seam and one cut. Our plant launched a Tetra Classic “pyramid” line in 1972. This is the beginning year of the “Lambumiz” historty.

Only during the 1990s, when the country had completed its transition to a new economic model, milk factories were forced to review their milk production and product delivery costs. This was the reason why milk packaging factories shifted over to production of new packaging types.

“Lambumiz” has shifted over to production of more advanced Gable Top format of milk packaging, used throughout the world. These are rectangular packages with a ridge on top, with a closing cap or without cap.

“Lambumiz” plant is still manufacturing Gable Top products in all sizes and formats. These are made from more robust modern materials, extending milk storage period up to two weeks, and these boxes take up less shelf space as well.

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Has “Lambumiz” plant had any issues with equipment or raw materials due to the loss of the European market and partners?

We have never depended on imports, though some of our plant equipment was historically made abroad. We have always sought to buy most advanced and sophisticated equipment. Back in 2003 – 2004 the company purchased a top-of-the-line

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flexography printing press and mastered a cutting-edge global technology, making it possible to extend storage life of packaged products up to 21 days. We got a certificate of the Russian Organization for Quality, confirming compliance of the products with the highest standard.

At the same time the raw materials – carton and polyethylene – have always come from Russia. Only dyes were imported, and due to this we had to go looking for alternatives after 2022. Indeed, there were issues, but we had managed to overcome these due to the two key solutions. The first one was about building up stocks of required spare parts for our equipment. The second was about selecting similar products in friendly countries.

It is public knowledge that “Lambumiz” has had an initial public offering of its shares at the Moscow Exchange. What was the purpose of the offering?

Indeed, on October 30, 2024 we started the exchange trade procedure for our shares. PAO “Lambumiz”, as a public company, successfully placed its shares at the Moscow Exchange. Going public was a logical step under the strategy, chosen by the corporate management. The IPO brought us over ₽800 million, and the corporation intends to use the funds largely to expand its presence on the packaging market by going into a new niche for us – production of aseptic packaging. There is only one goal – to replace products of foreign manufacturers and enter a promising and large market segment.

In 2025 “Lambumiz” started implementation of its Large-Scale Investment Project (LSIP). We are starting construction of a new production facility with the floor area of over 14 thousand square meters. The facility will house a production line for aseptic milk packaging and an extension to manufacture the current product mix. The new line is scheduled to be commissioned in 2027.

The LSIP status, awarded to the project by the Government of Moscow, enables us to actively use government support measures. The “Lambumiz” plant participates in the “Work performance” federal program as a Moscow-based enterprise. Owing to a subsidized loan from the Moscow Support Fund for Industry and Business, we have already significantly upgraded our production facilities.

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What will the expansion of production facilities bring to your business specifically?

According to expert estimates, if the Gable Top market share is maintained at the level of 35% and the 10% share of the aseptic packaging is achieved, then PAO “Lambumiz” will be able to increase its revenues by 3,5 times by 2028.

You mentioned that “Lambumiz” corporation has a reliable partner – the Government of Moscow. What are the specific projects where you have had actual support from Moscow authorities?

When we work with the Department of Investment and Industrial Policy of Moscow, with the Industrial Development Fund, for our corporation this always means guaranteed resources and successful projects. Thus, in particular, our cooperation with these very institutions for domestic business support helped us continue investing into production development during the period of high lending rates. Just recently the Moscow Industrial Development Fund has allocated ₽200 million to us. The corporation used the funds to expand its equipment fleet and to increase production volumes of milk and dairy product packaging.

It was the assistance of the Government of Moscow during 2022- 2023 that had largely helped us to keep supplying Russian dairy producers with packaging!

The key products of “Lambumiz” are Gable Top and TOPROLL packaging for milk. Is there anything else that your company is famous for?

Our plant has started producing tinted (on one side) carton with polyethylene coating. It is used to produce disposable plates and containers. Both raw materials and finished products are safe and have relevant food industry certifications.

The product range of the corporation has over 10 kinds of disposable items: from laminated carton trays to salad bowls with transparent tops and WOK containers. All these products are a standalone division of our business, which is developing successfully.

Furthermore, we have launched a unique project, involving use of artificial intelligence (AI), enabling dairy producers to create even more colorful and attractive packaging for their products. We view AI not just as a fancy trend, but as a required tool and an important competitive edge.

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The top management is proudly saying that “Lambumiz” is an exclusively Russian production company. Don’t you have any operations outside the Russian Federation?

Our production assets are localized in Russia and we have never had any plans to move any part of our production abroad. However, we are seeking to increase the export potential of our products: for now, we have increased the share of our exports from 1% to 6%. In fact, today “Lambumiz” is starting to provide dairy packaging to neighboring countries. If two years ago our key customers were Kazakhstan and Belorussia, then last year we also got Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

We have opportunities to go out to the global market, but the current international conditions are unfavorable for this. Nevertheless, we are reaching out to the markets that lack domestic production of dairy packaging. This is where PAO “Lambumiz” has great plans.

I wonder, why do you specialize primarily in dairy packaging? In France, for example, farmers sell their wine in carton packages …

We are keeping wine and juices in mind. When our aseptic project is implemented, we will manufacture juice and probably wine packaging.…

What is your personal view, Nikita Alexandrovich, of packaging in the future?

Tastes and consumer trends change with time. However, we are confident that the consumer demand for environmentally friendly and convenient packaging will remain. “Lambumiz” and its technology center are ready to meet any market challenges and new demands of our customers. We have a saying: “It doesn’t matter what sort of packaging will be there in the future, it will still be manufactured by “Lambumiz””.

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