

the environment of plants producing protein-vitamin concentrate (BVK: 'belkovo-vitaminnye kontsentraty') in other regions of the country. The planners and chemical specialists argued that the new technology was clean and safe. Discussions were held at meetings and gatherings, in the local press and on television.

And then, in February, a joint session of the city and district Council of People's Deputies was held in Nefteyugansk. These days a unanimous vote is a rarity, but in this case the people's elected representatives decided as one: they prohibited construction of the plant!

This was not what one would call a perfunctory refusal, without considering the opinions of the opposing side, or without analysis and study. In preparation, meetings were held with labor collectives; representatives of the public held dialogues with scientists and personnel from the ministry; and a group of citizens from Nefteyugansk even visited the village of Svetlyi Yar in Volgograd oblast, where there already is a BVK plant. But no one was able to persuade the northerners of the complete safety of this production facility. Nor were they able to clear up certain "missing facts".

Next, the executive committee of the Oblast Council requested a permanent inter-departmental commission on the setting of production facilities within the Oblast to make a detailed and thorough study of the problem and to issue findings. The commission did the study, and drew its conclusions. Here they are.

To date there have been no in-depth scientific studies with definitive results concerning the effect of this type of protein on the genetic