

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

For The Health Of The Whole Village

Our village, Sovum, is in the most northerly region of the Khanty-Mansiisk Autonomous Okrug. Our winters are harsh, with lots of snow, and they are long. Even at the beginning of April the temperature outdoors is often as low as minus thirty degrees celsius. On top of that there is the wind to contend with. A lot of people were convinced that in such circumstances, there was no point in even dreaming about growing our own cucumbers or, for example, producing our own milk. For this reason not only our cow barn sat empty, but also a greenhouse of some three hundred square metres.

For many long years the freezing winds blew through this building, until Il'ya Fedorovich Kotorobai and his wife Elena Kuz'minichna took it over on a family contract. They had to do a fair amount of work before they got everything in order, but now our school cafeteria regularly serves salads consisting of fresh cucumbers, radishes, onions, all seasoned with dill, on top of everything - and this even on the coldest days. The cafeteria now smells of the sun and of spring! Il'ya Fedorovich and Elena Kuz'minichna haven't given up their main jobs either, so they run the greenhouse in their spare time. They are helped by their two oldest children. Another two are growing up and Kotorobai thinks that the greenhouse area could be expanded. For the family this means extra work and rather a lot of it, but for the village it means joy and good health!

I couldn't say that the success enjoyed by the Kotorobai family was altogether unexpected. Many of us have succeeded in growing potatoes. The first