



# Biodynamics in the world

Newsletter April 2019

## Dear members and friends of Biodynamic farming,

Social values are an essential part of our self-image in the Biodynamic movement. This is demonstrated by many of our partners on their farms and in their companies. In addition to the fine example set by many of our members, we wish to guarantee that a minimum of socially acceptable conditions exists across all Biodynamic enterprises. This will be one of the focus points at the members' assembly of Demeter International this year.

I wish you a good hand for the shaping of relations in your companies and on your farms.

*Christoph Sinschenderfer*

*"Only the heart can see well,  
the essence is hidden from the eyes."*

Antoine de St. Exupéry

## Agricultural Section at the Goetheanum

### ■ Reflections on the Agriculture Conference 2019

Three contributions - Interview with Ueli Hurter, Horn mist for business life and Expert Forum Food Systems, reflect the essence of Agriculture Conference 2019.

### ■ International Biodynamic Advisory

The Section is working in partnership with Demeter International on a development project with the aim of promoting trusted and high quality advisory work.

### ■ Nutrition - Training for cooks from France

From 22 to 25 February, 25 cooks, teachers, a nutrition consultant and a bee-keeper absorbed theoretical and practical suggestions for dynamic cooking practice.

### ■ Theme of the year 2019/2020

It is this spiritual content which arouses the interest of many people in biodynamic agriculture.

### ■ Agriculture Conference 2020 - Call for Proposals

The current theme for the year "The spiritual in agriculture" will provide the basis for exploring spiritual aspects of agriculture at the Agriculture Conference 2020.

## Research, training, advisory

### ■ Climate protection through biodynamic agriculture

From scientific research in the DOK study in Therwil, Switzerland, it is known that biodynamics is the most sustainable form of agriculture.

### ■ Biodynamic compost preparation plants

At the science conference of the Section for Agriculture in Dornach in September 2018, a research project began to discuss the use of plants for compost preparations in biodynamic agriculture and horticulture in tropical and subtropical regions.

### ■ Farm Talks in Hungary

After a successful Demeter training in September 2018, the picture of the Farm Talk vision poster was sent out to the Hungarian Biodynamic Association.

## Demeter-International

### Lobby Work

- Revision of the EU Organic Regulation

From 1 January 2021, new regulations will apply to the European organic sector – and to imports into the EU.

### Marketing

- Communicating Demeter in the World

The International Marketing Committee (IMC) developed a basic marketing strategy in the past year, which aims to serve various goals.

### Reports from member countries

- 47th Biodynamic Training Workshop at BASIL Academy, Mysore, India

The Biodynamic Association of India conducted its 47th training program on the basics of Biodynamic Agriculture from the 8th to 12th of April.

- Development of Biodynamic Movement in Colombia by ABD Colombia

ABD Colombia held its first Members Assembly 5th-7th April in “Tarapaca”, a care farm institution at the fringe of Cali.

- First Demeter Certified Wine Grower in Denmark

Skaarupore Vingaard made the first Demeter certified wine in Denmark.

- Positive Biodynamic Development in Denmark

Free biodynamic conversion process for organic farmers and biodynamic farm talks.

- Restructuring in Demeter USA

Demeter USA is undergoing many new and exciting changes and the restructure is beginning to take shape.

## Dates & events

- SIF Egypt 2019 “Unfolding Individual Potential for the Future”

12 – 15 December 2019, Sekem, Egypt

- Trainer and Teacher Conference

7th - 9th November 2019, Goetheanum, Dornach, Switzerland

- Agriculture Conference 2020

5th to 8th February 2020 – at the Goetheanum Dornach

- Organic World Congress 2020 (OWC)

21-27 September 2020, Rennes, France

- **Banana Conference, 14-16 November 2019, Dominican Republic** - Further information will be available in the coming days

## Agricultural Section at the Goetheanum

### Reflections on the Agriculture Conference 2019



There follow three contributions reflecting on the Agriculture Conference 2019. Photos, Videos and further contributions at: <https://www.sektion-landwirtschaft.org/en/lwt/agriculture-conference-2019/>

### Interview with Ueli Hurter about the Agriculture Conference

**Michael Olbrich-Majer:** The number of participants brought quite a buzz to the conference, there were many convincing and well-trying attempts at achieving a fair and sustainable production chain beginning with farmers and CSA through to true cost accounting. It was also clear that new ways need to be found for assessing the value of agricultural products. Do 'associations' offer the 'royal' route?

**Ueli Hurter:** The suggestions listed are all innovative and, in many places, already proving effective. There is no need for a 'royal' route but many different 'peasant' routes. What can be of real help however is a leading star. Could the star around which these various paths orientate themselves be the associative economy? I believe it can. Associative economy is then not ONE path, but the focus of many paths. It is as I see it, not a technical solution, but a space for social and economic innovation, for a modern economy respectful of human dignity.



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**MOM:** Forming associations sounds like the implementation of concepts and the legal foundation of new organisations. Is that how it proceeds?

**UH:** I think we have learnt during this conference that theory and experimentation must go hand in hand in the real-world economy. Without a 'somersault' in our thinking i.e. thinking about economy in a new way, it will not be possible. And without the trial and error of everyday economic life, it will also not work. If later on, this leads to a more formal founding process, it can only be welcomed.

**MOM:** What is the potential of associative working?

**UH:** The potential for an economy that respects human dignity is in principle as large as the whole earth and as powerful as humanity as a whole. On a practical level I think that for around three years we have a window of opportunity for really moving forward in the biodynamic movement and organic market. One of the aims of this conference was to inspire and encourage the creation of a new future. I believe the seeds have been sown and that we now have to await what develops in the field.

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**MOM:** The Economics Group of the Section which together with Demeter Germany helped to prepare the conference, put together a charter for associative economy – what effect is it having?

**UH:** The Charter is the path of transition from theory to practice. Those signing the charter must now put the principles they have proclaimed into practice. The Charter has a federal constitution which means that every business is free to determine how to implement the principles. This concept of self-determination has a different social basis to the compulsion of the Demeter standards and therefore needs as I see it, a different administrative organ – the nucleus for which is formed by the community of charter signatories. Over the coming months it will become clear whether there is sufficient impetus to bring this about. It will of course also be independent of the Section, which will continue its task together with the Economics Group of providing a forum for the study of economic questions.

**MOM:** Associative working is the basis for fairer marketing and pricing as was shown by the contributions of several food processors and traders including Voelkel, Eosta, Oikopolis and in part also the Swiss report about the engagement with COOP. How can this approach be expanded more widely or at least to begin with in Demeter?

**UH:** Expansion can only occur through growth. It cannot be imposed by an organisation. I count on associative economic principles being implemented on an individual basis and look towards a coming together of initiatives like the community of charter signatories, the CSA network and others. I believe that we are dealing with a sister impulse of Demeter. If it is to be fully realised it will need to have a certain independence from Demeter.

**MOM:** A very different theme currently occupies the organic sector, at least it does in Germany – the dominance of the large concerns, organic supermarkets and conventional food stores. Can the associative concept be of help?

**UH:** That organic and Demeter are no longer the sole operatives in the organic market is a fact in many European countries. I think this is now irreversible. It has a positive aspect in that more land and more people are engaged. There is also a negative side in that our movement is threatened by a trend towards conventionalisation. It is precisely in this context however that I am convinced that associative working will have a decisive role to play. The deeper, more genuine and consistently associative the marketing arrangements become, the more resilient and effective will they be for the future.

First appeared in «Lebendige Erde» volume 03/2019



## Horn manure for the economic sphere

A great deal of substance has flowed into the celebratory mood of the Agricultural Conference, substance which the contributors have gained over decades in the real world of agriculture and economics. Creating an enterprise, growth crises, upheavals in consumer expectations, moving to the next generation: this existential substance was contributed by some and received by others with a great openness. I believe that this practical research gives rise to fundamental material for the annual renewal of the Section's knowledge.

Perhaps it can be compared to the cosmic and earthly forces which act in the buried cow horns in winter, when the manure packed into the horn is transformed into horn manure. If the horn manure is stirred and sprayed in spring, this 'spiritual manure' can fertilise a very large area.

During the week after the Agricultural Conference many of the participants met again at the Biofach Trade Fair in Nuremberg. The exhibition halls were overflowing with visitors, the newest figures were making the rounds: the global organic market has now reached 90 billion euros. At a meeting we talked about the next steps for associative economics in partnering with biodynamic products. One of us anxiously asked the question: can what we have been working on at the Goetheanum influence this large market, just as the horn manure preparation can fertilise a whole field? Could the Goetheanum be like a buried cow horn, where the active life substance is transformed and can then radiate powerfully into the machinery of our civilisation?

*Ueli Hurter*

## From field to plate – Food Systems

### Report from the specialist forum at the Agriculture conference 2019.

All processes and facilities that provide food for human consumption come under the heading of food system. This covers the entire production chain from agriculture, food processing and trade through to planning the menu. It can be a farm with a farm shop, a CSA, a school farm or intentional community that undertakes food processing and marketing and offers customers the chance to experience or take part in courses. Such a food system depends on the cultivation of relationships. Examples were given by contributors to the specialist forum:

Patricia Flores, the South American IFOAM coordinator, described how in Peru with the support of biodynamic advisors, small farmers have been able to rediscover their connection to the land and so build up their production of healthy food. Anna Perret from the Jura in Switzerland, runs projects to develop sustainable food systems and organises trips out for consumers. An authentic connection to the origin of vegetables, bread and wine comes about on farms in bakeries and in vineyards. "If children are taught to cook they learn the skills to change the world", said Heidi Leonhard (lecturer in sustainable cookery) and pointed out how the themes of sugar, sweets and fair trade (where does chocolate come from) can be woven into the cooking of brownies. Using the motto "connection creates future" Margarete Hinterlang from the school farm of the Freien Landbauschule Dottenfelderhof, Germany, connects children and young people to daily life on the farm. Fodder preparation, mucking out and weeding are part of the 'lessons'. The 100 participants showed great interest in this afternoon event. This was demonstrated by the fact that afterwards many remained behind in animated conversation.

You can read an extensive report in the 2019 Conference Documentation which is due to appear in June.

*Jasmin Peschke*

## International Biodynamic Advisory

In view of the growing biodynamic market and the increased demand for farm conversion, the advisory role is becoming increasingly important. The Section is therefore working in partnership with Demeter International on a development project with the aim of promoting trusted and high quality advisory work. This includes various aspects such as further training courses, a database system and an international quality system for biodynamic advice. The idea was discussed and further developed at the international advisory meeting in February 2019 along with 40 advisers.

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The first version of the concept of the International Quality System for Biodynamic Advisory was completed at the end of March and is currently being tested by 16 advisors for its practicality and user-friendliness. The quality system is based on the principles of biodynamic advisory work laid down in the charter. By means of continuous reflection, evaluation and selective further training of the advisors, quality and transparency should be supported and the biodynamic movement strengthened from inside. More information on the project will soon be available on the website of the Section for Agriculture.

*Jean-Michel Florin / Sarah Sommer*

<https://www.sektion-landwirtschaft.org/en/thematic-areas/biodynamic-advisory/>

## Training for cooks from France



From 22 to 25 February, 25 cooks, teachers, a nutrition consultant and a bee-keeper absorbed theoretical and practical suggestions for dynamic cooking practice.

"Let the pearl shine every day" is the motto of Heinz Fendrich, the chef at the Sonnenhof in Arlesheim. The pearls are his colleagues in the kitchen whom he views as being part of a learning "community of destiny". This attitude, the quiet and attentiveness during the daily preparation of meals for 500 people, made a very big impression on the participants, especially because in most professional kitchens, things can get pretty harsh. During a three day training at the Goetheanum, 25 cooks, teachers, a nutrition consultant and even a bee-keeper were able to experience the theory and practice of how biodynamics in cultivation, the threefold nature of the plant and the human being, and dynamic nutrition all flow into a dynamic kitchen, how even at a large scale the Klinik Arlesheim with its wide range of needs (wards, restaurant, etc.) functions. The chefs from the Goetheanum's surroundings, Heinz Fendrich (Sonnenhof Arlesheim), Sabine Hagg (Klinik Arlesheim), Andreas Kaiser (Anfora Dornach) and Hermann Spindler (former Lukasklinik), opened their doors during normal business and shared everything from experiences and concepts all the way to recipes from their exemplary kitchens.

For those who had travelled from the far corners of France, the programme offered the maximum in a small format, such as the red cabbage which was cut up for a Goethean observation with Jean-Michel Florin. The fact that Rudolf Steiner's Representative of Man can be related to nutrition was new for everyone. All were enthusiastically involved with energy, curiosity and enjoyment from the morning eurythmy with Riho Peter-Iwamatsu to late evening discussions on the experiences of the day. Ina Chesnier from the kitchen of the Waldorf School in Avignon who organised the group is more than satisfied that everyone took away new ideas for their daily work. "I am really pleased that the special value of our kitchens which have been practising a sustainable and future-oriented nutrition since they started, has been recognised and appreciated," Jasmin Peschke summed up.

[www.sektion-landwirtschaft.org/en/thematic-areas/nutrition/](http://www.sektion-landwirtschaft.org/en/thematic-areas/nutrition/)

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## Theme of the year 2019/2020

### **The spiritual in agriculture**

Biodynamic agriculture has developed from the anthroposophical spiritual science of Rudolf Steiner. The lectures which form the basis for this are published under the German title "Geisteswissenschaftliche Grundlagen zum Gedeihen der Landwirtschaft" (Spiritual-scientific foundations for a flourishing agriculture) (translated into English as The Agriculture Course, GA 327). It is this spiritual content which arouses the interest of many people for biodynamic agriculture.

### **A broad range of themes**

Nowadays there is an increasing wish for an expanded conception of the material world view – whether due to the longing for a spiritual world; whether based on personal spiritual experiences; whether due to the absurdity of materialism with all its excesses in science, economics and the social realm; whether arising from practical experience with biodynamic agriculture; whether based on epistemological insights; or whether simply due to the recognition that spiritual forces are required in order to ensure the existence of humanity. In Rudolf Steiner's words "... we can see how necessary it is to derive forces from the spirit, [...] so that human life on Earth can continue at all, since as physical beings we depend on what the Earth provides." There is a broad array of reasons for interest in the spiritual in biodynamic agriculture and for devoting our attention to this.

### **Between opening up and remaining true to yourself**

Since the start of the 21st century the biodynamic movement has increasingly become a global movement. It is developing rapidly in Asia as well as in South and Central America, South Africa and many other regions and countries. This has brought it into contact with the traditional spirituality of native peoples. How can we, as a biodynamic movement, develop an understanding and a relationship to this kind of spirituality? Can the meeting of biodynamic agriculture with these kind of 'traditional forms of spirituality' lead to a mutual enrichment, from which each person can find their individual path in new freedom? Are there any examples of this kind of successful personal integration? How can the biodynamic movement itself and its roots in anthroposophy remain true to itself without getting stuck in old traditions? And lastly, how can the human being in this search for the spiritual do justice to the wakefulness and power of judgement of their present-day consciousness?

### **The culture of the spiritual in daily life**

How can we learn from each other? How can we keep a sympathetic ear for the spiritual experiences of the other person and how can we develop a proper mutual understanding for this? This kind of support for one another can be the basis for developing a culture of the spiritual in daily work.

### **The whole human being is needed**

The search for the spiritual is often linked to the idea of losing our down-to-earth and practical qualities. It is often associated with a flight from the earth and intellectual abstraction. However, when we are dealing with the experience of the spiritual in the world around us, then there is always a need for the whole human being, the creating active willing, the feeling, and the contemplative reflective human being. And the nature of the spiritual experience differs, depending where the emphasis lies: some will have relevant experiences in the working application of the content of the Agricultural Course, others will come to visions of occult perceptions.

### **Taking responsibility**

Working in agriculture nowadays presents us with great challenges: from the environment (e.g. climate change) via myself (e.g. personal competence) all the way to cooperation in the social realm. How can the intentional inclusion of the occult or spiritual dimension of reality be a real help for coping with all these challenges? How can spiritual faculties and exercise paths help to strengthen me, considering the current confrontation with the virtual and digital world and the increasing nervousness and loss of concentration?

And finally, how can I combine the material world with the spiritual reality in order to find a better basis for my practical actions in agriculture, in order to be able to act confidently, with self-consciousness and responsibility?

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## Agriculture Conference 2020 - Call for Proposals

The Agriculture Conference is the international conference of the biodynamic movement and takes place annually at the Goetheanum in Dornach.

The current theme for the year "The spiritual in agriculture" will provide the basis for exploring spiritual aspects of agriculture at the Agriculture Conference 2020, based on the Agricultural Course. The conference will deepen spiritual connections and demonstrate paths and personal approaches. It will aim to offer a forum for discussion of these topics and a basis for developing a culture for dealing with the spiritual in agriculture. Experiences will also be shared on the burning issue of how the conscious inclusion of the spiritual components of reality can be of practical help for all today's challenges in agricultural work.

We would like to invite you to get involved in your own initiative. Contributions to the Agriculture Conference can be proposed until 15th May 2019.

[www.sektion-landwirtschaft.org/en/call-for-proposals/](http://www.sektion-landwirtschaft.org/en/call-for-proposals/)

## Research, training, advisory

### Climate protection through biodynamic agriculture

From scientific research in the DOK study in Therwil, Switzerland, it is known that biodynamics is the most sustainable form of agriculture. This long-term study has been comparing biodynamic (D), organic (O) and conventional (K) agriculture for 40 years and is jointly run and funded by the FiBL (Research Institute of Organic Agriculture) and Agroscope, the Swiss government centre of excellence for agricultural research.

In these comparisons biodynamic agriculture is distinguished in particular by the highest organic carbon deposits and therefore the best CO<sub>2</sub> sequestration, the highest microbial diversity in the soil and the lowest nitrous oxide emissions (N<sub>2</sub>O). This means that biodynamic agriculture has the potential to protect the climate on the one hand and to preserve soil fertility on the other, even in times of climate change.

The idea is to scientifically prove this potential in practice as well and so make the resilience of biodynamic agriculture more comprehensible to both the wider public and politicians and officials. An initial project outline was developed along with the FiBL and, after being worked through again, was expanded with all the important aspects of sustainability. Based on the analysis of soil quality and carbon reserves, the project covers a whole-farm sustainability assessment, an economic and environmental impact analysis and a synthesis with the sociopolitical implications.

The project involves high costs. We therefore need a risk assessment with a subsequent review of the project design. A preliminary project with workshops will clarify whether the SMART analysis – Sustainability Monitoring and Assessment Routine – is suitable for this project. Initial assessments are encouraging. The project will take time, but we will persevere.

*Ueli Hurter/ Susanna Küffer Heer*

### The Preparation Plants in Tropical and Subtropical Regions

In September 2018, we began a research project on the compost preparation plants in tropical and subtropical regions. In the Agricultural Course (1924), Rudolf Steiner clearly stated that the plants recommended for making the compost preparations could be replaced by others, should they be difficult to obtain in some regions. Due to the spread of biodynamic agriculture from Central Europe to numerous countries across the world and, in recent years, to countries in tropical and subtropical regions in particular, new questions arise on this matter:

- Which regions have problems in growing one or more of the preparation plants?
- Is it important or of obvious benefit to obtain preparation plants from the local region in particular countries?
- What plants are suitable and how can we recognise them?
- What experience of "new preparation plants" already exists in particular countries?

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This research project is planned in four stages:

**1. Creation of a network of international advisers, local agricultural experts (or coordinators) and botanical and Goetheanistic experts (scientists)** in order to exchange ideas and information on the problems and possible solutions

**2. Research on related plants in tropical and subtropical countries – e.g. Valeriana**

It is difficult to get *Valeriana officinalis* to flower in tropical and subtropical countries. The Valerianaceae family comprises around 250 species worldwide. Of these, a large number (approximately hundred) are only native in the mountains of Central and South America. Only about ten species grow in the alpine regions of Europe, others in the southern Himalayas (India - around fifteen species) or China (approximately fifteen species). Are there any important traditional medicinal plants or other plants with special characteristics amongst these species? Is there any experience with the use of other valerian species? We are planning excursions to study other plants from this family. Later we also want to look at the other preparation plants and their families in order to find ways of cultivating them and of working with local experts in cases where there are problems (e.g. *Quercus*).

**3. Expert discussions**

We wish to hold expert discussions on individual preparation plants. The first of these is planned for May 2019 in Dornach on Valerian and Valerian preparation.

**4. Summary of research results**

The results of the excursions, trials and expert discussions on the individual preparation plants and their alternatives are to be summarised in a booklet so that they can be made available to other interested individuals for further work.

**Responsible for the project:**

- Jean-Michel Florin (head of section for the Section for Agriculture)
- Reto Ingold (freelance co-worker of the Section, advisor for biodynamic agriculture, working mainly in tropical and subtropical countries)
- Dr. Jürgen Momsen (biologist, coordinator and secretary for the research project)

**Collaborators for the project:**

- Jan Albert Rispens (biologist, medicinal plant research)
- João Felipe Toni (MSc., biologist, Institute for Contextual science, Goetheanum)

To exchange our experiences with valerian and other preparation plants, we would like to further develop the International Network of Preparation Plants. More detailed information to the project can be found in the appendix or on our website: <https://www.sektion-landwirtschaft.org/en/thematic-areas/preparations/>

If you would like to join this research project, we request that you fill in your details and experiences in the form accessible via the following link:

<https://www.sektion-landwirtschaft.org/index.php?id=10586&L=0>

We will keep you informed about the project and its findings and look forward to the exchange. If you have any further questions about the project or the cooperation, please feel free to contact the Section for Agriculture or the project manager Jürgen Momsen ([juergen.momsen@t-online.de](mailto:juergen.momsen@t-online.de)).

*With many thanks and best wishes,*

*Jean-Michel Florin (Head of the Section for Agriculture) & Dr. Jürgen Momsen (project management)*

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## Farm Talk in Hungary



After our very successful Demeter training in September 2018, the picture of the Farm Talk vision poster translated to Hungarian was sent out to every Demeter partner of the Hungarian Biodynamic Association. The management of the Association asked the Demeter Partners to try and think about the picture and share their thoughts in a few weeks.

This poster inspired many questions related to understanding the different principles. After these questions, which we had left open to form a further base for thinking together, the individual thoughts inspired by the picture gradually began to arrive.

Here is a summary of the aspects that were collected:

- **Use of preparations:** Some of the answerers had been using the preparations for many years and had a good practice already. However, there were some who needed support with the usage.
- **Individual development:** Biodynamic reading groups, regular winter training programme, art work (painting) and reading the Agricultural Course were on the list of most answerers. Also, most of them emphasized on the need for more frequent BD training to learn and exchange experiences.
- **Social aspect:** It was discussed that there was a need for more frequent biodynamic meetings and trainings. This led to the idea of organizing local biodynamic workshops, inviting school students or young adults into the farm to show them the life in the farm and also occasionally hosting a group and working together with them.
- **Economical aspect:** There is a need for increasing the diversity of the goods/ products. There is an openness for doing farm-connected activities and the need for development in marketing and selling the products.
- **Animals in the farm:** The importance of keeping animals in the farm is a basic fact in Biodynamic farming. It is very important to understand the needs of the different kinds of animals; therefore, the farmer should observe them to be able to create the right environment.
- **Quality of the product:** According to the feedback of the customers and from the farmers' own observations, the products always reach a very high quality.
- **Biodiversity:** After a few years (4-7) an ecological balance can be clearly observed in the farm. Mostly all living species are healthier and more resistant to illnesses than previously.
- **Farm organism:** It is an endeavor in general to look at the farm as an individual organism, use less and less products coming from outside the farm like seeds, cow manure, preparations.
- **Living soil:** Using the manure/compost in the right time and the right amount. This is a very important issue, in most cases, there needs to put be a stronger focus on it.

*Gabriella Treiber and Mihály Mezei*  
*Biodynamic Association in Hungary*

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## Lobby Work

### Revision of the EU Organic Regulation

#### What's new, what's not and what is not yet known

From 1 January 2021, new regulations will apply to the European organic sector – and to imports into the EU. The basic text of the new regulation has already been adopted in 2018. It lays down the goals, general principles and overarching rules for organic production and labelling. Main novelties brought about already by the basic text include:

- Enhancement of the scope of products that can be certified organic
- The principle of soil-related crop cultivation
- The admission of diverse plant genetic material, such as organic heterogeneous material
- An enhanced encouragement of short distribution channels and local production including, for example, increased percentages of animal feed to be sourced regionally
- Stricter regulation of additives in processing
- Establishment of a system of group certification within the EU also
- A shift in the import regime that now requires conformity instead of equivalence with European organic regulation

Besides these overall shifts, many more concrete standards for production, controls, certification and enforcement will be known only when the delegated and implementing acts are formulated. Discussion and drafting of these are currently ongoing.

#### Undue controversies around contamination

While implementing acts are still pending, there has already been much controversy about the new rules on contamination of organically certified products. However, in regard to this topic, it is most important to note that the basic principles of EU organic regulation remain unchanged even after revision: Organic regulations remain inherently process-based. Products can be certified organic when the procedural rules for organic production are observed along the value chain.

The European Commission had briefly considered a shift towards a more product-based regime in which organic status is determined by (measurable) qualities of products. But ultimately, decisions were taken against this idea. Hence, organic status remains dependent on observation of organic production rules. And therefore, cases of contamination of products still affect certification only where organic production rules have been violated. Just like its predecessor, the new regulation does not define any thresholds for residues that organic products have to abide by. Nevertheless, it also does not forbid reliance on such thresholds at national level. Therefore, certain countries continue using them as they have done already under the previous regulation.

#### Duties in cases of suspicion of contamination

What is indeed new is that the precautionary duties to be taken by all organic operators in order to prevent contamination are more clearly defined. The same holds true for measures to be taken by both operators and control authorities in case of suspicion of contamination. Essentially, these duties are:

- All operators – so from 2021 on also the farmers – have to put in place a system of adequate and proportionate precautionary measures under their control to identify and avoid risks of contamination; the latter measures are of particular importance in the case of mixed organic and conventional production by the same operator; the precautionary measures become part of organic control and hence, the operator will be certified as compliant with the provisions.

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- An operator who suspects a case of contamination has to identify and separate the product concerned; check whether the suspicion can be substantiated; refrain from marketing the product until the suspicion is found unwarranted; inform the competent authority if the suspicion is substantiated; and cooperate with the authorities thereafter;
- In case of suspected contamination, the competent authority has to carry out an official investigation immediately and complete it within a reasonable time frame taking into account the durability of the affected product; it shall provisionally prohibit the marketing of the said product;

Most importantly, in case of suspicion of contamination, there is no automatism to either inform authorities, launch an official investigation or ban a product from marketing as organic.

Much instead, any operator suspecting contamination has the right and duty to judge whether contamination is the result of a violation of the rules for organic production. When he judges it is not, he is under no obligation to inform.

Similarly, a permanent ban on marketing as organic is possible only when the competent authority established that the operator intentionally used non-allowed substances; that he did not implement adequate and proportionate precautionary measures; or that he has not taken measures in response to relevant previous requests from the competent authorities.

The wording of adequate and proportionate measures here clearly puts a limit to what is expected of the operator. Hedges or buffer zones for prevention of spray drift, for example, are not part of this requirement.

## Marketing

### Communicating Demeter in the World

*What is Demeter? What is special and unique? Why do we need Demeter? Is Demeter a brand or a movement? What is the key message of Demeter in this day and age?*

Questions around how to communicate Demeter best to people are present in all countries and there is a great variety and creativity of marketing and communication ideas and concepts to find in many places. On the other hand, not every country has the capacity and the knowhow to build up a professional communication with target groups - farmers as well as consumers. At the same time Demeter is growing in most regions, the markets are developing fast and thus the demand for a professional brand communication is obvious.

The International Marketing Committee (IMC) developed a basic marketing strategy in the past year, which aims to serve various goals:

- The Demeter community has a common picture and understanding of who we are and what we stand for (see mission statement) and how we translate this into the marketing context: a global brand communication
- Consistency and unity of communication in different regions (The way and methods of communication can vary due to local need)
- Individual support of marketing in the countries and providing a toolbox, templates, photo gallery etc.
- Platform to exchange good practices

In a first step we figured we need a global brand communication concept, and derived from that a practical marketing toolbox that will make it easy for countries to establish a basic brand communication in their markets, including material for e.g. social media, trade show booth, brochures, websites etc..

The IMC will present a first concept at the next Member's Assembly in June and is curious how this will be received.

*For the IMC, Katja Aßmann, Coordinator IMC*

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## Reports from member countries

### 47th Biodynamic Training Workshop at BASIL Academy, Mysore, India



BASIL Academy, a two-hectare training facility of Eco-Agri Research Foundation, is situated on the banks of the River Cauvery, near Mahadevpura village, Srirangapatna, Mandya District, in the state of Karnataka in India. This training facility has a boarding & lodging capacity of 36 participants and has a 68-hectare Demeter certified farm next to it. It has trained over 7000 farmers in Biodynamics in the past.

The Biodynamic Association of India (BDAI) conducted its 47th training program on the basics of Biodynamic Agriculture here from the 8th to 12th of April.

The 5-day program had 31 participants from Sri Lanka and the Indian states of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala, Manipur and Tamil Nadu. Most participants were progressive farmers already practicing organic agriculture and wished to enhance their practice through Biodynamics, while a few others were just taking their first steps in this journey.

The faculty consisted of Sundeep Kamath for all theory classes and G S Mani & Aditya Mathai for the practical sessions. They were supported by Sumanth Bhardwaj, Training Coordinator of the BDAI and Harsha Gangwal in the organizing of this training program and by Dr Thomas Jacob, advisor to the PDS Organic Spice project, who shared a contribution on *Vriskhayurveda* (a component of *Agnipurana*, an ancient Indian scripture, a dedicated text signifying the importance of agricultural science. *Vriskhayurveda* means the science of plant life) and Anbu from the BDAI's Demeter Certification Office, who shared a presentation on Demeter Certification.

The participants for the training belonged to various organizations which included the NGOs of Earth Trust, Organic Farmers Association of India (OFAI) and Kerala Jaiva Karshaka Samithi (Kerala Organic Farmers Association), the certification body, Control Union Certifications and the Demeter projects of KARMUHIL ([socialinitiativeforum.org/portfolio/muhil/](http://socialinitiativeforum.org/portfolio/muhil/)), PDS Organic Spices ([pdsorganicspices.com](http://pdsorganicspices.com)) and Bio Foods ([biofoodslk.com](http://biofoodslk.com)), in addition to farmers from the region.

A participant feedback is shared below:

“Thank you Sundeep, Mani & the wonderful team for making the training memorable. After a long gap of 6-7 years BASIL got a great revival start. Had a wonderful group who had put their mind, soul, and energy at the revival process. All the best.”

*Sundeep Kamath*  
Secretary, Biodynamic Association of India



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## Development of Biodynamic Movement in Colombia by ABD Colombia



The conference “CONAGRECO” led to the founding of the Association for Biodynamic and Demeter in Colombia in December 2017 with the presence of more than 250 participants. After a little more than one year, ABD Colombia held its first Members Assembly 5th-7th April in “Tarapaca”, a care farm institution at the fringe of Cali.

A wide range of participants were present which included farmers from all parts of the country such as a recently certified Demeter banana grower from Santa Marta, a lime cooperative in the northeast in the process of conversion to Demeter, coffee growers from the south, the national certifier Biotropico, several young people with experience in PGS, in market development and ICT and teachers and advisors with in total 40 participants over the days.

For a day and a half, the members worked in small groups for a program which was prepared by Ingo Mordhorst, Reinhild Schloss, Thomas Schmid and Petra Derksen. The aim was to make concrete and realistic project plans for the coming year in several steps. At the end, three topics were chosen to be worked upon- the responsibilities of different resources, where to find these resources and their accountability and reporting to the board. Participants worked intensively and already had enough experience from previous years in working together in small groups. This helped the members to make feasible plans for the following topics for 2019.

- Organisational structure – secretariat, contact with members
- Training to develop courses.
- Certification and protection of the trademark

It is not easy to start with no resources for a lot of operational tasks such as a running secretariat, communication to the members, and designing a website. The big question that came up was financing these tasks as the membership fee has to be kept low for small farmers to be able to afford it. The official Members Assembly with 27 members of the official 34 members present, decided to ask all members and interested persons to pay what they can, instead of a limitation to the fee.

But even if resources are a real challenge, there are several young people active and interested in becoming more active. By volunteer work of several people, a new website has been created which is still under construction.



*Report by Thomas Schmid who facilitated the first Members Assembly of ABD Colombia*

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## First Demeter Certified Wine Grower in Denmark

We are happy to announce the first Demeter certified wine grower in Denmark - but not the last!



Skaarupore Vingaard is a small vineyard with a professional production located on the island Fyn. It had been organic for 8 years before it was converted to biodynamic. It was Demeter certified in 2018 and is releasing its first Demeter wine in April 2019.

The vineyard makes white, rosé and sparkling wines.

*For more information:*

*Bente and Carsten Rasmussen, Skaarupore Vingaard*

*5881 Skaarup, Denmark*

[www.skaaruporevin.dk](http://www.skaaruporevin.dk)

## Positive biodynamic development in Denmark



### **Free biodynamic conversion process for organic farmers and biodynamic farm talks!**

Thanks to funding from an organic state fund the Biodynamic Association can now offer Danish organic farmers a visit (3 - 4 hours followed by advising by phone and mail) about the biodynamic principles and methods. The aim is to give the farmer information about the aspect and perspectives of growing biodynamic and what it takes personally and practically to convert.

Within the last 2 years, 45 farmers have had a conversion visit. 15 farmers have converted or are in a conversion process. The number of Demeter certified farms is now 44. We expect to reach 50 farms next year.

At the same time, we can offer biodynamic farmers a farm development process (farm talk), focused on the subjects the farmer wants to work on. The aim is to support the process to develop the farm in a more ideal biodynamic direction. This year 5 farms will be active in the process.

For more information: please contact Klaus Loehr-Petersen, Biodynamic Association, [info@biodynamisk.dk](mailto:info@biodynamisk.dk)

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## Restructuring in Demeter USA

Demeter USA is undergoing many new and exciting changes and the restructure is beginning to take shape! Here is an introduction to your colleagues in the USA:

### **Tarry Bolger, Director of Certification**

Email: [Tarry@Demeter-USA.org](mailto:Tarry@Demeter-USA.org)

As the new Director of Certification for Demeter USA, Tarry has assembled a Standards Advisory Committee and launched a new customer database. He has oversight of the U.S. certification program.

Tarry is the former Managing Director of Demeter UK and Chairman of the United Kingdom Organic Certifiers Group. He is an advisor on Demeter International Accreditation Council and has had the distinct pleasure of working with many Demeter organizations around the world to ensure compliance to the Demeter International standards. He is deeply interested in quality assurance processes that serve and support the continuous and sustainable development of farms and food businesses.

### **Erin Sojourner Agostinelli, Director of Business Development**

Email: [Erin@Demeter-USA.org](mailto:Erin@Demeter-USA.org)

Erin has been a valued team member since 2013. As Director of Business Development for Demeter USA, Erin connects brands and people to the farm and farmer and advocates for the health of our planet and people through the food we eat.

### **Jen Rose Silverman, Certification Specialist**

Email: [Jen@Demeter-USA.org](mailto:Jen@Demeter-USA.org)

Jen has sixteen years of certification experience and has worked with Demeter USA since 2017. As a certification specialist, inspecting farms and processors throughout the United States, Jen has the abundant task of ensuring the integrity of Biodynamics is carried out on the farm. Jen is also responsible for approving that labels uphold the labeling standards.

### **Andy Bennett, Certification Staff Inspector**

email: [andy@demeter-usa.org](mailto:andy@demeter-usa.org)

Andy has been a valued team member since 2014 and he's been inspecting farms since 2001 with Food Alliance, USDA NOP Organic and Demeter USA. Carrying this knowledge out to the field Andy is able to educate farmers on Biodynamic practices.

### **Sarah Rhynalds, Member Services Coordinator**

Email: [Sarah@demeter-usa.org](mailto:Sarah@demeter-usa.org)

As member services coordinator, Sarah is the initial contact for new members interested in Demeter certification. Sarah maintains the inspection allocations for all Demeter US certified entities.

### **Felicity Baxter, Business Administrator**

Email: [felicity@demeter-usa.org](mailto:felicity@demeter-usa.org)

As business administrator, Felicity manages the day to day operations of the business office including full cycle bookkeeping.

Website of Demeter USA: <https://www.demeter-usa.org/>

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## Dates & events

### SIF Egypt 2019 “Unfolding Individual Potential for the Future”

**12 – 15 December 2019, Sekem, Egypt**

During this Social Initiative Forum, we want to share ideas from all over the world by different people of different backgrounds on education that supports individual and holistic potential unfolding for a sustainable future that evolves through life-long learning.

We aim to address the topic by an integral approach, including education on its different levels: formal school as well as higher education, informal skills and training impulses as well as potential unfolding activities within economic, agricultural or cultural backgrounds.

Let's inspire and encourage each other to think outside the box, and start new initiatives and impulses!

Co-organisers: [SEKEM](#)

Got any questions? Contact the [Social Initiative Forum's Team](#)

We look forward to seeing you in Egypt!

More Info: [Social Initiative Forum](#)

### Trainer and Teacher Conference - Unfolding potential-building capacity for a common development in Biodynamics

**7th - 9th November 2019, the Goetheanum, Dornach, Switzerland**

This conference is about unfolding potential to enable all biodynamic trainers worldwide to take the next step. We will deepen some fundamental aspects of biodynamic training and address specific questions. Moreover, we want to create a space for individual development.

We want an agriculture that encourages people and enables them to unfold their individual potential and full consciousness. The aim is to support local work and to build local organisms that pulsate sustainably. Together we want to build the capacity to face the ecological, social and economical challenges in agriculture.

We look forward to seeing you in November in Dornach.

*Best wishes,*

*Sarah Sommer und Jean-Michel Florin (Section for Agriculture) &*

*Petra Derkzen (Demeter International)*

### Agriculture Conference 2020 - The Spiritual in Agriculture

**5th to 8th February 2020 – at the Goetheanum Dornach**

Annual International Conference of the biodynamic movement.

More Info: [www.sektion-landwirtschaft.org/lwt/2020/](http://www.sektion-landwirtschaft.org/lwt/2020/)

### Organic World Congress 2020 (OWC)

**21-27 September 2020 in Rennes, France**

Pre-conference biodynamic research 21 September 2020 - More information soon

During the main conference (23-25 September) there will be a Farmers' and Advisors' Forum. Contributions from the biodynamic environment are very welcome. Further information: <https://owc.ifoam.bio/2020>

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Published by Demeter-International e.V.  
 Editor Christoph Simpfendörfer & Harsha Gangwal  
 The next newsletter will be published on 30th of July 2019  
 Editorial deadline will be 16th of July 2019

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