03/2017

Biodynamics in the World

The Newsletter of
The Agricultural Section at the Goetheanum,
the International Biodynamic Association (IBDA) and Demeter-International e.V.

Dear members and friends of Biodynamic farming,

In our Member's assembly in Italy, Helmy Abouleish inspired us in the mornings.
He spoke about the different soul qualities and their relation to the cultural, social and economic sphere.
The four basic exercises described in these words of Rudolf Steiner are essential to develop our consciousness soul.
We speak them every day in our morning circle on the farm.
We wish you an inspiring lecture of this newsletter.

To wonder at beauty,
Stand guard over truth,
Look up to the noble,
Resolve on the good;
This leads us truly
To purpose in living,
To right in our doing,
To peace in our feeling,
To light in our thinking.
And teaches us trust
In the workings of God
In all that there is
In the widths of the world,
In the depths of the soul.

Rudolf Steiner

Agricultural Section at the Goetheanum

- Thomas Lüthi gives his farewell from co-leading the Section for Agriculture

After seven years, Thomas Lüthi resigns from co-leading the Section. Jean-Michel Florin and Ueli Huerter will be supported by a strengthened team.

- New employee in the Agricultural Section at the Goetheanum

Since the end of November 2016, Verena Wahl has been working for the Section as assistant

- New book: Biodynamic viticulture - New ways to regenerate the vine culture

Jean-Michel Florin's book is expected to be published in autumn 2017 and is intended to make Biodynamic viticulture accessible to a broader audience

- I really like this Soup

Report of a training week for cooks in April 2017 by Jasmin Peschke

IBDA

- Change within the Board of the International Biodynamic Association, IBDA

At the Members' assembly of IBDA in February 2017, Hubert Kögler resigned as a member of the board. Thomas Schmid was elected as his successor.

- Egyptian Biodynamic Association new IBDA member

The Egyptian Biodynamic Association is a new member of the IBDA

Demeter-International

Members' Assembly

- Co-creating the future

Some impressions about the Members' Assembly in Italy

International Certification Office

- Handover: Demeter trademark administration to BD Association India

Demeter-International is handing over all responsibilities for Demeter trademark administration to India.

Demeter-International

Market

- Exports of Demeter products to China

When Demeter products are exported to China, a Chinese organic certification is recommended.

- ProWein Registration open now

The next ProWein will take place from 18.-20.03.18 in Düsseldorf

Lobby

- EU policy frameworks for organic farming change

The revision of the EU organic regulation has been discussed since 2013. A preliminary political agreement was reached on 28th of June.

- Organic plant breeding on the agenda!

Demeter-International is involved in the EU research project LIVESEED. The kick-off meeting took place from the 19th to the 21st of June

- DI seed project "Promoting Organic Plant Breeding in Europe"

A study by Johannes Wirtz and Peter Kunz will be presented at the conference "Seeds as Commons" on Thursday 19th of October 2017 at 10 pm in the European Parliament in Brussels.

Reports from member countries

- County profile: Denmark

In a new series we will introduce the member organizations. This time: The Danish Biodynamic Association and the Demeter-organization Demeterforbundet

Reports/ various

- Kenya – Biodynamic Seminars 05th April – 08th May 2017

The two gardeners Anne and Rolf Bucher report on their Biodynamic workshops, which they did in Kenya.

Biodynamic planting calendars

In Biodynamic agriculture constellations play a key role. We will present three examples from three continents:

- India
- Latin America
- New Zealand

- Researching Holistic Approaches to Agroecology – Distance learning course

Online-cource for farmers, gardeners and other interested persons

Reports from member countries

- First Latin-American Meeting of Biodynamic Coffee, Cacao, Ginger and Brazilian Nuts Farmers - July 2 – 7, 2017 in Peru

Twenty-two people attended the meeting. Including people from Peru, Brazil, Ecuador, Mexico and Puerto Rico

- Biodynamics at the Harmony Conference

The British charity organization The Sustainable Food Trust held a two-day conference in Wales on "Harmony in Food and Farming"

- UK Seed Coop on Awards shortlist

The Seed Cooperative was nominated for its cutting-edge innovations and its pioneering work in the "BBC Future Food Award" category.

Dates and events

01.-02.09.2017 Seminar: Biodynamic development: an inner and outer transformation, Córdoba, Argentina

22.-23.09.2017 Formation of aether – human as creator (Kolloquium), Dornach

19.10.2017, 10.00-14.30 Uhr Conference „Seeds as Commons", European Parliament, tbc, 1047 Brussels, Belgium

7.-10.02.2018 Agricultural Conference – The Biodynamic preparations, Dornach

14.-18.01.2018 Intensive week: From Burning Issue to a beaccon of light, Dornach

4.-8.09.2018, Biodynamic research conference (working title) Goetheanum

Back to top

Agricultural Section at the Goetheanum

Thomas Lüthi gives his farewell from co-leading the Section for Agriculture

In the last seven years Thomas Luethi was the third person in the fellowship of the Section leadership. This spring he resigned from this task. Thomas' resignation from the Section leadership is not a resignation from active involvement in the Circle of Representatives or in Demeter-International. The Section shall carry on working in a constellation of two leader that functions very well, supported by a strengthened team.
We would like to thank Thomas most warmly for his collaboration with us in running the Section during the past seven years. He has played, and still plays, an essential part in the open- and broad-minded working of the Section and of the whole Biodynamic movement towards a viable partnership of humankind and the earth.

New employee in the Agricultural Section at the Goetheanum

Since the end of November 2016, Verena Wahl is working full-time with us. Her main tasks are the assistance of the section management, especially project management and public relations. Born in Freiburg (Baden-Wuerttemberg, Germany), she studied agricultural sciences at the universities of Kassel / Witzenhausen and Hohenheim and then worked in the Future Foundation for Agriculture in Bochum. She got to know the agricultural life at an early age on two farms in her family in the Hohenlohe (near Schwaebisch Hall, Germany) and later worked on conventional and Biodynamic farms. Through numerous projects, internships, and stays in New Zealand, Turkey, India and Moscow, she has valuable intercultural competence.

New book: Biodynamic viticulture - New ways to regenerate the vine culture

Jean-Michel Florin (eds.) Published in autumn 2017, publisher Goetheanum www.vamg.ch

The idea for this book came after the first international viticulture conference in Colmar and Dornach. From this initial impulse, a larger project was developed followed by additional French viticulture conferences in the period from 2013 to 2016, organized by the Mouvement de l'Agriculture Bio-Dynamique, which is why the book also appears in French.
The winegrowing world is on the way! Weakened vines, new pests and diseases, compacted soils and much more present challenges in vineyards, which cannot be solved by the usual methods and ways of thinking. More and more winegrowers are interested in Biodynamic viticulture and the number of Biodynamic winegrowers is growing steadily.
For more than 30 years, Biodynamic winegrowers have made practical experiments and gained experience, thereby opening up new ways and perspectives for winegrowing. The aim of this book is to make the knowledge and experience of Biodynamic winemakers accessible to a broader audience. Who is the vine actually? And what does it need? What are the foundations of a healthy viticulture? These and many other questions are addressed by experienced winemakers, researchers and consultants in their contributions to this book.
The book will be only available in German and French

By Verena Wahl
verena.wahl@goetheanum.ch

Back to top

I really like this Soup

Report on the Advanced Training Course Week for Cooks

the kitchen of the Speisehaus

Anthroposophical nutrition is not at all so stuck in the mud as I had always thought. “I am motivated to do things more consciously and will make purer, more untainted and more meaningful decisions in my everyday life”. The feedback of the eleven cooks from Germany, Austria and Switzerland, who came to a further training course of the Co-ordination Centre for Nutrition at the Goetheanum at the beginning of April, was altogether positive.
The participants were cooks and chefs from Waldorf kindergartens and schools, a curative centre and other social establishments, from a Biodynamic farming community with 100 meals a day right through to an organic lunch-time restaurant and a catering head of a university clinic with 70 cooks.
The programme was organised to include a variety of seminars and practical kitchen experience. In the kitchens of places like the *Speisehaus* (dedicated restaurant) at the Goetheanum, at the Sonnenhof (curative centre), the Arlesheim Clinic as well as a Demeter restaurant in the region the point was getting to know the overall idea, the course of actions, the selection of food and structuring the menu, less about cooking, which professionals do not need to learn.

Dessert, picture taken by J.Peschke

For the participants the openness of the chefs involved as well as their respectful approach to the co-workers and apprentices, but also to the high quality food were impressive. “I pass enthusiasm for cooking on to my apprentices. Showing regard for the food in the way you handle it is the essential thing for producing a delicious menu” is the creed of one of them. Another one puts it in a nutshell: “it depends on my inner attitude as I am standing at the stove – this involves me getting to grips with anthroposophy”.
During the course various pearls were discovered, which encouraged the participants to reorganise their everyday work, such as, for instance, by introducing a morning circle or taking a more active approach to cooking grains once more. “I have taken away a lot of delicious recipes for grains”. “I would like to send my co-worker here next year” were parting notes from participants.

By Jasmin Peschke
Section for Agriculture, coordination office for nutrition,
nutrition@goetheanum.ch

Back to top

International Biodynamic Association IBDA

Change within the Board of the International Biodynamic Association, IBDA

At the Members' assembly of IBDA in February 2017, Hubert Kögler resigned as a member of the board. During his 12 years term as a board member and as a founding member, he had a significant influence on the work of IBDA. His colleagues and the IBDA members thank him for his tireless commitment to the Biodynamic movement!
Thomas Schmid was elected as his successor in the same meeting. The farmer from a farm near the Lake of Constance works as well as a consultant and has been representing Demeter e.V. as chairman of the board since 2014.

Egyptian Biodynamic Association new IBDA member

We are pleased to welcome the "Egyptian Biodynamic Association" as a new member of the IBDA. For further information and a list of all member countries please visit: www.ibda.ch

By Verena Wahl
verena.wahl@goetheanum.ch

Demeter-International

Members' Assembly

Co-creating the future

Thank you, Lapo, for this unforgettable Members' assembly.
Wonderful venue, tasty Demeter food, perfect weather, inspiring visits and best working conditions enabled us to make steps towards an agriculture of the future.

By Christoph Simpfendörfer

Back to top

International Certification Office

Handover: Demeter trademark administration to BD Association India

Since more than 10 years there is close cooperation between Demeter-International and the colleagues from the BD Association India.
We are in the last phase of handing over all responsibilities for Demeter trademark administration to India, following an approved “transfer plan”.

This includes the day to day issues regarding advisory, inspections/reports, inspectors approval, certifications, standards, exemptions, labels, etc.
We therefore kindly ask you to address from now on all related correspondence to my colleague Lucas Dengel and his team to demetercert@gmail.com
Demeter Certification Office
Lucas Dengel
Aurosarjan Complex
Auroshilpam
605101 Auroville, Tamil Nadu
INDIA
phone +91 4132622469
demetercert@gmail.com

For formal reasons Demeter-International will continue to issue/sign contracts, invoices and certificates until June 2018, when full membership for the BD Association India is expected to be approved.

By Cornelia Hauenschild
c.hauenschild@demeter.de

Market

Exports of Demeter products to China

The Chinese market is more and more interested in Demeter products, especially Demeter wines. Demeter Germany, represented by Nina Weis, took part in Prowine Shanghai in November 2016.
Labelling is a crucial issue since the Chinese organic certification is expensive and has additional requirements. Very few organic certifiers outside China are entitled to offer the Chinese organic certification (e.g. ECOCERT, CERES).
The additional certification has to be applied to the whole chain, e. g. producer, processor and exporter, which can be simple for vintners, but more difficult for mixed products with several ingredients.
Examples of major differences to EEC organic are:

- inspection has to be close to harvest time because a product sample has to be taken (not only a leaf sample). For processing, the inspection has to be done when organic produce is being processing;
- there has to be soil, air and irrigation water quality assurance for the production site (can be via a test report or information from government website);
- there has to be an Quality Management System in place (e.g. for planting, cleaning, storage);
- the next inspection and evaluation must be finished before the old certification expires;
- at least 12 months of conversion time is required even for EEC organic farming or fallow land.

Back to top

Although our standards allow the use of the Demeter logo, if organic standards like the EEC organic regulation, NOP or similar are met, **we do recommend having the Chinese organic certification for exports to China.**
The whole communication of Demeter is based on the organic certification. However according to our information it is legally permitted to use the Demeter logo in China without any reference to organic (information not guaranteed).

By Cornelia Hauenschild
c.hauenschild@demeter.de

ProWein Registration open now

ProWein is the World No. 1 International Trade Fair for Wines and Spirits and a very important meeting point for the international wine business. The interest of international Demeter wineries to participate at the Demeter booth was increasing once more in 2017, so that we could present the whole diversity of 28 Demeter wineries from all over the world. For 2018 the registration is already open (the fair will take place in Düsseldorf, March 18th to 20th 2018), so if new Demeter wineries are interested in showing their wines at the Demeter booth in March 2018, please contact Nina Weis from Demeter Germany. As the registration follows the first-come-first-serve principle and the booths are limited, please don't hesitate, if you plan to participate.

By Nina Weis
Nina.weis@demeter.de

Back to top

Lobby

EU policy frameworks for organic farming change

More information on EU policies related to organic farming: www.ifoam-eu.org. Regular policy updates are available via the IFOAM EU newsletter. Contact: Antje Kölling, antje.koelling@demeter.de

New base for EU organic certification is on its way
The revision of the EU Organic Regulation has been subject to debates since 2013. On 28 June, a provisional political agreement has been reached between the three European Institutions (Council, Commission and Parliament). The current text still bears major problems; especially article 20 is subject to controversial discussions. In the current version (at editorial deadline, 12 July), the law would oblige organic enterprises to notify and investigate all – even irrelevant – suspicions of contamination, which may put an extra administrative burden especially on organic processors without providing more safety for consumers. A positive outcome may be the pilot project for the registration of organically bred varieties. The technical consistency check as well as the work on implementing rules will bring more clarity on final impacts on the organic sector.
However, the formal approval of the text in the Council of agriculture Ministers and in the EU Parliament will not happen before autumn. Demeter, together with our partners BÖLW and IFOAM EU, still tries to reach improvements in the text. The new EU organic regulation will most probably apply from 1 July 2020 on. Several deadlines for derogations are set in the regulation, such as for the use of conventional seed. A progress report on the availability of seed, animals and protein feed in organic quality is planned for 2025 and will have an impact on the actual date when derogations will end.

Debate on new support rules starts
The EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is since long criticised by civil society groups as well as organic farming organisations for its untargeted farm support, mainly on the basis of per-hectare payments. We demand “public money for public goods” instead. The current CAP is evaluated in a midterm review this year and will end by 2020. So politicians and civil society are warming up: EU Commissioner Günther Oettinger has announced potential cuts in the agricultural budget to compensate consequences of the Brexit. The results of the public consultation show a clear interest in change towards a future CAP that puts sustainability, public health, fair income for the farmers and environmental performance at the centre. First position papers can be found online:
IFOAM EU: A CAP for healthy farms, healthy people, healthy planet

BÖLW (German): Starke Höfe, gesunde Umwelt, lebendige Dörfer: Für eine zukunftsfähige Gemeinsame Agrarpolitik der EU

For both “organic” papers, Demeter was involved in the writing process.

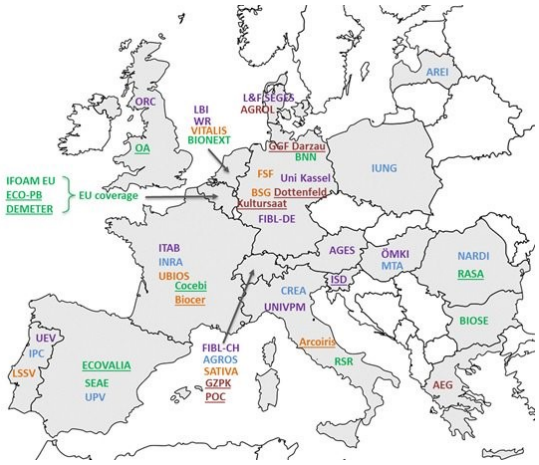
Civil Society Statement on the Reform of European Agricultural Policies: Good Food, Good Farming – Now!

By Antje Kölling
antje.koelling@demeter.de

Back to top

Organic plant breeding on the agenda!

Biodynamic breeders have been and still are pioneers in breeding plants that are specifically suited for Biodynamic and organic farming and in developing models for plant breeding according to the organic principles. Demeter-International is therefore involved in the EU research project LIVESEED under the framework programme "Horizon 2020". The project aims to increase the use of organically multiplied seed and to encourage organic plant breeding. The kick-off meeting took place in Belgium 19-21 June. Demeter-International will mainly be involved in socio-economic questions, policy recommendations and communications, whereas Biodynamic breeders (Bingenheimer Saatgut, Kultursaat, Sativa, Cereal Breeders a.) Dottenfelder Hof b.) Peter Kunz c.) Darzau) are involved in practical breeding programmes. More information to follow soon at www.liveseed.eu



Liveseed Partners

Liveseed Kickoff meeting

By Antje Kölling
antje.koelling@demeter.de

DI seed project "Promoting Organic Plant Breeding in Europe"

The Demeter-International office in Brussels runs the project "Promoting Organic Plant Breeding in Europe". The project website is about to arise (www.organic-plant-breeding.org) and the conference "Seeds as Commons" will present a study conducted by Johannes Wirtz and Peter Kunz[1] in the European Parliament in Brussels on Thursday, 19 October 2017 at 10 p.m. Alternative models to reconnect plant breeding with the society will be introduced, such as non-profit organic breeding initiatives and the OpenSourceSeeds[2] initiative which aims to make seed a common good again. The panel of outstanding experts will engage in discussions around the question how to establish systems wherein organic plant breeding can best contribute to the availability of healthy food, the improvement of agrobiodiversity, vital ecosystems services and to resilience of our food system.

Save the date: Conference "Seeds as Commons", 19 October, Brussels

[1] The study "Saatgut Gemeingut" (Seeds as Commons) was published by Goetheanum – Section for Agriculture and Fonds für Kulturpflanzenentwicklung in January 2017. It shows the importance of seed as common good and explains how to develop seed sustainably and conserve it. The English translation of the study will be presented in this seminar, the German version can be found here: http://www.sektion-landwirtschaft.org/fileadmin/landwirtschaft/Saatgut_Gemeingut/saatgut_gemeingut_2_Auflage.pdf

[2] www.opensourceseeds.org/en

Back to top

The workshop “Business models for organic plant breeding – chances and challenges” took place at the premises of Bingenheimer Saatgut AG on 22 and 23 June 2017. It has been a success with about 30 participants from nine different countries discussing how to strengthen seed work in the regions, what opportunities and challenges have to be handled in the marketing of products from organic varieties and how to prevent seed produced with new gene technologies entering the organic food chain. A visit of the fields where zucchini and carrots are bred was a highlight in the workshop programme. More information will soon be available on the project website: www.organic-plant-breeding.org
Contact: info@organic-plant-breeding.org

Workshop "Business models" in Bingenheim

By Antje Kölling
antje.koelling@demeter.de

Reports from member countries

First Latin-American Meeting of Biodynamic Coffee, Cacao, Ginger and Brazilian Nuts Farmers - July 2 – 7, 2017 in Peru

Inspired by the successful meetings of Biodynamic winegrowers from Argentina and Chile, the Biodynamic Agriculture Association of Peru (ABD Peru) supported the organization of the 1rst Latin-American Meeting of Biodynamic Coffee, Cacao, Ginger and Brazilian Nuts Farmers; held in Peru in two venues: Lima (dialogue, peer knowledge exchange and planning) and Villa Rica (field excursion).

Twenty-two persons participated from Demeter Biodynamic projects and projects in process of being Demeter certified, from Peru, Brazil, Ecuador, Mexico and Puerto Rico.
All projects shared their experiences, technologies, innovations and agroecological/Biodynamic techniques, use of biodynamic preparations, different types of fermentations and efforts towards a better quality of the final product.

It was a platform and shared space to build dialogue and confidence to move forward a proposal of Biodynamic Agriculture in the Tropics, based on practical experiences and building a vision taking into account the group strengths, perspectives, methodologies and strategies to work collectively. The proceedings of the workshop will be shared as soon as the editing is finished in early August.
The meeting also included professional tasting of chocolate, coffee and for the first time of ginger. This exercise was implemented with the aim to train the taste perception and link it with the achieved quality of the products produced with Biodynamic and organic agriculture practices.
The meeting will shift the venue and meet every year, to develop a space for discussion, advocacy and synergy among all Demeter certified and in transition projects, already applying Biodynamic practices and knowledge.
Next meeting will be held in Veracruz, Mexico in Finca El Equimite, in August 2018.See you in Mexico!

By Rene Piamonte
President Asociación Agricultura Biodinámica de Perú – ABD Perú
renepiamonte@gmail.com

Back to top

Biodynamics at the Harmony Conference

In 2010, HRH The Prince of Wales wrote a book called 'Harmony: A New way of looking at our world'. In it, he writes about how disconnected we have become from the natural world and how that is contributing to our environmental crisis. He suggests that we change the way we view the world around us by, amongst other things, bringing in wisdom and knowledge from former times.

HRH The Prince of Wales giving the keynote address

Greatly inspired by book, the UK charity The Sustainable Food Trust recently held a two day conference on the theme of 'Harmony in Food and Farming' at Llandovery College in Wales. To this were invited an eclectic and wide range of contributors to explore the theme from different angles. HRH The Prince of Wales himself was present to give the keynote speech that then set the visionary tone for the conference. He spoke earnestly about the need for change and that humanity has to look urgently at what will restore nature's balance before it is finally too late. He went on to say that British farms have been reduced to little more than factories and must be brought into greater harmony with the planet.

Patrick Holden, director of the Sustainable Food Trust

Other speakers included Patrick Holden (Director of the Sustainable Food Trust), Dame Ellen MacArthur (round the world sailor and now a proponent of circular economics), Sir John Elliot Gardiner (Conductor and organic farmer), The Venerable Master Chin Kung (Buddhist Monk and educator) and Rupert Sheldrake (Scientist and author).

We felt very honoured to be invited to have a workshop session on Harmony and Biodynamic Agriculture. It turned out to be one of the best attended workshops in the whole conference. It was moderated by the Danish Biodynamic farmer Thomas Harttung and included presentations from Ueli Hurter (Goetheanum), Peter Brown (Farmer, Biodynamic Association), Ed Berger (Farmer, Ruskin Mill Trust) and Alex Valsecchi (wine grower, Albury Vineyard).

Speakers at the workshop on biodynamics. Left to right: Peter Brown, Alex Valsecchi, Ed Berger, Ueli Hurter and Thomas Harttung

An overview of Biodynamic principles was given by Ueli showing how, with the human being at the centre, Biodynamics fits in with the natural world. Peter spoke about his practical experiences working on Biodynamic farms in South Africa, Germany and Tablehurst Farm in Sussex. Ed Berger related the therapeutic benefits that working with animals has on young people with challenging behaviour and finally Alex spoke about her personal journey to Biodynamics as a wine grower.

In an email thanking participants afterwards, Patrick said that it was one of the most important and energising conferences he had ever organised. He went on to say that 'it is clear that unless we work together in a new way, informed by Harmony thinking, we will not be able to bring about the changes that are necessary in the time available'.

We found it very exciting to be part of this new movement for change in the UK (and indeed the world) with many new connections being made at the conference.

Recordings of the speeches and workshops from the conference will be posted soon on the Sustainable Food website: http://sustainablefoodtrust.org/

By Richard Swann
rswann@biodynamic.org.uk

Back to top

UK Seed Coop on Awards shortlist

Each year in the BBC acknowledges the good work of farmers and food producers in the UK through its annual, prestigious Food and Farming Awards. They were set up “to honour those who have done most to promote the cause of good food”
Since their inception in 2000, several Biodynamic initiatives have received an award. This year is no exception with The Seed Cooperative being nominated in the category ‘BBC Future Food Award’ for cutting-edge innovation and pioneering work that could influence how the UK's food will be grown, distributed and sold in future.

The Seed Cooperative is a community owned seed company that specialises in the growing and selling of Biodynamic and organic seeds. It was launched in 2014 and is based on a small farm in Lincolnshire.
When they were told about the award, David Price of the Seed Co-operative said, “We are delighted to have been given this chance to tell our story about the future of food. Food is not ‘man-made’ but produce of the natural world and it all starts with seed. We are bringing seed production back home and re-connecting farmers, growers, gardeners, chefs and ‘people who eat’ with the natural world, through co-operation. Vitality, diversity and resilience is what our seed is all about.”
The award ceremony will take place on 20 September. We wish them luck!
More about the seed cooperative can be found here: www.seedcooperative.org.uk

Inside the seed packing workhop

By Richard Swann
rswann@biodynamic.org.uk

Country profile: Denmark

The Danish Biodynamic Association was founded in 1936 and celebrated its 80th anniversary with a big event on a Biodynamic farm in June 2016. The Demeter organisation Demeterforbundet was established in 1986.
The Biodynamic Association is located in the same building as the leading organic organization Organic Denmark (Økologisk Landsforening) in Aarhus. There are the workplaces of Anke Stubsgaard and Klaus Loehr-Petersen, project manager of the Biodynamic Association and board member of Demeterforbundet.
Anke started working in fall 2016 for the Biodynamic Association and has among other qualities experience in development-talks on organic farms, homeopathic medicine, practical BD-farming, RISE-sustainability tests and project management.
The Danish Demeter-organization Demeterforbundet is located in Odense, where Marianne Jung Christensen works as a secretary for Demeterforbundet and the Biodynamic Association.

The Biodynamic Association in Aarhus

Back to top

The Biodynamic Association and Demeterforbundet are legally and economically separated, but have a very close cooperation:

- The BD Association chooses 3 of the board members for the Demeter-organization (9 board members all together: 3 producers, 3 processors and wholesalers and 3 consumers).
- The two organizations have the same secretary (Marianne Jung Christensen).
- The Demeter-organization economically supports the information work done by the association and also Biodynamic education.

Anke Stubsgaard

Klaus Loehr-Petersen

The Demeter-organization mainly deals with inspection, certification and the ownership of the Demeter-flower (the legal sphere).
The Biodynamic Association (the spiritual sphere) sets the Demeter-standards, provides information and books, publishes the members magazine and the newsletter, gives advisory, offers courses and education (this year the focus is on courses about soil fertility), conducts development-talks and conversion-visits, engages in public relation and exhibitions. In 2016 the association made several short videos about different aspects of Biodynamic farming: farm organism, compost, importance of husbandry, biodiversity and more. They are on YouTube/BiodynamiskForening
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrQVS6bed9TkuPZKdUJe78w
Organic funding from the Danish state during many years has financed courses, farm-visits and gastronomic events.

Marianne Jung Christensen

In 2016 Demeter-Denmark had 36 Demeter certified farms with 2965 ha. An increase in acreage of 18% compared to 2015. In 2017 two farms were lost due to the Danish Demeter-standards that demands a minimum of 0,2 animal units/ ha (min. 0,1 AU/ha ruminants).The new farmers who convert to Demeter are mostly already organic farmers, who want to improve their soil and products in a qualitative way.
For the new wholesalers, ecology has become mainstream and they seek something new and with better quality. The consumers ask for better quality and the gastronomic world is looking for Biodynamic products as well. Demeter-Denmark has several contacts with restaurant and catering companies that are interested in using and/or selling Biodynamic products.
The main Demeter-product is milk and other dairy-products. Then grain/flour, vegetables, fruit and very little eggs, meat and sausages. In 2017 five new organic farms have asked for Demeter-certification. Among them a big estate, Knuthenlund Gods, with 600 ha arable land and a world class awarded cheese production from cows and sheep. It has pigs and its own mill, too.
Demand for BD products increases in Denmark and Demeter-Denmark needs additional human and financial resources. Every year, they apply for organic state funds to do different projects and have succeeded quite well during the last 18 years (in general a whole salary for one person since 2000), but the amount is limited. They will now try to apply to other funds to strengthen the economy in the association and to be able to employ more staff in order to do more information and development work.

Demeter-Denmark wishes for the development of Demeter-International:
‘Our meetings in DI will continue as it brings the work and the people from the membership countries more and more together. The work in working groups will increase. DI will expand on the political scene e.g. concerning seeds.
Less focus on control, more on development. The vision and mission statement of Demeter-International expresses very well our motivation to work for Demeter.”
http://www.demeter.dk/
Marianne Jung Christensen: biodynamisk@mail.tele.dk
Anke Stubsgaard: anke@biodynamisk.dk
Klaus Loehr-Petersen: klp@pedersholm.dk

Back to top

Reports/ various

Kenya – Biodynamic Seminars 05th April – 08th May 2017

Spraying of horn manure preparation in the late afternoon, Kangari, Murang'a, Kenya

1. Tasks and goals

- To continue our work of teaching and practicing BD farming in Kenya with small scale farmers
- To prepare and practice BD preparations
- First course: advanced course for participants of last year's course
- Second course: introductory course for a new group of small-scale farmers

2. BD courses, OACK, Kangari, Murang'a, 23th April - 28th April 2017

Both courses took place at the Ministry of Agriculture Training Centre in Mariira; practical work was done on this place and on two farms. Due to OACK's (Organic Agriculture Centre of Kenya) excellent organisation all the necessary materials were of good quality and available at all times.
In April 2017 we ran two courses: an introductory course and an advanced course for those who had attended last September (29 of last year's 31 participants attended, five of them OACK staff)

Advanced course, day 1
After introductions, our participants talked about their recent work. Seed quality was an important issue. Two groups had prepared horn manure in their villages, another group had prepared stinging nettle preparation (Urtica masai). All their activities had been monitored by OACK staff.
Last year's course topics were revised. This time we focussed on the preparation and practice of horn silica, horn manure and composts. In the hands-on part we prepared valerian prep made from dried valerian flowers brought over from Germany.
The horns buried in September 2016 were lifted. Colour and smell of the horn manure indicated good quality, its texture however was a bit too dry. In the afternoon, we were all stirring and spreading horn manure at a participant's farm.

Back to top

Advanced course, day 2
At a different farm we planned to do some field work with quartz pieces found in Kenya. We had sent David a couple of photos beforehand so that he could have some metal tools (i.e. mortar and pestle) manufactured. Besides, on our request a traditional grindstone had been found - an excellent tool for powdering. Step by step all of us continued pulverising and then filling the quartz powder into 13 horns. Twelve of them were buried on the farm ground, one was buried at the Steiner school farm some days later. Together we then prepared a compost pile. All farmers could receive sufficient BD500 manure and compost preparations for their fields. Extensive course material and a course certificate were also handed out.

Introductory course, day 1
There were 29 participants, one of them a female staff member of the Ministry of Agriculture. We discussed the basics of BD agriculture with topics like the planning of crop rotation, green manure, mixed crop, plant disease and pest control, optimising cultivation, agroforestry trees, preparation and practice of composts and plant teas, animal husbandry and animal health, seed quality.

Mortaring quartz pieces

Spreading the neetle preparation

Before spreading the preparation a summary is given about the use of the Biodynamic compost preparations.

A traditional millstone* is most appropriate for pulverization of quartz (*originally used for grinding corn: sorghum and millet)

Introductory course, day 2
After revisions we introduced the participants to the basics of BD farming and the preparation and practice of BD preparations with our focus being on the two spray preparations. In the hands-on section 25 cow horns filled with fresh manure were buried. Nine horns were filled with quartz powder and buried as well. We also demonstrated how to stir BD500. The preparation was spread on David's field.

Introductory course, day 3
Revision concluded we discussed and practiced compost preparations. At this time of year, flowering stinging nettle (Urtica masai) are readily available so we cut and filled them into two clay vessels which were

Back to top

then buried. Finally we looked back at our three-day workshop activities. The participants received written course material and the brochure "Steiner's Impulse for Agriculture ".

Further activities
A vet at the local abattoir had provided us with cow intestines and mesentery. Together with David and three other OACK staff members we filled the intestines with chamomile and the mesentery with dandelion. Seeds of valerian, stinging nettle, chamomile, dandelion and yarrow which we had brought along were sown over prepared ground. Last year we found some badly stored preparations. On our advice David had a new box with good storage conditions built.

Course feedback
All participants gave very positive feedback and requested the continuation of our courses in autumn 2017. All of them took a great interest in learning and implementing BD practices. OACK will monitor their work in the months to come.
Since the start of this project in September 2016 all BD preparations - except yarrow and oak bark - have been prepared by us on site. We are fully aware that European standards as to time and preparation are not met. Our main concern is that OACK staff and small-scale farmers can acquire the know-how of BD preperations. Furthermore, quality standards as to time and preparation in equatorial East Africa may be achieved.

3. Further impulses

3.1 East African Anthroposophical Conference, Mbagathi School, 10th April - 13th April 2017
100 participants attended the conference at the Steiner School. Our workshop was the one with most participants. Our 20 participants came from countries all over the world: Kenya, Madagascar, Uganda, Zanzibar, Tanzania, Denmark and Canada.
We introduced them to BD basics and practiced the preparation of composts, the preparation of horn manure and the burying of horns. After the conference some of our participants could learn the stirring and spreading of BD500 at the school farm. Feedback was very positive. Some participants requested further courses.

3.2 Module for Waldorf Teachers in East Africa, Mbagathi School, 18th April - 22nd April 2017
Two days before our flight to Kenya we were asked whether we could reschedule our teachers training course, i.e. April instead of August. And we did.
Our tuition was given to 16 primary school educators from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Zanzibar who teach third-year pupils at Waldorf schools or schools with a Waldorf impulse. Besides giving them the theoretical know-how of organic and BD gardening and guidelines of how to teach these topics, we also wanted to do some practical work. As many teachers have no knowledge of gardening they do not appreciate gardening activities with their pupils. Nor are they aware of the manifold possibilities of practicing gardening in combination with other subjects, e.g. maths. We intergropped maize with beans, sunflowers and cowpeas, harvested onions and turned composts. All this was done bearing in mind the following activities: measuring, weighing, calculating and closely watching. Later on we all stirred and spread horn manure.
This was our second course for Waldorf teachers on organic and BD gardening. Our tuition was well received with very positive feedback. All participants requested further courses.

Zanzibar
Mussa Ali Mohamed teaches at a Waldorf school on Zanzibar. He was acquainted with BD gardening during our first course for Waldorf teachers in 2014. As there already has been a BD impulse in his home country he has become deeply interested. During this course we could often meet and answer his questions. He participated in the stirring of horn manure and we showed him how to prepare composts. We could provide him with BD compost and the spray preparations as well as seeds of the prep plants for his school garden.

3.3 Rudolf Steiner School Farm, 6th April - 8th May 2017
Eight horns filled with horn manure were lifted, new horns filled with fresh manure and one filled with BD501 were buried. Seeds of valerian, stinging nettle, chamomile, dandelion and yarrow were sown in seed trays and one plot. Within days the seeds we had brought over from Germany germinated, except for the valerian. 16 composts were turned and prepared, horn manure was stirred and spread. We made 504prep and planted new rootstocks of the indigenous Urtica masai.

Back to top

4. Recommendations and new perspectives

Both OACK courses were very successful and supported by the excellent organisation of David Gathuka and his team. In the near future OACK' s most important task concerns the sustained support of small-scale farmers. We are planning additional courses for both groups scheduled for autumn 2017. As to the various preparations we would especially like to teach the CPP preparation. Furthermore, OACK's staff will be offered a one-day intensive workshop about BD farming. In autumn, we will also continue our work at the school farm of Rudolf Steiner Mbagathi School.

5. Acknowledgements

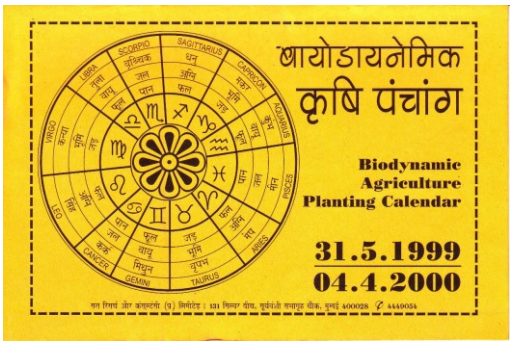
We would like to thank OACK's staff for facilitating both workshops, especially David for his excellent organisation throughout. Our heartfelt thanks go to Dr. Annette Massmann, Zukunftstiftung Entwicklung and Christoph Simpfendörfer and the executive board of Demeter-International. We are deeply grateful not only for their sustained financial support but also for the trust they put in us and our work.

By Anne and Rolf Bucher Karlsruhe, May 20th, 2017
rbucher@t-online.de

Biodynamic calendars

India : Biodynamic Planting Calendar

Peter Proctor conducted the first training on Biodynamic Agriculture in Indore (Central India) in 1993. In 1995, after he conducted a couple of trainings for farmers near Kodaikanal (Southern India), he felt that to take this movement forward in India, there should be a train the trainer program. In 1997 the first of these was conducted under the banner of Kurunji Organic Farm (the company of Jayakaran 'Jakes" Chelladurai) and a strong local environmental group called Palani Hills Conservation Council (PHCC) of which Jakes was the President.



First Calendar published in 1999

Sanjay Doctor attended this training in 1998 and soon after started printing the calendar based on the astrological data provided by Peter Proctor. As this data was from the southern hemisphere, he had to convert it to the Northern Hemisphere manually. He also published this in several regional languages.

After a few years, this task was taken over by the Jai Chaitanya Das, the second President of the Biodynamic Association of India (BDAI) based on the Lahiri's Indian Ephemeris of Planets' Positions (According to the 'Naryana' or Sidereal* System) published by Astro-Research Bureau, Kolkata.

One Page calendar (in Marathi)

This calendar was also published in a one-page format for ease of use of local farmers. Binita Shah's organization, SARG also published this one page calendar in the local language, Marathi for the small landholding farmers.

In 2014 due to the difficulty in getting the ephemeris in time and a human resource crunch, the BDAI asked, one of its senior resource persons, Ravi Koushik to take over this task. He used his background as a software programmer to create a software, in which once the ephemeris data was input the output was a planting calendar based on the latitude and longitude of the location provided. This not only simplified the

Back to top

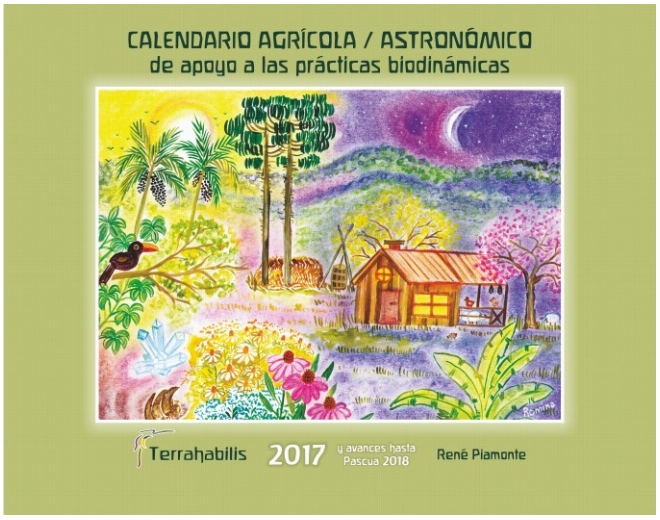
task of making the calendar but also created the possibility of publishing the calendar for multiple geographies across the world.

Last year Ravi also had a breakthrough in getting the astronomical data with the help of Dr. Brijmohan Thakore, from Gujarat, India and Dario Anderle from Trieste, Italy. With this breakthrough we now have the astronomical data for the next many years and can effectively carry out our wish to publish this calendar every year on Peter Proctor's birthday as a small token of gratitude by the Biodynamic Community In India.
This calendar for India is available for free download at http://www.biodynamics.in/pdf/2017/planting-calendar-india-2017.pdf and for some other locations at http://www.organichutbkk.com/resource-gallery.

*Sidereal and tropical are astrological terms used to describe two different definitions of a year. They are also used as terms for two systems of ecliptic coordinates used in astrology. Both divide the ecliptic into a number of "signs" named after constellations, but while the sidereal system defines the signs based on the fixed stars, the tropical system defines it based on the position of vernal equinox in the northern hemisphere (i.e., the intersection of the ecliptic with the celestial equator). Because of the precession of the equinoxes, the two systems do not remain fixed relative to each other but drift apart by about 1.4 arc degrees per century. The tropical system was adopted during the Hellenistic period and remains prevalent in Western astrology. A Sidereal system is used in Hindu astrology, and in some 20th century systems of Western astrology

By Sundeep Kamath
secretary@biodynamics.in

Latin America: Astronomical Calendar in support for Biodynamic Practices



Since 19 years ago, this Calendar has been published continuously up to date. It is based on Maria Thun's Aussaattage and since 2013, on Mattias K. Thun's, introducing the necessary adaptations for the South Hemisphere and time zone of Argentina and Brazil (the source has been always acknowledged as this work has developed as a result of the work of researcher and professor Maria Thun and her team).
Additionally, other accurate astronomic data is used such as NASA (Planetary Systems Laboratory) and Starrynight Program of University of Canada, with the aim to have an accurate astronomy following the indications of Maria Thun in her visit to Brazil, indicating the importance of the astronomic data and not astrologic.
Based on several authors, the text describes astronomic aspects to be taken into account for its interpretation. Also, every year, the calendar pays tribute to an outstanding personality who has contributed for the development of Biodynamic agriculture in Latin America.

The publication is organized in three different ways:

(A) a basic data version, user friendly, showing icons for root, leave, flower and fruit;
(B) an astronomical calendar differentiated by the level of importance of the aspects influencing in plant growing, from left to right: sun position, (seasons), moon phases (ascending/descending moon, perigee/apogee), and sideric moon linking the basic element and the main ephemeris. On top of that, sky observations of the month and planet positions. To establish this hierarchy is very important, as almost all calendars focus on the root/leave/flower/fruit aspect, but this is not the most relevant aspect in plant growing.
(C) the third one is a poster where all the basic aspects are shown together with pictures of Biodynamic practices of the different projects in Latin America. On the back, there is an anthroposophical artistic contribution or the description of a particular Biodynamic preparation.

We do not call it Biodynamic Calendar, as its application is not compulsory in Biodynamic Agriculture as the preparations are, it is a handy tool to facilitate Biodynamic work. This is why it is called Astronomical

Back to top

Calendar in Support of Biodynamic Practices (**Calendario Astronómico de Apoyo a las Prácticas Biodinámicas)**. This impulse of *Terra habilis*, has consolidated with its own identity as a vision from the South, from the Tropic of Capricorn, which has been for years a valuable support for the development of Biodynamic agriculture in the region.

The Calendar is an autonomous economic initiative, it has no institutional support, nor sponsorship from the private sector nor advertising. It is exclusively funded by direct sales payed by users. Two thousand copies are published every year and distributed in several Latin-American countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Bolivia, Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Peru, Paraguay, Uruguay, Puerto Rico, Ecuador y Mexico. Every year, three hundred copies are donated to farmers with no means to pay for it or students.

The Calendar is published from January to Eastern next year, establishing a rhythm from Eastern-to-Eastern, with the aim to elevate consciousness on the importance of this annual rhythm.

By Rene Piamonte
renepiamonte@gmail.com

Back to top

New Zealand: The Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Calendar

In New Zealand the Biodynamic calendar starts in June, because that is the quietest time of the year on farms and gardens. It runs to the following May and it has twelve charts of astronomical events. Lunar movements are covered in detail – the phases, the ascending and descending, the movement through the sidereal zodiac, the eclipses and the crossings of the ecliptic (nodes). Other information includes the movement of the sun and planets through the sidereal zodiac and information about many planetary conjunctions, oppositions, trines and quadratures.

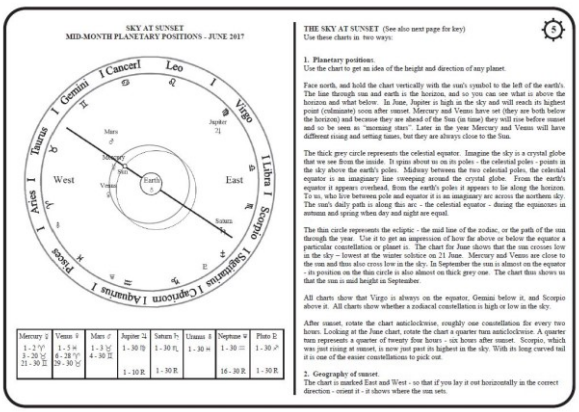
There are several additional sections. There are notes referring to studies of astronomical influences made by people such as Maria Thun, Franz Rulni and Hartmut Spiess. These are offered separately from the astronomy, so that readers are encouraged to use their own judgement, rather than just accept that they should "plant carrots today." Readers are also advised that what works in another place may not work for them because the individuality of farm or garden will be different.

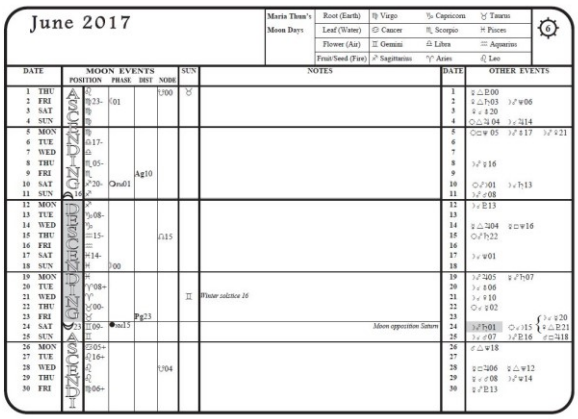
There are extensive notes on geo-centric astronomy, such as about the relationship between daily sky movement and the movement of the planets over successive days; about the various lunar rhythms, and about the movement of the stars during the year, along with suggestions of how to observe some of the movements without instruments. These notes also explain the differences between the astrologer's "sun signs" and the calendar's constellations. The NZ calendar uses the definitions of constellations agreed to internationally in the 1920s and has not adopted more recent revisions because that would make some of the research inaccessible.

Finally, there are a series of "mid-month sky at sunset" diagrams showing where planets and constellations are at sunset on 15th of each month. These are intended to encourage readers to go outside and look at the sky themselves.

The calendar is distributed with a separate wall chart to assist interpretation of the diagrams and symbols, and if sold in shops or to new readers brief notes introducing Biodynamics are included.

It can be purchased from the Biodynamic Association, www.biodynamic.org.nz





By David Wright
info@biodynamic.org.nz

Back to top

Researching Holistic Approaches to Agroecology – Distance learning course

Researching Holistic Approaches to Agroecology is an online distance learning course with optional face-to-face intensives. The course is designed to foster and support research in the practical and social dimensions of agroecology (organics, permaculture, Biodynamics, urban agriculture etc.).
By engaging with aspects of the course through distance learning you are enabled to study at postgraduate level with the option of undertaking further studies in order to obtain a full Master's degree while remaining in your own locale.
Each student's area of research will be different, students follow an individualised learning journey (within the framework of the modular structure) that is accompanied by an assigned member of the core faculty. In addition to this, students are supported to develop their own field mentoring relationships with an outside circle of practitioners who have the relevant specialist expertise. This learning is also brought back into the group through student presentations and seminars. This approach supports farmers, gardeners, food advocates or individuals with an interest in the social dimension of agriculture and food production to become researchers in their own right.
This innovative programme is validated through the Crossfields Institute/Alanus University Partnership and is certified by the Alanus University Institute for Philosophy and Aesthetics in accordance with the UK FHEQ and FQ-EHEA.

For more information please visit the website or contact the course administrator: jane.tyler@crossfieldsinstitute.com, +44 (0) 1453 808 118

.

Section for Agriculture
Ueli Hurter, Jean-Michel Florin, Thomas Lüthi
ph: +41 61706 4212 sektion.landwirtschaft@goetheanum.ch, skype: ueli.hurter, skype: jeanmichelflorin, skype: Thomas.luthi1

International Biodynamic Association
IBDA Ueli Hurter, Therese Jung
ph: +41 61706 4212 office@ibda.ch skype: ueli.hurter

Demeter-International

General Secretary & newsletter
Christoph Simpfendörfer
ph: +49 711 87874398
christoph.simpfendoerfer@demeter.net
skype: christoph.simpfendoerfer

Certification
Cornelia Hauenschild
ph: +45 874269 90
c.hauenschild@demeter.de
skype: hauenschildsingapore

New Projects
Ute Bucholski
ph: +49 6155 8469 99
ute.bucholski@demeter.de
skype: utebucholski

Accreditation Council
Reto Ingold
ph: +41 61 7 03 11 88
reto.ingold@demeter.net
skype: r.ingold

Raw Materials Co-ordinator
Aurelie Truffat
ph: +33 450 357 440
a.truffat@demeter.fr
skype: truffat.demeter

Standards
Ian Henderson
ph +64 4143 712
ian.henderson@demeter.net
skype: hendersonian

International Communication
Anette Jorry
ph: +49 6155 8469 81
anette.jorry@demeter.de
skype: anette.jorry

Office Brussels
Dr. Andreas Biesantz
ph: +32 26 462 117
andreas.biesantz@demeter.net
skype: biesantz

Published by Demeter-International e.V. Editor Christoph Simpfendörfer & Carolyn Heubeck
The next newsletter will be published on 25th of October.2017, editorial deadline will be 11th of October 2017

Back to top