

Applied BIO-DYNAMICS

FALL 1992

A Quarterly Newsletter of the Josephine Porter Institute • Woolwine, Virginia

ISSUE No 1

SO THAT THE EARTH MAY BE HEALED

The Josephine Porter Institute for Applied Bio-Dynamics, Inc.
P.O. Box 133, Woolwine, VA 24185-0133 Tel.: (703) 930-2463

September, 1992

Open Letter from the Board of Directors

Dear Farmer, Market Gardener, and Backyard Gardener,
Effective October 1, 1992, all production and distribution of the Biodynamic preparations, as well as sheath materials for making preparations, will be under the auspices of the Josephine Porter Institute for Applied Bio-Dynamics, Inc. (JPI). Tasks that previously were divided between JPI and Bio-Dynamic Preparations (an agency of the Bio-Dynamic Farming and Gardening Association, Inc. or BDA), will now be handled solely by JPI.

This move, which has been approved by the Board of Directors of both the BDA and JPI, is intended to provide the biodynamic preparations work a more firm financial foundation. This new status of JPI arises from a carefully considered joint initiative and decision between the BDA and JPI. Together we will continue to cooperate closely in an effort to support the BD work.

Sincerely,

JPI Board of Directors

A. Lee McWhorter
A. Lee McWhorter, President

James Marquardt
James Marquardt, Vice President

Candace Coffin
Candace Coffin, Secretary
Hugh Courtney
Hugh Courtney, Treasurer

Producing the biodynamic preparations: officially endorsed
by the Bio-Dynamic Farming and Gardening Association, Inc.

A NEWSLETTER IS BORN

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This issue gives birth to *Applied Bio-Dynamics*, the newsletter of JPI. One of the purposes of the newsletter is to provide a forum for testing our assumptions about the bio-dynamic preparations: "... dogma and stagnation set in the moment we cease to test our assumptions" (Roszell, Calvert. *Near-Death Experiences*, Anthroposophic Press, 1992). In order to fulfill the JPI mission, future issues will offer the reader information on various aspects of bio-dynamic preparations as well as offer a vehicle for going beyond any possible stagnation and dogma so as to grasp anew the truths of the bio-dynamic preparations. Upcoming issues will include columns on:

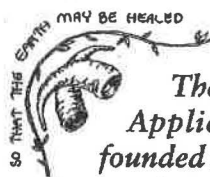
BD PREPS: An opportunity to focus on particular preparations, their properties, the making and application of, etc.

FARMING &

GARDENING: Various contributors will share practical aspects, seasonal tasks, and insights.

AGRICULTURE, BY RUDOLF STEINER:

Aspects of these lectures will be grappled with, relating Steiner's words to our present situations in agriculture.



MISSION

The Josephine Porter Institute for Applied Bio-Dynamics, Inc., was founded to produce quality bio-dynamic agricultural preparations based on the spiritual scientific research of Rudolf Steiner.

It serves as a living memorial to Josephine Porter, a bio-dynamic pioneer for this work in America.

The mission of JPI also includes education and research in bio-dynamic agriculture.

JPI undertakes these tasks so that the Earth may be healed.

NUTRITION: A look at the vitality of foods; indications for health.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS: An advice column on using the preparations; reader's queries, etc.

REPORTS FROM OUR

READERS: This is *YOUR* column. A forum for sharing your experiences with the BD preparations.

BOARD REPORT: The JPI Board of Directors will provide information on the operations of the Josephine Porter Institute.

UPCOMING

EVENTS: This will be devoted to conferences, workshops and lectures that should be of interest to our readers.

THE NEXT ISSUE of *Applied Bio-Dynamics* will be sent to you the end of November.

These first two issues will be complimentary with the hope that you will find them useful and informative, and thus choose to subscribe so that you can receive the four issues of 1993. (See order form enclosed with this newsletter.)

RESEARCH

Research is an important aspect of JPI. To fulfill JPI's research mission, we would like to enlist the help of as many farmers and gardeners who would be willing to undertake a segment of various research projects. Help is needed to examine the following questions:

- *Sequential Spraying* – rain inducer or remarkable coincidence?
- *Varieties of BD #501* and their efficacy with respect to plant organs.
- *Pre-Potentized Horn Manure* (x) 500
 - efficacy in comparison to regular 500?
 - shelf life after stirring beyond 4 hours?

Details on these and other research projects will be forthcoming in future issues of *Applied Bio-Dynamics*, the JPI newsletter.



What better way to let the world know how better composting can happen than to wear our 100% cotton, beefy T-shirt in natural color with a beautifully executed design surrounding the caption in dark green. See the **ORDER FORM** in the enclosed mailer for ordering information. *Only \$12.50 each!*

A JPI PERSPECTIVE ON BIODYNAMICS

Bio-Dynamic agriculture originated out of the spiritual scientific research of the Austrian seer, scientist and philosopher Rudolf Steiner, the founder of Anthroposophy and Waldorf education, among other things. In 1924, when asked by German farmers, soil scientists and veterinarians to elaborate on solutions to a number of problems being experienced in agriculture, Steiner presented a series of eight lectures now published as *Agriculture*. Even as far back as 1924, the use of chemicals in agriculture was causing concern with respect to viability of seeds, deteriorating food quality, and greater difficulties for the health of both livestock and crops. During

this lecture course, Steiner gave indications for producing several different preparations to be used in agriculture which are now referred to as the Bio-Dynamic preparations.

While many people are inclined to assign greater or lesser importance to certain of these preparations, my experience requires advising that you take into consideration *all nine* of the BD "preps" if you really wish to reap the greatest benefits available. Horn manure (BD#500) and horn silica (BD#501) are field sprays, diluted and stirred in water, and relate to earth and light forces respectively. The yarrow (BD#502), chamomile (BD#503), stinging nettle (BD#504), oak bark (BD#505), dandelion (BD#506), and valerian (BD#507) preparations are known as compost "preps" and are applied to compost and manure piles. The horsetail herb/*Equisetum arvense* (BD#508) preparation is sprayed in liquid form and has a regulatory function with respect to fungus and other manifestations of the watery element.

In approaching the agricultural task from the Bio-Dynamic perspective, a new or different way of thinking is required. In our "conventional chemical" or "organic" approach to agriculture, we are conditioned to think in terms of substances (or rather, in terms of chemical requirements that can be met by this or that substance). In chemical agriculture, we bring Nitrogen (N) to the soil via ammonia or urea etc., and in organic agriculture we do so via manure etc. For phosphorus (P) the choice is super-phosphate or rock phosphate etc. Regardless, we are still thinking in terms of chemical substances or, as it might also be phrased, we still think in NPK terms. With Bio-Dynamic agriculture and the preparations, we are asked to think in terms of *forces* rather than *substances*. One need not throw out all knowledge of soil chemistry in order to think in Bio-Dynamic terms. It is simply that we must go beyond that chemical point of view. Just as the effects of the force of gravity or the force of magnetism can be observed without actually being able to *see* these forces, so too we can recognize through their effects the forces which are released through use of the soil enlivening Bio-Dynamic preparations. For instance, the

plant is described by Steiner as a being existing between sun and earth or between the polarities of silica and limestone with clay as the mediating factor. In present day agriculture silica is totally ignored, and almost no recognition is made of the

variables associated with limestone. Please recognize that when Steiner refers to silica or limestone or clay, it is not the substance meant but rather, the cosmic forces that permeate the substances. *Effects* of the cosmic forces can be observed in greater viability of seeds, improved food quality, and healthier livestock and crops.

The entire course of lectures by Steiner contains dozens of new concepts which one should attempt to grasp in order to arrive at "Bio-Dynamic thinking." Although it is by no means an easy book to read and requires re-reading any number of times, one is well rewarded in the effort.

Having recognized that Bio-Dynamic agriculture involves a new way of thinking and the use of certain agricultural preparations, how does one go about practicing the art? Please let me share my own present understanding of the BD preparations or, more specifically, the forces behind these minute portions of substance. In my analyses of the "preps" as they relate to the silica/limestone/ clay idea mentioned above (another person might have a different scheme), I have devised the following scheme of things:

Limestone	Clay (or clay-humus)	Silica
Polarity	Mediating factor	Polarity
Prep BD #500	BD#502-507, (known collectively as a SET of the BD Compost preparations.)	Preps BD#501 BD#508

If we want the enlivening cosmic forces standing behind silica and limestone to work with full effect, the first step is to introduce the mediating forces of the BD Compost preparations to the soil. This is usually done via properly made BD compost using #502-507. Proper composting using the preparations is a key feature of biodynamic agriculture. Another means for applying the Compost Preparations (BD#502-507), particularly when beginning a conversion, is by use of the Barrel Compost (Thun recipe) product containing BD #502-507, which can be applied as a spray. BD made compost itself, however, has the virtue of imparting a more long lasting effect to the soil as far as the forces of #502-507 are concerned then does the Barrel Compost. Once the forces of #502-507 are working in the soil the BD #500 (horn manure) is applied, followed by BD #501 (horn silica) and BD #508 (horsetail herb/*Equisetum arvense*) according to the need. One learns to recognize the "need" by closely observing plant growth. Contrary to the impression one might gain from some media sources currently, one does not necessarily start in biodynamic agriculture with BD#500, nor is one truly encompassing the methodology of Bio-Dynamic agriculture if one only uses the BD Compost Preparations in one of their several available forms.

The preparations must be made with exactitude; following the indications as given by Rudolf Steiner

so that they are able to convey forces to enliven the soil and heal the Earth. The care with which they are made must be followed by equally careful attention to the processes of stirring, spraying, and storing of the preparations by the person intending to put them to use. Various of the preparations



require stirring in a particular way for specific lengths of time. *The stirring is a most important step* and cannot be circumvented if the forces of the preparations are to be transferred to the water and brought to the soil as a spray. Proper equipment to do these tasks should be on hand and ready to go before obtaining large quantities of preparations.

Equally important is the proper storage of the preparations, especially for the farmer with a requirement for significant quantities of the preparations to be applied over a considerable period of time.

Ultimately, the BD farmer should plan to make his or her own preparations so as to regain control over the economic destiny of the farm. Help in educating oneself to make the preparations is available through the BD Farming and Gardening Association at the conferences and workshops; and through the Josephine Porter Institute for Applied Bio-Dynamics, Inc., in Woolwine, Virginia. In the meantime, the Josephine Porter Institute endeavors to maintain an adequate supply of preparations for use of those newly come to BD

agriculture, or otherwise unable to make their own preparations. JPI produces only the quantities of preparations that can be reasonably expected to meet current needs and anticipated increases in BD preparation usage. Needless to say, we must be alerted well in advance by someone intending to use the preparations on a large scale.

One final note on practicing the art of biodynamic agriculture: it does take a commitment, and one really needs to put one's hands to the plow with no looking back. The Earth, a living being, can be healed and our foods can be endowed with spiritual and cosmic forces which are otherwise lacking in foods grown using NPK thinking. The nine BD preparations need to be applied as a totality and should be orchestrated by the farmer or gardener out of an attempt to understand the dynamic forces and influences working into nature out of the cosmos. To motivate one's will to carry through with this work it is recommended that one become knowledgeable on the subject. The enclosed handouts describe briefly a number of publications that aid in acquiring that knowledge.



We welcome those seriously embarking on the path of Bio-Dynamic agriculture and look forward to serving your needs for the Bio-Dynamic agricultural preparations.

SEARCHING FOR AN ECONOMIC REALITY: A SOLUTION



Since the beginning of the Bio-Dynamic movement, the funding for production and distribution of the biodynamic preparations has presented a dilemma. To state that dilemma simply, it is difficult to charge for substances which came into existence through the spiritual insights of Rudolf Steiner. Due to this concern, most producers of the preparations have tended to undercharge with the result that production and promotion have frequently suffered. To provide a foundation to correct this inequity it is useful to take a look at another contribution of Rudolf Steiner's known as the Threefold Social Order. This idea reveals the need for human endeavor to be organized into the three distinct spheres of: legal rights; cultural/spiritual activities; and economics; with each sphere recognized as having a certain independent life to begin with. A germinal form of this idea served in the French Revolution as the rallying cry "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." In terms of the Threefold Social Order, this 18th century phrase means liberty in the spiritual/cultural sphere; equality in the legal rights sphere; and fraternity in the economic sphere. We believe that a diligent effort to apply this to the preparations work will provide a solution to the above dilemma. If the mission of the Josephine Porter Institute for Applied Bio-Dynamics, Inc. were restated within the context of Steiner's Threefold Social Order it might appear approximately as follows:

- 1) Making and, most importantly, using the biodynamic preparations is among the most vital and fundamental cultural (agri-) and spiritual activities (healing the Earth) available to human beings in this age.
- 2) All persons have the right to make and use biodynamic preparations of good quality. JPI attempts to produce such preparations and will not intentionally withhold the possibility of using the preparations from anyone. JPI will endeavor to teach any willing and committed biodynamic practitioners accepted techniques for producing quality preparations.
- 3) Responsible economic activity results from an association of producers, distributors, and consumers of economic goods. In addition, social benefit results when work is done in service to society and when society supports the worker freely. We at JPI will strive to establish the framework for making the biodynamic preparations work a responsible economic activity.

To structure the economic activity of JPI as producer/distributor and its "consumers" along associative lines, we wish to offer an alternative to the usual sales arrangement

heretofore available. This alternative borrows from the economic concepts of Community Supported Agriculture. That is, any biodynamic practitioner may contract to support the yearly work of JPI at an acreage level appropriate to his/her situation or wishes. In return, JPI agrees to furnish the biodynamic preparations needed to bring health to that acreage for the period of the contract, and also furnish a subscription to the JPI newsletter in fulfillment of its part of the contract. *JPI will not enter into such a contract until the biodynamic practitioner is able to give assurance in writing that all biodynamic preparations received will be properly stored.*

As an example, the backyard gardener contracts to support the work of JPI at the level of one acre or less and assures JPI in the contract that the preparations will be stored properly. For the contract fee of \$60 per year, payable by January 31st, JPI will furnish a subscription to the newsletter and the biodynamic preparations in two shipments as follows:

SPRING

- One set BD Compost Preparations (#502-507)
- One unit each of BD#500, BD#508, Barrel Compost (Thun recipe)
- Two units each of BD#501.

FALL

- One set BD Compost Preparations (#502-507)
- One unit each of BD#500 and Barrel Compost.

Other preparations required by the BD practitioner during the year to ensure the health of the contracted acreage will be furnished without additional charge, other than the shipping and handling fee. JPI will also customize the *Spring* and *Fall* shipments to meet the specific needs of the individual BD practitioner.

It is hoped that the practitioner will provide research data on various projects for compilation and eventual newsletter publication by JPI. Periodically, JPI will provide new products for those interested in research on such new materials, with no charge other than a shipping and handling fee.

A market gardener contracting to support the work of JPI at a level of 5 acres could expect to subscribe at a cost of \$120 per year for the newsletter and five times the single acre preparation requirements, or in accordance with customized requirements of the garden.

A farmer contracting at large acreages should contact JPI for subscription quotes.

For those persons not currently gardening or farming but wishing to support the work of JPI, we suggest that you contribute at a level of at least one acre, which will enable JPI to support work done in domestic and overseas situations where the financial status of the farmer or gardener does not permit purchase of preparations in the amounts required by the farm or garden. Individuals may also subscribe at an acreage level above the requirements of their situation. In such cases, shipping level can be indicated at a smaller rate than the subscription level.

It should be clear that anyone is free to purchase preparations in the usual way at the price indicated (see order form) and, as well, may subscribe to our newsletter independently of any contract or associative agreement.

Although, under Virginia non-profit corporate law, JPI is not a membership organization, those persons contracting to support the work of JPI will be regarded as honorary, non-voting, board members whose input will be warmly welcomed.

Please note that this associative contract (or CSA) concept gives JPI the necessary financial support while at the same time fostering a wider exchange of knowledge and information regarding techniques of producing the preparations. The contract enables growers to determine their preparations needs well in advance of the season and count on timely delivery. Also, unexpected preparations needs can be met with very little extra cost.

MICHAELMAS

It seems fitting that this first issue of *Applied Bio-Dynamics* is published during the Michaelmas season, celebrated on September 29th. A time when the pace of the shortening of the day's sunlight slows and the farmer/gardener must grow in courage and patience. The Earth begins to breathe in and we look toward the Archangel Michael, the light bearer, who has the qualities of the sun.

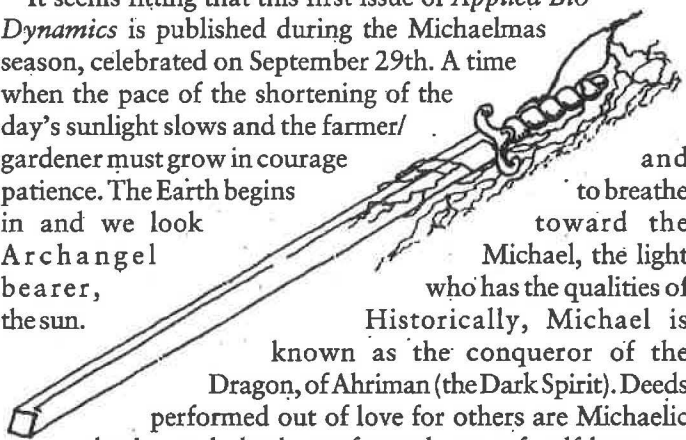
Historically, Michael is known as the conqueror of the Dragon, of Ahriman (the Dark Spirit). Deeds performed out of love for others are Michaelic deeds, and deeds performed out of self-love are Ahrimanic.

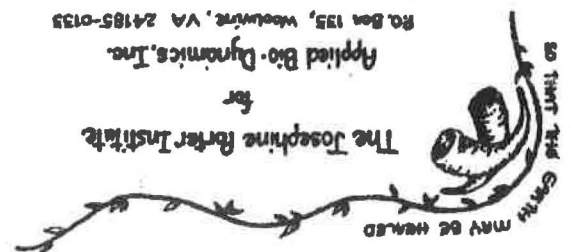
In Rudolf Steiner's lecture, entitled *Youth's Search In Nature* (Mercury Press, 1984), given on June 17, 1924, in Koberwitz, to the young people who attended the *Agriculture* course, the sword of Michael is to be carried out into the world, and it must be carried to an altar that lies beneath the earth.

Is it not possible that our love for others might come about in healing the Earth, using the bio-dynamic preparations to bring the enlivening cosmic forces into the soil.

"And when love for Michael, who remains ever true to cosmic intelligence, is present, then love of the world is cultivated. It becomes possible to love without self-love; and upon this path Christ can be found by the human soul." (Steiner, Rudolf. *Truthwrought-Words*. Anthroposophic Press, Spring Valley, New York, 1979, p.196.)

We are called to carry Michael's sword into the world so that the Earth may be healed, and thereby we are healed too.





“The most important thing to make the benefits of our agricultural preparations available to the largest possible areas over the entire earth, so that the earth may be healed and the nutritive quality of its produce improved in every respect. . . .”

...“This is a problem of nutrition. Nutrition as it is to-day does not supply the strength necessary for manifesting the spirit in physical life. A bridge can no longer be built from thinking to will and action. Food plants no longer contain the forces people need for this.”

— Rudolf Steiner in *Agriculture*, 1924