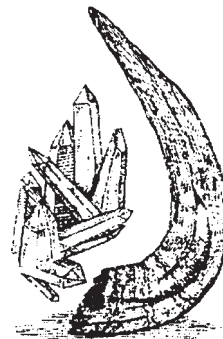


Applied BIODYNAMICS®



Summer, 2006

Newsletter of the Josephine Porter Institute • Woolwine, Virginia

Issue No. 53

An Interview with Peter Proctor

Conducted by Hunter Francis at Marian Farms, Fresno, California, on July 4, 2006

*Peter Proctor shared his views on successes and challenges of biodynamics as a world movement during his recent visit to the United States. As a farmer, consultant, educator and author of *Grasp the Nettle* and *Biodynamics: New Directions for Farming and Gardening in New Zealand*, Peter has been one of the driving forces behind biodynamic agriculture in New Zealand, and now, India. Particular attention was given to Peter's extensive experience with the biodynamic preparations.*

Peter Proctor has "horticulture in his blood" and credits his mother, an avid gardener and rose enthusiast, as his first mentor in agriculture. One of his earliest memories is watching her apply liquid cow manure on her rose bushes. Since young adulthood, Peter has led a life of service in the field of agriculture. At eighteen years of age in 1948, Peter received employment at Wellington Botanical Gardens in New Zealand, where his first job was making compost for use in the gardens. At 21, he entered the Massey Agricultural College in Palmerston North where he completed a two-year diploma course. For many years thereafter, Peter worked at grounds keeping. He then ran a business as a landscape gardener while managing his own nursery. During that time, he became interested in the writings of Rudolf Steiner. In 1965, he relocated his family to Hastings, New Zealand to make it possible for his children to attend a local Waldorf school. There, he took a job as farm manager at Hohepa Farm, an Anthroposophic residential community for disabled children and adults. At the time, Peter had little experience in milking cows, raising livestock or growing vegetable crops. With the help of a lively biodynamic community at Hohepa, he learned how to make and apply the biodynamic preparations along with his friends. Over the next 20 years, Hohepa

was the base from which he expanded and shared his knowledge of biodynamics. From 1975 until 1993, Peter served as Advisor for the Biodynamic Association of New Zealand.



Peter Proctor

Peter underwent a life-changing transformation after a tractor accident in 1985. A mower he was working with 'whizzed up a stone', leaving him blind in the right eye and forcing him to resign his managerial post at Hohepa. After recuperating, Peter expanded his consulting and teaching roles. In the late '80s, with the support of the Biodynamic Association, he initiated a seven month training course in biodynamic agriculture in Taruna, New Zealand.¹ This educational endeavor occupied Peter until 1997.

Besides his teaching commitment in Taruna, another educational opportunity came about in 1993. After many invitations, Peter accepted an offer to teach a training course in India. Originally reluctant to expand his teaching into the Subcontinent, Peter found fertile ground in the receptivity of the Indian people to the principles and practices comprised in biodynamics. Projects in India now occupy the bulk of Peter's time as a consultant and teacher.

Hunter Francis: *Peter, you mention that your experience at Hohepa was instrumental in your education in applied biodynamics given the supportive learning environment there. How did your role as a consultant outside of that community come about?*

Peter Proctor: The farm was relatively open to the public
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Notes

From the Executive Director

For quite some years, ever since Issue #29/30, I have been able to rely on the editing skills of Patricia Smith in the publishing of the JPI newsletter *Applied Biodynamics*. Because of health reasons Patricia has had to step back from her role as editor and her services will be sorely missed. Since I am myself having to deal with health issues within my own family, the transition to the next phase for producing the newsletter has been particularly difficult. Fortunately, we are still able to call upon Patricia's expertise in advising us along the way. For this fact, I am particularly grateful to her.

In an effort to determine the direction for the newsletter, which may even have required an abrupt cessation of publication, we were fortunate to have brought to our awareness two people who have been invited to serve as guest editors for the next two issues of *Applied Biodynamics*. For this issue, I must express appreciation to Gena Nonini, JPI's Board President, who was able to persuade Hunter Francis to try his hand at the editorship. His note of introduction appears elsewhere in the newsletter. Someone immersed in mainstream agricultural education with its heavy reliance on the scientific world view, as Hunter Francis is, has a difficult task in explaining biodynamics to his colleagues. While JPI and *Applied Biodynamics* have always attempted

to put forward the spiritual side of biodynamics, it is well to remember that Rudolf Steiner labeled his work as "spiritual science." Perhaps the current task is to educate the scientific agricultural community that biodynamics is science as well as spirit.

Of course, the solution to the dilemma can be found by having people eat biodynamically grown and thus spiritually endowed food. In any case, I am most pleased to welcome him as editor for this issue. Our next issue will give us the opportunity to invite Kara Le Beau to serve as a guest editor. Since Kara is here on the East Coast and Hunter is on the West Coast, I am currently entertaining the possibility of having them continue in an editorial role of some kind so as to represent opposite sides of the country. As we continue the "shakedown cruise" for this new phase for the newsletter, we hope that you will be patient with our struggles.

Greetings from Your Guest Editor

I'd like to start by saying how much I appreciate the opportunity Hugh Courtney has given me to serve as guest editor for this issue of *Applied Biodynamics*. My name is Hunter Francis and I am writing from California, where I live in San Luis Obispo on the Central Coast. Though an informal (yet avid) student of the writings of Rudolf Steiner

Applied Biodynamics

Applied Biodynamics is a quarterly publication of the Josephine Porter Institute for Applied Bio-Dynamics Inc. (JPI). The subscription price of \$30.00 per year helps support JPI research and development. Back issues are \$7.50 each.

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Layout by Bruce Bumbarger

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Mission



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

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

The mission of JPI also includes education and research in biodynamic agriculture. JPI undertakes these tasks so that the earth may be healed.

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for over a decade, I am relatively new to the practice of biodynamics. This is partly because there is virtually no biodynamic farming occurring in my region on any significant scale. It is my hope that by serving as an outpost for JPI in California I may help to change that.

I received my Master of Agriculture degree from Cal Poly with a specialization in Soil Science in 2005. Outside of gardening, my experience with agriculture has come largely through my work as the founder and coordinator of a program for sustainable agriculture at Cal Poly State University, home of one of the nation's largest undergraduate agricultural colleges. Through this program, founded in 2000, I have helped to initiate numerous courses, workshops and seminars in the field of sustainable agriculture, particularly certified organic agriculture. Additionally, our initiative at Cal Poly has helped to support the growth of an existing organic farm on campus, which was originally only two acres in size, but is now over ten acres and the site of a 250-member CSA program and a class for organic crop production offered each term. With the help of visiting biodynamic farmers, we have conducted several workshops for biodynamic agriculture, specifically, teaching the preparation and use of BD#500 and Barrel Compost. The Organic Farm at Cal Poly, however, is not biodynamic.

As a novice who is interested in sociology, spirituality and trends in science, one of the things that has fascinated me in my work at a reputable (and quite 'conventional') institution for the advancement of 'agricultural science' has been observing the attitudes of my peers as we have sought to implement new programs in the realm of sustainability and organics. While many of my colleagues are interested in the practical tools being promoted through the sustainable agriculture movement, particularly through organic agriculture, they are leery of the deeper issues such as the

social and the spiritual. This makes the discussion of biodynamics a delicate matter.

I have come to the conclusion that there is little room for professional discourse about the spiritual in our modern scientific establishment. Given the influence science exerts on our daily lives, this is tragic. I console myself with the fact that there is an element to this reticence of the scientific community which is understandable and even healthy. We needn't search far back into history to recall instances of the scientifically-inclined being persecuted. Clearly, we owe much to science in helping us to overcome outmoded religious obsessions. It has created a universal language accessible to all who seek knowledge. I am, therefore, an ardent proponent of scientific rigor, particularly when it helps us to ferret out the 'junk' science which is rampant today. Nonetheless, from an Anthroposophic point of view, I see that new perspectives, which include (but transcend) the scientific are urgently needed. The world view behind biodynamics offers an understanding of the forces at play in agriculture that is unique among the movements in sustainable agriculture. Therefore, biodynamics has an important role to play in helping people evolve to a new level of awareness.

As Steiner indicated nearly a century ago, our 'descent into matter' is coming to a dead end. Until we are able to lift our gaze again to the cosmos and reconnect spirit to our earthly endeavors, there will be little hope of effectively coming to terms with the daunting challenges we face. And, in my opinion, there will be little hope of effectively promulgating biodynamics (or any of the other spiritual, intuitive and/or truly holistic arts for that matter). The culture in which agriculture is embedded must itself be transformed and be made more receptive to 'saner' (Latin: 'healthier') ways of growing, eating and communing around food.

On a practical level, I love to eat biodynamic food, and I'm not finding it in my local stores! Thanks for the good work of organizations like JPI that it exists at all. I hope I may play a role in carrying this work further.

—Hunter Francis

Biodynamic Preparations Legend

BD #500 – Horn Manure

BD #501 – Horn Silica

BD #502 – Yarrow

BD #503 – Chamomile

BD #504 – Stinging Nettle

BD #505 – Oak Bark

BD #506 – Dandelion

BD #507 – Valerian

Compost
Preparations

BD #508 – Horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*)

Don't Forget to Place Your Order for Three Kings Preparation

It is not too early to place your order for the Hugo Erbe Three Kings Preparation. All orders received will be shipped between November 15 and December 15. Cost for each Three Kings Preparation kit is \$20.00 plus \$9.50 shipping and handling.

An Interview with Peter Proctor (continued from page 1)

and, by the mid-seventies, people around the farm began to notice a difference in the quality of the milk. I milked cows for twenty years! Also the quality of the vegetables, the taste of the fruit and so on. People became curious about our production practices. One of the people who really appreciated the quality of the apples was an old dairy farmer who said, "Well, if you can grow apples as sweet as this, I can grow grass that my cows will find just as tasty, and they will love that. Would you come and show me what you're doing?" So, I went up to see him, and he became the first commercial farm I consulted. He had one hundred head of cattle at the time and he found the BD#500 prep made a huge difference to his land. Nothing pleased him more than to have a group of farmers visit so he could show them the effect the preparations made in his soil – the soil structure, the water holding capacity, the earthworms, and the good grass, etc.! He had been farming that land for sixty years and he told everyone about the results of using the preps. This had a big effect in stimulating people's interest.

HF: *So you spent the next ten years expanding your consulting business?*

PP: Yes, particularly after the accident in which I lost my right eye. That effectively changed my whole destiny. Because of this, I was forced to pass on the management of Hohenepa Farm to someone else, and this gave me the opportunity to increase the amount of consultancy I did. I also started to do more teaching at this time. I helped start a diploma course in biodynamic agriculture at Taruna. It continues to this day primarily as a distance learning course, although I personally withdrew from it as my work in India expanded in the late '90s.

HF: *What exactly are you doing in India now?*

PP: We have several projects that I go back and forth between. Many have received support from our Biodynamic Outreach of New Zealand. The first, which is still an important center of activity, is located at an old British hill station at

about six thousand feet called Kodaikanal in the state of Tamil Nadu (see map on following page). There is a nursery there run by C. Jeyakaran of Kurinji Farms where all of the prep plants are grown and used. People are taught how to make the biodynamic preparations with the plants. This knowledge is disseminated throughout India by our students, particularly in the South. Jeyakaran grows and dries Demeter quality mangoes.

Among other projects, we have been working closely with one of our graduates (Jai Chaitanya Das, a Hare Krishna devotee) who is establishing an educational center near Mysore on three hundred acres. This land was originally in an excessively degraded condition, but within a short time has been turned into very fertile soil through the use of the preparations. We have been showing them how to do biodynamics and sell their products. A variety of tropical produce is grown on the land, including bananas, coconuts, and some twenty thousand vanilla plants. Jai Chaitanya is in association with some five hundred farmers nearby who are also growing vanilla, and together they produce thirty percent of the vanilla exported from India. Jai's goal is to establish a training academy that will hopefully train people from all over the world. The focus will be on the applied biodynamics. Principles will be taught, of course, but the instruction will be highly practical.

Another colleague, Bnita Shah, is growing the plants and making the preparations of very good quality at Nainital, in the foothills of the Himalayas. These preparations are used in the mountain states and also in other northern states. In Gujarat, Savadaman Patel has been running a wonderful, diversified farm of forty acres biodynamically since attending our course in 2000. His farm offers a great example for people wishing to convert their farms to biodynamics. We hold regular seminars there.

We have also been working with the Biore Cotton Project (with Rajeev Baruah), which grows biodynamic cotton



Lifting cow horns at Nainital, 10,000 filled annually



Actinomycetes in cow horns after emptying



Yarrow preparation immediately after digging up

in conjunction with many village farmers. This cotton is spun in India, sent to Switzerland, made into quality clothes and sold giving the Indian farmer a true price for the cotton.

HF: *What have been the key formal educational initiatives to date?*

PP: In 1997, we started a program at Kodaikanal to train agricultural graduates into the way of biodynamic agriculture with the help of C. Jeyakaran, a great supporter for this program. Students are already educated in agriculture before coming, and they have to speak English. They come from all over the country, so the group of students is quite diverse. Students come to learn and then take the information back to their villages. We are running two of these courses a year. Initially, they were about eight weeks long, now they're just one week. This has been a wonderful program, and is really what got biodynamics going in the country. The formation of the 'Kodai course' was actually the turning point. Its popularity among students has created opportunities for us to teach in other areas at the invitation of our graduates. Also, one of our early students went on to do Ph.D. studies in biodynamics and has become a consultant. This has helped give recognition to the ideas.

HF: *Would you say the people in India overall have been receptive to biodynamics (in comparison to other countries)?*

PP: Most definitely. The people there have a predisposition to things of a spiritual nature. On top of that, they are connected to the earth. Of course, they use tractors and other machines, but there is still a lot of manual labor – shovel work, mixing and spraying by hand and so forth. Also, they are interested in cosmic influences. My partner, Rachel, who co-teaches with me, is versed in naked-eye astronomy and has a particular interest in the planting calendar. Our students are always eager to explore these fields. India is now one of the most active centers in terms of people coming into biodynamics and I like to think the Indians will play a big role in furthering biodynamics worldwide.

HF: *What are the next steps?*



Map of India, with locations mentioned in text included

PP: Together with the Biodynamic Association of India, we will be having another Kodai course in September, and we will be working closely with Jai Chaitanya to establish the training institute in Mysore as well as with others to develop training programs in Gujarat and a cotton project in Madhya Pradesh. We are putting together a financial strategy to make sure these projects are supported into the future.

HF: *In general, what are your recommendations for farmers (conventional or organic) who wish to transition to BD?*

PP: The main thing is to apply the preparations. And, develop good systems on how to apply them, which means you have to have good stirring facilities, mixing facilities and



Biodynamic farm in Mysore



Terrace farming in the hills – 150 BD potato and vegetable farmers near Nainital



Flowform

so on. It's really a matter of doing it straight away. Don't think about it . . . just do it! Beyond that, you have to get off the herbicides.

HF: *Cold turkey?*

PP: Well, I would say you don't necessarily have to throw out the fungicides immediately, but definitely the other pesticides and the hard chemical fertilizers. Discontinue those right away because they will kill all of your bacteria. If you have to use fertilizer, use rock dusts. If you must use fungicide, look for the most benign product you can find; use things like sulfur or copper. No synthetics. Realize that we are striving to get a nutrient balance in the soil. This is what will ultimately solve the need for biocides. At the same time, start making as much compost as you can. Compost, compost, compost!

HF: *In terms of nutrient balances, why is the relation between calcium and silica so important?*

PP: As Rudolf Steiner points out, the processes of calcium bring in the form of the plant. It's a bit like a baby during gestation. The formation of the head (skeletal structure) is the beginning of the calcium process. So, likewise, if you have a seed germinating, it's a calcium process. But what gives it substance? You have formative processes, but what contains them? What gives the organism a boundary? That's where the silica comes in. You get the form from the calcium, and the strength from the silica. One of the interesting things Steiner talked about is the planets closest to the sun (Mercury, Venus and the moon), they bring in the forces of calcium. The distant planets (Mars, Jupiter and Saturn) bring in the forces of silica. You have to try to achieve those planetary balances if you can. As far as the preps, the 500 [horn manure/winter] brings in the calcium processes and the 501 [horn silica/summer] brings in the forces of silica. The goal is to get those two processes working together. When this happens, you get strength. Another wonderful time is when you have the moon rising and Saturn setting at the same time (moon in opposition to Saturn), or vice versa. When the two planets are in equilibrium at 180 degrees, you have an equal balance of the calcium processes and the silica processes. Those energies go into your soil, so when you sow your seed at that time, you are starting off with a balanced plant. You are getting equal amounts of calcium and silica coming into the plant and you get balance.

HF: *Is the 'Moon/Saturn opposition' phenomenon something Steiner talked about?*

PP: Not directly. I picked up the idea first from a book written in the '40s by Franz Rulni, an early Swiss biodynamic farmer. He must have gotten it from Steiner's book. He also explained about the ascending and descending movements

of the moon impacting the leaf and roots respectively. For example, transplanting should be done and cuttings should be taken during the descending period, as this encourages the development of new roots. These movements should be taken into account when working with the preps. Normally, application of BD#500 happens during a descending period. We have had good success using the Moon/Saturn opposition time for planting, cultivating and for sequential application of the major preps with BD#500 and Barrel Compost being applied the day before the opposition, and BD#501 being sprayed the day of – but only in the morning so as to avoid burning the crops.

HF: *Some biodynamic practitioners maintain insufficient attention is being paid to the quality of the preparations, thus weakening their effect. Do you share this concern?*

PP: Yes, I would agree with that. But, on the other hand, some people are making excellent preparations. In India, the preparations made are equal to or better than any other in the world. They are making some of the best BD#500 I've seen. They hardly ever have a failure. Brilliant! We need to help those who are not doing so well to improve. This comes with education.

HF: *How do you ascertain quality? How can you tell a good prep?*

PP: Judgment comes with experience and it also comes with observing the results of applying the preps. In India, we have a colleague who is growing a superior coffee called Nandanvan Royal, which has won international coffee competitions for five years in a row. And this from a rundown, forty-acre coffee garden originally infested with leaf rust that they rescued with biodynamics! That garden was managed by David Hogg, who is now the Secretary of the Biodynamic Association in India. When you are getting that level of quality, you know you are doing something right. I have often said, in learning how to use the preps, you learn how to make the preps. Qualitatively, experience sharpens your discernment. Smell is important. Horn manure should hold together well when removed, and should be covered with white fungal matter, indicating *actinomyces* activity. In general, when you dig up preps, they should have a nice 'life' about them. It should be clear they have undergone a transformation – individual qualities of some of the ingredients may still be apparent, but nonetheless they have changed. Remember, you don't 'make' preps, you 'grow' preps.

HF: *When transitioning to BD, is it necessary to start with preps that have been placed in soil already under biodynamic management and made with biodynamically-grown ingredients?*

PP: Yes, that's a good point. During the first year of transition, you should get your preps from a reliable source such as from JPI or local members. This enables you to begin

improving your own soil straight away. And then, during the second year, you can make them on your own land and with your own biodynamic ingredients. That's what I'd recommend. It's also important to pay attention to the quality of the ingredients you use. For example, manure for BD#500 should come from cows raised on BD forage and who are lactating (to bring in the calcium process). Furthermore, the cows should be fed on the best pasture possible two to three days before you collect the dung. It takes about two days for the food to pass through. The night before, or on the morning of collection, put the cows in a separate paddock and collect the dung from there. It should not be too sloppy or too firm. The better the dung, the better the prep. Water quality is also an issue in making sprays. You have polluted much of your water, as we have in New Zealand. When making sprays, it is important to use water which has not been contaminated.

HF: *Do you conduct any uses or applications of the preps outside of the orthodox?*

PP: I would point to our use of CPP (cowpat pit) prep – or rather the intensity with which we use the CPP (every month or even every two weeks – stirred less time, as little as fifteen minutes).² This type of Barrel Compost can stimulate the microlife of the soil quickly and helps with fungal control. It is also important to us in India, where there is need for great quantities of prep and the cost of the compost preparations can be prohibitive for small farmers. For example, we often use liquid made from CPP to inoculate compost piles rather than inserting the compost preps directly into the piles. This is an efficient way of getting the effects of the preparations over a large area, and is important to those making large quantities of compost with limited resources. One of our Indian friends, after receiving training over the years, initiated the making of ten thousand compost heaps on over five thousand acres with the

help of the community in Maharashtra. Next year, they intend to make one hundred thousand piles! With one CPP, you can inoculate twenty compost heaps (at forty gallons of spray per heap – one bucket per layer until the pile is a meter high). This may not be ideal, but it seems to transfer the energies of the preps and I've seen it work well. The 500 and the 501 preparations, on the other hand, are always made as recommended and not diluted down in any way.

HF: *Given its eighty-plus year history, why has biodynamics as a world movement not been able to impact global commercial-scale agriculture to a significant degree?*

PP: Why?! [Laughs] This is a question we ask ourselves all the time. What amazes me is that even with large successes such as we've had in New Zealand, it has not been enough to attract most peoples' interest. I think of the case of one of our sheep and cattle ranchers who has been religiously applying preparation over two thousand acres for fifteen years using aircraft and flowforms to stir the preps. He's never short of grass, he has good production and his animal health is excellent. The neighboring farmers have recurrent difficulty with fly strike and facial eczema on their livestock. He has no problem, and yet no one comes to ask him how he is doing it. Not one person! On the South Island, there is a wheat farmer fetching \$800/ton for his biodynamic wheat, when the going rate is \$150 to \$200/ton. It makes wonderful flour and lovely bread. It's working; he's making money at it, but nobody comes and asks him. The answers are there. Why don't others want to see? I don't know what it is.

HF: *How can we improve this situation?*

PP: Essentially, we have to get people to look at it in as many ways as possible. Consider the quality of the food. Steiner was so adamant that we have to improve the quality of the food before people can think properly. Hopefully, the people of India will make an impact on the world. I really feel this could be the case; they are taking to biodynamics so easily.



View of cowpat pits (above) and placing preparations (right)



Chamomile 'sausages' after lifting

Our experience is that it jumps from person to person to person. In India, just a few key people coming to our workshops have been remarkably successful in spreading the knowledge. Research can also help. Dr. Perumal, a colleague, has been studying the microbiological effect of the preps in the cowpat pit and is helping to explain how they impact fungal activity, for instance.

HF: *I understand one of the ways you will be spreading the word is through a documentary that was recently made highlighting your work.*

PP: That's right. The name of the video is *How to Save the World – Way Beyond Organics*. It was produced and directed by Thomas and Barbara Burstyn and is narrated by Peter Coyote. It will be released later this year.³

HF: *Do you think more people will look to biodynamics if they get disillusioned with organic agriculture (i.e., in its ability to maintain food quality, protect soils, etc.)? What do you think about the upsurge in interest among winegrowers?*

PP: That could be. In the case of wine, the thing that is driving the interest in biodynamics is the quality of the wine – the taste. People know the taste comes from using the BD preparations. So far, the food industry hasn't yet significantly translated this relationship to improving the taste of, say, a potato, or sweet corn or an apple, but the taste is there. So, we welcome this interest from the wine industry as it will popularize the concept of biodynamics. The same thing is happening in New Zealand to a smaller degree – certainly among the better winegrowers.

HF: *It seems as though the understanding is bound to spread.*

PP: Undoubtedly . . . it's got to. But what's going to drive it is the consumer. It's not going to be the farmer. It's only when the farmer can get more money for his product that the increase will be driven. We have been amazed in traveling around the Western U.S. at the availability of organic produce. But what is 'organic'? It may just be a substitution of production materials. It doesn't necessarily reflect a policy of bringing life into the soil. The preparations are what bring life into the soil. What we need to do is make sure the organic methods are good organics, not just a substitute for the chemicals.

HF: *Why is it difficult to get the large scale farmers involved?*

PP: What we are noticing here in California is that it's mostly the gardening people who are interested in biodynamics. And the winegrowers. In traveling to Fresno, we passed huge dairies. Dairy 'factories' is really what they are. It's not farming. As a dairy farmer at heart, it makes me shudder. The big question is what goodness is that milk going to bring to people? It can't; the proper forces aren't there. And there is no way you are going to change that situation until you get back to small units again. I don't know if that will ever happen. Again, it comes back to the consumer. Maybe

new marketing will help pressure the situation – asking the consumer, "Are you satisfied with the quality of your food?" You can also talk about the problem of obesity in this country. I have been blown away by the number of obese people we have seen traveling here, even the children. It's astonishing and it must have something to do with the food, with the carbohydrates in particular. It's empty food. There is no energy in it. In other words, the etheric formative forces coming in from the plants are weak, so people aren't satisfied and they eat more. So, you start with the consumer, but eventually you have to get everyone involved – the health department, the doctors, the school teachers . . . everyone has to learn what good food is.

HF: *Are we farther behind in the industrialized Western nations in our ability to recognize 'good food'?*

PP: I'd say so. Of course, you are farther ahead in terms of the mechanization of production, but not in quality. In India, there is a lot less processing. You purchase the raw ingredients at the market. A cook there may take the whole day preparing the evening meal because it's considered important. They take pride in the cooking and they put some of themselves into it; it's a real life process. Here, you can go into the supermarket and take an entirely prepared meal off the shelf. There is no human energy in it.

HF: *What signs of hope do you see? Other positive developments?*

PP: In traveling, what have been wonderful are the young people – people that smile, have a direct interest and ask questions: "How can I do this?" I have met quite a few youth who hold promise. Not particularly landowners, but people who consider themselves citizens of the world and want to do something to keep it good. And, of course, my work in India gives me hope.

HF: *Do you have any final thoughts?*

PP: When you are doing biodynamic agriculture, it's truly a love you have for the environment, for the powers of growth, if you like. You feel a very strong warmth of feeling in your heart. It's not an intellectual love; it's a heart, human warmth. Once you start using the preparations regularly (on any property in the world), you start to notice a nice ambience or feeling to the place. It has to do with helping the elemental beings. When you bring that human warmth to those beings, they will help you very much in your agricultural activities. You are helping them to do what they need to do to help human beings. You bring a loving warmth into your land and this is what helps the elementals and the animal life in the soil. And they will help you when you need them. In working with the biodynamics, you become a creator; we take on the work of the angels. It's important work.

HF: *Thank you, Peter.*

Notes

- 1) See <http://taruna.ac.nz/courses/organics_and_biodynamics>
- 2) The cowpat pit preparation that Peter uses is a type of barrel compost and is an excellent way of benefiting quickly from the effect of the compost preparations. It is prepared by making a shallow pit in the ground (approximately 2 foot by 3 foot and up to one foot deep). Line the sides (not the bottom) with untreated wood and fill the pit with firm cow manure, ideally harvested as you would manure for the BD#500 prep. Into this pit of cow manure, put five sets of preparations 502–507, pressing the solid preparations a thumb-depth into the manure at about 6-inch spaces. The valerian is stirred separately in a little water and poured over the pit. Cover with two burlap-type sacks for aeration and then a corrugated iron or wooden lid to prevent excess moisture from entering. In about four weeks, the material will have broken down into a compost-like material that can be stirred with preparation 500 and applied over the whole farm. [Note: Barrel Compost (BC), also known as Biodynamic Compound Preparation, made here in the US is made according to the original recipe of Maria Thun and in brick-lined pits containing significantly more cow manure and a lower ratio of compost preparations. It generally takes significantly more time before it is ready – up to four months.]
- 3) You may pre-order a copy of the film, *How to Save the World – Way beyond Organics* from Cloud South Ltd. by emailing your request to: <howtosavetheworld@gmail.com>, or by contacting JPI.

Fall 2006 Preparation Making Workshop

JPI's Fall Preparation Making Workshop is scheduled from Thursday, October 19 through Sunday, October 22.

Our hands-on preparation making will concentrate on making, using and the application of: BD#500 Horn Manure, BD#502 Yarrow, BD#503 Chamomile, BD#505 Oak Bark, and BD#506 Dandelion. Time permitting, we will also make some BC (Biodynamic Compound Preparation, aka Barrel Compost). Harvesting of the sheaths will take place on Thursday morning.

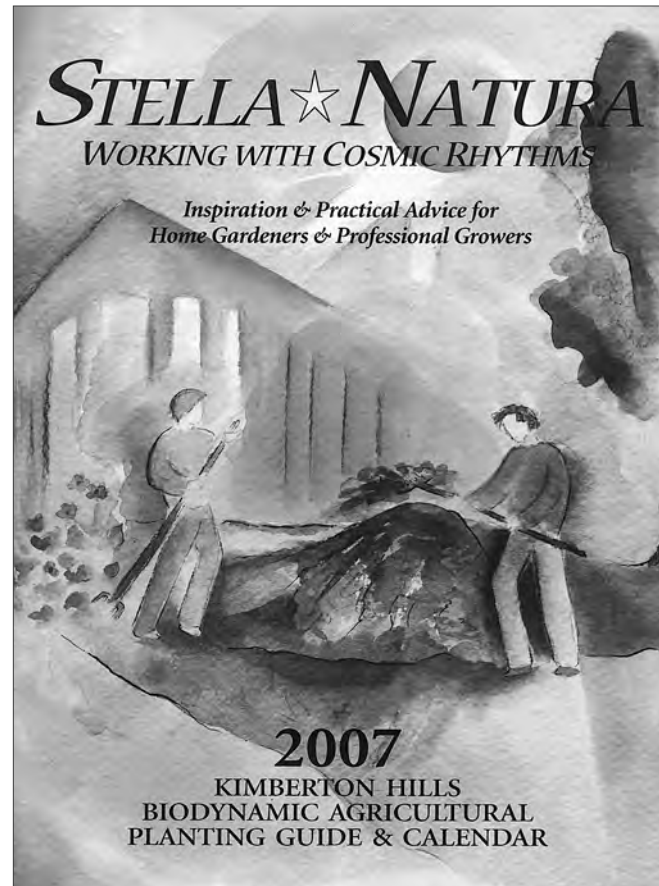
Cost for the weekend is \$500. Includes breakfast bar, sit-down lunch and dinner for all four days. Deposit for the workshop is \$100.00 and is non-refundable. Attendance at a previous workshop entitles you to a \$100.00 discount. Applications received by October 1 will receive an additional \$25.00 discount.

For further information, contact the Josephine Porter

Institute for Applied Biodynamics, PO Box 133, Woolwine VA 24185; (276)930-2463; fax: (276)930-2475; e-mail: <info@jpibiodynamics.org>.

Stella Natura 2007 Now Available

The theme for this year's *Stella Natura* is "Biodynamics in Context", with monthly articles which focus on "the relation of biodynamics to other healthy approaches to agriculture." Available from JPI for \$14.95 plus \$5.50 postage and handling.



“We can attain the greatest perfection in the description of disease, we can know precisely what happens in the organism in terms of modern physiology or physiological chemistry; and yet we may still not be able to heal the disease at all. In healing we must proceed not from the histological or microscopic diagnosis, but from the great universal connections.”

Rudolf Steiner – *Agriculture*, p. 96



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