

Applied BIODYNAMICS®



Fall, 2007

Newsletter of the Josephine Porter Institute • Woolwine, Virginia

Issue No. 58

Touring the Mediterranean: A Biodynamic Odyssey

Hunter Francis

The following article is, in one sense, a continuation of my previous article on my trip to the Terra Madre Conference hosted by Slow Food International in Italy in October of 2006 (see Applied Biodynamics No. 56). Both before and after the conference, I had the opportunity to tour the Mediterranean region (North Africa and Turkey) with farmer and JPI Board President Gena Nonini. I was along as an interpreter, primarily of French, as we met with biodynamic producers from both areas. Turkey, in particular, is a prodigious producer of dried fruits of all sorts, and many North African countries are engaged in a thriving trade of dates and other desert products. As elsewhere in the world, farmers are responding to the increasing global demand for organic and biodynamic produce. This was a rare opportunity to meet with those farmers and the traders who represent them, especially within the European marketplace. We were introduced to dozens of farmers who are engaged in biodynamics, and in many cases, we were able to tour their farms firsthand. While experiencing an admittedly small cross-section of the Mediterranean world, we were nonetheless able to identify common trends and concerns pertaining to biodynamics in that part of the world. What follows are my impressions and reflections on the fascinating face of biodynamic agriculture in the Mediterranean region.

As the plane left Paris and headed south, many thoughts ran through my mind. I had never been to an Arab country. In light of current global politics, I was wondering how I, as an American, might be received. The clouds over the Mediterranean floated in an enormous, puffed-up skyscape. By the time we reached the edge of the Sahara, the view yielded to what seemed to be an ocean of sand and rock. Any trepidation I had quickly dissipated. We were



A biodynamic vineyard in Turkey

warmly welcomed. We were, apparently, in friendly territory!

Another thing that struck me on this trip is how modernization and globalization are creating a common culture. Even seemingly remote places can bear the technological hallmarks with which we are familiar: agricultural implements to be sure, and now, the ubiquitous Internet. One night, we were hosted by a group of Bedouin, formerly nomadic tribesmen, but now farmers. We went out into some enormous sand dunes, and they prepared a desert feast for us. Traditional Bedouin bread was baked by burying a flat loaf under hot coals spread out in the sand. It was ironic, and a little humorous, that our hosts relied on the light of their cell phones to prepare this ancient recipe!

Throughout the region, we encountered a prevalent agricultural model in which local farmers are organized in cooperatives comprised of both organic and biodynamic

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Notes

Dear Readers,

Fall is in full swing as this issue of *Applied Biodynamics* is off to the printer. I recently talked with Florence Rewinski, whom many of you have had the pleasure to speak with over the phone in her capacity as office manager at JPI, and it sounds like things at JPI are busy as usual. A group of Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and their friends helped stuff over 1,200 cow horns last month; you'll read more about that in the next issue of *Applied Biodynamics*. The end of October brought JPI's annual fall preparation making workshop. Thirty people were registered from ten different states and Japan. Jennifer Greene of Blue Hill Water Research Institute in Maine joined the event as a guest lecturer. During the remaining months of fall, thousands of cow horns will be stuffed with manure and buried, only to be unearthed in spring as BD #500 (horn manure).

Those of us who spend most of our time close to home, especially those with commitments to farms and farm animals, will enjoy taking a virtual trip to some biodynamic farms in Turkey and North Africa, as Hunter Francis relays his experiences while traveling with farmer and JPI Board President, Gena Nonini. This issue of *Applied Biodynamics*

also brings news of regional preparation making activities, and the new Biodynamic Trade Association.

Thanks to the editorial team who helped put this issue together: Hunter Francis, Patricia Smith, Hugh Courtney and Bruce Bumbarger. We wish you well as you go about your preparation making activities throughout fall and early winter. Don't forget to check the website for Hugh Courtney's *Recommendations for Working with Crops, Sequential Spraying, and Ashing (for U.S.A.)* at www.jpibiodynamics.org.

Warm greetings,
Christy Korrow

Three Kings Preparation Kits available for purchase

Prepared and potentized at the stroke of midnight on New Year's Eve and stirred and sprayed on January 6, Three Kings Day, this blend of *Aurum metallicum* D2 (homeopathic gold), Frankincense and Myrrh is only recommended for land where the nine biodynamic preparations have been previously applied. "When using the Three Kings Preparation, you are in essence sending a message to the elemental kingdom that here within a 'magic circle' they will be provided a safe haven as well as the profound spiritual nourishment of the biodynamic preparations." (From the JPI literature.) Each kit covers 90 contiguous acres of boundary and costs \$25.00 plus shipping. To receive in time, contact JPI to order your kit by December 10th.

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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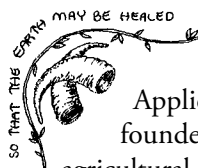
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Mission

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.

Board of Directors

Gena Nonini (Fresno, CA), President
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Touring the Mediterranean: A Biodynamic Odyssey

farm plots. Typically, a European investor will set up a development agency that helps fund processing and distribution facilities, and, most importantly, cultivates markets in Europe. A forerunner of this arrangement is Sekem (www.sekem.com), a biodynamic cooperative in Egypt, which was founded in 1977 by Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish with the help of German capital. Sekem has evolved into a vast enterprise based on Rudolf Steiner's three-fold social order.¹ Economic enterprises (such as companies producing biodynamic food products, natural pharmaceuticals, and textiles) help fund social institutions in the fields of health, education, scientific research and the arts. The success of the Sekem example has subsequently been used to convince farmers in other areas of the feasibility (and profitability) of growing biodynamic produce in the desert.

In North Africa, we met primarily with date producers. Biodynamic production among them goes back to the 1990s.



Gena Nonini inspects biodynamic dates after harvest

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*)

At that time, there was a dramatic decline in the price of dates in the conventional marketplace. This economic slump made farmers more willing to entertain the idea of transitioning to organic and biodynamic production than had been the case previously. With the help of European distributors familiar with northern markets for the produce, both styles of production spread. Of course, for farmers to convert, expertise in the management of organic and biodynamic production was needed. In the case of biodynamics, Swiss and German consultants traveled to meet with the farmers and to teach them how to make and apply the biodynamic preparations. Not unlike the United States, it is common for farmers to begin their transition with biodynamic preparations purchased elsewhere, until they have learned to make the preparations themselves successfully. Transitioning has proven to be a boon for growers from an economic standpoint, and often from a social standpoint. The development agencies involved in helping the growers transition have, by and large, worked to include growers in the decision making process of the cooperatives that were formed. Economic prosperity has made advances in the social realm possible.

The date groves we saw were surprisingly lush and diversified. The local people call them “oases.” Irrigation of them



Harvesting biodynamic dates (covered in pest-protective mesh bags)

is supported by water from aquifers – large, underground rivers that flow out of the Atlas Mountains which lie to the northwest. Demeter certification requires that open spaces are left on the farm to provide habitat for wild animal species. Even within the groves, we often found a healthy biodiversity. Date palms were interspersed with pomegranate and fig trees, flowers and cover crops. Increasingly, small plots are being dedicated to vegetable production, especially for seeds (e.g., beets, fennel, lettuce, kohlrabi, tomatoes). The desert is an ideal location for seed production because pest pressure is limited. These other products help provide farmers with income during summer months, when dates are out of season.

By chance, our visit to one of the farms happened to coincide with a fair trade inspection being conducted by GEPA, a German company. GEPA (www.gepa.de) stands for “Gesellschaft zur Foerderung der Partnerschaft mit der Dritten Welt,” or in English, “Society for the Promotion of Partnership with the Third World.” GEPA, Europe’s largest alternative trading organization, uses fair trade principles as a means for sourcing and for developing relationships with suppliers. Fair trade certification is based on six fundamental criteria: 1) support for economically disadvantaged producers through the formation of cooperatives, 2) transparency and accountability in management, 3) improvement of infrastructural capacity within the trading communities, 4) payment of a fair price to producers, 5) gender equity, and 6) humane working conditions. Child labor, an all too common problem in the Third World, is not permitted. Typically, fair trade organizations encourage producers to adopt environmentally-sound management practices. In 2006, global sales from certified fair trade organizations exceeded \$2 billion, a 41 percent increase from the previous year.² It was interesting and encouraging to witness conversations between the GEPA representatives and the farmers, who were asked about their income, their working conditions, and their ability to participate in decision making within their cooperatives. This appeared to be an empowering experience for the farmers, and left me with a feeling of hope for global commerce, which otherwise can be so fraught with opportunism.

Since the introduction of biodynamics to the region, many strides have been made, and we saw some excellent BD #500 (horn manure) that had been made on site. Only some of the biodynamic preparations are being made locally; the rest are being imported from Europe. BD #508 (Horsetail) is particularly hard to come by as *Equisetum arvense* does not grow in arid conditions. It is also common for BD #501 (horn silica) to be purchased from European suppliers. In the date groves, BD #500 is used twice a year



Gena Nonini inspects biodynamic compost in North Africa

at a rate of 2.5 ounces per acre. (This application is slightly more per acre than the quantity per acre recommended by JPI.) On some farms, it is applied by hand via a whisk-type broom. On others, mechanical spray rigs similar to those found in the United States are used. Half a teaspoon of BD #501 is used in about ten gallons of water per acre, and also is sprayed twice annually. Traditional compost made from palm fronds, sheep manure, and remnants of date processing is inoculated with biodynamic compost preparations and applied to enhance fertility, although production can be limited because of the relatively scant availability of compostable feedstocks. The cooperatives employ their own technicians to oversee and consult farmers on the preparation and compost making processes. In our meeting with these technicians, they were very eager to learn about ways to improve their skill.

In Turkey, the situation is similar as far as the biodynamic preparations are concerned. Cooperatives there also employ technicians, who visit farms either to train farmers in the preparations making process, or to deliver preparations made on other farms. One cooperative stored preparations in a cool (non-refrigerated) storage unit at a central location; the preparations were held in clay jars, buried in wooden chests filled with moist soil that, in turn, were stored in this cool storage room. As in Northern Africa, some preparation making materials are hard to come by. In Turkey, stag bladders need to be imported from Europe. The concentration rate of BD #500 was higher in Turkey, with as many as four ounces applied per acre (nearly twice the amount recommended in the United States), also applied twice per year.



Storage container for biodynamic preparations in a Turkish warehouse

Record keeping of the applications was meticulous. Technicians from one cooperative used Excel spreadsheets to keep track of applications on the scores of farms they manage. Of course, Demeter inspects each farm to verify compliance with biodynamic standards. Like other Mediterranean farmers we met, the Turks make biodynamic compost, but they also have difficulty procuring enough animal manure (high nitrogen materials) to meet composting needs.

The array of produce grown in Turkey was astonishing. Biodynamic raisins, figs, apricots, tomatoes, walnuts, hazelnuts, pine nuts, and sesame seeds are all produced. Numerous other fruits are also grown organically, including peaches, pears, and plums. The bulk of the fruits are sun dried. In the cooperatives we visited in Turkey, only about an eighth of the subscribing growers were biodynamic; the rest were organic, and there are several hundred of them.

Throughout the Mediterranean, we learned that the biodynamic sector is currently experiencing a much smaller growth rate than the organic sector (only one to two percent, versus ten to fifteen percent respectively). Apparently, this is true in Europe as well, where biodynamics has traditionally had a much larger percentage of the market share than in the United States. As the demand for ecologically grown produce is expanding in Europe, organic farmers are finding it easier to respond to this demand than biodynamic farmers because organic standards are less exacting. Also, new consumers of organic products tend to be less familiar with biodynamics, which played an important role in the early organic movement in Europe. In the United States, where biodynamics has played a much smaller role, some people believe the biodynamic movement has an opportunity to increase market share because of consumer uneasiness with organic standards under the new federal regulatory framework. Recently, a Biodynamic Trade Association was created to help promote biodynamic agriculture in the United States. (See related article on page 7 in this issue.) Obviously, producers we met around the Mediterranean welcome an increased U.S. demand for biodynamic products.

In addition to farms, we also toured processing facilities. Our hosts in Turkey noted that Demeter regulations for processing are more stringent than organic ones, so in accommodating biodynamic production, they had to make significant improvements. The overlay of multiple regulatory frameworks makes management of these facilities a complex affair. Detailed records are kept at each stage of processing. In Turkey, processing plant managers we met are held accountable to Turkish, biodynamic, organic, and international trade standards. In the late 1990s, they also adopted International Organization for Standardization (ISO) protocols, and they are now ISO 9001:2000 certified. Currently, they are in the process of implementing another quality control program, HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point). The HACCP system began in the United States. HACCP certification is now often required to sell produce in Europe. Infrastructure in Turkey for the processing of agricultural products will need to undergo additional improvement to be able to meet these added requirements.

While definitely clean and well organized, I couldn't help reflecting on what Steiner would call the "ahrimanic" nature of these modern processing plants. Workers are not allowed to talk during their work shifts. A steady stream of fruit is sorted, washed, dried, and packed to the drone of deafening machinery. In most cases, there were no windows. The bulk of the workers in the factories are women (over eighty-five percent). They are chosen because they are considered to be better workers, with higher manual dexterity than men. On a more positive note, the workers we met seemed good natured and content. In both North Africa and Turkey, plant managers have instituted literacy, hygiene and health care programs for their workers. This company-sponsored education helps improve worker productivity, to be sure, but it also adds to quality of life for the worker and the worker's family.



Sorting dried fruit in a Turkish processing facility

The issue of “local agriculture” is something that is surfacing more and more in discussions about sustainability. Unfortunately, domestic demand for organic and biodynamic products in the areas we visited is still very weak. Thus, virtually all of the goods we saw being produced are destined for foreign markets – often at large distances. Here in the United States, especially with California’s Mediterranean climate, we are able to produce domestically all of the fruits and nuts we encountered. This being the case, it does beg the question as to why agricultural products should be imported from so far. One of the problems inherent in producing for global rather than local markets is the tendency towards the concentration of agriculture. Large farms capable of sustaining large markets tend to be preferred over a cluster of small farms, partly because it’s easier and less costly for trading companies to regulate one farm rather than several small ones. This issue is complex, and difficult to generalize about. Nonetheless, foreign demand is providing valuable opportunities for workers abroad, and is stimulating a global exchange of information about biodynamic agriculture. In some of the areas we toured, producers are also benefiting from eco-tourism, in which people from industrialized countries pay to experience life on foreign farms. This is a relatively new phenomenon, only in the initial stages in the areas we visited, but I expect we will be seeing more of it in the future.

As often happens when considering the application of biodynamics in faraway places, the issue of adapting to climate and culture came up. Of course, the environmental conditions in which Steiner wrote are very different than the ones we experienced around the Mediterranean. Many of the herbs required in biodynamic preparation making do not grow locally in the region. Gena Nonini was particularly concerned about the small degree to which *Equisetum arvense* is used (BD #508). Part of the reason for this is that the European consultants who helped introduce biodynamics there tend to minimize the positive role of that particular preparation. According to Ms. Nonini, use of BD #508 helps push fungus off the plant back down into the soil, sweetens produce, and reduces fruit drop. She suggested that the local people might wish to consult with botanists to try to find an indigenous plant within the same botanical family as *Equisetum arvense*, so that farmers could make the preparation themselves. (Rudolf Steiner suggested that such adjustments to plant material used in the preparations could be made, with the single exception of stinging nettle.) Where cows are scarce, it was also suggested that goat horns and hooves could be used as a replacement for cow horns, if necessary. There was some question as to how Muslim holy days might be

incorporated into the regional version of biodynamics. Ms. Nonini encouraged practitioners to meditate on the deeper meanings of biodynamics and to try to find commonalities within their own faith. The important thing, she said, is to “feel it in your heart.”

On a more practical note regarding the preparations, Ms. Nonini expressed some concern about the overall quality of the preparations. In particular, she felt that some of the biodynamic preparations imported from Europe were lacking in vitality. She also encouraged farmers to be more liberal with the number of times the preparations are sprayed – going beyond a “twice annually” regimen when needed. Wherever possible, the use of biodynamic compost needs to be increased. Finally, Ms. Nonini spent a fair amount of time stressing the importance of using the biodynamic calendar to orchestrate farm activities around celestial rhythms. This also is something many European teachers downplay, yet it is, in her perception, a cornerstone of the biodynamic system.

All in all, farmers in the region seemed receptive to biodynamics. Many of the farmers we met are still what one might call “traditional farmers,” using relatively primitive technology by U.S. standards. These farmers live close to the earth, and are still sensitive to the influences of the moon. They seemed to be predisposed to many of the concepts promulgated by biodynamics. On the other hand, some of the university-trained technicians we met seemed to struggle with the deeper aspects of biodynamics, and acted as if they were following a protocol they didn’t fully comprehend. Nonetheless, I would say the experience for most of the people I met has been a good one. Biodynamics has helped farmers improve crop quality and increase revenues. It has made them more self-reliant and helped them to raise the standard of living in their communities. It has also harmonized well with wider, international efforts promoting education, cooperative decision making, biological diversity, and overall environmental health. As one manager in Turkey put it, “The biodynamic method has been very positive for our farmers. They will stick with it.”

Notes:

- 1) Suggested reading: *Sekem – A Sustainable Community in the Egyptian Desert*, Ibrahim Abouleish (Floris 2005). Available from JPI for \$35.00 plus shipping.
- 2) Fairtrade Labeling Organizations International (2007). <www.fairtrade.net>

Photographs supplied by Hunter Francis.

Meditative Thoughts for Autumn

“It is true that spring is fair, and it is a fine capacity of the human soul to perceive the beauty of the spring, the growing, sprouting, burgeoning life. But to be able to perceive also when the leaves fade and take on their fall coloring, when the animals creep away – to be able to feel how in the sensible which is dying away, the gleaming, shining, soul-spiritual element arises – to be able to perceive how with the yellowing of the leaves there is a descent of the springing and sprouting life, but how the sensible becomes yellow in order that the *spiritual* can live in the yellowing as such – to be able to perceive how in the falling of the leaves the ascent of the spirit takes place, how the spiritual is the counter-manifestation of the fading sense-perceptible; this should as a perceptive feeling for the spirit – ensoul the human being in autumn! Then he would prepare himself in the right way precisely for Christmastide.”

Rudolf Steiner

The Cycle of the Year as Breathing-Process of the Earth
Lecture 3



The Elizabeth Scott Courtney Memorial Fund

Heartfelt thanks to those who contributed to the newly established Elizabeth Scott Courtney Memorial Fund. The initial response has been most gratifying and a more detailed report will appear in a future issue of *Applied Biodynamics*. A gift to the Elizabeth Scott Courtney Memorial Fund will guarantee the perpetual care and sustainability of the Josephine Porter Institute for generations to come. For more information about how to support the work of JPI through this new fund, please contact Gena Nonini, JPI President, Board of Directors, at (559)352-8178.

The Biodynamic Trade Association is Here!

Hunter Francis

A milestone in the history of biodynamics in the United States was laid with the launch of the new Biodynamic Trade Association (BTA) at the Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association's (BDA) annual conference in Fair Oaks, California on August 24, 2007. After several years of thought and preparation, the BTA was formed by a group of biodynamic farmers and producers from across the United States. The initiative arose from the general desire to increase the availability of biodynamic products in this country, to spread biodynamic farming practices, and to help maintain the integrity of biodynamic standards. While it is the explicit intent of the BTA to help support and protect U.S. Demeter certifications and trademark use of the term Biodynamic through oversight and education, the two organizations are separate and autonomous. The BTA is a new organization with its own mission and own governance (see sidebar on page 8). As a prominent player in the future of U.S. biodynamics, the BTA hopes to assist in the coordination of efforts among organizations with similar missions, such as the BDA, Demeter and JPI.

One of the first tasks of the group was to nominate a Board of Directors. The Board of Directors manages the

BTA with the help of volunteer committee members. Funding for BTA activities is generated through memberships, of which there are two kinds. Regular members are Demeter USA Certified Biodynamic® businesspeople or organizations, or those in transition to Demeter USA Biodynamic certification. Members may be farmers, vintners, dairy operators, or other producers, processors, distributors or retailers of biodynamic products. Each regular member has one vote and contributes financially to the organization based on annual revenues of his or her business. Non-producers, or non-certified producers are called associate members. Associate members are individuals and businesses with an interest in supporting the mission of the BTA, though are not Demeter Certified Biodynamic. Associate members might be retailers, importers, members of the media, and consumers. Associate members are nonvoting members and pay membership fees for either individuals or businesses. Both regular and associate members may serve on committees to advise the BTA on specific topics.

In the coming months, the BTA will be busying itself with organizational capacity building. This will include implementing the BTA marketing plan, initiating a member-

BTA Mission Statement

- The BTA is dedicated to promoting and increasing public awareness of certified Biodynamic farms, gardens and agricultural products.
- We are a resource and educational body for the trade, media and public on Biodynamic practices and certifying criteria.
- This organization will provide oversight that will uphold Demeter certifications and protect the Biodynamic trademark.
- The BTA pledges to collaborate with those who share our mission and to actively encourage the use of Biodynamics in agriculture with the purpose of increasing the number of Biodynamic farms and products in the marketplace.

BTA Board of Directors

- Gena Nonini, Marian Farms, President
- Mike Benziger Benziger Family Winery, Vice President
- Barbara Steele, Cowhorn Vineyard and Garden, Treasurer
- Julie Golden, Golden Cellars, Secretary
- Doug Tunnell, Brick House Vineyards, Board Member
- Bu Nygrens, Veritable Vegetable, Board Member
- George Kalogridis, George's Organics, Board Member
- Randall Graham, Bonny Doon Vineyards, Board Member
- Katrina Fetzner, Ceago Vinegarden, Board Member
- Alan York, Biodynamic Consultant, Board Member
- Tom Newmark, New Chapter, Board Member
- John Kidney, Hawthorne Valley Farm Store, Board Member
- Will Carleton, Carleton Avocados, Board Member
- Ambassador Carol Moseley Braun, Good Food Organics, Board Member

ship drive, creating a website (coming soon), and conducting media events. All of this will help garner public recognition for the BTA. Eventually, the organization would like to be recognized as a clearinghouse of information on biodynamics, a “go to” place for the trade, media representatives and consumers.

Speaking as a consumer, one of the happiest prospects of this development is the possibility of seeing more biodynamic food in the marketplace. Supply often follows demand. If the

BTA is successful in its marketing and education efforts, this should stimulate demand for biodynamic goods, thus providing producers with stronger economic incentives for adopting biodynamic practices. As a future member of the BTA, I hope to benefit from easier access to biodynamic products, invitations to tastings and other food events, and a periodic email newsletter (scheduled for mid-2008)! Business members can look forward to trade events, professional networking, and marketing opportunities through the BTA website and publications. Keep your eyes open for these and other offerings of this exciting new force for biodynamics!

Currently, questions about the BTA may be directed to Mimi Gatens of Benziger Family Winery at 707-935-4011 or <mgatens@benziger.com>.

2008 Biodynamic Planting Calendars

Stella Natura 2008 – Kimberton Hills Biodynamic Agricultural Planting Guide & Calendar

Edited by Sherry Wildfeuer

Planting charts and thought-provoking essays on the theme of “Biodynamics in Context.” Articles include: “Carbon Cycles in Farming and Composting” by Will Brinton, Ph.D., “Carbon, the Forgotten Element” by Kyle Holzhuetter, M.S., “Agriculture and its Relation to Government” by Gary Lamb, and “Thoughts on Starch From a Baker’s Perspective” in which Chris Stearn takes a deeper look at the impulse behind a “low carb” diet.

\$14.95 plus shipping

The Northern Hemisphere Astro Calendar

Edited by Brian Keats and Stefan Mager

This full-color wall calendar has tips and information on naked eye astronomy, biodynamic gardening, celestial cycles, Rudolf Steiner’s “Calendar of the Soul” and, new to the calendar this year, a monthly column based on the climatic weather research of researcher, artist, and educator Dennis Kloeck.

\$14.95 plus shipping

The Biodynamic Sowing and Planting Calendar 2008

Maria Thun and Matthias K. Thun

\$13.95 plus shipping

All calendars listed above are available from JPI.

New Preparation Making Initiative in Kentucky

Laura Riccardi

In mid-June, Laura Riccardi, a former staff person at JPI, initiated a community biodynamic preparation making event in south-central Kentucky as part of her work as project coordinator of the Biodynamics Integration Project. The project's mission is to integrate components of biodynamics, primarily the preparations, into all forms of agriculture, while fostering openness to new tools and techniques that complement existing biodynamic approaches. The project especially embraces the diversity that all people bring to biodynamics as forms of healing agriculture are carried into the future. Anyone who works with the land is a necessary part of this healing. Hosted by Paul Bella and Robin Verson of Hill and Hollow CSA, over twenty-five farmers and gardeners (including several young children) came together to make horn silica (BD #501), yarrow preparation (BD #502), and Biodynamic Compound Preparation. Joining the locals were Joey Brinkley, Natalie Coles, Harold Nelson, and Lloyd and Kelley Nelson, who all brought insights and many years experience gained from preparation making at JPI and on other farms around the United States. A fall gathering is planned for late October.

The following is an excerpt from the letter Laura Riccardi sent to the attendees of the event.

First of all, thank you all for being part of what was a very peaceful, harmonious day. When things flow easily, I think it is confirmation of something positive. I personally received a lot of goodness from the experience. During our actual preparation making, my attention was placed on the tasks at hand. However, for the three days prior, I was largely focused on the intention of our work together. Upon reflection, I was grateful to see/feel that this intention was actualized by the group.

I had a feeling of the presence of spiritual beings/hierarchies and their joy from our gathering and work. The joy came as a result of group harmony and the non-competitiveness that we all engaged in. Some of you may not have experience with other biodynamic group activities. I have had a lot of exposure in different regions of the country. I am so very happy to have been a part of something refreshingly new and heartfelt – what I believe to be a true need within biodynamics.

My heart-thought as I sat under the giant sycamore where we made the preparations, was that a potent gift had been presented to the spiritual world, to the earth's spirit, and to the elementals. This healing gift came out of the way



Laura Riccardi and JPI board member Lloyd Nelson enjoy clipping yarrow blossoms in the shade.

we came together, the way we created together. The actual preparations will carry that energy, which will be magnified and potentized by the natural world's processes as the preparations transform.

As I thought of the preparations on the farm, imagining where they were now, I sensed that they were already emanating healing, and not just for Hill and Hollow. I have never felt this before.

Overlooking the area where we were working, the eight bladders of yarrow (BD #502) were hung very high at the front of the barn, from the beams that are at the roof line. The thirteen horns filled with silica (BD #501) were buried in another field up the creek; we dug a pit where a lot of geodes were found and we placed crushed-up crystals in the pit with the horns. We buried half of the horns with the points facing upward, the other half downward. It started to sprinkle much needed rain while we were there.

We invite you to share your experiences of community preparation making activities with us. Photographs courtesy of Chris Korrow.



Close-up of pulverized crystals before being sifted and ground into a fine powder.



A cow horn filled with prepared quartz crystals, ready to be buried for the summer.

How to Save the World: One Man, One Cow, One Planet

Reviewed by Christy Korrow

"A gardener from New Zealand and a bucket of cow dung – could this simple recipe be a way to save the world?"

Peter Coyote, from the film

Many of you may have already heard about the new film featuring Peter Proctor's biodynamic work across India where Rudolf Steiner's agricultural methods are placed against a backdrop of the predominant agricultural-industrial complex. The green revolution has taken its toll on India: saline-saturated fields, farmer suicides, and a general collapse of India's farm economy. But despite these dire consequences, there is a reconnection with the old agricultural ways – with a new twist. Over the fifteen-plus years of Proctor's work in India, a network of farmers has embraced biodynamics, and there are now an estimated two hundred thousand biodynamic compost piles across the country. With a predisposition towards accepting the spiritual realm, an abundance of organic matter, and a willingness to work close to the land, farmers' soils and incomes are improving, and so is their self-esteem.

For those of us working with biodynamics, it is especially inspiring to watch the film footage of the workers making and spraying the preparations and spreading compost. Many hands make light work in the making of Barrel Compost (called Cow Pat Pit by Proctor). As the eighty year-old Proctor squats amongst farm workers around a mound of fresh cow manure he thoroughly mixes in egg shells and basalt with his bare hands, almost as if he was kneading bread. Proctor smiles and says, "It's a lovely feeling!"

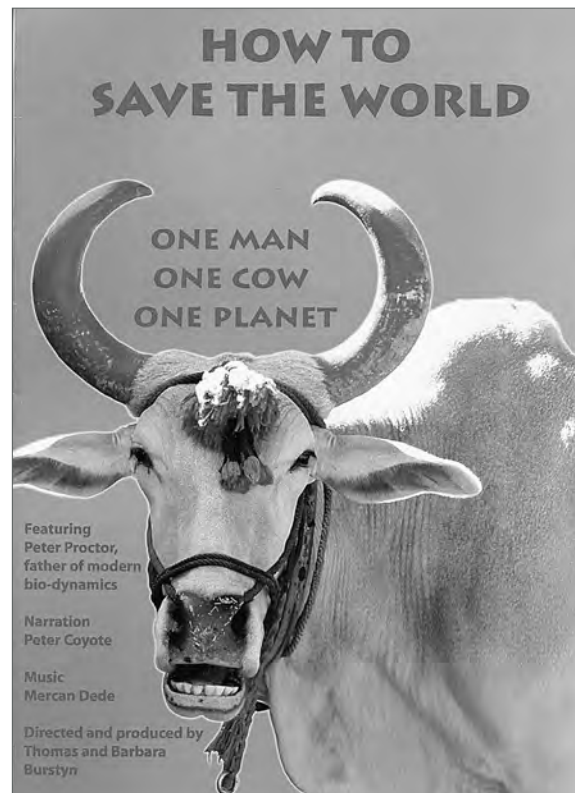
As a farmer pours the BD #507 valerian water onto the compost pile, he holds the bucket in one hand and lets the water pour out slightly over his wrist and into his cupped hand, using the fingers to make the water sprinkle and spread across the pile in a very gentle, rhythmic fashion. BD #500 (horn manure) is applied with a whisk broom. Beginning at waist level, the farmer circles his broom out, up, around and over, creating a wonderful arched spiral of droplets. Dry composted manure is spread from shallow pans carried above the head. As the pans are swirled, the dried compost is flung out across the rows, once again creating a wonderful spiral pattern.

Narrated by Peter Coyote, the film is divided into sections that cover different levels of biodynamic work, including: compost as the cornerstone of biodynamics, the preparations, the cow, cow horns, flow forms, spraying preparations on the fields, soils, the planting calendar, pest control, harvesting and marketing.

Even though the focus of the film is on India, it is a fine introduction to biodynamics – one that is appropriate for all audiences, especially because the biodynamic movement is placed in the context of the struggle for food sovereignty, clearly a worldwide issue. The film is a story that can inspire us all. As Proctor is described in the film, "He is a new kind of hero. Rather than battling the problem, he simply lives the solution. Ignoring the machination of the multinationals, Peter keeps his hands in the soil... he believes a revolution is happening, one farm at a time."

Cloud South Films, Ltd., 104 minutes

DVDs are available from JPI for \$29.95 plus shipping and handling. To learn more about the work of Peter Proctor see *Applied Biodynamics* Issue No. 53.

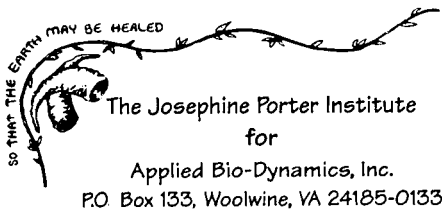


Errata

The editors apologize for not including the photo credit with Maria Mihok's article, "Healing a Wounded Woodland" in *Applied Biodynamics* Issue No. 57. The images were taken by Lorna Reichel, Subtle Energy Consultant and Biofield Imaging Specialist; <www.atlantisvibes.com>.

“...a farm is always an individuality, in the sense that one farm is never the same as another. The climate and soil conditions are the very foundation of a farm’s individuality.”

Rudolf Steiner – *Spiritual Foundations for the Renewal of Agriculture*, p. 184



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