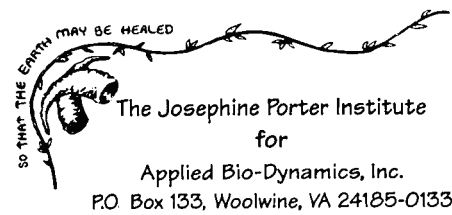


The personal relationship that you can develop to such things [as stirring the preparations] is extremely beneficial for people who wish to experience nature as a whole...

Rudolf Steiner – *Spiritual Foundations for the Renewal of Agriculture*, p. 74



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Fall, 2008

Applied BIODYNAMICS®

Newsletter of the Josephine Porter Institute • Woolwine, Virginia



Issue No. 62

Contemplating the Plant

As the season advances, the plant blooms, falls and is reduced to dust as it dematerializes, so to speak into the universe. As Goethe might have said: when the substantial plant decays, its being – the living idea that brings it forth – returns to the outer most reaches of the cosmos. The mineral-like seed which remains is only an anchorhold by means of which the being of the plant finds its way back into the world of appearances when conditions warrant. In spring, when nature sprouts, shoots and buds, the idea of the plant starts incarnating, reaching the peak of its visible existence about the middle of the year. In summer, plants bloom, fade and begin to dry. By autumn only the seed is left; the being of the plant has withdrawn from sight, to reappear in the following spring from seed.

...As we study the plant with our eye sensitive to the facts before us, it teaches us to abandon our modern concepts of indestructible matter based on the materialistic, mechanical views of atomic and molecular chemistry. For plants clearly demonstrate the fact that matter is just a fixed stage of universal process. What earthlings call substance is cosmic activity in dense, arrested form. Earthly materiality and cosmic being are two opposite poles between which Nature's span appears in infinitely many stages. Plants are living links between the poles of the world organism.

—Rudolf Hauschka

Excerpted from *Nutrition: A Holistic Approach*
Rudolf Hauschka, Rudolf Steiner Press
Available from JPI for \$28.00 plus shipping and handling
Illustration by Erin Pickford



Editor's Notes

Dear Readers,

I write this upon my return from a trip that took me over 6,000 miles from my home in Kentucky through the north-central US, to end on the Washington coast. Throughout my travels I observed some of the most fabulous natural ecosystems I have ever seen, and I was brought back to the first place Sir Albert Howard suggested we look if we want to learn about maintaining soil fertility: "the methods of Nature – the supreme farmer – as seen in the primeval forest, in the prairie, and in the ocean..." (*An Agricultural Testament*, 1940). You will notice, as you read the back cover of this issue, that his statement underscores Steiner's teachings more than 15 years earlier. Manfred Klett reiterates this concept in this issue's fascinating article by Hunter Francis.

In the 2.2 million acre Yellowstone National Park, we saw herds of antelope, elk and buffalo grazing fertile, green meadows filled with flowers. I gained new insights into the beings of fire, the salamanders, as I learned of thermophiles, microbial creatures that thrive in higher than boiling temperatures, creating "paint pots" or pools of bubbling mud as they digest clay, which mixes with the water boiling up from underground volcanic activity; and the undines, when I saw water cascading down a waterfall gushing 63,500 gallons per second at peak run off times, or

underground springs that pour out a constant 4,000 gallons of water per minute.

The wisdom inherent in biodynamics lies in that it is a system that operates within the realm of nature. This was again confirmed to me when, on the pristine Pacific coasts of Washington, I saw Mother Nature had "companion planted" entire banks with *Equisetum* and yarrow – tall, strong and healthy.

But even within the progressive agricultural model that is biodynamics, we must be awake so that we do not reduce the incredible creative potential in nature to just another system, where we merely go through the motions, with no original thought of our own. Nature is the superior system, and there is much to learn from her. Perhaps most important is that through the development of consciousness, humans can become co-creative partners with nature – potent examples of this relationship between humans and nature are the biodynamic preparations.

I invite you to step off of your own land and into a wilderness area. Spend time there in observation and contemplation, and you will bring back valuable insights and fresh ideas you can apply to your farms and gardens. As farmers and gardeners, we tend to get our information from books, and from other farmers, but very seldom do we go back to the source and learn from the uncultivated natural world.

May fall be a time of renewal for you and the land you serve as steward!
—Christy Korrow

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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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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Gratitude to All for Preparation Plant Contributions

Each year groups and individuals do their part in making it possible for JPI to meet our customers' needs for BD #506 by harvesting dandelion flowers. Thank you to those of you who ventured out into the fields and carefully harvested and dried these special yellow flowers. If you have a lot of dandelions in your area, and would like to harvest some for JPI, contact JPI for specifics about harvesting, drying and shipping.

- Katherine Rose Plum – Mount Airy, VA
- Highland Hall Waldorf School (Juanita Gilmore) – Northridge, CA
- Gary Crivellone – Gig Harbor, WA
- Sharon Carson – Delmar, DE
- Freida Lankford – Collinsville, VA
- Jennifer Thomson – Crestone, CO
- Nancy Keiser – Marne, MI
- William Oshima – Las Vegas, NM
- Sophie Rakada – Rochester Hills, MI
- Lori Waterman – Rochester, WA
- Ruth Zinniker and friends – Elkhorn, WI
- Vicki Garrett – Columbus, OH

Thanks also to Conrad Mentjes and Mary Lee Plumb-Mentjes, Anchorage, AK for *Equisetum arvense* (BD #508) and yarrow blossoms (BD #502).

Events

Annual JPI Fall Workshop

Featuring the harvesting of sheaths, and the making of the biodynamic preparations, with five days of hands-on workshops and lectures. Guest speaker to be announced.

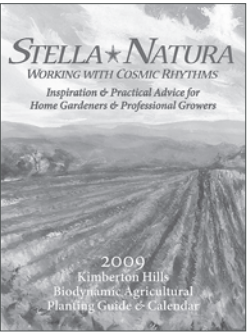
The workshop will run from October 22–26, 2008, Wednesday through Sunday. Cost is \$500.00; all meals are included in the price. Some housing is available, and tenting is permitted.

Call (276)930-2463 or visit <www.jpibiodynamics.org> for further details.

Foundation for Applied Biodynamics

A two-day workshop, running November 14–15, taught by biodynamic farmer, Gena Nonini, will be held for the second time at Cal Poly State University in San Luis Obispo, California. Cost is \$195. Participants may earn 0.9 Continuing Education Units. For more information, visit <www.continuing-ed.calpoly.edu/wine.html>, or call (805)756-2053.

Time to Order Planting Calendars from JPI!



Stella Natura 2009

Sherry Wildfeuer (Camphill Village Kimberton Hills)

This year's edition features biodynamic planting information as well as articles by Christina Root, Tom Stearn, Gena Nonini and Hunter Francis, Craig Holdrege, Mark Moodie and others on topics including the language of gesture

in nature and poetry, food growing and distribution, genetic engineering, biodynamic sprays, garden archetypes, and more.

\$14.95 plus shipping

The North American Biodynamic Sowing and Planting Calendar 2009

Maria Thun and Matthias K. Thun (Floris Books)

\$13.95 plus shipping

Northern Hemisphere Astro Calendar 2009

Brian Keats; \$14.95 plus shipping

Fiscal Reality Revisited

With a sense of both reluctance and necessity, JPI's Board of Directors authorized an increase in prices for several products and services effective September 1, 2008.

The price for a SET of Compost Preparations, BD #502-507 was raised from \$20.00 to \$21.00, with commensurate increases in the cost of the individual preparations. Cost of BD #500 and BC are now \$8.00/unit, with #(X)500 and "Prepared" 500 now \$9.00/unit. Shipping and Handling for preparations increases from \$10.00 to \$11.00 and postage and handling for publications increases from \$6.00 to \$7.00. In addition, the Associative Contract discount was lowered from 25% to 20%.

While an idealistic view might prefer to give the preparations away freely, JPI must also exist in an economic realm as well. The Board, therefore, must meet its responsibility to see that JPI remains a fiscally sound endeavor and at this time, the price revisions are necessary.

some heavenly cinnamon tea to go along with plenty of other good food.

After our break, we buried the nettles and, almost everyone took home some nettles to bury on their own property.

Tour of the Shock Farm

Later, our tour of the Shock Farm highlighted a new, large preparation storage pit dug against the house, Barrel Compost in progress in a half barrel, a very deep basalt pit that Will is experimenting with to see what the basalt and other herbal additives will do to contribute to yet another batch of Barrel Compost, and extensive plant trials around the farm. Almost everyone took home starts of yarrow, chives, Jerusalem artichokes, herbs, flowers, and other plants. When Will and Lisa bought the farm ten years ago, it supported a large crop of knapweed and crabgrass in the sand and gravel. Even the trees were dying. They have been using biodynamic compost and preparations to transform their soil, and it has responded well to their applications.

The rest of the day was spent grinding up quartz crystals Joe Clark had brought in his double pipe crusher, along with a large iron mortar and pestle. We made about two-thirds of a cup of BD #501 (horn silica) and packed it in a horn that we then buried. It will be dug up and distributed at a fall preparation making workshop.

We are very thankful for the wonderful group of spiritual science students in our area. We will be pressing valerian flowers as they appear. Many members have contributed dried dandelions, so we now have several gallons of them ready for fall preparation making. We plan on making all the fall preparations in October. We welcome new participants, and are looking for individuals to give talks and to provide farms to tour. Suggestions are always welcome. Interested persons can request information on our activities and workshops by contacting Merla Barbarie at (208)263-0366 or <herbnmerla@supersatz.net> or Lisa Shock at (208)265-0512 or <shockwaves@acweb.com>.



Grinding quartz crystals at Raphael Gardens at Rudolf Steiner College

Reflections on Biodynamics and Its Significance for the Future by Dr. Manfred Klett

Hunter Francis

On March 28, 2008, I had the pleasure and the privilege of interviewing Dr. Manfred Klett, a leader in the world-wide biodynamic movement and, for many years, head of the Agricultural Section of the School of Spiritual Science at the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland. The occasion was a conference at Rudolf Steiner College in Fair Oaks, California, convened especially for Dr. Klett's visit. As part of the weekend's activities, Dr. Klett participated in the unearthing of three biodynamic preparations prepared by Harald Hoven, Director of the Raphael Garden at Steiner College, and his interns, depicted in the photographs below. Dr. Klett was introduced by Mr. Hoven as "one of the best thinkers in biodynamics today." Rather than transcribing the interview verbatim, I have chosen to intersperse it with ideas from his previous lectures. These lectures provided me with an excellent background for understanding Dr. Klett's comments, and I thought it important to share the perspectives they offered. All non-referenced quotations in the article were taken from my personal interview with Dr. Klett. As part of the conference, Dr. Klett gave several lectures specifically on the topic of the preparations. These will be discussed in the Spring 2009 issue of Applied Biodynamics.

Manfred Klett was born in Tanzania and grew up in Stuttgart, Germany. He spent most of his youth in cities. His extensive travels include a year of higher education in England, at Michael Hall in Sussex. After college, in 1955, he spent a year in northeastern Syria working on a project to study the effects of overhead irrigation on cotton in a

semi-arid climate. It was there that he decided to pursue a career in agriculture. In 1956, he received an apprenticeship position at a biodynamic farm outside of Frankfurt called Dottenfelder Hof. Dr. Klett calls this the best year of his life, and it was the beginning of a long relationship with the farm. There, he developed a deep bond with his mentor, Ernst Becker. Dottenfelder Hof had been founded in 1946 as a biodynamic farm, but passed through a phase of being conventionally managed from 1957–1968.

After his apprenticeship year, Dr. Klett moved to Stuttgart to attend the University of Hohenheim, where he received his PhD in Soil Science. He worked for four years at the Institute for Biodynamic Research in Darmstadt, where he conducted studies in soil fertility and food quality research. In 1968, he returned to Dottenfelder Hof and collaborated with others to start a unique biodynamic farm community – the first of its kind. At the time, the farm was



Manfred Klett inspecting freshly-unearthed dandelion preparation (BD #506)

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*)

in danger of being developed. The property comprised 186 hectares (it's now 150 hectares, or approximately 370 acres). Five families agreed to take over stewardship of the farm, with the goal of achieving self-sufficiency. They split the farm into areas of activity, such as for arable work, animal husbandry (dairy cows, chickens, pigs), gardening, making and applying the biodynamic preparations, and fruit production. "We were convinced that the farm should not be organized in the typical vertical fashion of a conventional farm."

From this new beginning, the farm was used for educating others. They hosted visitors, and began to conduct research in biodynamics. The founders started a two-year apprenticeship for on-farm training. Additionally, they offered enrollments in their *Landbauschule* (or agricultural school, offering a more theoretical biodynamic training program) for the first time. The training is held as a four-week course in January, with an option to do advanced studies for four weeks in February. The courses have continued to this day, and since 1987, a one-year course has been offered. There are now approximately one hundred people living at the farm, seven families, a dozen appren-

tices and sixty full-time employees (some employees live off site). Dottenfelder Hof offers a complete range of activities: fruit, vegetable, and cereal production, a creamery, bakery, research station, and a popular food store, which provides a primary income source for the community. They process all of their own milk, and produce bread from up to eighty metric tons of grain annually. Research initiatives at Dottenfelder Hof include large-scale biodynamic plant breeding of vegetables and grain crops, and research on biodynamic preparations and homeopathic additives. In addition to the *Landbauschule*, the farm hosts community programs on a variety of topics, such as gardening, cheese and bread-making, and cultural activities.

Dottenfelder Hof is one of approximately thirty biodynamic "farm communities" in Germany today, and among over 1,400 biodynamic farms in that country. The Dottenfelder Hof model is something that Dr. Klett is passionate about. He sees the establishment of economic links between the farm and community as essential. "The family farm is no longer viable. A larger community is needed to develop and care for a highly diversified farm." He credits the CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) concept, in which farmers sell subscription memberships directly to the consumer and which has been spreading rapidly in Germany and the U.S. since the 1980s, as having played a role in developing local markets by connecting the wider community to farms. "A CSA is the good way to develop a local market – especially in the U.S., where the distances are so enormous. The fundamental idea is to pre-finance production, under all conditions." According to Dr. Klett, the benefits are not merely economic, but also environmental. "You must build local markets if you want to develop a truly ecological farming system globally."

This idea strikes at the heart of the much talked about concept of sustainability. Linkages must be forged within a healthy system whereby economic relationships support environmental necessity, as well as sound social interactions. Dr. Klett referred often to the idea of "holism" as being fundamental to the biodynamic model. Further, he credits biodynamics as having been a pioneer of the sustainability movement. "It was the ferment for sustainable agriculture, and was the original form of organic agriculture in Germany, which has since split off." After eighty plus years, it is difficult to fathom the profound influence Rudolf Steiner's ideas had on the development of alternative agricultural paradigms throughout the twentieth century, but in Dr. Klett's opinion, this influence is real, and powerful. He recounted the effect Steiner's agricultural course had on the farmers who attended it in 1924. "There was tremendous enthusiasm on the part of those who at-

Northern Idaho Grows Biodynamic Growers

Merla Barbarie

Beginning a new biodynamic gardening group of serious spiritual science students has been a totally new project for us. With only the goal of getting started, we held an organizational meeting at the local library and showed the Peter Proctor film, *How to Save the World*. Forty people attended, and we started an e-mail and phone list.

The first thing most everyone wanted to do was to start making our own biodynamic preparations, either as a group or individually. Another item of much interest was learning how to use the *Stella Natura* calendar more effectively. And, of course, we all wanted to better understand the Rudolf Steiner lectures, especially in relation to agriculture. While some of the participants had been using the preparations and calendar for many years, others were new to this information. We are very fortunate to have a Waldorf School in Sandpoint as it has introduced many people to the teachings of Rudolf Steiner. As a follow up to the first meeting, we met again to plan our workshops, swap seeds, and discuss some ways to use the calendar.

Tree Paste Workshop

Our first hands-on meeting this year was held on Saturday, April 12, 2008, at Mitch and Colleen Rifkin's farm in Bonners Ferry, Idaho, near the Canadian border. Bonners Ferry is a "banana belt" and had no snow; everyone else's place still had snow pack. Mitch and Colleen sell vegetables and flowers at the Farmers' Market in Sandpoint that was to start on May 3. We toured their loaded greenhouse that was heated by wood and had automatic misting capability, and their vegetables under row cover outside. Then we set out the cow manure, clay, and sand and took turns stirring, and sometimes singing to, the horn manure preparation (BD #500) for an hour. We also stirred up some Barrel Compost (a.k.a. Biodynamic Compound Preparation), and used *Equisetum* tea as an additive to the tree paste. Each person filled a container with the mixture and stirred. We all took home enough finished material to apply to our own trees. We shared a Waldorf blessing and a healthy potluck lunch outside. Afterwards, we had a tour of the Rifkin log cabin that Mitch and Colleen built.

Barrel Compost Workshop

On Monday, June 2, after the snow had melted at 2,800 feet, we held a Barrel Compost workshop at Herb and Merla Barberie's homestead north of Sandpoint. We toured the garden which consisted of the home garden, three cold frames for warm crops – tomatoes, peppers, eggplants,

cucumbers, and barely-started broccoli, and newly-planted snow peas outside. Merla sells herbs in pots at the farmers' market. We shared some herbs from Merla's herb volunteers and christened their new kitchen and dining nook still in the process of being built. Merla and Herb are working on a preparation storage container made out of a wooden tool chest. Herb had their wood cook stove going and we were warm and cozy eating our potluck lunch of wild green salad (red orach, chickweed, sorrel, red mustard, lamb's quarter, sweet cicely, and raspberries with vinaigrette dressing), garlic bread, cucumber-potato-lovage soup, steamed nettles, pickled green beans, and two desserts – a raspberry cake and a very creative apple crisp with nuts and other goodies.

Then we got to work taking turns mixing the cow manure, basalt powder, and ground eggshells in the Barberie's snow sled which we then pulled across the ground, through a gate in the garden fence, to a pit lined with kiln bricks. We shoveled half the mixture into the pit and added a set of compost preparations. We then added the other half of the mixture and the second set of preparations, finishing with a protective burlap bag and a wooden cover. We shared the cost of the preparations and will divide up the compost when it is done so everyone can have enough to use this fall.

Nettle Compost Prep and Horn Silica Workshop

The summer was almost upon us and the garden chores were getting ahead of us, but the nettles were blooming and we were ready to make our first preparations as a group. Will and Lisa Shock's place near Cocolalla Lake has a large patch of nettles. On June 16, we harvested nettles and got plenty of stings to remind us of their power. Peter Proctor writes in his book that the worse the sting, the stronger and better the preparation it will make. We must have made some very strong nettle preparation (BD #504), since the nettles we harvested were powerfully strong.

While the nettles sat in the shade to wilt a bit, we ate a potluck lunch. Then Julie McCallan, who is a Waldorf teacher, brought pictures, sample vanilla beans and cinnamon stick, and gave a fascinating talk on her nine-month sabbatical at a biodynamic farm, Villa Vanilla, in Costa Rica. We learned how they grow and process these unique spices, and how we may buy some at wholesale prices. Everyone could smell the difference between these vanilla beans and cinnamon and store-bought spices from the United States. Julie also brought some fantastic homemade crackers made out of ground, soaked and dehydrated flax seeds, nuts, and vegetables, accompanied with dips and



The dairy cow at Rudolf Steiner College



Manfred Klett participating in a question and answer session at Rudolf Steiner College

Referring to the recent “Agriculture and Spirituality” conference held at the Goetheaneum at Dornach in February of this year, Dr. Klett reflected on the enthusiasm and openness to the spiritual felt by so many people today. Over eight hundred people attended. “I think we are now entering a time when people will get more and more interested in a spiritual approach to what they do. At the conference, we offered a wide range of topics. The participants were deeply involved, and it’s an individual approach. Biodynamics draws people, it doesn’t push. One is absolutely free as to how one approaches biodynamics... [Nonetheless,] anthroposophy is a challenge to us all, because spirituality deriving from it is not delivered on a feeling level. It’s a science, not a belief, and it requires strict, conscious thinking. But the more one is challenged, the more one comes to a more conscious approach to what one is doing... We are dealing with a metamorphosis of consciousness.”

He continued, “Biodynamics, and the preparations, are a means of transformation. We are talking about the idea of evolution and development. Our imparting things into nature has far reaching effects into the future. Modern science has no idea of time, only space. It doesn’t know what’s not here today can be here tomorrow. We need to develop a more holistic approach, and try to build upon it... Unfortunately, we live in a civilization of egotism. It’s monstrous, and it numbs us. We would be much further along if we were not so submerged in it.”

Once again, he reminds us, biodynamics is more than

just an antidote to infertile soils, or poor nutrition. It’s also an invitation to personal growth, and a tool for planetary transformation on the deepest levels. “When you work with the preparations, you are free. The more you work with them, the more you realize you do it out of love. No one tells you to do it. You internalize it – inwardly. It is done with love, with a Christian attitude. The farm becomes a manifestation of love. The force of love doesn’t exist in nature. We develop love ourselves, and we bring it into nature. The earth is longing for this love! The more you work with biodynamics, the more you create a new identity with yourself and with the land.”

References

- 1) Klett, Manfred. “The History of Agriculture,” in *Tomorrow’s Agriculture: Are We Meeting the Challenges?* (East Sussex, England: International Biodynamic Initiatives Group, 1986), 11.
- 2) Ibid., 13.
- 3) Ibid., 16.
- 4) Klett, Manfred. “The Present Day Situation in Agriculture,” in *Tomorrow’s Agriculture: Are We Meeting the Challenges?* (East Sussex, England: International Biodynamic Initiatives Group, 1986), 22.
- 5) Ibid., 25.
- 6) Ibid., 27.
- 7) Ibid., 30.

tended the course. They just plunged right in. The farmers tried to put the teachings of Rudolf Steiner into practice immediately. Within a very short time, there were over a thousand biodynamic farms in Germany. They were so moved in their will! They had hardly any knowledge about biodynamics, but they had incredible will to try it. They had been so very inspired by Steiner’s words.”

One of the many tragedies of the Nazi period was the effect it had on the biodynamic movement. “The Nazis smashed the whole impulse. If this hadn’t happened, the whole development of farming would have taken a completely different direction in the twentieth century. I don’t think industrialization would have taken off to the extent that it did... In 1935, biodynamics was officially outlawed in Germany, and by 1941, finally forbidden. Representatives of the biodynamic movement began to be sent to concentration camps. People who continued to work with biodynamics had to do so underground. This prohibition also continued in East Germany during the Communist period.” In both cases, “tremendous pressure was put on farmers to adopt the usage of synthetic chemicals in agriculture.”

Dr. Klett’s analysis of the development of agriculture in modern times provides remarkable insights into the forces that have been at work since industrialization. In this interview, as in many of the lectures he has given, he illuminated the wider historical context within which modern agriculture took root. In doing so, he helps us to penetrate the spiritual significance of this phenomenon, and its dangers. The Nazi “smashing” of biodynamics was extreme, as many Nazi policies proved to be. Virtually all industrialized societies, however, have pursued policies leading to the crass modernization of the farm, often inhumanely so. In the West, this has removed agriculture from the center of human social life and pushed it, fragmented, to the periphery. Why? What is the deeper significance of this alienated form agriculture has taken?

“History provides the foundation for what we ought to strive for in the future. Knowing how to step into the future is only possible if we know our history.”¹ Dr. Klett goes to considerable lengths to paint a picture of how agriculture fit into the traditional European landscape. For centuries prior to industrialization, the farm was a central feature of villages there. The vestiges of this relationship can still be seen in small towns. Dr. Klett argues that this arrangement did not happen by accident. “A landscape has a biography – a structure is developing within it, an eco-structure.”² According to him, country landscapes developed by the work of man, with the guidance of the folk spirits. In this sense, the countryside became a biography of man. Here, we have

a glimpse as to how the farm is, in biodynamic terms, an “organism” – a living structure within a larger body. This will be discussed later.

The creation of the farm as we think of it traditionally happened over time. In pre-Christian times, farms did not exist in the same sense. Most significantly for Dr. Klett, the management of different agricultural tasks was handled separately. Early on, evolving from hunter-gatherer societies, mankind began to shepherd animals. Later, another set of skills was developed in working directly with the earth. Thus the plant growers, the cultivators of the land, were born, particularly those who cultivated grain. The growing out and breeding of seed stocks was one of humankind’s earliest conscious interactions with the plant world. Eventually, this tendency was applied to vegetables, and the gardener was born. Finally, “a fourth evolutionary line then split away – those people who had the special ability to grow and cultivate trees, the vine, the olive tree and all our fruit trees.”³ These all became inherited abilities, and for the most part, the practices developed separately and did not coalesce in agriculture.

It wasn’t until the fall of the Roman Empire that these various aspects of agriculture merged. “They developed separately and converged with the Christ event. The first Christian farmers were the Benedictine monks, in the fifth century. By the sixth through ninth centuries the lines had re-emerged in a metamorphosed form... only in Europe, and especially in the Celtic and Germanic cultures.”

Dr. Klett dates the full development of the traditional, European farm to the ninth century. “It became the carrier of all culture.” Slowly, villages began to create the impulse for the farm organism, especially in Central Europe. “It’s as if,” he says, “the buildings grew out of the landscape. Villages revolved around the church’s spire, which created an axis around the sun – representing the soul. The tower was an external representation of the human ego. It was a sort of striving for the spiritual. The village and farm revolved around it, surrounded by the forest, which continued to represent a form of untamed nature. Nowadays, the Christian impulse is emancipated. The church has lost its power – that impulse has come to an end. It was smashed by the industrial age! Now, this impulse must be internalized.”

Clearly, there have been advantages and disadvantages to the way humanity progressed. The evolution of towns into cities as we are familiar with them occurred simultaneously with humankind’s development of a conscious self-awareness (individuation). This corresponds to Steiner’s idea that humanity had to pass through a period of extreme focus on material processes during the scientific age. And it was in the cities where this happened most of all. Dr. Klett related

a German adage, which makes sense in this context: “*Stadt Luft macht frei*.” (City air makes one free.) In fact, there was a rush to leave the farm for the city. This is still happening in certain parts of the world. “It would have been impossible for human beings to develop their modern self-awareness in the context of the confines of traditional village life... Natural science was born in the cities – by people who had forgotten what nature is!” As a result, the development of reductionist science, while positive in one sense, has not been without its problems. Natural science was necessary to gain self-consciousness, but it produces “dead thought.” “Out of this dead thought, one worked back into agriculture”, and thus modern mechanical techniques were born.⁴ “With it, one can only create dead forms in nature.” Now completely divided, most modern farms have fallen back to the pre-Christian situation.

Dr. Klett has thus clarified the task at hand, in fact, one of the fundamental tasks which Steiner brought forth with biodynamics. Modern agriculture has been fragmented. It is now very common to find vast acreages dedicated solely to one crop. Large animal confinement operations dot, or rather impose themselves upon rural landscapes. There is no village around the farm, and often few people are needed to manage it. Biodynamics flies in the face of this tendency towards “specialization.” According to Dr. Klett, the historic streams of the agricultural enterprise must be reunited, but with a new awareness. Agriculture must be “liberated,” and truly modernized. He sees the “true foundation” of all modern farming as the reestablishment of the farm organism. “Agriculture now becomes an individuality in a new, conscious sense. The new farm organism is emancipated. We have gone through the individuation of the cities experience, and in this process we have lost the spiritual guidance of the mysteries. Now, we must guide ourselves. The farm organism of the Middle Ages was still embedded in instinctive spiritual guidance. Today, we can participate in agriculture consciously. You can experience this personally. This is a joy, so freeing!”

At several junctures, Dr. Klett stressed the effect our consciousness has on our surroundings. The spiritual element of humans mediates their relationship between their inner being and the external world. Far from being separate from nature, our spirituality permeates it. And, our effect has changed over time. “As man transforms his inner world, so must the world around him change.” Dr. Klett maintains, “One can only develop a new agriculture through the understanding of man, not just through understanding the outer world. Man is the starting point. The outer reflects the inner, and the farm organism is a mirror of the human organism. We must find an identity between what is in-

side us and outside. A truly biodynamic (holistic) approach comes about only through an understanding of the human organism and its various dimensions – etheric, astral, etc. Biodynamic farming should not just be a matter of optimizing nature [*i.e.*, manipulating the external world, the ‘macrocosmos’], like in organic farming. Many are more receptive [to these ideas] now, but not many can transmit the anthroposophic view, and how it relates to agriculture.”

In his lectures, Dr. Klett has used the idea of the “farm organism” as a starting point for what he sees as three essential processes to be striven for and to work with on a biodynamic farm:

- 1) The formation of a natural “organism”
- 2) The development of a human community in and around the farm
- 3) On-going education

Dr. Klett sees the fundamental idea of Steiner’s agricultural course as being: “The farm is an individuality – and this individuality can incarnate.” When properly oriented and motivated, “the mixing of natural kingdoms by humans introduces something new into nature. It’s a process of incarnation, and it’s a cultural impulse. You are bringing something new into being, and the organism you build comprises local, indigenous relationships. The farm organism body goes beyond nature [*i.e.*, the material world]. With the creation of an agricultural individuality, a being incarnates into nature. This corresponds to the Christ impulse. You spiritualize substance. Thus, farming is not merely an economic process. In biodynamics, you realize nature teaches you, but you teach nature too! We are participating with nature, and creating a new identity. We are building a self-contained organism in a farm, but in a new way.”

In modern times, it is common to think that man can only have a destructive influence upon nature, but in Dr. Klett’s view, it is important to recognize this is a fallacy. On the contrary, man has often played a hand in helping nature to evolve in a healthy way. Through working with natural forces, mankind was able to create something new – the farm itself. This is something positive, yet something not possible through natural forces alone. The forming of a farm organism involves “establishing a new identification between man and nature.” He sees human beings, through the use of their ego (spirit), as being “transformative agents for the earth, and the proper role of the human ego in nature is to help further the aims of nature.” He goes on to observe, “The work of combining elements from the various kingdoms in nature helps in creating the organism. This is well demonstrated in the work of the preparations.”

The preparations are an excellent example of man’s contributing something to nature that wouldn’t ordinarily exist.

Germany since the 1980s. We are far more advanced in the realm of plant breeding than ordinary organic agriculture. Biodynamic farms try to build their own animal stocks, but the difficulty of the hybrid problem is especially acute both in plants and animals. For years, we have been breeding biodynamic chickens, and we have done it consciously for many years with cattle – out of female bloodlines... Biodynamics breeds according to Goethean science. We have very skilled plant breeders, a whole range of officially-acknowledged, self-bred cultivars in both cereals and vegetables, and entire catalogs of biodynamic seed. This should be encouraged in the United States.”

He continues, “There is a tension between the economics of industry and those of agriculture. The fact that agriculture deals with living systems makes it fundamentally different. In industry, capital is organizing and dividing human labor and the mechanism, the machine, is producing goods; while in agriculture the organism produces. The machine doesn’t produce in agriculture! I have always criticized the universities for not grasping this idea. Their study is conducted as if agriculture were like any other industry, when it obviously is not. Ecological farming has its own conditions of economics – and that is a diversified farm organism. One must find a way to make visible that this is the way agriculture works... In the United States, it has been hard to gain momentum in terms of research and the acceptance of biodynamics. The economic pressures [here] are enormous. Also, the consciousness of the consumer is different.”

Beyond pressures in the cultural/academic and economic spheres, there are also pressures exerted through the political, and Dr. Klett briefly discussed the struggles of biodynamics, and indeed of the entire anthroposophic community, in the face of regulatory changes being proposed by the European Union (E.U.). Essentially, the E.U. is moving towards greater political integration, and this is likely to result in increased standardization of policies and regulations affecting member states. At the moment, the E.U. Parliament has the opinion that anthroposophic initiatives in agriculture and food production, education, social therapy, medicine, and therapeutic disciplines comprise too small a market for special laws of protection to be made for them. Instead, it is demanding that they fit into laws intended to protect the population from inferior products and services; mandatory homogenization of, and addition of synthetic substances into some foods are examples of these regulations. This trend is already creating challenges for biodynamic practitioners and, justifiably, is seen as a threat to people’s free choice in the marketplace.

Dr. Klett told of the difficulty facing biodynamics related

to preparation making. “The E.U. effort to interfere in biodynamics is not a conscious one, but because of the fear of B.S.E. [bovine spongiform encephalopathy, commonly referred to as mad cow disease], the E.U. has prohibited the use of animal sheaths in agriculture. It is illegal to sell animal parts. Biodynamic farmers are therefore in the awkward position of having to use them surreptitiously. This has created a hardship for us. In Switzerland [not part of the E.U.], farmers have found a way of handling this problem. Seven selected farms are officially sanctioned by the government to take animal parts from their own cows and distribute them to other biodynamic farms. It’s controlled, and they must use parts from secure herds with no B.S.E.” At the moment, the issue is unresolved in the E.U., but Dr. Klett expects that a similar arrangement will eventually be set up in Germany.

The response from the anthroposophic community in Europe has been the generation of a continent-wide campaign to gather a million signatures, which would demonstrate the level of support the various anthroposophic initiatives have, and would serve as a lobbying tool to ensure that proponents of alternative agriculture, education, and medicine would have a voice in future E.U. policy making. The campaign is being spearheaded by a group called “ELIANT” (European Alliance of Initiatives for Applied Anthroposophy). Dr. Klett reports that over 500,000 signatures have been gathered to date. To find out more about the campaign, or to sign the petition, please visit: <www.eliant.eu/new/lang/en>.

What struck me most in my conversation with Dr. Klett was his vast perspective on how the relatively new phenomenon of biodynamics fits into the evolution of humankind – and his sense of hope. “Currently, our relationship to nature is conditioned by the ‘on-looker’ consciousness of materialistic science. It has created an abyss, which we must bridge. We must realize the farm corresponds to our own ego spirit. We must apply the inner force of selflessness and devotion to seek a new identity, and a new relationship with nature... For farming to truly renew itself, it must become aware of forces. Biodynamic farmers have a special insight into these. You must have a very far-reaching outlook and realize this is something new. You see, biodynamics is an evolutionary work! It is a seed for the future. This idea is exciting to me. In developing the work of biodynamics, we are laying the foundation for the next thousand years, just as the villagers of the Middle Ages laid the foundation for society for centuries to follow. In knowing this, you have an inner certainty in what you do. This is a privilege, in a sense. And one must be humble, for the task is huge. We will not see the results in one lifetime.”