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Editorial

Dear readers,

Climate crisis, war, critical media reports about anthroposophy. The current challenges present an opportunity for us to completely re-assess our position, our past, but also the way we work in the public domain. Such an opportunity was offered by COP 27, the biggest climate summit in the world in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. There Lin Bautze and Ueli Hurter presented their new book “Breathing with the Climate Crisis”, a bridge-builder, which thanks to the poetic language and being without dogmatism moves people of various nationalities, with or without anthroposophical background, young or old. Despite the meagre results of the climate summit, with its 40,000 participants it made it possible to present the biodynamic contribution towards resolving the climate crisis to a broad section of the public.

The climate concerns us all – and connects us all. This connection is picked up by the approach “One Health”, which illustrates the interdependence of the health and resilience of human beings, animals, plants and soils in a particular “sociotope” (social setting) and biotope. On the one hand, this approach may meet criticism on account of the dictate of the WHO, on the other hand, it holds huge potential, as Ueli Hurter shows through the example of his 30 years of farming experience.

Just as much potential is offered by looking at biodynamic research, which Jean-Michel Florin gets to grips with in his article. Thus, he counters the current criticism that biodynamics is anti-scientific, indeed even anti-enlightenment. Jasmin Peschke and Lea Sprügel present an especially successful piece of biodynamic research in their project “The Lehenhof – a forward-looking nutritional System”.

Like the Lehenhof, other biodynamic farms are also centres of sustainability, health and resilience, above all, in times of crisis. This includes the Potutory farm near Lviv, in the Ukraine. In the Summer Circular (no. 121) Cristina Lieberherr reported on her everyday life there. Now she tells how the life on the farm and of the people who had sought refuge there on account of the war have developed since.

The variety and diversity of biodynamic farms was evident during both excursion days of the Circle of Representatives in Austria and Hungary. The Michlits

family, whose farm, Meinklang, lies on the Austrian border to Hungary, invited us to hold our autumn meeting there and helped us to gain a new insight into the relationship between East and West and the clichés and prejudices entailed

We want to meet each other ‘anew’ time and again, especially at the coming agriculture conference from 1st to 4th February 2023 at the Goetheanum. After the conference has taken place mainly digitally for two years because of Corona, we are especially looking forward to this possibility of conversation and interaction to strengthen our bonds despite the times of crisis. Together we shall look back at 100 years of biodynamics, but also at the cultural development of agriculture in general. With this, there have been repeated phases of self-determination, of taking part in the shaping of society, indeed even of upholding cultural progress for agriculture, as Ueli Hurter reports in his interview with Wolfgang Held.

With the project “Carrying the cultural impulse” we invite enterprises and organisations to help us carry the review of the effects of the Koberwitz impulse as a way of tuning into the coming conference and exhibit their review in the form of a poster or video at the Goetheanum. Such contributions should be devoted to three sorts of bearers of the impulse: individuals, farms and organisations. Through such an exhibition we can tell of the history of the working of the Koberwitz impulse and gain an understanding of what point the impulse has reached in the present day. This, in turn, will form a starting-point for the theme of the year 2023/24, which Jean-Michel Florin and Ueli Hurter have gone into in the final article of this circular.

We hope you will find this stimulating reading and are looking forward to meeting you in person again at the coming conference after a two-year interruption and continuing the conversation!



Anna Storchenegger
for the team of the Section for Agriculture

Lin Bautze and Ueli Hurter's Participation in the COP27 Climate Conference in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, for the Agriculture Section

Ueli Hurter

Back Story

In 2019 Guillermo Scallan asked Constanza Kaliks whether representatives of the Goetheanum or of the Anthroposophical Society wanted to visit the Climate Summit in Santiago de Chile in order to bring in the contribution of anthroposophy to the challenge of the climate crisis. On behalf of the Avina Foundation he would be organising round table discussions there, we would be warmly welcome. This call was surprising and challenging, for in the first place there was no basis there – neither in knowledge nor in the field of activity – to be able to make a substantial contribution to the theme of the climate crisis out of anthroposophy.

In the summer of 2019 all over the globe Fridays for the Future were taking place, which were being initiated, above all, by young people. We took the decision to hold the Agriculture Conference 2021 together with the Youth Section on the theme of the climate. Experienced farmers who have devoted their lives to working the earth and young city people, living as vegans and with deep inhibitions inside about treading on the earth at all properly, because their footprint might be damaging for the climate, stood face to face and sought perspectives together. The conference itself had to be carried out 100% digitally on account of Corona. A huge experiment, a complete novelty for the Goetheanum, a success for many of the 1,200 participants from over 60 countries.

The Booklet “Breathing in the Climate Crisis”

In the reviewing of the conference and in further dealing with the theme of the climate we wondered whether we could and should make some of the results of the conference available to a wider public, or not. For the climate discussion is carried out in a completely reductionist and mechanical way. Generally it is a question of the sequestration of CO₂ or else of CO₂ equivalents with the aim of holding up the warming of the atmosphere caused by them. Through the computer-simulated prognoses an apocalyptic view of the future arises and an imperative to act, which does not let other more comprehensive viewpoints emerge. However, at the conference we definitely did work out

viewpoints that moved beyond this; we experienced this together. Can we formulate these in such a way that they can lead to a contribution from anthroposophy to the official climate negotiations?

The three of us – Lin Bautze, Ueli Hurter and Johannes Kronenberg – set about working on this and at the end of August 2022 we finalised the manuscript of a little book with the title “Breathing with the Climate Crisis”. Further stages of publishing followed, in particular, the graphic work by Mark Schalken and the translation into English, Spanish and French. On Friday 4th November 2022 Lin Bautze and Ueli Hurter travelled to Egypt – in joyful expectation of the 800 copies, which our friends from Sekem had printed for us there, in order to distribute them at the COP 27 in Sharm el-Sheikh and at their pre-conference meeting at the Heliopolis University in Kairo.

“Breathing with the Climate Crisis” is written in language which is meant to speak to the heart. An argumentative style of language, which we are used to in contemporary academic or scientific culture slipped away from us while we were writing. Just the dimensions of the living world, of the soul and spirit as genuine anthroposophy can come across as something striving, if they are offered to the readers with explanations before they have asked. We adopted a style of addressing the readers directly, especially for young people, and did not attempt to speak about the matter, but rather out of the matter. The content is now structured – after all the processes of condensing that the text went through – as four main statements: 1. The earth is a living being and not a broken machine. Our body is part of the earth. 2. We, as human beings, can get involved in a positive way. We are not condemned by our nature to destroy nature on the earth. On the contrary, the earth is waiting for our footprint. On account of our cultural abilities, we are able to participate in shaping the earth's future. 3. This participation will become real, if we are active and work the earth, if we farm in a healthy way, biodynamically. As we all eat, we are all farmers. Biodynamic agriculture, as an example, benefits culture, builds up soil fertility and has a positive climate balance. 4. There is no way around being personally affected, nor around having the knowledge and being involved ourselves. However, it does not

need to get stuck at the personal level. Connecting with lots of people, potentially with everyone, is possible. It is just the climate that connects us all.

The Conference before the COP 27 at the Heliopolis University in Kairo

Together with partners, the Sekem Initiative and the Heliopolis University launched the two-day event “Solution Summit” with the aim of bringing in concrete proposals for solutions. The participants came from the areas of economics, politics and science. In addition, 300 students from the Heliopolis University came and also partners invited by the Sekem Initiative, to whom we belonged. Over the past months the Sekem entrepreneurial group had itself worked out a solution in the form of a proposal and had developed it ready to be put into practice. The point is to turn agriculture from being a cause of the climate and environmental crisis into being part of the solution. To this end, in the current pilot phase, there are 2,100 small farmers who are converting to biodynamic cultivation with composting, tree planting, building up the soil and the installation of renewable forms of energy. These conversions will lead to a measurable binding of CO₂, for which CO₂ certificates can be awarded, and for which there is a market. Through the sale of certificates the farmers will generate additional income. This will enable them to sell biodynamically produced food at the local market at the usual prices. If we add up the results from 2,100 small farms that are now converting, it results in the following figures: 5,600 hectares of land with 21,000 tons of bound carbon, 636,363 trees, 70,000 tons of compost. That results in 84,000 certificates for a total amount of 2.1 million Euros. Of course, this only functions, if

there are buyers for these certificates. Furthermore, money is required for helping with the conversions and the schooling of the farmers. At COP 27 in Egypt the next phase of the project is now starting, which is to involve 40,000 farmers. In the environment of this contribution and other practical solutions, in which the monetary aspect plays an important role, our little book with its completely different approach was distributed to all the 400 participants. It was well received; the students were really glad and proud to hold it in their hands. They will work on the content together with their professors. And we had the impression that for many participants it was a good complement to the CO₂ acrobatics with numbers.

The COP 27 in Sharm el-Sheikh

Then the journey carried on to the southern tip of the Sinai peninsula, where in the last 40 years a small fishing village has turned into “Sharm el-Sheikh”,



Reading students
Photo: Lin Bautze

the all-round tourist and conference destination. The airport dates back to the Israeli occupation after the Six-Days War. Now 40,000 people are travelling there from all countries so as to discuss the earth's climate together. The COP (Conference of the Parties) is a UNO conference that has been taking place each year since 1995. The bases for the negotiations are the scientific reports on climate change and relevant scenarios of the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change). At the COP 21 in Paris in 2015 the governments agreed bindingly to a 1.5 C goal. Each state determines its own climate policy in order to achieve the common goal, yet it regularly gives an account of its actions. The noble goals are one thing, the interests of the individual states and their economies is another. In the negotiations there is some tough horse-trading, for instance, about withdrawal scenarios from the coal industry or transfer payments from the North to the South, etc. The negotiations are carried out by the states, though selected representatives from the economic life and civil society are authorised to attend; and thus the COPs are becoming huge events with a complex structure.

Our base was a stall of Heliopolis University where the project with the CO2 certificates, described above, was

presented and our little book was displayed. The little book with its light-blue/white cover was an eye-catcher, and we were actively giving copies away, above all, to the many young visitors. During the COP lots of events take place on different stages on an hourly basis. The usual format is a panel, in which three to six people handle a theme with brief interventions. The format requires each participant to blurt out something quickly, which a lot of people are well able to do. With each panel you could learn a lot in a very concentrated form. This year a lot of NGOs were not accepted to be part of the panels; neither were we. The representatives of Sekem, on the other hand, were on the stage again and again and were able to present their approach. Helmy Abouleish, especially, was a sought after man. He knows a lot of ministers and entrepreneurs from Egypt and has good networks internationally, when it comes to the themes sustainability, agriculture and new forms of economic working. After a few days you end up with a whole pile of business cards from great people, who informed you of their impressive projects. In this manner the huge conference community enters the realm of real experience. Biodynamics and even Demeter were reasonably well known, also because at every opportunity the Sekem co-workers emphasised their biodynamic approach. Anthroposophy, the Goetheanum and the Agriculture Section, on the other hand, were known to only a few people. For this reason our little book was a welcome bridge-builder.

The Villa by the Sea

For the two weeks of COP Sekem ran a hotel, so to speak: a villa directly on the Red Sea was rented. Around 40 beds were available, so during the entire period roughly 100 people could be accommodated. The garden is the only green spot that can be found in Sharm el-Sheikh with Google Earth; it was turned into an



Lin Bautze, Helmy Abouleish, Ueli Hurter
Photo: Section for Agriculture

open-air restaurant with 150 seats and biodynamic cuisine thanks to the products from Sekem. Thus breakfast and the evening meal in the green garden by the sea were particularly valuable times to converse with the many interesting participants from all over the world. Every evening, according to the COP theme of the day, there was an event with a panel format with the title “COP Solutions Dialogues”. A few months beforehand the “Future Economy Forum” had been brought into being; the organisers had set themselves the benchmark of getting a conversation under way on concrete solutions for a new economic system. Starting from the fact that ecology and sustainability appear as costs in business accounting and the wider economic system and, therefore, to this day – 50 years after the report “The Limits to Growth” of the Club of Rome – are treated not as economic factors but as philanthropic, the challenge for the speakers was to demonstrate their concrete proposals towards solutions for the coming 12 months. “Regenerative economics” should become mainstream, that was the maxim. There were some really courageous appearances, in particular from Sandrine Dixon-Decleve, Co-president of the Club of Rome, and many others. In this framework it was anything but easy to make a statement on behalf of the biodynamic movement. Our view of ourselves is such that we have been carrying out a lot of what is just now the fashion for a hundred years. This faces us with the critical challenge of being able to formulate our century of experience in a highly relevant and topical way. And the burning question is: what are our completely concrete contributions that we want to introduce in the near future? People who know the Goetheanum, such as Patrick Holden, for example, who has set himself the task of lobbying for sustainable agriculture and food production in conventional economic circles, were very much aware of our presence and appreciated it.

Conclusion

After a week we departed. The negotiations were not over. From those who stayed on we have heard that any progress has been moving like treacle. After a week of great effort from seven in the morning until late evening no ground had been gained for taking

agricultural systems into account that are kind to the environment. The agrobusiness lobby successfully blocks everything. On the other hand, in the circles in which we have been moving and to which we belong the knowledge that biodynamic agriculture and many related forms of ecological cultivation can make an effective, positive contribution to the climate has consolidated. Thereby, the currently accepted estimate that approx. 30% of the climate gas emissions come from agriculture and food production is designated as the ecological footprint of conventional agriculture. Conversion to ecological agriculture is able not only to prevent this negative footprint from happening, but also to overturn it. A good portion of the emissions from the resource-consuming economy can potentially be recovered through agriculture and absorbed by the life processes of the soil, the plants and trees. During the days at the COP 27, the will grew to strengthen this approach in a focused way so that it can be brought in at the next COP (28) in a dynamic way. At the Agriculture Section and the Goetheanum we want to pursue this theme further. As a next step we shall try to spread the call in “Breathing with the Climate Crisis” far and wide.

Breathing with the Climate Crisis

Lin Bautze, Ueli Hurter, Johannes Kronenberg

We need air. We need breath.



We need a new horizon. A new narrative. **A new perspective.**

We know. Almost everything. We know about climate change and the loss of biodiversity. Animals are dying, plants withering.

We know about us human beings who do not listen to each other. We know about the challenges of our times. We know so much.

Theoretically we know what we would have to do. Could do. Should do. Must do. But we rarely do anything. We hear shouts, we fight an invisible enemy.

We fight something. We fight each other. We fight climate change. We fight the changes of our times.

We fight the destruction of the earth.

We have a feeling of suffocating. In what we must do, could do, should do, in what we know. In the challenges of our times.

How can we draw breath nowadays? How can we breathe when our footprint only does more damage? How can we breathe, when our action contributes to more CO₂, less biodiversity and greater injustice in the world?

I am seeking. New perspectives.

A new viewpoint. Of our role as human beings. Fellow human beings. On our earth. Our relationship with each other.

We can do it. You. I. The earth. Together.

Together we want to make a positive footprint. We want to breathe. We want to act.

It needs you. Some things we can do alone. But many only together. Our times are asking for a change. All the way down to the roots. A radical change, a quick transformation.

Get started!

We are the earth.

One chapter is coming to an end. We have reached a full stop. The new chapter will follow. The new story. We are those who write and those who are written about. **Just start writing!**

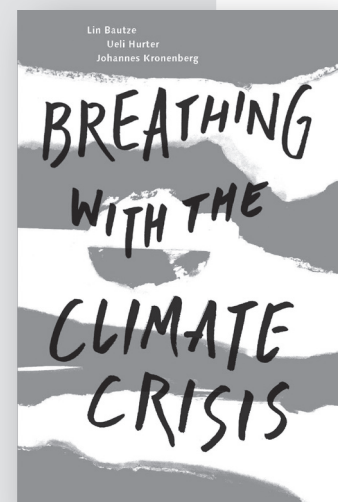
Background

This text is an excerpt from our newly published book "Breathing with the Climate Crisis".

The contents are the research, thoughts and processes of the conference of the same name, which was held in 2021 together with the Youth Section. The text makes an appeal to adopt a perspective of partnership with the earth and to bring about healthy breathing and a healthy footprint.

Thus, the practical and spiritual experience of anthroposophy and biodynamic agriculture over many years can be put forward as an approach for resolving the challenges of the present time.

The whole text is available for free as a PDF in 4 languages (German, English, French and Spanish) under www.livingfarms.net. The printed version will appear, all being well, at the Agriculture Conference 2023.



One Health

My Experience from 30 years' Responsibility for Running a mixed biodynamic Farm in Switzerland

Ueli Hurter

One Health means the interdependence of health and resilience of humans, animals, plants and soils in a particular social environment and biotope. This approach, which has been adopted to work on by the Medical Section and the Agriculture Section, is in its early stages. However, the term itself is controversial, because people do not understand it as common health or shared health, but rather as standardized health, which is to be introduced via the WHO in a dictatorial manner. At the Goetheanum an information evening on One Health took place and in this context I tried to convey my practical experiences.

In the course of 30 years, during which we ran the farm carefully, the health of soils, plants and animals on the farm have improved and become continually more stable. By far the most of the essential steps that led to this were of indirect nature. In other words, success came about not through a strategy of fighting disease, but rather through a strategy of acting out of a holistic view of the farm and thus it corresponded to a One Health approach. Thereby, the view always starts from the whole – from the agricultural organism – right through to the particular. The cultures, the animals, the soils are viewed and treated as organs of the farm organism. Correspondingly, diseases and illnesses are disturbances between one organ and the organism, or else between different organs. The therapy can consist in the adaptation of a particular organ so that it fits into the organism better. Or else, farm processes that connect the organs are changed so that the organs are interconnected in a different way.

One example of such a change within an organ is the selection of the variety in plant cultivation. Thus, with the conventional wheat variety 'Arina' we repeatedly had 50% failures because of brown rust, partly too because of stinking bunt. With the change-over to 'Aszita' and later to 'Pizza', wheat varieties from Peter Kunz's biodynamic grain breeding, all the diseases have disappeared and the stability of the yield on a middle level was guaranteed. With other cultures as well the selection of the variety became a decisive step for success – right through to propagating our own seed with beetroot.

Another example is the health, robustness and resilience of beef and dairy cows and calves. Each attempt to increase the milk yield destabilised the situation in the cowshed. In other words, small mistakes or inattentiveness led straight away to diarrhoea and navel inflammations with the calves, to parasites with the heifers and bullocks or to ups and downs in the milk quality with the cows. A first step towards stability was to consistently only take calves from our own stock: every heifer of your own is better than a supposedly good dairy cow from another farm, simply because it comes from the farm, that is, from the common health biotope, from the "One Health World" of the farm. A further step came about through the inner attitude "the farm does the breeding, not I"; which meant the animals with their health or disharmony were telling me who belonged to the farm organism and who did not. That meant a catharsis, because, in the beginning, I picked out the wrong animals and I needed to acquire new eyes. Together with other measures the animal health has stabilised massively through a strategy of taking account of and adapting to the conditions of the farm organism to the greatest extent possible.

As an example of an adaptation of the process the way that manure is dealt can be described. In the first year deep bedding manure from the new pen was spread on the field, where it caused a genuine disaster with thistles. A phase of compost rows on the edges of the fields followed, tiresome machine work, with high losses. Finally, a place with foundations was established, the manure could be turned as needed, was always covered up, received the biodynamic preparations two or three times and the rotting process was only carried out up to the fungus stage. At the same time, the manure spreading in the crop rotation was changed; instead of fertilising the nutrient-hungry cultures directly, the manure was spread solely to build up the soil. Usually the main spreading took place in the second year of clover grass growing. With adaptation of the process of managing the farm manure, the soil became quiet and stable, major problems with weeds became rare, the soil was compliant and able to accept each culture.

The biodynamic farm that does completely without buying in mineral fertilisers, agrochemicals and, to the greatest possible extent, antibiotics needs to create its own capacity to promote health itself. It is the farm's third genuine performance factor, alongside the annual yield and the long-term building up of the soil fertility. Experience has taught me that this goal is only achieved through a roundabout approach for salutogenesis, coming from the whole or the periphery, which does not aim at the particular disease, but thanks to observing, thinking and acting in a holistic way, takes in the whole farm organism. Part of this on a biodynamic farm is the application of spray preparations and compost preparations. In terms of farm management I would reckon the saving made by good health on our mixed farm at 5–10% of the gross proceeds, that is, 30,000 to 50,000 Swiss Francs per year. The produce that leaves the farm carries this health element in it. Food is produced, which has not become unhealthy because it has been protected by chemicals, but which is healthy thanks to the healthy

production process in the farm organism. This health is 'one health' or shared and common health of all creatures, which, through the work of the human being as composer, are ordered and shaped as a farm organism which is an organism of a higher order. If this shaping and ordering succeeds, then the farm is not just not unhealthy, but is healthy in a productive way, a hotspot of health. With the food this health is passed on to the social organism, to people who feed themselves with it.

The Scientific Nature of biodynamic Agriculture

Jean-Michel Florin

"Biodynamics is anti-scientific, even a reaction against the Enlightenment and would lead us back into the dark Middle Ages, when people believed in magic powers"; recently this statement, intending to disqualify biodynamics, could be found frequently in various media outlets. This often involves the attempt to separate it from the stream which it co-founded, the stream of organic agriculture and agrarian ecology. Even the term in English 'organic' derives from the concept of the farm organism.¹ In order to counter the accusation of being unscientific, the scientific status of biodynamic agriculture will be examined more closely in this article.

As a first step the relationship between biodynamics and science needs clarification. This means distin-

guishing two aspects of what is generally described as science. With the first aspect science is considered as a method of working, which fulfils a set of criteria: transparency, reproducibility etc. Using this method of working, phenomena can be observed and be 'objectively' described. Here it is worth reminding ourselves that with anthroposophy Rudolf Steiner wanted to lay the foundations for a scientific approach to the spirit, far removed from any kind of revelations that people needed to believe in blindly. As far as biodynamic agriculture is concerned, biodynamic research had begun before Rudolf Steiner's Agriculture Course for the farmers: for one thing, with the preparatory work of Dr. Ehrenfried Pfeiffer, and, for another, with the work of Eugen Kolisko on foot-and-mouth disease. Rudolf Steiner insisted that the farmers and estate owners participating in the Course should found an

¹ See the contribution to the Theme of the Year 23/24, p. 26.

experimental circle in order to carry out field trials.² before the glad news of biodynamic cultivation was spread. This was started immediately. Beyond this, the task consisted in interpreting the results obtained. A number of researchers show that any interpretation of scientific facts is never completely 'objective'. It always takes place in a context, in a paradigm, as Thomas Kuhn calls it. Bruno Latour, the French philosopher who has recently died, demonstrates this in his book «Nous n'avons jamais été modernes». Like every other approach to the world, research always develops in a certain context, which influences the so-called 'objective' interpretations. And thus we come closer to the necessity in the present paradigm of opening doors for new perspectives.

With the second aspect, science counts as the "new religion".³ This is totally self-contradictory, because the promise of science, which appeared on the scene in the Age of Enlightenment, consisted in freeing people from the obligation of believing blindly in the revelations of authority figures. The Corona time and the manner in which, in a whole number of countries, experts turned into high priests who told the governments and citizens what was to be done is an example of the abuse of science. From this viewpoint (science=new religion) biodynamics may be considered unscientific, since it does not (yet) fit into the prevailing general interpretation of the phenomena of matter and life. Thus, the application of substances in infinitesimal doses is criticised regularly, as it is impossible to imagine that a substance which has disappeared from a solution, can still have an effect. In this connection, from the founding days of biodynamics, the necessity of broadening the scientific approach was evident. The Goethean approach, for example, is such a broadening, which includes observation of the context as well as the qualitative aspects of the phenomena observed. Thus, various 'qualitative' methods have been developed, some of which the scientific community validates nowadays (morphogenetic methods and likewise the copper chloride crystallisation). My lecture on biodynamic quality on

Goetheanum TV⁴ gives an overview of the various methods which are used to capture the physical-material, vital, sensory, individual and the ethical levels of a living product.

This prerequisite is necessary in order to have grounds to enable the relationship between biodynamic agriculture and science to be explained and the critics to be answered. Here there are three aspects to consider. Firstly, are there research results that validate the effect of specific biodynamic practices? This question may be answered yes, whereby it needs to be noted that the results are not always absolutely reproducible, but are broadly comprehensible, since it is a matter of research on a living organism.⁵ Secondly, how can the biodynamic practices be explained in the context of current scientific knowledge (out of the current paradigm)? We must admit that a lot of the mechanisms of their working are not yet fully explicable, even if a series of studies shows interesting ways forward.⁶ Here the above-mentioned necessity of extending the scientific approach in order to have the methods and concepts available so that we understand the biodynamic phenomena better. Thirdly, how is the relationship between the biodynamic movement and academic research? Since the 1970s Germany and Switzerland have carried out pioneer work in this area, but now the international community is interested in biodynamic agriculture. Particularly the conversion of numerous vineyards, some of them renowned, whose wine has improved in quality, has extended the reach of biodynamics in the media. Thus, research is developing further in Italy, France, the USA etc. Contrary to the media reports in European countries, the interest of researchers in biodynamics is growing, something confirmed by the rising number of papers published of academic research work on biodynamics, as the graph shows.

2 Compare Rudolf Steiner, Agriculture Course, GA 327, Rudolf Steiner Verlag, Basel 2022, pp 217-238.

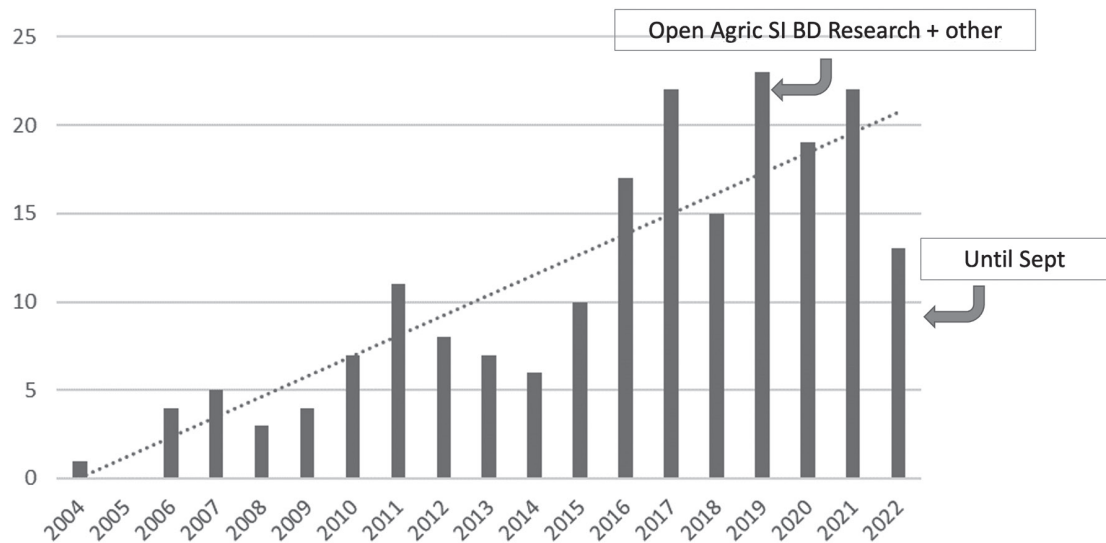
3 See the lecture by Matthias Rang, Are we making a religion out of science? <https://goetheanum.tv/programs/machen-wir-aus-der-naturwissenschaft-eine-religion?categoryId=100786>

4 See lecture of Jean-Michel Florin (2022), Biodynamic Quality – does it really exist? <https://goetheanum.tv/programs/die-biodynamische-qualitaet-florin-peschke>

5 Compare Edita Juknevičienė et al. (2021), Effekt von biodynamischen Präparaten auf das Wachstum und die Fruchtfleischqualität von Kürbissen, (Effect of biodynamic preparations on the growth and the quality of the flesh of squashes/pumpkins) <https://www.sektion-landwirtschaft.org/en/research/sv/the-effect-of-biodynamic-preparations-on-growth-and-fruit-quality-of-giant-pumpkin-cucurbita-maxima-d>

6 Alessandro Piccolo et al. (2012), Molecular properties of a fermented manure preparation used as field spray in biodynamic agriculture, <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11356-012-1022-x>

Development of peer-reviewed BD research papers



It is interesting to see that, whereas for a long time academic research on biodynamic agriculture mainly took place in the agronomics departments, nowadays various social science departments are opening up to it. They approach it with completely different questions, which have more to do with the foundations of biodynamic agriculture and less with examining the effectiveness of its agronomic practices. As social scientists are more used to including various world-views, it is easier for them to examine biodynamic agriculture with an open-minded approach. In France and French-speaking Switzerland the work of the famous anthropologist, Philippe Descola, forms a theoretical basis for several of these enquiries.

How does the Agriculture Section encounter these research developments concretely? With a committee of researchers, who represent several organisations, the Section has organised two research conferences⁷, which each made a meeting and conversation possible among more than 150 researchers from 15 to 20 coun-

tries. Most recently, the need arose to develop research communication that orientates itself towards the work done by the association “Biodynamie recherche”. Thus, on the Section’s website summaries of the latest academic research on biodynamics are to be found.⁸ People expressed the need to strengthen the links among researchers so that communication makes the work more straightforward, makes common projects possible and, finally, improves the quality of publications.

⁷ See <https://www.sektion-landwirtschaft.org/en/thematic-areas/research>

⁸ Compare *ibidem*.

The Lehenhof – a forward-looking nutritional System

Jasmin Peschke and Lea Sprügel

As a follow-up to the book “From the Field to the Plate – What really makes Food healthy”, published in 2021, a study of practice on the Lehenhof in the Deggenhauser Valley, in Germany, was undertaken with Lea Spruegel, the nutritional scientist. This involved examining how the typical Lehenhof quality arises, what influence the people concerned have on it and how this quality is nurtured from cultivation via the processing right through to the house communities.

In the book “From the Field to the Plate – What really makes Food healthy” the key questions are what health is and what fosters people’s immune resistance and resilience. A leitmotif is brought out that is grounded on a way of treating the soil, the animals, plants and human beings that reflects partnership, interest and regard. How this works is shown by nutritional systems which serve health and in which, from cultivation and trade right through to the plate, quality, regard and interest are in the foreground. Thereby food is produced which fosters development and all the people participating are involved in the process of it coming about. This may be seen as a contribution towards a future worth living. Such an approach is nurtured in the Lehenhof Camphill Village Community, which is therefore a suitable practical example for the book.

By means of questionnaires and in-depth interviews with the people working in the production, processing and preparation of the Lehenhof food as well as in the care side, the way the quite typical, particular Lehenhof quality, indeed its very own, comes about was investigated. Each workshop and house community has its own character, the stamp given it by the people working and living there. In open conversations the motives and heart-felt concerns of people were included and written down in the form of portraits. Here the central question was what makes the Lehenhof a healthy place for people both more and less independent. Moreover, various workshops – such as the tasting of foods of varying quality, the preparation of a meal, or else painting – served to discover and enhance the awareness of the life on the Lehenhof, especially of the quality of nutrition.

An appreciative, respectful, inner Attitude

With all the portraits regard and respect as inner attitudes shown towards fellow human beings, but also raw materials, plants or animals on the farm were striking and in harmony. The matter of course nature of working together as partners in a community to which everyone contributes is also reflected in the house communities. The effective working together of all contributors shapes the workshops and house communities and makes them unique. “Our vision is not to be an institution, but rather a living and working community”, in the words of Rui Machado, head of council and chief executive as well as house co-ordinator in Morgenstern House, one of the 15 houses of the Lehenhof. Overall it is the nurturing of the “in-between space” that distinguishes the Lehenhof and that provides the people living there with well-being and security, making it their home. Moreover, quality is worked upon consciously right through to the plate, for example, in the form of a ritual before and after the shared meals.

Authenticity and Identification with the Lehenhof

In the in-depth interviews those asked said, independently of one another, that the authentic quality of the products and the community itself only come about through the individuality of the people involved. This is shown by the example of the cheese workshop: the differences in the milk require a sensitive awareness of the milk on a daily basis on the part of the cheese-makers. Thus, although the procedures seem the same and routine, the cheese that is made gets its own characteristics each time, which are dependent on the experience and sensory faculties of the particular person involved. The motto is “being present with all one’s senses”. Work instructions serve orientation and do not replace sensory perception. This is hugely different from industrial cheese production. “Sensory work lends meaning” – this energises and motivates people, and the joy of working can be sensed. “We do not tire of emphasising: cheese is a crafted product and we give our best every day” in the words of Ellen Baier from the cheese dairy team. The team hold regard for one another and almost all stages of the work can be taken on by everyone equally well. In this way a special team



From the field to the plate
Photo: Lehenhof

spirit is fostered. All this contributes to the quality and authenticity of the products, which in turn enable the products to continue to be recognised.

In the workshops a certain pride and identification with the Lehenhof and the special quality which also appears in the food were found and these continued to be strengthened. The identification with the Lehenhof found expression in the painting workshop: for instance, the view of the Alps was accompanied by the statement, “freedom is my Lehenhof”. Moreover, with the blind tasting of apple juice of varying quality this identification was really evident; the Lehenhof apple juice was recognised immediately by people with higher needs, “This is Lehenhof apple juice! It tastes of lovely apples”. This latter workshop as well as the workshop “My favourite food – what makes the difference?” made the participants much more aware how the quality can be sensed, when one pays attention to it.

Healthy Organism – healthy Community

The manner in which agricultural production including forestry is carried out is expressed in the landscape in each case. In a healthy organism the food crops grow and ripen on healthy soil. They further the health

of the people eating them. Thus the head of the garden workshop, Stephan Bauck, knows what distinguishes Lehenhof vegetables: “A lot of attention is given to the vegetables, while they are growing here. All the work here is done by hand. (...) Elsewhere the work is taken on by machines. A lot of care is given to the vegetables, it is the effort we make. (...) Irrespective of who is handling them, it is a matter of the inner attitude of the individual, which is devoted to the vegetables”. It is exactly this individual devotion that characterises the quality of Lehenhof vegetables.

Animals also play a big part on the Lehenhof biodynamic farms and for the village community. Thus, on the one hand, manure, milk and meat are important products, on the other hand, the encounter with the animals as living creatures that have dignity is a fundamental experience which speaks to the soul.

Such an environment contributes to the health of the people living in it and with it. Moreover, it nourishes via the senses, when, for example, we think of a walk through orchards in bloom or in an autumn wood. In the Lehenhof’s nutritional system the provision described, with food produced regionally or locally, reduces dependence on EU-wide or global distribution chains and contributes to resilience. People often only become

aware of this fact in times of crisis. With regard to the current situation in the world “think global, eat/act local” is an action that represents a contribution of the individual to a suitable world for future generations. Thus the result of a sustainable system of nutrition can be seen as positivity and meaning. For a healthy life healthy conditions are required, which begin with the soil on which food is produced and reach as far as the community at the meal table together, which appreciates the meal and enjoys it consciously. The Lehenhof with its organisation, the means and processes which form the system of nutrition contributes to the salutogenesis of the whole community.

Genuine Sustainability

In modern agriculture and food production it is a matter of “indoor farming” (cultivation of vegetables or lettuce with a nutrient solution and under artificial conditions), 3D-printers and laboratory meat, which is presented under the label of sustainability. Sustainability, considered comprehensively and extended to the question as to what conditions make for health leads to

the authentic production of food with an inner attitude of devotion and working as partners. In the above-mentioned book “From the Field to the Plate” this is described as a source of vitality and immune resistance. Thus, biodynamic agriculture, gardening and caring for the landscape are an important source of health. This is mirrored in the picture of the landscape and in the community of the Lehenhof.

Conclusion

With all the interviews it could be observed that what was typical about the workshop or house community comes about through the inner attitude of the people involved. It is distinguished by respect and dignity. The way from the field right through to the plate and beyond is handled with interest and regard, and authentic food comes about that makes a contribution to individuals, the community and nature. The Lehenhof is a sustainable system of nutrition, organised in a rational way, which may serve as an example and stimulus for the development of other forward-looking systems of nutrition.



A Look at everyday Life on the Potutory biodynamic Farm – Part 2

Cristina Lieberherr

In the Summer Circular no. 121 Cristina Lieberherr has already reported on everyday life on the Potutory Farm near Lviv, Ukraine. In the meanwhile most of the people who had sought refuge on the farm on account of the war have moved on. Where their destinies have taken them and how life on the farm has developed since is shown by the following passage from Cristina Lieberherr's report from 25th September 2022.

Our refugees have almost all moved on. Most of them have returned home to Irpin to repair their houses, to work and live their lives. It seems that there actually is work in Kyiv and its surroundings (N.B. Kyiv is the Ukrainian version of the city's name, translator's note). Moreover, several of our bigger customers from Kyiv have opened their shops and restaurants again and are ordering teas and herbs with us. So life goes on, for the Ukrainians are survival artists, as the great number of terrors of their past shows in horrible detail.

Natasha, the poet well-known in our circle¹, is living with her two sons in Germany; she wants to spend the winter in the safety of the West. She has friends half-way across the world and therefore has found somewhere to stay in Germany. Her husband, Volodya, is in Irpin, is holding the fort, repairing the house and buying and selling bicycles, which are very much in demand. Ira, our designer and artist, is also in Germany with her adolescent son, Dima, but it seems to me that they are not doing as well as Natasha, the permanently jovial and positive one. They are still searching for their place to be, have still not started learning German – and they are simply uprooted and homeless. Tatiana, the grandmother, Ira's mother, has stayed with us; she makes herself useful in the kitchen and bakes wonderful bread for us. She comes from Mikolaiv and does not yet dare to return there. However, she is homesick not only for Mikolaiv but is also missing her daughter and grandchild. Inga, the agronomist, who the waves of the war have washed

1 See the text in the Summer Newsletter no. 121.



View over wheat fields
Photo: Potutory Farm



Staff
Photo: Potutory Farm

up on our farm, has also remained. It is uncertain still whether she really wants to find a new home here.

Thus, this war turns many people's lives upside down, even though many of them are not directly impacted; also with children right across the Ukraine. Only those whose schools have an air-raid shelter, are allowed to return to school; there are few of them. For the many other children there is only teaching on-line. That is now the third year in succession, after the Covid years, that children, instead of experiencing life properly, have to live in this parallel world.

Of the Waldorf schools in Kyiv and Dnipro we hear that almost half the children and teachers are "over the border", as people say here. The big, excellent Waldorf schools in Kyiv and Dnipro cannot and do not want to work with the few children left, because they refuse to teach on-line. Just particular creative (female) teachers find opportunities time and again to provide live teaching: in the park, in the rooms of the Christian Community, in someone's house. That is all a result of the war. However, there are a few private, small Waldorf schools, dependent on the state, that are simply working quite normally.

For the children in Potutory it is fortunate that they are living in the countryside. Time and again in the world of life there is something to experience, e.g. in our beautiful "Ittinger Playground".

Here on the farm in Potutory we do not notice anything of the war, only the up-ending of people's lives affects

us. The prices for diesel, gas, electricity, replacement parts, food etc. have shot up by up to 100%, whereas the prices for grain, because of the surplus in the Ukraine, have dropped by up to 50%. We cannot even sell the milk for a higher price.

In the last ten days approximately 140 mm. of water have fallen; and so far the rain is not stopping. This is why our "fleet" is at a standstill and is waiting for the fields to dry out. Only then will we be able to tackle the autumn work on the 400 hectares; threshing millet and buckwheat, bringing out the manure, preparing as many fields as possible for winter grain and sowing, then ploughing the other fields for the winter. Even our new 220hp John Deere, which we were able to buy thanks to a large donation and thanks to the energy and determination of Christian Butscher in Germany, is waiting.

There is other work besides this waiting, though, and that is cleaning the grain harvested so far and preparing part of it for export. We hope to receive the Demeter Certificate this year. Yet this too is a matter of waiting.

Because of the heavy rain everything is still green, even though not as fresh as in spring; even the oak standing at the beginning of our farm drive. It is a bit like us – or maybe the way we would like to be, or else will be. It too had a difficult start; seven years ago we dug it out of the woods in a very dry summer and re-planted it here. However, as we did not forget it and watered it properly throughout the summer (similar

to the way our investor “Schiwa Semlja Schweiz” does not forget us and waters us properly), it actually took root. And now it stands there in this wet autumn, full of youthful energy, and refusing to let itself be blown over. It creates the harmony between the polarities, between the choleric and the levity, between hardening and disintegration.

On our farmland, besides oaks and cultivated and tended areas, there is sufficient space for untamed nature. In a peaceful contest with elderberry trees and orache (or mountain spinach), stinging nettles, above all, are spreading out; they are conquering whole areas with their yellow, gentle yet unstoppably penetrating, rhizome system. What is the “nature of the stinging nettle”? Perhaps it is this: being completely at peace with itself, being highly concentrated on what the matter on hand is. In its case, it would be the forming of these countless, wonderful, swaying, perfect stinging nettle leaves, these leaf stems which hold the leaves when they sway, the forming of these countless, little, siliceous, stinging hairs that glitter in the rain and of which each single one is a powerhouse in its working and wisdom. With this hymn to the stinging nettle we must not forget its effect on the soil, which it conquers out of interest with its root system that gets out of hand, sending its roots through the soil, feeling its way through, working its way through and transforming it; transforming it into the most beautiful, dark, crumbly humus earth.

There would be several more hymns to be written: about yarrow, the delightfully delicate, chaste, strong, tough plant, which continues to bloom untiringly on our land, wherever stinging nettles and other strong plants do not take over quite so much; about valerian, which has long since formed its seeds and shed them; seeds which have already germinated and now as a dense ‘lawn’ of little valerian plants are growing around the faded and withered valerian shrubs; and finally about the horn silica, our light-bringing preparation. These hymns will remain unsung for today.

However, in any case, with biodynamics and its untapped potential we will never come to the end.

From tomorrow on I have to prepare the preparations workshop which will take place next week-end. Then we shall fill the cow horns with manure for the horn manure preparation and produce the preparations of dandelion, chamomile, oak bark and stinging nettle. 15 people from the Ukraine and two people from Germany have already booked. This too makes you realise: life goes on – maybe to pastures new.

Support for the biodynamic farm Potutory

The most important and effective action for the farm's future is to secure the conditions of the lease. This will guarantee that the total area of 400 ha, which is made up of 270 lease agreements, will continue to be available to the farm for cultivation. The villagers of Potutory who lease these areas of land will also get a small but secure income from the obligatory payment of rents in these difficult times

Donations are collected through Acacia², a fund for development cooperation. Donations are transferred via the accounts of the Verein Schiwa Semlja Schweiz to Schiwa Semlja Potutory in the Ukraine. All incoming moneys will be used solely for the above-named purposes. The Association Schiwa Semlja Schweiz³ and the farm manager at Potutory guarantee that the money can be received and will be managed transparently.

2 ACACIA – Fonds pour la coopération au développement

3 Schiwa-Semlja Schweiz est un projet d'ACACIA constitué en association indépendante. Ce fonds est responsable de l'utilisation des dons et confirme leur utilisation à des fins d'intérêt général. www.acacia-verein.ch

Donations account (Switzerland):

Freie Gemeinschaftsbank, Basel, PC 40-963-0
IBAN: CH93 0839 2000 0040 0800 6
BIC FRGGCHB1
In favour of: ACACIA

Donations account (Germany):

GLS-Bank in D-44787 Bochum
IBAN: DE05 4306 0967 0012 3300 10
BIC: GENODEM1GLS
In favour of: Zukunftsstiftung Entwicklungshilfe
Donation reference: Ukraine-Hilfe

Report on the Autumn Meeting of the Circle of Representatives in Austria and Hungary from 25th to 28th October 2022

Jean-Michel Florin

The biodynamic Meinklang farm of the Michlits family lies in the furthest reaches of Austria; they had invited us most warmly to hold our autumn meeting there. Angela and Werner Michlits Junior as well as their four children prepared a marvellous reception for us and a wonderful stay in the brand new buildings of their vineyard. We were the first visitors to stay in the elegant, simple buildings, which are completely ecologically built.



The farm lies in the Seewinkel region, which is separated from the rest of Austria by the Central European Neusiedlersee. It is a steppe landscape, which was once home to the large Hungarian Grauvieh cattle that are supposedly the nearest direct descendants of the aurochs which died out in the Middle Ages. Above the huge, open expanses of the steppes the sky appears vast and the flights of the cranes, which make a rest stop at the Neusiedlersee, enhance this impression of the horizontal. Their trumpeting calls that in various languages have earned them the name Gru-gru lend a melancholic accent to the landscape.

Until the fall of the Iron Curtain the Seewinkel region was a kind of cul-de-sac. However, since then there has been lively interaction between East and West and through the border opening the opportunity was given to the Michlits family to buy lots of Hungarian plots of land, which those who had been given their original property back had sold at low prices. Now the family owns roughly 2,000 hectares of land. Annelies, the mother of the three brothers, Werner, Lukas and Hannes, explained that in 1993 when she and her husband had taken on the farm with its 21 hectares from the in-laws she had never thought of such a scale. Even the size of 100 hectares seemed unattainable then.

Lisa Dyk
Photo: Anna Storchenegger

Nowadays, the three brothers, Werner, Lukas and Hannes, run the farm, in which each one has their own special area: Werner and his wife, Angela, have the vineyard, Lukas the cattle breeding and Hannes the grain and the arable land. It is important that each of them has their own area of responsibility and, consequently, their freedom to make decisions. The farm includes approx. 13 larger and smaller enterprises, of which the latest is a farm shop in Vienna. Annelies keeps an overview, especially over the finances.

About 80 of the 2,000 hectares of land are given to wine-growing, Angela and Werner's common passion. They got to know one another at the Wine University in Geisenheim. When they returned to the Michlits family farm after their degrees, Angela brought in the biodynamic impulse. Werner related, "Quite unlike with other vineyards, during the wine-making process a lot of things happen intuitively. For instance, Angela tastes the wine regularly, instead of having the acid content measured. Therefore, some wine-growers consider us crazy". But Angela and Werner trust their perceptions – and this has been a very good experience.

First Excursion Day in Austria

During our two-day excursions in Austria and to Hungary we got to know various farmers, who, despite the different sizes of their farms, had one thing in common: striving for quality, which is expressed both in the produce as well as in the careful tending of the farms. These are committed, enterprising and creative people, who get the best out of their farms. This is quite the contrary of the cliché of backward-looking Austria, which yearns for its former greatness!

Thus, we met Helga Bernold, a dynamic and enthusiastic young woman, who used to work in IT, but in the end followed her great wish to become a farmer. She and her – now late – husband built up a cattle-breeding farm from scratch in the dry wine-growing “Weinviertel” region (approx. 450mm precipitation), where



Helga Bernold
Photo: Anna Storchenegger

cattle-breeding died out around 50 years ago. Helga said, “The Demeter approach convinced me straight away, as I could not imagine a farm without animals”. She wanted a local breed, the Pinzgauer, which, however, does not sell well on the traditional market. Therefore, she decided to diversify her production by

breeding about 30 mother cows of different breeds: Pingauers, French Salers, Scottish Angus and Japanese Wagyu. The customers appreciate this variety. When visiting a high-quality butcher’s in Vienna, she met her new partner, Wolfgang, who is an expert in meat processing and whose talent as a butcher we came to appreciate at the lunch-break. He explained that meat is a highly nutritious food which deserves profound respect in the processing.

The animals, which are fattened up for four years instead of the usual 18 months, are slaughtered on the farm and are processed there in a workshop that is built to the proper standards. The meat is sold at the farm, sent by post to regular customers and once a week sent to Vienna as a parcel. The cattle, which cannot graze in the area on account of the dry climate, are fed in an open cowshed with a lucerne grass mixture and with additional grain to fatten them. The crop rotation is broad: lucerne grass, followed by wheat, oil squash, sunflowers, triticale and lentils. With our next visit we got to know another dynamic young entrepreneur. Lisa Dyk took on the Dyk Mill in Raabs from her parents. For over thirty years the mill has sometimes processed Demeter grain; in 2004 they switched exclusively to organic and biodynamic grain. This enabled lots of farms in the region to process their grain locally, whether spelt, which is husked, forest rye or Einkorn etc. The mill still uses water power, as in the past, but today no longer to turn the great wheel, but rather a turbine, which produces most of the power required. Lisa is a woman with an entrepreneurial spirit; she has founded a second enterprise, which designs and produces medium-size mills that are exported to various countries. Her dynamism, openly facing the future shows through, even if this does not look so rosy!

Afterwards, we drove to the Waldviertel, a region that is more wooded, colder and more barren. There Andreas Höritzauer was awaiting us on his 6 hectare farm, the Wegwartehof; he is the president of the Demeter Association in Austria, which unites 266 farms (over 8,000 hectares). Andreas settled in the region in the 1990s with goats within the framework of a farm community. In 1990 he started with the breeding of 30 Hafflinger mares, a local breed, which is used both for milk production as well as for riding. The other pillar of the farm is the production of medicinal plants, which are processed as cosmetics. Thus, in the course of time a small enterprise for cosmetics and health products has developed. The mares’ milk, which is an excellent

cell-builder, is said to have numerous good attributes: it helps with psoriasis, can be used to accompany chemotherapy and is good for the lungs with Covid illnesses. Recently, a new branch of the business has developed: holiday accommodation and the organising of training and educational courses. However, among the Austrian biodynamic farmers and gardeners the Wegwartehof is known, above all, as a centre for the communal production of the biodynamic preparations. We visited the basement and were impressed by the excellent quality of the preparations. In the past the preparations were produced on a different farm each year, but in the course of time the Wegwartehof established itself as the place of choice. Structuring of the work makes it possible to process the quantities required – with 100–120 participants for approx. 70 farms. There is a small core group, which organises and works out what is required for each production process in advance (one to three people per process) and puts all the necessary ingredients together. Without being dogmatic this group takes inspiration from the various people involved and advisors, which means the best possible quality is achieved.

The first excursion day culminated in the evening meal, deliciously prepared by Christine Saahs, at the Nikolaihof, a farm or estate that is thousands of years old in the famous wine region of Wachau. Indeed, this vineyard has Roman origins. Christine and her husband began with biodynamic wine-growing on 2 hectares in 1971. As the plot was too small to live from, Christine developed a restaurant straight away, which is still going today. This very active woman even finds time to share her culinary discoveries with others by writing cook books. Nowadays, the eldest son of the family runs the vineyard, which now comprises an area of 24 ha. The younger brother developed a crafted production of high-quality Demeter cosmetics from the vine products, such as, for example, from grape kernel powder, which is very rich in anti-oxidants. In the meanwhile, the range comprises 25 products. It is interesting that, from the outset, the family has endeavoured to go beyond the pure and simple wine production and to make use of the whole potential of nature and the place. Here we could clearly see that biodynamics enables the development of a genuine agricultural-cultural approach that creates work places, in complete contrast to industrial agriculture, which destroys work places and confines itself to producing cheap raw products.

Second Excursion Day in Hungary

The next day, after we had viewed the various parts of the Michlits farm and our Hungarian colleague, Mihály Mezei and his wife, Katalin, had given us valuable information about Hungarian history, we visited the farm of Sandor Varga in Szentgal and the vineyard Kristinus near Lake Balaton. The latter was introduced to us by the farm manager, Florian, who has been running it for eight years. He only converted the enterprise to biodynamic cultivation four years ago, but the effects are already noticeable.

Instead of taking us through the vineyards, Florian and his right-hand man, Laszlo, showed us the first animals which they had proudly integrated into the vineyards. Moreover, Laszlo had created a testing garden where new practices can be tried out on a small scale before they were used on the estate. Here green manure mixtures are tested or else methods of getting rid of couch grass etc.

To the question as to what differences he could see between conventional and biodynamic cultivation, Florian answered, “I am quite content, even if the yields are smaller to begin with and the observing of and tending the plants more demanding. This can be balanced out through higher prices. Furthermore, we noticed better resistance against fluctuations in and shocks from the climate (drought, hail etc.) and an easier fermentation process in the cellar. The aromas of the wine remain more stable and after opening the wine it keeps longer. Overall we have fewer bad wines”.

Finally, we returned to the Michlits vineyard, enriched by the two excursion days full of new discoveries, agromonomically, entrepreneurially and gastronomically. We were really spoilt and afterwards worked for two days, strengthened and motivated, on the Leading Thought in preparation for the coming conference as well as on the theme of the year 2023/24 and got to grips with current topics. By way of conclusion to this report I would like to thank all the individuals who received us so warmly on their farms.

The past 100 Years and 10,000 Years of Agriculture in the present Time

Interview with Ueli Hurter, questions asked by Wolfgang Held

“Looking back as Looking forward”, this is the subtitle you have given the coming agriculture conference. What does it mean?

Ueli Hurter: We are planning a trilogy. In 2024, when we celebrate 100 years of the Agriculture Course, we do not want to press everything into one conference, one moment. In 2024 we intend to concentrate on the impulses of the “Agriculture Course” and answer the question how these impulses live today or should live. This will work all the better, the better we now succeed at the coming conference with looking back. We have grasped that our agriculture did not start with Koberwitz in 1924. The beginning of its history stretches further back into the past. Therefore, we are now taking the history, the genesis, of agriculture from its beginnings, maybe 10,000 years ago.

The review is thus a double one: of the history of biodynamic agriculture and of the history of agriculture as such.

“Cultural impulse” is a key concept for us, and it has belonged to agriculture for 12,000 years. Agriculture has shaped human culture as a whole. This move is mirrored in the conference programme. We begin with seven or eight brief contributions on the 100 years of biodynamic agriculture’s life, from plant-breeding via research right through to farm development. Then there follows the looking far back to Göbekli Tepe, the first town settlement of humanity 11,000 years B.C. Arzu Duran, pioneer of Turkish biodynamic agriculture, and Martin von Mackensen (Dottenfelder Hof) cover this span of history back to the origins of land cultivation. I am really glad that we have been able once again to win Vandana Shiva over. The ecological activist, honoured with the alternative Nobel Prize, will speak about the rediscovery of the sacred in agriculture. This vista leads us, then, back once again, as we would say in anthroposophical terms, to the ancient Persian culture. Since that time the cultural impulse of agriculture has lived in lots of variations and then it has been desecrated step by step, become more and more utilitarian so as to end up in our times in gene technology. Looking as far back as this, we can say, with our eye on the future, it is a matter of healing the earth, but also of a new consecration of the earth.

Presumably agriculture, more than other fields of life, still bears the past within it today.

Indeed yes, and yet we had not planned this far-reaching stretch back into primeval times. We realised this properly in the conversations in the Circle of Representatives, where we worked on the theme. In fact, agriculture works with long cycles of time; in it the past is still living. In three brief contributions we then extend the theme with the three spatial dimensions of agriculture, asking about the cosmic, the earthly and the atmospheric sources of agriculture. Here the speakers will talk at times about a hundred years, at others about 100x100, that is 10,000 years.

What are you hoping for from the conference?

We are hoping that all who are active in biodynamic cultivation look back. They can ask themselves, “From whom have I actually received this biodynamic impulse?” “And from whom has he or she received it?” Then you realise: after three or four such hand-overs of knowledge and practice you are back at the source in Koberwitz. In other words, it is far away and at the same time quite close. I wish that each person has the experience: I am the bearer of an impulse which had its starting-point far back in the last century. However, I am close to this impulse, when I get into this looking back and do not think from Koberwitz onwards, but go back from my own position.¹

And can this movement be scaled up now?

Yes, then years will turn into centuries and I realise: the entry of modern science into agriculture around 1840 with Justus von Liebig, that has only just been. And then I go further back and come to the replacement of the three-field system with the introduction of feeding in the cowshed. I ride further back and come to the Scottish monks, who were no longer serfs, or day labourers, but farmers, who were farming and were carrying the Christ impulse. To go into it in such a way that the past becomes a personal experience, that is the one goal and the organisations, the regional associations, the specialist associations are now taking this up. We have a past and our responsibility in the future is

1 More on the review process in the next article “Carrying the cultural Impulse”, p. 24 - 25.

based on the biodynamic past and the overall historical past. Thus, we will span a bow which will take us into the future. The future is not the continuation of the past. By making the past our past, we can be free in our dealing with it.

And what pitfalls are there?

The challenge is to perceive and take others seriously with their past, which is so distinct from one's own. In Germany we think back to 1924. You cannot do that in Brazil. You cannot do it in Tanzania. How is it in India? And how is it in Thailand, where there is now maybe just about a past of barely ten years?

Where is the reality? Is it in the beginning or has it come about through what life has brought in the 100 years?

It is both. But we should not be fixated with it, but rather bring the two into a reciprocal relationship. I am interested in all the origins. We have published a new edition of the "Agriculture Course". I am interested in the details. But not because I think it is reality with relevance, but because seeds have been sown there. What has developed out of them and what is the potential that will come from it?

Have you worked completely through the Themes of the "Agriculture Course" together?

It is like in one's personal life. I believe we have already played through our themes, but then they come anew. And so I think that, for example, it is a matter of shaping the farm organism, which has been achieved in the first 100 years. And I would say we have shown it scientifically with the DOK trials.²

I have just come back from Sekem. How is it with biodynamic cultivation in the desert? To these questions we have found answers. The same with the preparations, plant breeding, with food quality. When it is time for it, we shall put all these questions anew from a higher standpoint. This applies particularly to questions that seem unresolved, such as the so-called peppering.

What is a highlight for you in the coming conference?

The panel on Friday at 5 p.m.: women as pioneers in biodynamics. We will be making a gesture of atonement towards all the women who have made their mark on the century and on the millennia and of whom people never speak. They are only women for the most

part by far! A women will lead the discussion. Oh, and I hope the Goetheanum, that is, the decision-makers at the Goetheanum see it and take note. I do not know whether this has ever happened.

Is handing over from one generation to the next a subject of conversation as with the Waldorf schools?

Yes, but we are not the first generation to hand over, something that does represent a threshold. However, a change is actually coming now. I belong to those in their low sixties, who are carrying responsibility in the movement. Passing on the baton is beginning, but we are not yet (gone). Generally speaking, the question needs to be put: who will do the farming in the future? Similar to the care professions, we cannot find anyone to work in the fields. Farming, as it has been handed down from olden times, is dying out. In the countryside there is a lack of young people coming forward. Fortunately, in every generation young people find their way from the towns and cities into the country. They are looking for the future and in many countries they encounter us older ones and we learn about biodynamics together. Each time it is new and each time it is a great joy. Just now we have been holding four training conferences on four continents, in Malaysia, in Zimbabwe, in Switzerland and in Peru. The biodynamic movement is growing.

Moreover, we are going to devote ourselves to a further aspect at the conference, to the destiny question. I will hold a lecture with the title "What are we? Who are we?", a lecture which is concerned with destiny questions in the biodynamic movement. Rudolf Steiner also held lectures about karmic connections at the same time as the Koberwitz Course.

The lectures on agriculture took place at 11 o'clock in the morning on the Koberwitz estate, and in the evenings Rudolf Steiner spoke about karma in Breslau (now Wrocław, translator's note). The same people who were listening to him on the theme of agriculture were then following him, when it was a matter of karmic questions. Both questions, destiny and agriculture, are interwoven. Personal destiny and that of the biodynamic impulse may perhaps be seen in the context of humanity as a whole. It is not so much a matter of saving the earth for its own sake, but for the sake of people still to come because human beings want to continue incarnating on the earth. Feeling responsible for them means keeping the karma place, the earth, alive.

² Compare <https://www.fibl.org/de/themen/projektdatenbank/projekt-item/project/404>

«Carrying the cultural impulse»

Individuals, farms and organisations in the first century of biodynamics

Kalle Hübner and Ueli Hurter

The last Agriculture Conference before the 100th Anniversary of biodynamics gives us the opportunity to reflect on the path that the Koberwitz Impulse has taken in the past 99 years. You are warmly invited to join this reflection in your organization, team or individually – and to present your reflection in form of a poster or video at the upcoming Agriculture Conference in the Goetheanum.

Contents and formats

1. Presentation of individual personalities in the movement

Reflections on individuals who have carried and shaped the biodynamic impulse in particular ways throughout the past decades. Guiding questions: How was this person's biography connected to the history of biodynamics? Where do we experience the impulse or the work of this person in biodynamics today?

2. Presentation of farms and places

Reflections on farms and significant places where biodynamic principles have been practically applied and developed. Guiding questions: How has the Koberwitz Impulse come to live at this place? How has this place contributed to the evolution of biodynamics? What is the importance of this place for the movement?

3. Presentation of associations and organizations

Reflections on organisations in which people have come together to shape, evolve, and grow the biodynamic movement across cultures and societies. Guiding questions: How has the organisation carried and developed the biodynamic impulse since 1924? What were the most significant developmental steps? Where does the organisation stand today?

What formats can be exhibited?

Posters

Posters should be submitted as a printable file in high resolution, for example, as a PDF. The format

should be A0. A printed or hand-painted poster may also be brought to the meeting - all contributions are welcome.

Videos

A video should have a maximum length of 5 minutes and be exported in mp4 format (4:3).

Please send your contribution by 14 January 2023 to: agriculture.conference@goetheanum.ch

Example process of reflection

We have prepared a process as an inspiration for those, who wish to conduct a reflection in their own organization or team. It can help to look back and create a contribution for the exhibition. There are three steps in this process. It is helpful if one or two people moderate the process for the other participants.

Step 1: Individual review

In a meeting of all participants, each person is asked to think back to their individual starting point. The following guiding questions can point the way:

- Why did you come to this organisation? What were your personal reasons for joining this organisation? What did you know about the history of the organisation?
- How did your work develop here? How did you experience the development of the organisation? Which personalities were important for you here?
- Where do you see your future tasks? Where do you see your role in your organisation?

The aim is to get a sense of how your own biography is connected to the history of the organisation and the biodynamic impulse. This process can be expressed artistically - participants use paint, words, craft materials, etc. Many may be interested in the organisation's history. Many may also reflect quietly for themselves.

Step 2: History of the organisation's impact

Contributors now share their individual review with the community. One person can moderate this process. The feedback can be collected, for example, on a blackboard. Now, starting from the personal retrospective, the view can be extended to the organisation in which you have an impact through your individuality.

- What is the biographical history of your organisation?
- What were the most important stages in the organisation's development?
- Which personalities have shaped or impacted this organisation in a special way?
- How may your organization look like in the future?

At this point, other sources can be included, for example, those that describe the organisation's history, how it came into being, and its vision for future work.

The aim is to understand how the biodynamic impulse has been carried through the organisation and how it is expressed today.

Step 3: Formulate key messages and shape the contribution

At this point, contributors can formulate certain key messages through which the history of the biodynamic impulse in their organisation can be experienced by others (i.e. the viewers of the poster or video). These core sentences can be answers to the questions:

- How has my organisation carried and developed the biodynamic impulse since 1924?
- Where do we stand with our organisation today?
- Why are we committed to the biodynamic movement/agriculture?
- What future questions are we facing in our organisation at the beginning of the second century of biodynamics?

One or more people can now create a draft from the participants' feedback, or a contribution can be made together. This is again a creative process with colours, pictures and key sentences (in the case of a poster) or through video recordings (in the case of a video contribution).

On the new Theme of the Year 2023/24

Jean-Michel Florin and Ueli Hurter

2024 is the centenary of the "Agriculture Course" and thus of the biodynamic impulse. At the Agricultural Conference 2023 we shall review the history of the development of biodynamics and of agriculture as a whole as a preparation for the centenary. Moreover, with regard to the centenary, the Circle of Representatives would like to explore the fundamental principles in depth – the "Agriculture Course" – in order to open up the essential content for the future anew. In other words, the question may be put: what treasures or seeds can we discover in the relevant context of the Koberwitz impulse?

At the autumn meeting of the Circle of Representatives at the farm of the Michlits family in Pamhagen (Austria) we discussed the theme of the year 2023/24. The aspects resulting from these conversations are sketched in the following.

Opening up the Potential of the biodynamic Impulse for the Future

If we compare the biodynamic impulse with the seed of a plant, we could say that the "Agriculture Course" as the seed of the biodynamic movement has "incarnated" during its first century in increasingly large circles, soils, cultures etc. What was only ideal at first, was present spiritually, became physically visible, has incarnated. From the realisation of this impulse it has gone on developing further. Every plant does it likewise: the seed, which contains the potential or the idea of the plant, germinates and in the encounter with the elements, the light, with the other beings, it unfolds in a special manner specific to the place. All the 'experiences' which the plant has during its growth are internalised in the seed. Thus, the next seed carries a new potential within. And perhaps all the experiences

of the plants have a spiritual effect on the development of the species. In the present time this fact is explained by epigenetics. In this sense every place where biodynamics is applied concretely contributes to the development of the impulse.

With regard to the 'seed' of the biodynamic impulse it would be time after a hundred years to consolidate the current potential, and to see how the impulse can fruitfully grow in the new context of the current world situation for the future.

How does it look? How has the biodynamic impulse developed out of its encounter with so many different soils, climatic zones, cultures, communities? Has it remained rigid and dogmatic or has it become completely diluted? What has remained as its core? It seems really important to us to connect up with current issues: which aspects are particularly called for by the current world situation? Climate, environment, social issues?

The agricultural Organism as a Model for Agriculture in Future

A further aspect is that people should not see biodynamic agriculture only as a small impulse alongside many other agricultural methods, for it would be able to establish itself as a fundamental ideal or model for a form of "living agriculture of the future". For this we would have to define which aspects apply to agriculture as a whole and which are rather more specific to particular farms.

In the present time, in which fossil resources are becoming scarcer and the limits of globalisation are becoming more strongly evident, the concept of the agricultural organism is becoming highly topical. This is apparent from the example of the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, which is interested at present in biodynamic agriculture in order to drastically reduce the nitrogen discharge of industrial agriculture.

Besides, it is fair to remind people that the term the "agricultural organism" has given organic agriculture its name, as is known.¹ Can we mine the wealth of this term and discover its traces in the Course so as to make it fruitful for agriculture in the future? How concretely do we use this term nowadays? How does this concept, which originally arose in the European context, incarnate in the great variety of landscapes and cultures

of the world? Where are successful examples of these agricultural organisms?

Individualisation of the Farms

A further step is the theme of individuality and individualisation. Again we can look for indications about individualisation in the "Agriculture Course" and how it is to be understood in relation to the common development of the human being and the earth. How does the contradiction between individualisation and generalisation work, if the same guidelines are valid for all regions of the earth? Why should the farm be an individuality? Does this concept apply to all measures taken on the farm? Do farmers determine the agricultural individuality? What methods can help to understand the individuality? What does it mean to individualise the manure? And to what extent should we individualise the application of the preparations as well? What does it mean to individualise the plants and animals? Can the individualisation impulse as a model be valid right through to the processing? And where are there successful examples of such steps towards individualisation?

Establishing the concept of "individuality" as a basis for agriculture means seeing the human being as the basis. In other words, agriculture is not the knowledge of nature but the knowledge of the human being.

The Human Being is made the Basis

The expression "the Human Being is made the Basis" derives from the "Agriculture Course". The last passage of lecture 4 reads as follows, *"But you see the whole household of nature forms the basis of what is said out of spiritual science. The thinking proceeds from the whole; (therefore, the particular, one must say, is definitive for the whole.) If the farm is run in this way, the only possible outcome is that it is the best thing for the human beings and the animals. Indeed, everywhere the human being is taken as the starting point in considering the farm, the human being is taken as the basis. Thereby the hints that are given for this will result in human nature maintaining itself in the very best way. That is what distinguishes this form of consideration from the ways that common today."*²

The human being as a natural and, at the same time, spiritual being, that is, an individuality, can be compared with the model for the farm. The body of the human being is formed and structured in such a way

1 www.academia.edu/9145044/The_Betteshanger_Summer_School_Missing_link_between_biodynamic_farming_and_organic_farming

2 Rudolf Steiner, Agriculture Course, Volume GA 327, 9th (recently reworked) edition, Rudolf Steiner Verlag, Basel 2022.

that it can house an individual spirit being, most easily visible from the upright walking, from speaking and thinking in a self-reflective way. Do we understand the agricultural individuality rightly, if we understand the closed circulation of substances from feed – manure – fertilising – soil – root – plant growth as a bodily basis analogous to the human being? Then every human body is also quite concretely individualised through the individual dwelling in it, who expresses him- or herself in the physiognomy, but also in lots of physiological characteristics, such as, for example, the make-up of the blood. Would the particular shaping of the farm, as it is developed over the years, be this aspect of the individuality in the sense of “the human being is taken as the basis”?

However, you can read this passage in such a way that it is a matter of nutrition: the human being is taken as the basis, as the receiver of the products that are grown on the farm. Everything is set up in such a way that the human being receives good food, that they are well fed. In other words, according to this interpretation, the whole Course would be instructions for the production of food for the future. Does this way of understanding it give a different colouring to Steiner’s explanations?

Peppering

Of the practical indications given in the Course perhaps peppering is applied least systematically. There have been practical trials and scientific trials, but until

now there has not been a “breakthrough”. As the agro-chemical industry controls the money now as before and every year world-wide wreaks a vast amount of damage to the soils, the waters, flora and fauna, we should ask ourselves whether we should invest properly in peppering again. Maybe not for ourselves so much, for, on a lot of farms a balance has been found over the years so that weeds and pests no longer become existential problems. Nevertheless, for the world and the earth as a whole it would be an enormous contribution, if we could show that in biodynamic agriculture there is a regulatory technique available which does not leave toxic traces in the biosphere.

Working out further connecting Threads

Besides the above-mentioned examples of the farm organism or of individualisation, the “Agriculture Course” holds further connecting threads which are waiting to be explored in depth and be brought up to date. These include themes, such as economic resilience or nutrition. Taking an organism that is used for food, the soul dimension of nutrition, for example, can be shown. Also for the theme of human work on nature, which is becoming so difficult today, the “Agriculture Course” holds interesting approaches to resolve it at the ready. Finally, this approach holds good for building bridges to areas beyond agriculture, such as to medicine, education, etc.

Diary Dates 2023/24

Datum	Title	Venue
30. Jan – 01. Feb. 2023	Circle of Representatives	Goetheanum, Dornach, Switzerland
1. – 4. Feb. 2023	Agriculture Conference 2023	Goetheanum, Dornach, Switzerland
5. Feb. 2023	Economy Council of the Section for Agriculture	Goetheanum, Dornach, Switzerland
6. Feb. 2023	International Biodynamic Advisors Meeting	Goetheanum, Dornach, Switzerland
23. – 25. Nov. 2023	Workshop for Experts in Fruits, Olives and Wine Growing	Goetheanum, Dornach, Switzerland
7. – 10. Feb. 2024	Agriculture Conference 2024	Goetheanum, Dornach, Switzerland

Landwirtschaft als Kulturimpuls

Ein Rückblick als Vorblick
auf 100 Jahre Biodynamik

Reflections on Agriculture as a Cultural Impulse

Towards the 100th Anniversary of Biodynamics

Landwirtschaftliche Tagung
1. – 4. Februar 2023

Agriculture Conference
1 – 4 February 2023



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