Dear members and friends of Biodynamic farming,

The spring is well advanced here in North Canterbury, New Zealand. The weather has been mostly kind, apart from two wind storms which made the shelter belts look like toothless smiles as trees tumbled on to fences, yards and buildings. However the spring has gone on and the autumn cereals/hay fields have had their day. Before the spraying season starts I often find the preparation work to be a hurdle, a job needing a lot of effort, long hours and attention to detail if it is to be completed to best effect. But once underway it is truly nourishing for all involved. The plant world greets the silica with open arms, the animals rejoice in the grass that has gained substance, losing some of the over watery spring flush, the farmer feels feedback from the elemental world and smiles his/her way across the fields. Spring puts a spring in the step.

In the Northern hemisphere the trees are colouring, the first snow is not too far away and earth is becoming more introspective – also an excellent time to bring out the 500. The preparation use spring and autumn have not only a local effect, they are a way of extending arms around the world, uniting all the BD islands wherever they are, passing man’s blessing and some will forces to the soul of the earth.

Best regards

Ian Henderson,
ian.henderson@demeter.net
Hello to all of you!
My name is Aurélie TRUFFAT, I am 33 years old and I come from France. Starting from November, I will be working as a raw materials manager for Demeter International. Let me introduce myself and explain my new tasks.

I am an environmental engineer and did some of my studying in Germany (Hohenheim University) specialising in organic farming. I also studied for one year at a Business School in France. In 2005 Demeter France hired me as a trainee to analyse the market for Demeter products in France. Then I worked for a few French companies to develop their sales of organic raw materials in Europe. A few years later, Demeter France hired me again as Marketing Manager for Demeter certified grain products. I was also in charge of the processors’ certification and translation of documents. For personal reasons I decided to move back to the French Alps (near Geneva), where I come from. However, I am now very pleased to work again for Demeter.

My new task is first to get an overview of the international market for Demeter products, which means finding out what types of products are available (products not sold as Demeter or newly certified products) and what sorts of products are in demand. The aim of this work is to be more reactive in order to help farmers sell their products with the Demeter trademark and to help companies develop new Demeter products more easily.

This work requires very good relationships with all Demeter organizations. I will contact all of you in the following weeks or months but if you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to contact me (we can communicate in English, French or German).

Aurélie Truffat
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0033/450 357 440 or mobile 0033/623 661 843
Skype: truffat.demeter

The International Certification Office (ICO), with headquarters in Darmstadt, Germany, certifies and concludes trade agreements in all countries without an independent Demeter certifying organisation. It is currently active in 34 countries with 235 producers, 48 processors and 15 retailers.

The focus is on Spain (currently 51 enterprises that will be certified by Demeter Spain from 2014), India (33 enterprises) and Argentina (26 enterprises).

The certification body comprises Cornelia Hauenschild, Katia Ziegler (Switzerland), Walter Rudert (UK), Friedrich Sattler (D) and Ian Henderson (NZ). Oliver Alletsee, a Demeter consultant from Germany joined the ranks as a guest in October.

New Certifications
Since July, there have been the following new certifications:

- Vasilis Dimas and Agroktimata Ltd. Exporter in Greece: Figs and grapes "in conversion to Demeter"
  Contact: agraktimata@gmail.com

- Wedderwill Wine Estate in South Africa: grapes for wine "in conversion to Demeter"
  Contact: wolfgang@wedderwill.co.za

- Piotr Dibowski in Poland: Sea buckthorn
  Contact: dibowski@gmx.net

- Cooperativa Ltda Manduvira in Paraguay: Sugar "In conversion to Demeter"
  Contact: andres.gonzalez@manduvira.com

- Viñas del Sol S.A. de CV in Mexico: grapes for wine "In conversion to Demeter"
  Contact: jimenavi@gmail.com

We warmly welcome all new licensees.

Resignations:
None
Cornelia Hauenschild
c.hauenschild@demeter.de
Decertification of CMS cauliflowers in Germany
Demeter “Natural Cool” Blumenkohl (cauliflower) had to be decertified because CMS markers were detected in the marketed products and a recall of this deep frozen line was subsequently demanded. The Demeter standards do not permit the use of cms seeds including this hybrid cauliflower variety and so the German distributor of the product had to organize the removal of the product from all retail and wholesale markets.

New analysing methods permit the easy detection of CMS markers in the products. The German television (zdf: WISO see the video at http://www.zdf.de/ZDFmediathek/hauptnavigati on/startseite/#/beitrag/video/1953648/WISO- Sendung-vom-5-August-2013) took up the story and interviewed Dr. Alexander Gerber, the new board member of Demeter e.V., about the findings in Demeter cauliflower. We were happy to find that the organic seeds were not CMS hybrids (they originated from the seed company bejo zaden), but the processed product containing the contamination had been grown not only from this organic seed line. Bejo zaden helped with testing the cauliflower samples and through this cooperation it became clear so that the organic seeds had become mixed with other cms varieties.

Please be aware that CMS seeds are not permitted for the production of Demeter vegetables (some other organic organisations also have a similar ban) though they are allowed under the EU organic regulations. It is essential to increase awareness of this issue and minimise the risk of mistakes. So the AC repeats the request to member countries to improve their knowledge concerning this issue, to require only cms free seed lines and ensure that they do not become part of the Demeter product market. An essential part of the strategy is to translate the list of cms varieties on the AC website into the respective national language and inform growers. The topic will also be taken up in the certification workshop. Reto Ingold reto.ingold@demeter.net

Agricultural Section at the Goetheanum IBDA/IBDC

Intensive seminar week – structuring the future: knowledge and tools for decision-makers inside the organic and Biodynamic movement. 12th - 17th January 2014 at the Goetheanum, Dornach / CH

Do you have burning questions regarding the farm, business or institution? Are you searching for methods and strategies to realize your vision or to progress your initiatives and projects?

The intensive week which takes place from 12th – 17th January at the Goetheanum is based on the U-process from Claus Otto Scharmer and is aimed at people who are active in the organic and Biodynamic movement, offering them encouragement in their work and tools to develop their initiatives.

We go there for this week, taking a step away from the day to day with the question: Where do I stand?

The first step of determining where we are is possible through dialogue.

In a second step, we try to explore what causal and driving forces are within us. In a third step, we leave what has been and immerse ourselves in the becoming. What comes from the future toward me? Do I run against a threshold; can it be overcome?

In the fourth Step, we compress the future that we have sensed.

Then in the fifth we plan an attempt to bring a something new into our everyday practice, generating a new impulse.

Thus an intensive path, empowering a shaping of the future, is described. The common and individual experiences of this week are also intense. Work on your own question gains a new impulse and is enhanced by artistic exercises, observation exercises as well as contributions on questions of our times.

The organizers, Jean–Michel Florin, Ursula Hofmann, Ueli Hurter and Johannes Wirz are all active in the Biodynamic movement, practically, in teaching or in research.

Information and registration from the Agricultural Section at the Goetheanum. Please note the application deadline of 3rd January 2014.

Note the seminar will be held in German. sektion.landwirtschaft@goetheanum.ch

Reports from member countries and Biodynamic organisations

Seeds are part of our culture – they belong to us all! ELIANT reports:

Organic seeds are a key issue for the future of organic and Biodynamic agriculture. After all, seeds are the basis of all life, all agricultural production, and consequently our food supply.

The Biodynamic movement is researching this issue, working intensively on it. ELIANT for its part lobbies in Brussels on a platform that aims to promote organic seeds as common property for everyone.

Biodynamic agriculture (Demeter) co-founded the ELIANT alliance to promote the concerns of Biodynamic agriculture and to ensure their full representation in Brussels. The ELIANT founders are responsible for the ELIANT alliance and their six-monthly meetings provide an ideal setting for both an intensive exchange of ideas and for planning essential activities.
Sowing the Future
Biodynamic agriculture (Demeter) believes in a supply of open pollinated freely tradable seeds. In the autumn, participating farmers in a number of countries invite consumers interested in joining them to sow a field as part of an initiative called ‘Sowing the Future’. The farm locations and all necessary information can be found on www.avenirsem.ch. Everyone taking part sows seeds, immersing themselves in the atmosphere of this archetypal action. Sowing seeds connects people with the earth. They can see the seeds grow over the following months. The grain, harvested in summer can then be baked to bread.

Promoting a supply of open pollinated, freely tradable seeds is also Demeter’s response to international corporations that are producing genetically modified crop varieties. These corporations secure seeds bred using conventional genetic engineering, as well as unlawfully obtained existing varieties, by patenting them. This makes them unavailable to the general public, particularly farmers and breeders and the profits arising from the royalties paid on patented varieties line corporation pockets.

As a global civilization, we are experiencing dramatic developments. Within the space of two decades, a powerful seed industry has emerged – with far-reaching consequences. The ten largest seed companies account for over 70% of the market worldwide. They are severely reducing the number of crop varieties which are available and this in turn shrinks the genetic base. Laboratory based breeding techniques are used, primarily manipulating plant genetic material in the test tube. Compared with other sectors and industries, the mechanisation of agriculture has developed very rapidly and the consequences for the future are terrifying.

Seeds and propagation material used to be an integral part of farming culture. Depending on which part of the world, this was still the case as recently as a few years ago in some places, in others decades or, at most, one or two centuries ago. The perception was that seeds belonged to us all, or it could be said, they did not belong to anyone. They were not a commodity – they were part of our culture.

Biodynamic plant breeders have already achieved an enormous amount: a wide range of excellent varieties have been developed. This work now needs to be underpinned legally and economically in society to ensure seeds are a part of our culture, belonging to us all. This requires collaboration between breeders, farmers, processors and, most of all, consumers and the general public.

An example of successful lobbying by the ELIANT alliance and Biodynamic agriculture in Brussels:

The EU Regulation on animal by-products, which came into force in 2002 as a result of the BSE crisis, prevented farmers from using cow horns for Biodynamic preparations. Following seven years of intensive lobbying, they were included in a specific section of this Regulation in 2009, once again giving Biodynamic preparations the necessary legal security.

Become a sponsoring member of ELIANT
ELIANT has an important task for the future of Europe. For this task we need your assistance. If 15,000 members contribute 10 Euro annually, or 7,500 members 20 EUR we would be able to cover our costs. Our hope is to reach 2,500 supporting members by Christmas. Please help us to make THIS HOPE become a reality. Become a sponsoring member yourself and let your friends know about this!

Michaela Glöckler, Ueli Hurter and Susanna Küfler Heer (Executive Committee); Michaela Sieh (project management)
info@eliant.eu

Apprentice training scheme in South Africa
Prior to our national BD conference in June 2013 farmers and tutors participated in an assessor training for the two year internationally accredited Apprenticeship diploma which will commence in October 2013. The external facilitators journeyed from England to work with an impressive variety of farmers all committed to bringing renewed life to the BD movement by taking time out to learn how to offer experiential training to the emerging youth. This marks a momentous occasion in our era where there is an urgent need to advance ecological agriculture into the future. The best people to do this are our youth equipped with a 2 year accredited diploma and a vast array of training on our Biodynamic farms.

Helen van Zyl, Training Coordinator
training@bdaasa.org.za

Reports

The 28th Latin American Meeting “Seeds for a New Agriculture” finally came to an end, after four intense and inspiring days.

The members of ABD Peru worked very hard to make an event possible that was excellent in every sense. All participants expressed their gratitude for the enormous effort that went in to making it such a success.

107 persons participated, amongst them farmers, professionals, teachers, consumers, students, coming from countries which included Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Ecuador, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Puerto Rico as well as friends from Switzerland and Taiwan.

The first day was held at the main agricultural University of Peru: the National Agrarian University La Molina, where the programme consisted of lectures given by keynote speakers and it was a session open to the university community. Topics developed were plant
breeding, Biodynamic viticulture, permaculture, Biodynamic experiences in Latin America, Biodynamic coffee and rice experiences given by biodynamic farmers themselves.

For the next 3 days, the participants were accommodated in a special place in the mountains on the outskirts of Lima, where the programme continued conference topics given by farmers, professionals, practitioners. The programme also included workshops for specific technical aspects, as well as artistic ones. The evenings were a time for relaxing with cultural and artistic activities.

Some of the main topics developed were: Seeds, Astronomic Calendar, Biodynamic Husbandry, Biodynamic Coffee, Rice, Viticulture, Permaculture and Apiculture:

Early in the morning, reading and discussion of Rudolf Steiner’s Agricultural Course formed the spiritual basis. At noon, the fair for seed exchange and the exhibition of the countries’ delegations complimented the days’ programmes.

The contributions that received the greatest interest were “Pacari Chocolate” with Santiago Peralta, “Biodynamic Viticulture” with Armando Rebolledo from Emiliana, “The relationship of human beings with animal beings in the context of the agricultural individuality” with Fabian Baumgratz/Beate Müller, “Associative Economy and accountability of the agriculture organism” with Simon Blaser, and "Participatory Certification or PGS / Participatory Guarantee System – DEMETER" with Pedro Jovchelevich.

The Assembly elected Mexico as the venue for the 29th Latin American Meeting of Biodynamic Agriculture.

Mr. René Piamonte states: “I personally, feel very happy to have been part of the organizing committee and I truly believe that an important impulse has been given to strengthen the Latin American Biodynamic consciousness built from our own experiences and with this, making possible our contribution to the global Biodynamic movement”

For more information, visit the blog http://encuentrolatinoamericaobdp.peru.blogspot.com.br

René Piamonte
terrahabilis@arnet.com.ar

Demeter Gastronomy Tour 2013

Demeter/Biodynamic viticulture has long been an international trend, which not only motivates growers, but also convinces more and more connoisseurs. Top Sommeliers and restaurateurs appreciate the high quality of Biodynamic wines.

In September and October Romana Echensperger and Friedemann Wecker of Demeter Germany offered training to decision makers and front of house staff of the top restaurants in Hamburg, Cologne, Berlin and Munich. Romana Echensperger has been working for a considerable time in top restaurants as a sommelier as part of her ‘master of Wine’ dissertation has worked intensively on Biodynamics. Through the seminar, the participants were given communication tools, an understanding of the advantages of biodynamic viticulture with its diversity of experience and excellence, as well as getting important information about the certification of Demeter wines.

The concept was surprisingly well received, so there is interest from both speakers to offer this concept to other cities and countries, for example, Stockholm, Copenhagen and Amsterdam.

Friedemann Wecker
friedemann.wecker@demeter.de

Miscellaneous

The Sekem circle (see photo below)

The famous morning circles and the weekly meeting on every Monday evening have been a key element at Sekem from the very beginning. Especially the morning circles stand out for each visitor who visits the main SEKEM farm, the Cairo-based Heliopolis University, or the initiative’s administration on the outskirts of Cairo. These circles are a part of SEKEM’s programme for community advancement and one of the prime examples of what new co-workers often find most startling at first and then quickly grow very fond of.

The morning circle, actually a number of circles large and small taking place at the same time in multiple places, is primarily an instrument to facilitate mutual awareness through face-to-face encounters. Here, co-workers are given the opportunity to give a brief report on their work and to point out what they have planned for the day. Central to the event is the awareness of each other, of all co-workers at a specific facility or in a given department. It helps to form a sense of community and an experience of belonging. It also promotes good communication and a clear daily structure. So do the weekly staff meetings:
every week the “Monday forum” also provides a chance to discuss issues co-workers might have and listen to their experiences. Cultural, scientific, historical, and artistic presentations by writers and artists are also held here. SEKEM values its co-workers, strives to form a long-term good relationship with them, and to optimally meet their needs. The aim is to help build a community in which everyone can be proud of each other.

From Sekem Insight # 130
Fatma Sami
insight@SEKEM.com

Krafft von Heynitz celebrates his 90th Birthday
Krafft von Heynitz, an important and well respected personality in the Biodynamic movement in Germany, is 90 years old. He was very active in the state of Baden Würtemberg where he was the Chairman of the Board of Demeter Baden-Württemberg since its inception in 1960 until 1991. He is also well known as an author throughout Europe, with his books “Das biologische Gartenbuch” and “Kompost im Garten”. Congratulations!

Extract from the press release, Demeter e.V.
Renée Herrkind
rene.herrkind@demeter.de

Nutrition - a creative process
Tracing the paths of transformation
International Nutrition Conference at the Goetheanum
(English, German, French)
1st – 3rd of May 2014

• How can we understand the nature of the bee?
• What are the elements to consider for bee-keeping in accordance with the nature of the bees?
• What role do the bees play in the world?
• What can each one of us do for the bees and for their environment?
• How can we work together in alliances for the bees?

The substantial work on these questions will be enriched and complemented by concerts, artistic courses, guided tours, professional and thematic group meetings and plenary sessions.

Registration from mid-November onwards on:
www.goetheanum.org

For further information contact:
Section for Agriculture at the Goetheanum
sektion.lwirtschaft@goetheanum.ch
www.sektion-lwirtschaft.org

Agriculture Conference 2014: The Bees, Creators of Relationships
5th - 8th of February 2014 at the Goetheanum in Dornach/CH

The collapse of bee colonies is a shock for many people. Beyond the circle of bee-keepers and farmers immediately affected by the problem, we are all affected and startled, because one of the most profound symbols of our agriculture and our only domesticated insect – the bee – is in deadly peril. The weakening of the bees is a sign related to the general weakening of the life world. In recent years the bees have become an important motivator for people to join together in new initiatives aimed at protecting the bees and creating a world that can be a true home for them.

In the next Agriculture Conference at the Goetheanum, what Rudolf Steiner said about the bees will be used as a foundation to develop an understanding for these beings. In lectures, interactive workshops and short contributions we ask ourselves:

Dates and Events

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How can we become more conscious of these transformative processes and shape them constructively in our everyday nutrition? How can we convert the original substance that is contained in plant and animal products in a way that leads to true refinement?

Alongside a deepening of these questions, the conference also aims to connect individuals and nutrition initiatives from different countries. Cooperative workshops using dialogue methods will be used to enhance the exchange amongst the participants. The conference is open to all interested individuals and will be trilingual. Workshops will be held in various languages.

Sektion für Landwirtschaft am Goetheanum

www.sektion-lwirtschaft.org
http://www.sektion-lwirtschaft.org

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