



Goetheanum · School of Spiritual Science  
Section for Agriculture  
Sektion für Landwirtschaft  
Section d'Agriculture  
Sección de Agricultura

## Activity Report 2021





## Editorial

This review presents our work during the second year affected by the coronavirus pandemic. Despite the resulting restrictions, many projects and events have been successfully completed. Numerous meetings, small and large, took place online and, while this is no replacement for real human encounters, it is better than nothing. Even after the coronavirus pandemic, there will be ongoing uncertainty in the world and we will have to constantly adapt our way of working in the international networks. However, we are confident of our task, as the contribution that the biodynamic movement can and intends to make for the future of the earth is clearer and more urgent with every passing day. One special project reached a provisional conclusion in the reporting year: the reprint of the Agriculture Course in its 9th edition. It has been possible to complete the book within the planned time and budget, thanks to the disciplined work of a project group of five and cooperation with the Rudolf Steiner Archive supported by a common objective. This means that it is available two years in advance of the centenary in 2024 as a source for study and research and as the basis for translations. The archive magazine has also been published with material of historical interest on agriculture. In addition, in summer 2021 the Verlag am Goetheanum published the new book by Manfred Klett “Von der Agrartechnologie zur Landbaukunst” (From agricultural technology to the art of farming), a 500-page compendium on biodynamics as the agriculture of the future.

*Ueli Hurter, Head of Section*

## Imprint

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## Review of the Agriculture Conference 2022 “Quality through Biodynamics”

This year’s Agriculture Conference, which took place from 2–5 February 2022, was a mirror of current events: a daily adventure in turbulent times. Both the planning and delivery of the event were a great challenge for the Section team, but also an opportunity to boost the team spirit!

For the second year, we decided to hold the conference online due to the circumstances linked to the pandemic, but with a group of around 40 studio guests as representatives of the biodynamic community. Around 650 people took part online worldwide.

The topic of quality explored precisely what we are all in need of in these times of masks and screens: actual experiences and sense perceptions. All the speakers, workshop leaders and artists therefore created an especially welcoming atmosphere, dedicating all their creativity to enabling an experience of the sense perceptible side of quality.

If there is one area in which quality plays not merely an important but absolutely vital role, then this is nutrition. Our quality of life is directly dependent upon it: after all, we eat three times a day, so connecting ourselves to the world!

The conference developed into a journey of discovery on the way to a living quality. What are the benefits of biodynamic quality? In what ways is this quality special? How is it formed, how can it be developed and how is it experienced and enjoyed? It became clear how living

quality runs like a thread through all the stages of the process of producing our food – from the soil to the table.

It also became apparent that quality is closely connected to ethics. For example, the question of how to improve animal welfare leads directly to better quality in the animal products. But quality also needs to be perceived and appreciated. This in turn can lead to a respect and appreciation of the beings who provide us with quality in our food and our lives: the soil, the plants and the animals.

*Jean-Michel Florin*

Save the date

Agriculture Conference 2023

### Evolving agriculture –

**100 years of biodynamics: looking back to look forwards**

Annual International Conference of the biodynamic movement  
1–4 February 2023 at the Goetheanum Dornach, Switzerland

Cover picture: Book launch: Agriculture Course. Photo: Philip Wilson

Sheep in front of the Goetheanum. Photo: Philip Wilson

Agriculture Conference 2022, Jasmin Peschke, Jean-Michel Florin and Ueli Hurter. Photo: Lin Bautze





## Nutrition

What creates health – practical studies on the book “Vom Acker auf den Teller. Was Lebensmittel wirklich gesund macht” (From field to plate: What makes food really healthy), the book by Jasmin Peschke, was published in February 2021 to great acclaim. Work is now underway on the practical studies for it. In the Camphill Community Lehenhof, Germany, Jasmin Peschke and the nutritionist Lea Sprügel are studying whether there is a typical Lehenhof quality in the cheese, bread and tomatoes produced there. How are Lehenhof foods produced? Is it only the ingredients that create their particular quality, or is an important component contributed by those who work there? Does their mood and attitude have any effect? The community is particularly suitable for this study because, first, this is where the biodynamic foods are produced and processed and, second, it is a place that focusses on the health and development of people in need of special care. The first step is to examine the development of the characteristic Lehenhof product quality. The individual workshops and households are characterised and a picture formed of them. The motives and concerns of the people who work in production, processing and preparation are recorded in open discussions. Quality arises through using methods and materials with love and dedication. An approach of this kind implies treating people, animals, plants and soil with respect. This gives rise to a “food system” which produces food for people but also cultivates and safeguards the natural resources in the long term.

A second step involves workshops with the people in the community to support them in identifying with authentic quality. For example, a cooking workshop will be held for the co-workers with special needs. A painting workshop aims to record what the Lehenhof feels like. There are also tasting sessions that enable an experience of the different qualities of the foods.

### Empathic food testing – certified trainer

The nutrition department offers further training and workshops, and Jasmin Peschke also speaks at a range of events. She is now going to complement this portfolio as a certified trainer in empathic food testing. Empathic food testing was developed by Dr. Uwe Geier and identifies the effect of a food arising after we have tasted it. It deals with feelings, sensations and effects that are triggered by a food in the body or soul. It is possible to learn how to perceive these. This helps to boost our own nutritional competence, for example, or assess the effect of different product qualities. For instance, it is fascinating to research butter and margarine in order to be able to use them with a particular aim. Introductory seminars can be booked with Jasmin Peschke at [jasmin.peschke@goetheanum.ch](mailto:jasmin.peschke@goetheanum.ch).

*Dr. Jasmin Peschke*

## Biodynamic course at the Heliopolis University in Cairo, Egypt

One of the five courses at the Heliopolis University established by Sekem is agroecology. In each of the first six semesters, students attend a two-week biodynamic course, which is held in Sekem and directed by the Section. The main aims are to convey experiences, guide observation and encourage reflection and questions. The maxim is *ability and application* rather than the acquisition of knowledge. Local teachers are undergoing training and are gradually taking over the modules themselves. The subjects covered are soil, plants, animals, nutrition and preparation, associative economics and agroecology. After starting with 15 to 20 students per semester, applications last autumn rose rapidly with 60 new students.

In the food module the students spend one day working in the kitchen. They fetch milk from the farm, cut up vegetables and salad, cook, wash up and clean. This gives a real appreciation for the different foods. “From now on I will only put as much food on the plate as I can eat” is the take-away message. The chef is also convinced of the potential for learning and now regularly offers practical sessions.

*Dr. Jasmin Peschke*

## Ongoing development in the area of research and scientific communication

The second International Conference on Biodynamic Research (BDRC 2021) on the topic “Growing beyond Resilience” offered the 170 participants from 34 countries a very varied programme from research and practice in an online format. Over 90 contributions were presented, in collaboration with 11 international partners. This gave rise to important ideas for further developing biodynamic research methods and for networking the global stakeholders.

In November 2021, the Section’s area of scientific communication was expanded with the appointment of Laila Grillo to the team. This will support the development, networking and maintenance of an international research network. In addition, current research results from biodynamic agriculture and food science will be published on our website.

*Laila Grillo*

Project leader Lea Sprügel and Jasmin Peschke (2nd and 3rd from left) during the interview in the bakery. Photo: Lehenhof



Jean-Michel Florin with Heliopolis University students. Photo: Heliopolis University



## Deepen Biodynamics

This is the name given to the newly developed online learning platform that is the basis for future digital courses to be held by the Section for Agriculture.

The Section’s first official online course took place in November/December 2021, following a pilot project the preceding year. The course, entitled “Biodynamic Agriculture & Anthroposophy”, which was given by the two section leaders, Ueli Hurter and Jean-Michel Florin, was very well received, being attended by 40 participants from all over the world. The aim of the four-week course was a detailed examination of biodynamic agriculture and its connection to anthroposophy. The course was based on Rudolf Steiner’s “Agriculture Course” and the “Michael Letters”. Amongst the topics dealt with were “The evolution of earth, cosmos and cultures” and “Man’s co-creation with nature based on the example of the biodynamic preparations”. Current questions and challenges were also addressed and discussed for each topic in the course.

As part of the School of Spiritual Science, the Section for Agriculture has the option of interdisciplinary co-operation with different sections. It also has access to a large network of teachers, researchers and other po-

tential partners. We want to use this interdisciplinary approach to make the background to biodynamic agriculture clear, up-to-date and practical, and to promote personal initiative and a passion for dedication to a healthy agriculture.

Further online courses are being planned on the subjects of “The farm organism and perception”, “Nutrition and healthy food” and “Associative economics”. The course format – with a workload of around six hours per week, of which only two are fixed live sessions – is chosen so that it can be combined with full-time work. We are pleased that this online service of more in-depth courses on biodynamic agriculture will enrich the internationally available training opportunities.

*Sarah Sommer*

## Living Farms

Two new videos made by the Living Farms project were released at the Agriculture Conference 2021: one about the Martinelis family farm in Lithuania and one about Community Supported Agriculture on the Rekola farm in Finland. The portfolio was also expanded with projects on understanding the farm organism, with several online workshops being held on this topic.

Plans for 2022 include a podcast, a project on the topic of “Cow and climate” and a brochure entitled “Breathing with the Climate Crisis”.

The Living Farms project thus fully reflects scientific endeavour and communication activities with regard to the farm organism and agricultural individuality. The focus on the practical examples of biodynamic places and farms remains unchanged. In 2022 we want to continue to contribute to the global challenges of our times. You can find out more about the project and its development on our website and on the Section’s YouTube channel.

*Lin Bautze*

## Communications

Our communications work in 2021 comprised the following:

**Website:** The number of visitors to the website doubled between 2019 and 2021 to around 46 000 (excluding the conference platform). 66 news items were posted, most in several languages.

**Printed materials:** In addition to the two circulars in three languages, the Agriculture Conference documentation in four languages and the annual review in four languages, we also published books. These include “Von der Agrartechnologie zur Landbaukunst” by Manfred Klett, collaboration on the new edition of the Agriculture Course in the Rudolf Steiner Verlag, and a number of translations into other languages, for example “Biodynamic Preparations Around the World” by Ueli Hurter et al.

**Newsletter:** We sent 11 newsletters from the Section to over 5000 subscribers and an additional 23 professional and project groups.

**Videos:** A number of video presentations were created for the Agriculture Conference, lectures for “goetheanum.tv”, plus recordings of interviews and lectures and of Living Farms. ([www.youtube.com/channel/UCD4ZhiUedj331Z8pAsjfFsw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCD4ZhiUedj331Z8pAsjfFsw)).

**Pressemeldungen:** Nine press releases were sent.

**Instagram:** We posted 48 contributions on our Instagram channel, which currently has 1088 followers.

**Facebook:** 61 contributions were posted on our Facebook account which currently has 1577 followers.

*Lin Bautze, Johannes Onneken*





## Section for Agriculture

The Section for Agriculture is one of eleven Sections of the School of Spiritual Science at the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland. Its main task is to coordinate and give new impulses to the biodynamic movement across the world. Courses, seminars, conferences, lecture tours and publications create points of contact for people who are seeking a deepened anthroposophical/spiritual scientific understanding of agriculture. Encouragement to become responsible for one's own activity is especially important in agriculture and horticulture, in food processing, trade, nutrition, inner work and in public relations. An active worldwide network of individuals and associations, Demeter businesses, research establishments, trusts etc. are encouraged and developed.

The Section is led by Jean-Michel Florin and Ueli Hurter. The team running the Section is currently made up of eight people. Other co-workers are also involved with specific projects. The Council of Representatives which represents the biodynamic movement in its regional and professional diversity, currently includes 70 people from 18 different countries.

The Section has a number of sources of income. The income and expenditure for 2021 were as follows:

<b>Income 2021</b>	<b>CHF</b>
Individual donations	34 163
Donations from institutions and project funding	520 609
Income from events	262 062
Goetheanum*	105 856
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>922 690</b>
<b>Expenditure 2021</b>	
Personnel	605 915
Events and projects	316 775
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>922 690</b>

\* Annual basic contribution by the General Anthroposophical Society from donations and members' contributions

## Contact

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## Donations

You may also wish to offer financial support. Bank details can be found at:  
[www.sektion-landwirtschaft.org/en/donations](http://www.sektion-landwirtschaft.org/en/donations)

**Section team 2021/22.** Photo: Paul Stender

**Back:** Lin Bautze, Living Farms project, research, communication / Anna Storchenegger, secretary's office / Ueli Hurter, Head of Section / Johannes Onneken, Graphic & web design, communications.

**Front:** Vincent Eichholz, event organiser / Sarah Sommer, training, advisory services and professional groups / Laila Grillo, international research communication and coordination / Jean-Michel Florin, Head of Section / Dr. Jasmin Peschke, nutrition department.

