



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

Activity Report 2022



Editorial

In 2022 after the gradual easing of the Covid restrictions, it was again possible to actively pursue direct international links and exchange of views. This opening up reached a highpoint in autumn with a number of important events. The first was the Section's participation in the COP 27 UN climate conference in Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt, along with partners such as Sekem. At this event we presented and distributed the booklet «Breathing with the Climate Crisis», which arose in response to the climate debate following the 2021 Agriculture Conference. The two section leaders also travelled to Chile, to the Members' Assembly of the Biodynamic Federation Demeter International (BDFI), an important partner of the Section. Lastly, four trainer workshops were held in partnership with the BFDI in four different countries on four continents: Malaysia, Zimbabwe, Peru and Switzerland. This enabled nearly 200 people to take part.

Last year was also characterised by intensified attacks by the media in a number of European countries, particularly in autumn 2022. In order to take an active stand against the criticism that biodynamics is unscientific, we continued to expand communication in general, such as in the form of podcasts, but with a focus on research communications. An international cooperation project was set up to increase the effectiveness of this communication. A further joint project is a platform for the exchange of views and cooperation between researchers, set up at the 2023 Agriculture Conference.

This year's Agriculture Conference – which was held in a hybrid format – is also part of our search for new exchange and event formats (with a mix of in-person and

online meetings), enabling us to reach more of the people interested in biodynamics. This further strengthened the worldwide network, one year before the centenary in 2024. Maybe we need to develop a particular quality in our changing times: to concentrate on what is important, remain flexible and develop new projects that support cohesion and cooperation.

We wish to extend our heartfelt thanks to all in the worldwide biodynamic movement for your loyal support, and to the Section for Agriculture team for their dedicated work.

Jean-Michel Florin, Section Leader

Imprint

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Cover picture: Extract from the book "Breathing with the Climate Crisis", design by Mark Schalken

The Glashaus, headquarters of the Section for Agriculture. Photo: Johannes Onneken



Review of the 2023 Agriculture Conference

«Agriculture as a cultural impulse»

In 2023 the Agriculture Conference was able to take place at the Goetheanum again, and was more varied than ever before.

This year's Agriculture Conference at the Goetheanum had a very special mood. Was it the joy of meeting in person again after two years of online conferences? Was it the presence of so many young people? There were many smiling faces and a great sense of thankfulness at the end of this meeting, attended by around 570 people at the Goetheanum and around the same number online. Attendance was particularly notable in Asia, Africa (Sekem), Eastern Europe and Latin America, where participants had organised seven regional conference groups. A demand for the lectures and the two eurythmy performances also came from beyond the conference community, with almost 800 tickets sold. One key theme was a review of the development of agriculture as a cultural impulse. Guest speaker Vandana Shiva showed how agriculture has been a culture and a cult from the very start – a conscious relationship of the human being to the divine in the earth and the cosmos. The Koberwitz impulse, through which this relationship becomes the basis of agricultural practice, was the focus of the keynote lectures and numerous workshops. The way in which art, science and practical experience can mix and be mutually supportive was also clearly shown by the mood of encounter at this year's biodynamic cele-

bration, so that a real agri-culture or culture of the living can continue to develop. Biodynamic agriculture is therefore able to rekindle our awareness of the dignity of working with the cosmos on earth. The conference had depth and seriousness but was also characterised by a mood of lightness and tolerance, qualities that are perhaps a mark of the maturity of this almost centenarian movement

Kalle Hübner / Ueli Hurter



Agriculture Conference 2023, Vandana Shiva in the Great Hall. Photo: Xue Li



Nutrition and biodynamic food quality

The online course in the series “Deepen Biodynamics” dealt with food and biodynamic quality as well as gathering experience from our own eating behaviour. Dynamic nutrition, vitality and processes of quality development were the main focus. The course also covered the microbiome, mindful eating and copper chloride crystallisation as a method of quality analysis. The participants appreciated how their own power of judgement had been stimulated through the exercises and discussion, instead of being given recipes and instructions. The “aroma painting”, a method developed by Torsten Arncken from the Natural Science Section, enabled a new way of experiencing the quality of foods. Space for discussion and conversation allowed participants to make links to those in other countries. The English online course was attended by 26 professionals in the field. The course was also held online in Malaysia, translated into Mandarin by the Kongsy Academy and attended by 280 participants.

The Lehenhof – a pioneering food system

How is quality from field to plate produced and what promotes human resilience? There is evidence that a cooperative and caring approach to the earth, animals and plants, as well as between human beings, plays an important part. The way in which this comes about is shown by food systems that promote health and focus on a respectful interest. This was studied based on the example of the Lehenhof Camphill Community in Germany. Staff there from different areas such as agriculture, gardening, cheese-making, baking and the household were questioned by means of in-depth interviews. This revealed what each of them finds important, what they do and, in particular, how they do it, i.e. what attitude they adopt and how each of their contributions to the community – which does not view itself primarily as a therapeutic institution – is formed. In addition, workshops were used to find out about and support the awareness of life at the Lehenhof, particularly for the quality of the food. Overall, it is care for the “in between”, the mood and attitude, that defines the Lehenhof. For the residents this means well-being, safety, home and future. The “Lehenhof food system” can therefore serve as an example and inspiration for developing other forward-looking food systems. The interviews and results are described and published in a report:

www.sektion-landwirtschaft.org/en/sv/the-lehenhof-a-forward-looking-nutritional-system

Dr. Jasmin Peschke

Managers of the Lehenhof farm. Photo: Lehenhof



Research communication and coordination

The Biodynamic Research Communication project arose through the international cooperation of a number of biodynamic organisations, including the Section for Agriculture. The aim is to bundle research results and present them in an appropriate form. This will build a bridge between academic research, biodynamic practitioners and the broader public.

Another project, the Research Platform, links researchers worldwide in order to enable more intensive exchange on biodynamic topics and to improve the quality of the research. The project was started during the 2023 Agriculture Conference. The Section for Agriculture has taken on responsibility for managing the project.

Lukas Maschek

Lukas Maschek has led research communication and coordination since September 2022. In addition to a scientific training, he brings professional experience in agriculture, nature conservation and international communication to the post. He regularly publishes summaries of current research results on biodynamic agriculture on the Section's website.

Learning Biodynamics as a Path of Transformation: Training & Teaching Conference 2022

In 2022 the second international biodynamic training conference aimed to continue the worldwide development of cooperation networks and exchange between biodynamic trainers. As differing regional and continental requirements require a tailored approach, we developed new ways of working together. Instead of one central conference, four regional workshops on four continents (Asia, Africa, Europe and America) were organised and run by smaller regional teams. This enabled the form and subject matter of the workshops to be adapted to local interests, needs and contexts. The workshops were coordinated and organised jointly by the Section for Agriculture at the Goetheanum and the Biodynamic Federation Demeter International.

The first workshop, the “African biodynamic trainers workshop 2022”, was held in Zimbabwe from 18–23 October 2022. Thirty participants from 11 countries attended the event in the Kufunda Village, a young biodynamic initiative. The training workshop planned in Asia was integrated in the “Asia Pacific Biodynamic Conference and Trainers meeting” and took place in Raub Pahang, Malaysia, from 20–23 October 2022. The European biodynamic trainers & teachers workshop 2022 followed from 18–19 November 2022 at the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland. A total of 30 participants attended from 9 different European countries, with two guests from the USA and Brazil. The final workshop was the 2022 Latin

European Biodynamic Trainers Workshop 2022, Switzerland. Photo: Simone Helmle



American biodynamic trainers workshop from 7–10 December 2022 in Lima, Peru. Thanks to this event, biodynamic trainers from the whole of Latin America were able to meet for the first time. The workshop was attended by 65 new and experienced trainers from Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Mexico, Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay, the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Colombia and Peru. The four workshops were linked by the overall theme of “biodynamics as a path of transformation”. In addition, four online meetings after the individual workshops enabled the experiences, results and insights to be shared with the entire international community of trainers.

Deepen Biodynamics

After a successful initial online course on the topic of Biodynamic Agriculture & Anthroposophy held in 2021, further courses followed in 2022. The course format – comprising a workload of around 6 hours of which two were fixed live sessions – was chosen so that working people from all over the world could take part. The online course “Associative Economics” with section leader Ueli Hurter and Christoph Simpfendörfer, co-managing director of the BFDI, took place in March and April 2022. Associative economics is an important topic which is still seldom put into practice in the biodynamic movement. The course was built around the individual circumstances of the participants, and fruitful discussions took place on practical implementation, opportunities and challenges.

The online course “Nutrition and healthy food” in May and June 2022 with course leader Dr. Jasmin Peschke, who is in charge of the nutrition department at the Section for Agriculture, is described in more detail in a separate report (see p. 4). In September 2022 the fourth online course on “The farm organism for planetary health” took place with Lin Bautze and Jean-Michel Florin from the Section for Agriculture. Lin Bautze’s scientific expertise on climate change, Jean-Michel Florin’s geotheanistic knowledge and their shared insights on the topic of “perception” contributed to a well-rounded course. Ueli Hurter was invited as a guest speaker to talk about land-based animal husbandry and the biodynamic preparations. Further literature and practical exercises enabled participants to get to know their own farm organism in an inspiring new way.

We look forward to expanding the selection of courses available internationally with an online range of in-depth courses on biodynamic agriculture.

Sarah Sommer

Exercises «Mood Map Diagnosis». Photo: Chik Ying Chai, Malaysia



Living Farms – Roadmap for a healthy climate

The Living Farms Roadmap comprises various projects on topics in biodynamic agriculture that contribute to a healthy climate. In 2022, new material was developed and disseminated mainly through two projects.

This gave rise to the first six episodes of the podcast “Living Farms: biodynamic perspectives worldwide!” The podcast discusses topics in the biodynamic movement in the context of current events.

In addition, the booklet “Breathing with the Climate Crisis” was presented to political actors at the Climate Conference (COP27) in Egypt. It contains research results and the thoughts and processes from the 2021 conference of the same name that came about in collaboration with the Youth Section. The text makes an appeal to adopt a cooperative approach to the earth and to jointly develop a healthy breath and footprint.

The whole text is available as a PDF in four languages (German, English, French and Spanish) at www.livingfarms.net

The printed publication can be obtained in German and French from the Verlag am Goetheanum and in English from Hawthorn Press.

Lin Bautze

Communications

Our communications work in 2022 covered the following:

Website: The number of visitors increased again by 15% to approx 54,000 per year. 84 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. In 2022 these included “Breathing with the Climate Crisis” in four languages with a print run of 55,000.

Newsletter: We sent 10 newsletters from the Section, each to around 5,000 subscribers, plus an additional 38 professional and project groups.

Videos: A number of video presentations were created for the Agriculture Conference, lectures for goetheanum.tv, recordings of interviews and the new Living Farms podcast. (www.youtube.com/channel/UCD4ZhiUed-j331Z8pAsjfFsw).

Instagram: We posted 55 contributions on our Instagram channel, which currently has 1,543 followers.

Facebook: 60 contributions were posted on our Facebook page which currently has 1,759 followers.

Lin Bautze, Johannes Onneken

Students in Egypt reading the booklet “Breathing with the Climate Crisis”. Photo: Lin Bautze



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.

Contact

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The Section has a number of sources of income. The income and expenditure for 2022 were as follows:

Income 2022	CHF
Individual donations	20'289
Donations from institutions and project funding	555'340
Income from events	174'781
Goetheanum*	78'949
TOTAL	829'359
Expenditure 2022	
Personnel	557'703
Events and projects	271'656
TOTAL	829'359

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

Donations

You may also wish to offer financial support. Bank details can be found at:

www.sektion-landwirtschaft.org/en/donations

The Section team 2022/23

Top: Lin Bautze, Living Farms project, research / Jean-Michel Florin, section leader / Ueli Hurter, section leader / Kalle Hubner, event organiser / Johannes Kronenberg, sustainability project

Bottom: Lukas Maschek, research communication and coordination / Johannes Onneken, graphics and web design, communications / Dr. Jasmin Peschke, nutrition department / Sarah Sommer, training, advisory services and professional groups / Anna Storchenegger, team coordination, finances and communications

