



Goetheanum · Freie Hochschule für Geisteswissenschaft

Section for Agriculture

Sektion für Landwirtschaft

Section d'Agriculture

Sección de Agricultura

## Activity Report 2024/25



# The anniversary year 2024 – 100 years of biodynamics worldwide

2024 was an extraordinary year: the centenary of biodynamic agriculture was celebrated worldwide. Biodynamics is now represented on all continents, with an estimated 30,000 farms in 64 countries, 7,500 of which are certified with the "Demeter" label. The Section for Agriculture took part in various celebrations and organised three anniversary events itself.

## Festivities at the Goetheanum

As a prelude to the festivities, the Section for Agriculture organised the International Agriculture Conference on "100 Years of the Agriculture Course" from 7 to 10 February 2024. The central theme "from the sun through the earth for the human – may the human become sun for earth" was intended to have an invigorating effect in view of the global economic, ecological and social crises. The sold-out conference with 1,000 participants from 50 countries made the Goetheanum positively vibrate with joy and enthusiasm, allowing many participants and their communities to draw new strength. An emotional highlight was the farewell to Jean-Michel Florin, who stepped down as co-section leader after 14 years. The conference participants honoured him with a standing ovation.

At Whitsun, exactly 100 years after Rudolf Steiner's Agriculture Course in Koberwitz, a regional festival was held in the Goetheanum garden park. Around 800 guests accepted the invitation of the nursery and the Section for Agriculture to an open day that brought the diversity of biodynamics to life.

The third event was the "Steinbeisser Evenings" on 30 and 31 August to celebrate biodynamic food quality. Together with top chefs Elif Oskan and Selassie Atadika, the Steinbeisser Creative Studio transformed the Goetheanum into a paradise for the senses and presented the biodynamic principles in a refreshing new way (see cover).

## Anniversary events worldwide

To mark the anniversary, the first pan-African biodynamic conference was held in Sekem in April. Kalle Hübner took part and witnessed the great interest in biodynamic agriculture in African regions.

Ueli Hurter was invited to anniversary celebrations and to visit Australia and New Zealand in May. During the two-week trip, it became clear how closely the biodynamic community is linked to indigenous cultures.

In June, the Biodynamic Federation Demeter International (BFDI) held its five-day general assembly in Krzyżowa (Kreisau), Poland, not far from the cradle of the biodynamic impulse in Koberzyce (Koberwitz). Afterwards, the participants, including Section representatives Jean-Michel Florin, Jasmin Peschke and Ueli Hurter, travelled to the big anniversary celebration in the eco-village of Brodowin, Brandenburg, which was organised by Demeter e.V. Germany.

On 11 July, Ueli Hurter attended the presentation in Lisbon, Portugal, of the Gulbenkian Prize for Humanity 2024 to the Sekem Initiative and the Egypt Biodynamic Association. Receiving this highly endowed prize, especially in the anniversary year, showed that biodynamic agriculture is increasingly being recognised.

The last major anniversary event of the year took place in the Philippines in November. Kalle Hübner led a workshop there on Rudolf Steiner's seven life processes and was thrilled by the enthusiasm of the participants.

## Publications to mark the anniversary

The study commissioned by Demeter e.V., BFDI and the Section for Agriculture entitled "Die biodynamische Bewegung und Demeter in der NS-Zeit". Akteure, Verbindungen, Haltungen (The biodynamic movement and Demeter during the Nazi era. Players, connections, attitudes) was published in June. Despite its sensitive content, there were largely no media attacks, which illustrates how well-founded the work of the authors Jens Ebert, Susanne zur Nieden and Meggi Pieschel was.

To mark the anniversary, the Section published a new magazine format and a short film to illustrate the biodynamic principles and their benefits for a sustainable future. Living Farms, the new magazine of the Section for Agriculture, with a circulation of 15,000 copies in German, is published twice a year and is translated into various languages.

## Developments in the specialist areas

**Training:** 2024 marked a success of a very special kind: the modules on biodynamic agriculture were fully integrated into Heliopolis University as part of the degree programme in organic agricultural science.

Another success was the monthly online courses led by Sarah Sommer in the series "Agri-Culture: Rhythms and Rituals", each with over 80 participants from all over the world, as well as the "Astronomic Farming" course, which took place twice a month in winter 24/25.

Neither should the training courses in Ukraine on the Potutory farm be forgotten. In March 2024, Jean-Michel Florin was there to teach and had a sense that the course gave the participants support and meaning in the face of the prevailing war.

**Nutrition:** Dr Jasmin Peschke published the handbook "Vom Ernährungssystem zum Ernährungsorganismus" (From Food System to Food Organism), which met with great interest, as did the monthly articles on various nutritional topics. She also founded the "Dynamic Nutrition Network", where nutritionists from all over the world meet online several times a year to raise awareness of dynamic nutrition worldwide.

**Research:** The International Biodynamic Research Platform (IBRP) gained more members in 2024 and now has over 200 people taking part in the regularly organised online seminars on current research topics. Lukas Maschek published monthly study reports and preparations began for the third international biodynamic research conference.

**Sustainable Development:** The compendium "On the Earth We Want to Live – Anthroposophy's Contributions to Sustainable Development", with 75 contributions from anthroposophical institutions and scientists on sustainable development, was developed in this new department under the direction of Johannes Kronenberg. It illustrates the contribution anthroposophy can make to the healthy development of the earth and people. The book is published by Springer Nature as part of the "World Sustainability Series" and will be presented at the World Goetheanum Forum in Sekem in September 2025.

## Forwards to the future – Agriculture Conference 2025

The members of the circle of representatives met in Belgium in autumn to prepare for the Agriculture Conference 2025. Based on Rudolf Steiner's concept of the seven life processes, the topic "The Earth as a Living Being. The Future of Biodynamics" was worked on. The life processes and the learning processes derived from them serve to help us understand both, the earth and the farm as a living organism.

The opening of the conference on 5 February 2025 provided an impressive answer to the question of how farmers can support the earth as a living being and enable a positive future. Initiatives from Egypt, India and Central America showed how community-based, sustainable agriculture can improve the lives of many families. Other inspiring projects illustrated how biodynamic farms act as educational and therapeutic centres and can also exist in the midst of industrial agriculture.

Despite the current economic challenges for many biodynamic farms, the conference remained well attended with over 700 participants from 49 countries. The high participation of young people was particularly pleasing.

## New co-lead

It is a great pleasure to see that after 100 years the seeds of the biodynamic impulse are bearing fruit all over the world. We look to the future with confidence and look forward to further developments, now with the co-leadership of Eduardo Rincón and Ueli Hurter.

Eduardo Rincón, biodynamic farmer, researcher, consultant, lecturer and artist, is the former president of the Biodynamic Association in Mexico. He succeeded Jean-Michel Florin in August 2024. At the Section for Agriculture, he is responsible, among other things, for the areas of training and research. A matter close to his heart is fostering social connection and supporting young people, as they are the lifeblood of biodynamics.

## Publishing information

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# The Section for Agriculture

The main task of the Section for Agriculture is to co-ordinate and inspire the biodynamic movement worldwide. Through courses, seminars, working groups, conferences, lecture tours and publications the Section creates opportunities for people looking for an anthroposophical spiritual scientific deepening in connection to agriculture. Ideas and suggestions for self-determined activity in farming and horticulture, processing, retail and nutrition, and for inner work and public relations are particularly important. The Section maintains and develops an active, global network of individuals and societies, Demeter companies, research institutions, foundations and more.

The Section is led by Ueli Hurter and Eduardo Rincón. The Section team currently consists of nine people. There are also freelance co-workers working on projects. The Circle of Representatives of the Section represents the biodynamic movement in all its regional and professional diversity at present through 70 people in 18 countries.

## Contact

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Financially, the Section rests on several pillars. The following income/expenditure accrued for 2024:

Income 2024	CHF
Donations from individuals	15'764
Donations from institutions and project funding	735'645
Revenue from events	436'792
Goetheanum*	65'702
TOTAL	1'253'903
Expenditure 2024	
Staff	625'017
Events and projects	628'886
TOTAL	1'253'903

\* Annual basic contribution from the General Anthroposophical Society arising from donations and membership fees

## Donations

We welcome your donation!  
Bank details and donating online under "Donations" at:



### The 2024/25 Section team

**Back row:** Johannes Kronenberg: "Sustainable Development" project / Lukas Maschek: Research communications and coordination / Kalle Hübner: Event organisation

**Middle row:** Ueli Hurter, Section head / Dr Jasmin Peschke: Nutrition Department / Anna Storchenegger: Communications, public relations, event marketing

**Front row:** Eduardo Rincón: Section head / Jacqueline Reimann: Administration, finances / Sarah Sommer: Training, counselling, specialist groups

