

Living Farms

The magazine of the Section for Agriculture



**You
Never Farm
Alone!**

Wanting to live together!
Projects in Namibia, Mexico, and the USA

Biodynamics worldwide
Interview with Eduardo Rincón

Alternative Economics
Six pioneers share their stories

Farms that teach the future
Animals and nature as teachers

Researching together
Four researchers provide insight

Community out of free will
How collaboration succeeds

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Editorial



You Never Farm Alone

Contributions from the Agriculture Conference 2026

Some articles in this magazine issue were created in cooperation with the weekly publication "Das Goetheanum". Would you like to read more articles on the Agriculture Conference 2026 or watch the recordings of all main events? Then visit the following websites.

Weekly publication "Das Goetheanum":



Goetheanum.tv:



Dear readers

The idea "We are free shapers of our destiny" describes the essence of the Agriculture Conference that took place from 4 to 7 February 2026 at the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland. Freedom and destiny are usually regarded as opposites: either one or the other. And yet there are moments that break through this logic. The conference was such a moment. Among the 750 participants from 46 countries, a tangible cheerfulness arose. How could this be? Many had gone through challenging times, marked by extreme weather, sales difficulties, and a shortage of workers.

So where did the confidence come from? One source was the conference theme "You Never Farm Alone - Living communities for the future". A slogan became a watchword that touched everyone. The message was clear: agriculture is more than production. It is relationship, responsibility, culture. This understanding runs through the following contributions in our issue on the Agriculture Conference 2026:

- In the opening article "How do we want to live together?" we explore projects in the United States of America, in Namibia, and in Mexico, in which new forms of economy, community, dialogue, and self-determination are being tested in practice.
- In the interview, Co-Section Leader Eduardo Rincón discusses what holds

the worldwide biodynamic movement together at its core.

- In "Community as an economic force", it becomes clear how cooperative consumer models, community-supported agriculture, and new forms of market strengthen trust and shared responsibility.
- "Farms that teach the future" shows how biodynamic education enables children and young people to take on responsibility and experience self-efficacy.
- "Research as a communal process" is dedicated to research as a communal process that goes far beyond scientific understanding.
- "Community out of free will" illustrates how modern self-determination connects freedom and community and why community must be consciously shaped.

The Agriculture Conference 2026 has shown that hope, creativity, and cohesion can grow even in difficult times.

Ueli Hurter

Co-Head of the Section for Agriculture at the Goetheanum



How do we want to live together?

Agri-culture as the foundation of community

In the sparse expanses of Montana in the United States, the team around Anna Jones-Crabtree is testing new ways of operating, while on the Krumhuk Farm in Namibia, shaped by colonialism, space for dialogue is growing. At the same time, a powerful movement is emerging in Mexico: Tosepan Tetataniske, a network of cooperatives that enables self-determination for indigenous communities. These are three examples that make it clear that agriculture is more than food production: it is relationship, responsibility, culture – and perhaps a key to the question of how we want to live together in the future.

Anna Jones-Crabtree **Vilicus Farms, USA**

The engineer Anna and her husband Doug came to agriculture relatively late. Both are newcomers from other professions who consciously decided to implement ecological agriculture on a large scale. Montana offered the necessary conditions for this – above all, available and affordable land. In many other regions of the United States, such a step would hardly have been financially conceivable.

With around 12,000 acres – about 6,000 hectares – Vilicus Farms reaches a size that is exceptional in Europe, but corresponds to the norm of an industrialised agricultural landscape in the United States. A large portion of their land is leased long-term, partly through yield-

based models. It is located in the Northern Great Plains, a region characterised by harsh conditions: a dry climate, strong winds, and low precipitation. Trees are rare; even small shrubs stand out immediately. The landscape appears open and unprotected – and precisely therein lies its challenge.

Ecological infrastructure and biodiversity in an extreme climate

Narrow strips run through the landscape – unobtrusive, almost like a design detail. But they are far more than that: a highly complex ecological infrastructure. Originally established for bees, they fulfil numerous functions. They slow down the wind, retain snow, store water, and create habitats. When icy



Anna Jones-Crabtree



Charlene Makondora



Clemens Voigts



Maria Esther Nieto

winds sweep across the fields at minus 25 degrees and snow is driven through the air, it becomes clear how they tame the wind and capture the snow, which then serves as irrigation. Soil building cannot be thought of in isolation here. It only emerges through the interaction of systems that enable climate resilience and biological diversity.

Antelope, foxes, curlews, falcons, badgers, and bumblebees naturally belong to the same community as humans and livestock. The bumblebees in particular are important: more than 28 species are native to Montana, some of which have returned since the fields have been

“An agriculture based on relationships, time, and regeneration encounters a capitalist economic system that demands short-term returns.”

Anna Jones-Crabtree, Vilicus Farms, USA

farmed organically. For Anna, this is no coincidence, but an expression of a force that unfolds when ecological conditions are right.

Strengthening resilience

Although geographically remote, the farm is anything but lifeless: three Jack Russell terriers, 21 Highland cattle, and a team of ten create a vibrant place that is shaped together. Without the support of many participants, Vilicus Farms would not have come into being: friends, family, workers, and landowners were willing to share risks. Nothing followed a straight line or a predefined plan.

How fragile this structure is became evident in the climatic extremes of recent years: three years of drought, a promising sowing destroyed by heat and storms, yields that first dropped to 37 percent and later to nine percent. In

one year, the harvest even fell below the amount of seed sown. And yet, it was precisely during this phase that Anna and Doug converted thousands of acres to organic farming.

A new economic model emerges

An agriculture based on relationships, time, and regeneration encounters a capitalist economic system that demands short-term returns. A life between ecological vision and economic pressure – seemingly irreconcilable. But instead of wearing themselves down against this, Anna searched for solutions. She developed a model that she calls “Community Supported Stewardship Agriculture” – a further development of community-supported agriculture. The focus is not on consumption, but on responsibility. People do not only participate in the product, but in the process, in the preservation, and in the development of a living system.

From this emerges a different understanding of money: not as an abstract quantity, but as something that circulates – like water or energy – anchored in real relationships. Why, Anna asks, do we think about carbon dioxide certificates when flying, but not about directly investing in the regeneration of land? In this way, the perspective shifts. Agriculture no longer appears merely as production, but as a cultural and social practice.

Clemens Voigt and Charlene Makondora Krumhuk Farm, Namibia

From the wide plains of Montana, the journey continues to Namibia, where Clemens and Charlene, together with others, operate the Krumhuk Farm. Clemens grew up in Namibia in a family with European roots and returned there after years of education in Germany. Charlene was born in Zimbabwe, lived in South Africa, and came to Namibia for the farm project. The two represent

a young generation of farmers who not only practice agriculture, but also consider societal questions.

The biodynamic Krumhuk Farm lies between the Namib and Kalahari deserts in a region with little rainfall and large temperature fluctuations. It has existed for around fifty years and is supported by a community of about one hundred people. What distinguishes this community is its diversity. Eight languages are spoken, and each person brings their own story. But this diversity is not only an enrichment; it is also a challenge, because Namibia is still marked by the scars of colonialism and apartheid.

Living community despite challenges

Clemens and Charlene speak openly about how this history shapes everyday life. Inequalities, divisions, and wounds are part of reality, even within the community. This makes the social spaces they consciously create all the more important. Every Monday, everyone meets in a circle, and on Friday evening they gather again. These rituals are more than organisational elements; they are places of encounter where people can perceive one another beyond their roles. The circle becomes a symbol of equality and connection.

Closing cycles

Krumhuk Farm is clearly structured. There is a business management as well as an elected community council that deals with social issues. The integrative approach includes large areas left in a natural state, targeted cultivation, animal husbandry, and processing. Cows, pigs, chickens, and bees are part of a system in which cycles are closed. Milk is processed, by-products are reused, and waste becomes a resource. A bakery, a butchery, a kitchen, and a market in Windhoek connect production and community.

What is particularly striking is how learning is understood here. It does

not take place in separate spaces, but in the midst of life. Children count eggs, bake bread, and care for animals. Guests come, bring new perspectives, and take experiences back with them. The farm becomes a place of exchange, a living field of learning.

Maria Esther Nieto Tosepan Tetataniske, Mexico

Maria grew up in Mexico between city and countryside, studied environmental engineering, and deepened her knowledge of renewable energy in Germany before deciding to return to Mexico. In the northeast of the Puebla highlands, she found the community “Tosepan Tetataniske” (we will succeed). This network of cooperatives is a symbol of hope and resilience in a region heavily affected by poverty.

Many indigenous communities in Mexico suffer from limited access to basic necessities such as food, housing, healthcare, and education. The Nahua and Tutunaku groups that form the basis of the cooperative have long struggled against these problems.

“Again and again, the circle appears as a symbol of community, of equality, and of what can grow at the centre.”

Maria Esther Nieto, Tosepan Tetataniske, Mexico

Self-help in times of need

Out of real needs, a complex network developed: ecological agriculture, marketing, financial systems, healthcare, education, and even telecommunications. Each of these structures emerged not as an abstract concept, but as a response to concrete challenges. Maria particularly emphasises the central role of women





and the importance of collective decision-making processes.

Today, “Tosepan Tetataniske” comprises eight regional cooperatives and supports around 35,000 families in 29 communities. The aim of the movement is to build a holistic, sustainable, and democratically organised local economy that is deeply rooted in the indigenous culture, language, and ecological knowledge of the Sierra Norte.

Agriculture is understood here as a connection between the material and the spiritual dimension. This perspective shapes not only everyday life, but also long-term visions that are set out in strategic guidelines. Despite all difficulties, there is a deep sense of confidence, sustained by the feeling of not being alone.

Wanting to live together

The experiences from these three continents condense into shared images. Again and again, the circle appears as a symbol of community, of equality, and of what can grow at the centre. It

is about courage, about relationships, about the ability to hold on to a vision despite uncertainty.

What remains is the realisation that agriculture extends far beyond agriculture. It becomes a cultural, social, and spiritual project centred on the question: how do we want to live together? The stories of Anna, Clemens, Charlene, and Maria show that this question is being asked all over the world. Their answers are as diverse as the landscapes and communities from which they come. And yet, they are connected by something shared: the powerful idea that a positive future emerges where people take responsibility for one another and for the land.



What connects biodynamic communities worldwide

Interview with Eduardo Rincón

The biodynamic movement is growing together worldwide – carried by a shared love for the earth and a commitment to a sustainable future. Co-head of Section Eduardo Rincón speaks about what fundamentally connects this movement and what makes it so unique.

Anna Storchenegger: You lived in Mexico for many years and now lead the Section for Agriculture at the Goetheanum in Switzerland. How has this change in perspective shaped your understanding of biodynamic agriculture as an international movement?

Eduardo Rincón: A certain polarity becomes visible: at the place of origin, ideas can appear rigid, while in other places they are often more flexible, open, and adaptable – though sometimes also somewhat further removed from their original sources. This creates the possibility for a living dialogue between these perspectives: bringing more flexibility to where things have become rigid, while at the same time strengthening structure and depth where they may have become too loose. For me, this mediating role is a central task.

When you look at biodynamic communities worldwide – what is the connecting element that holds this movement together across continents?

A fundamental connection is the love for the earth and for human beings. At the core are shared questions: how do we produce healthy food? How do we care for the land sustainably? How do we shape meaningful relationships? Closely connected to this is the importance of community. In many places, biodynamic work is embedded in communal contexts, even though these may look very different depending on the region.

There is also a strong and widespread desire to learn and to grow. People are interested in deepening their understanding of biodynamics and anthroposophy, refining their practice, and exchanging with others – this gives rise to a vibrant global dialogue.



Eduardo Rincón is co-head of the Section for Agriculture.

Living Farms Podcast

Biodynamic perspectives worldwide

Co-head of the Section for Agriculture Eduardo Rincón speaks in the monthly Living Farms Podcast with guests from the global biodynamic movement – and this year also invites representatives of other sustainable agricultural approaches.

The focus is on the key questions of our time: what does holistic agriculture mean today? What answers can it offer to ecological and social challenges?

Listen now!



Also available on Spotify, Deezer, Apple Podcast, and YouTube.

At the same time, there are major regional differences. Which cultural or climatic conditions shape biodynamic practice?

An important example is rhythms. In biodynamics, seasonal rhythms play a central role, but these differ greatly from region to region. European seasons cannot simply be transferred to tropical areas. Instead, local rhythms must be carefully observed and understood. This means that biodynamics must always develop in dialogue with the people locally. It cannot simply be transferred, but must grow out of the specific conditions of a place.

How do social, economic, and political conditions influence biodynamics in different countries?

These influences are very concrete. During the Agricultural Conference 2026, it became clear how differently people respond to economic challenges – from small-scale farming structures to large agricultural enterprises (see page 12).

Geopolitical developments are also playing an increasingly important role. For example, when supply chains for fertilisers are disrupted, the consequences are felt worldwide. In such moments, biodynamic farms can suddenly become particularly important, as they operate independently of chemical inputs.

Such challenges require a high degree of creativity. That is why biodynamic education is not about following fixed recipes, but about understanding fundamental principles. This understanding makes it possible to respond flexibly to a wide variety of situations.

What challenges do biodynamic communities face in less privileged regions? And how can the international movement support them without undermining their autonomy?

In many countries, hidden rules and political structures contribute to maintaining inequality and make social mobility and improvements in quality of life more difficult. This also affects agricultural

development, as systems are sometimes designed to benefit a privileged minority. Yet through dialogue, education, and cooperation at all levels of society, solutions continue to emerge. The most important thing is to truly listen and to understand the realities of people's lives. Solutions must be developed together with local communities.

How can a shared understanding of quality be maintained in such a diverse global movement?

A central element is the work with Rudolf Steiner's Agriculture Course. It provides a deep and living foundation that can be connected with local conditions. Education, training, and communication are essential in order to create a meaningful bridge between theory and practice.

Looking to the future: what opportunities do you see for biodynamic agriculture? And where do the greatest challenges lie?

One of the greatest opportunities lies in working with young people. Many are searching for meaning and connection in today's often chaotic world – and biodynamics can offer both. At the same time, we must learn to communicate biodynamics in a more open and accessible way.

New forms of collaboration are also emerging – not only within agriculture, but also with other sectors, such as the fashion industry, where interest in regenerative and biodynamic materials is growing. However, there are also risks: that biodynamics becomes too rigid, is reduced to a mere technique, or that its name and label are misused. The real challenge, however, is to remain alive, creative, and open. Or, as we say in the Section for Agriculture: we must think about agriculture in a new way, feel it in a new way, and shape it in a new way.

A new generation is coming together worldwide

Conference scholarships strengthen young voices in biodynamics

The Agriculture Conference 2026 was not only a place for professional exchange, but also a gathering for the next generation of the biodynamic movement. Thanks to conference scholarships, young practitioners from different parts of the world were able to participate, contribute their perspectives, and take new impulses back to their home regions. Five of them share their experiences – and how they want to help shape the future of biodynamics.

Osvier Del Jesús Pereira Chamoo

Advancing the transition to ecological agriculture in Venezuela

I am a biodynamic farmer from Maturín in Venezuela and am currently training to become a biodynamic instructor. For me, the Agriculture Conference was above all one thing: an intensive space for learning and reflection. It provided me with concrete tools – not only for everyday agricultural work, but also for social processes. I now approach challenges in communication, empathy, and collaboration with new methods that are already showing initial positive changes in my working environment.

For Latin America and the tropics, continuing training and support are crucial in order to shape the transition to ecological and biodynamic agriculture. My vision is clear: I want to be a driving force for change – for communities that want to expand their awareness and connect more deeply with the forces of nature.

Aparna Vinod

Anchoring biodynamics as a community-building force in India

As a sustainability consultant in Wayanad, Kerala, I am currently cultivating black pepper and turmeric biodynamically while at the same time developing a learning centre – the “School of Sustainability”. In this way, I combine practice, education, and consulting.

The Agriculture Conference was both a confirmation and a deepening of my work. The guiding theme “You Never Farm Alone” particularly inspired me: I now understand the farm even more clearly as a living organism, embedded in social, ecological, and spiritual contexts. Equally important to me is the strong role of women, with their caring and intuitive abilities, in biodynamic agriculture.

Another focus of my work is the work with preparations. Conversations with experienced practitioners have encouraged me to cultivate preparation plants myself and to shape the entire process consciously and authentically.

For the future, I plan to expand my cultivation areas, further develop my learning centre, and in particular involve hobby gardeners. My goal is to anchor biodynamics as a community-building force in India.



Osvier Del Jesús Pereira Chamoo



Aparna Vinod



Nitzan Betzer



Bruna Janini



Amy Ling Wan

Nitzan Betzer

Passing on biodynamic knowledge in Israel

One of the most important insights from the Agriculture Conference for me was this: agriculture is more than production – it is relationship. I was particularly inspired by the models of community-supported agriculture, because they understand the farm as part of a living community.

As a vegetable grower in Israel with a focus on regenerative agriculture, I now want to implement this perspective in concrete ways: through closer relationships with my customers, new forms of collaboration within the farm, and stronger involvement of the local community.

In the long term, I plan to gradually integrate biodynamic methods, deepen my knowledge and practical experience, and actively pass on this knowledge – as part of a growing network for sustainable agriculture.

Bruna Janini

Building biodynamic bridges between Brazil and Turkey

I am currently supporting an agroecological farm in Brazil in its transition to biodynamic agriculture. There, we cultivate cacao, coffee, bananas, as well as flowers and aromatic plants. Before starting a larger project in Brazil, I would like to visit more farms around the world and learn from them. A next step is already planned: a volunteer placement on a biodynamic farm in Turkey.

For me, the Agriculture Conference was above all a source of inspiration and a place of exchange. Encounters with experienced farmers as well as with people who are just beginning showed me that what matters is not the size of a farm or the moment of starting, but the inner attitude and the connection to the relationships within nature.

Amy Ling Wan

Creating biodynamic exchange in Malaysia

Since November 2024, I have converted my farm from chemical to biodynamic agriculture, leaving behind all synthetic inputs and beginning to work consistently with the biodynamic preparations BD500 and BD501. The change is noticeable: the quality of my fruits has visibly improved.

In Malaysia, I had hardly been part of communal activities before; I did not know what strength lies within them. Now – after the Agriculture Conference – I see that agriculture is connection – to people and to a shared goal.

Inspired by Mari Orchard, a biodynamic farm in Malaysia, I now want to cultivate vegetables together, read anthroposophical texts, and create exchange. For one thing is clear: I will farm biodynamically for the whole of my life.

Support young people with a conference scholarship for sustainable agriculture worldwide

For the next Agriculture Conference from 3 to 6 February 2027, on the topic “Working with the intelligence of life. Biodynamic agriculture brings microcosm and macrocosm together”, we would again like to award scholarships – and warmly ask for your support, whether large or small. A scholarship requires 700 Swiss francs.

Donate now



(Purpose: conference scholarship)

Community as an economic force

Financing, market, and responsibility in biodynamic agriculture

Whether community-supported farms, cooperative shops, or new forms of collaboration with supermarkets: six perspectives from different countries show how relationships, trust, and shared responsibility make possible an agriculture that benefits everyone.

Alice Groh, USA

Co-founder of a farm that pioneered community-supported agriculture (CSA)

“You have to want The Farm, not just its products.” My husband Trauger Groh emphasised this again and again to our members. It is about recognising the value of the farm for the environment and for the social aspect of the community as a whole.

When we started, no bank was willing to finance us. So we created an annual budget for operating costs and presented it to the community. Then we sat together in a circle, and each member pledged aloud a monthly contribution. That required courage because we all knew one another. One family offered 200 dollars, another 150 – and so on. Our vegetable grower and accountant Anthony Graham added up the amounts and told us whether we had reached the target. If not, we began the round again until we succeeded.

What was decisive was that Trauger kept speaking about the ideals of biodynamics and about social values. That inspired people and kept the enthusiasm for our farm alive. We are now entering our fortieth season.

It is impressive that CSA has spread worldwide and today secures the livelihood of thousands of farms. Rarely does a social idea establish itself so sustainably. Trauger always reminded us: We are all farmers; we bear responsi-

bility for how our food is produced and what impact our biodynamic farm has on the environment. We must therefore also learn to read our social environment as attentively as we do the natural and agricultural one – and to recognise the opportunities and possibilities within it.

Olivier Clisson, France

Baker and farmer (paysan-boulangier) with committed customers

What has sustained my farm for twenty years? Associative economics. In essence, it is simple: the customers need us – and we need them. In today’s economy, it often works the other way around: customers want to pay as little as possible, traders want to earn as much as possible. That falls short of the mark.

For me, everything began with building a bread oven. I needed money and turned to a small bank in France with an anthroposophical background. Their condition: ten guarantees. So I

approached people who were interested in local food – we did not know one another. After an hour, everyone expressed their trust and signed. Failure was not



Alice Groh, USA



Olivier Clisson, France

“In essence, it is simple: the customers need us – and we need them.”



Andres Milan, Colombia

an option. In difficult times, I thought of them: I must not let down this trust. Later, an opportunity arose to acquire more land. I asked my customers whether they wanted to participate. With the support of “Terre de Liens”, our local cooperative was thus created – and I was able to buy my first cows. Or rather: have them bought. A cow cannot be divided, so each animal was purchased by one person, and I “rented” it from them.

When we became active against genetically modified plants, we adopted an idea from Switzerland and invited people to a shared sowing. It became one of the most beautiful days of my life as a farmer. Perhaps the essence of biodynamics lies in connections – to nature and to our invisible companions, to ourselves and the divine within us, and to one another, carried by all the hearts that are with us.

Andres Milan, Colombia

Working to advance biodynamic cultivation in Latin America, where lack of market access is a central challenge

We needed a strategy for building local markets. The key insight: in biodynamic agriculture, the business cannot be separated from community. It is not only about production and sales, but about sharing values and shaping new relationships.

Competition and short-term profitability are not sufficient here. Our goal is real added value. Without social cohesion and ecological regeneration, there is no economic sustainability. As a network, we share stories and experiences – this makes us resilient. Despite different backgrounds, we recognise shared challenges that no one can overcome alone.

From this, several strategies have emerged. First: experience before explanation. Taste, vitality, and authentic stories convince more than concepts. That means we approach our customers, understand their needs, and meet them as part of our community. Second: a shared regional narrative is needed – biodynamics must become visible as a living Latin American movement. Third: education is part of it. We share our knowledge and thereby strengthen our community.

Regional cooperation is also crucial – including across borders – in order to

expand availability and diversity. While the global trend is moving toward meaningful, transparent, and regenerative food, the real opportunity of biodynamics lies in deepening these values and allowing resilient communities to continue to grow.

Merle Koomans, Netherlands

Part of the initiative Consumer-Supported Shops (CSS), which develops community-supported retail models

Odin is a food cooperative in the Netherlands with forty stores in community ownership. Anyone can become part of it – and take responsibility. With every euro we spend, we help decide what our world and our food chain will look like. Around 23,000 households now belong to Odin, with annual revenue of about 100 million euros. That is remarkable – but not enough. Our goal is not profit for its own sake, but change.

We also have seventy-five bee colonies on around thirty biodynamic farms – not primarily for honey, but for biodiversity. The bees make visible what has fallen out of balance. When a bee dies, everyone is alarmed; when people become ill from pesticides, silence often reigns.

Odin also includes a biodynamic farm focused on open-pollinated breeding. We grow vegetables and invite people to understand why non-genetically modified seeds are important and where their food comes from. For a long time, I myself did not protest. But the world is changing – and sometimes that means leaving one's comfort zone. So I became active against the approval of genetically modified plants and against insufficient pesticide regulation in the Netherlands.

I find it important that we not only sell food and talk about it, but also act when something goes wrong. Or, as it says on our T-shirts: "Be the change you want to see."

Fabio Brescacin, Italy

Entrepreneur behind NaturaSì, advancing national campaigns for fair and transparent prices in agriculture

Forty years ago, we began with a small cooperative in a small town near Venice; two years later, we founded a farm. Today we are located in the heavily polluted Prosecco region – and have created a 25-hectare oasis without environmental pollution. Inspired by anthroposophy, we pursue a clear mission: healthy, biodynamic agriculture. But this only succeeds with an equally healthy economy. That is why, twenty years ago, we decided to use the value created within the company also for spiritual and cultural purposes.

We now have 350 stores. Consumer awareness has grown, harvests are good – and yet many farms are operating at a loss. So how do we arrive at fair prices? Last year, we launched the campaign "Prezzo Transparente": transparent prices to support agriculture. This was a shift in thinking, because prices were long considered confidential. For us, they are a shared decision. That is why we brought together institutions, agriculture, and consumer organisations – not to set prices but to provide guidance.

Today, the "market price" still dominates – often an insufficient price. We need new ways of financing and must channel funds from the larger financial cycle into agriculture. Many consumers are ready for this. That is why we are currently developing pilot projects for equity and loans along the entire value chain.

Human beings are not just selfish. For thousands of years, another impulse has also been growing: altruism. As Rudolf Steiner said, the economy can be a school of altruism. Our task is to give people the opportunity to do good.



Merle Koomans, Netherlands



Fabio Brescacin, Italy

"Human beings are not just selfish. For thousands of years, another impulse has also been growing: altruism."



Tom Saat, Netherlands

Tom Saat, Netherlands

Seeking ways to position organic and biodynamic products effectively in supermarkets

When I began as a farmer in the early 1990s, organic and biodynamic farms were growing strongly. Since around 80 percent of food was sold in supermarkets, it was an obvious path to take – even if it was not easy to sit “at the table” with large retailers.

In the past ten years, much has changed. As part of the “Green Deal”, the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive requires large companies to disclose their sustainability performance. At the same time, Greenpeace is putting pressure on supermarkets across Europe to offer healthier products. Many companies now have not only purchasing departments but also their own sustainability departments. This opens up new spaces for dialogue: producers, processors, sustainability departments, and purchasing departments increasingly meet on an equal footing.

What is missing are the consumers. Many believe they can choose freely in the supermarket – but this freedom is limited. Placement and presentation significantly influence sales. Supermarket management thus indirectly decides what is bought – and in a sense also sits “at the table”.

This table is becoming rounder. I see in this a springboard for a development that is no longer reversible. If we as biodynamic agriculture want to remain relevant, we should join in on this path. Many paths lead to the goal – what matters is that they are fruitful for all. That is why supermarkets should also be part of the growth of organic agriculture.

Farms that teach the future

How biodynamic practice shapes education and leadership

In the Ruskin Mill Trust, a network of schools, farms, and workshops in Great Britain, children and young people do not learn abstractly, but through experience: they experience relationship and self-efficacy – with animals, crafts, and nature as teachers. Founder Aonghus Gordon developed this approach, and his successor Tara Gratton is now renewing it. A look at how living organisations grow.

At the centre of the Ruskin Mill Trust is the biodynamic farm organism as a space for learning and living. Here, education is not conveyed abstractly, but through experience. Mathematical understanding arises when counting eggs, responsibility when caring for animals, relationship in daily activity. In this way, the farm becomes a space in which human potential can grow – a place of learning and development that calls for self-management and, in the long term, gives rise to new working and learning communities.

Learning with animals

The role of animals is particularly striking. They are active partners in developmental processes. A goat can, for the first time, give a sense of belonging to an emotionally wounded child. A donkey walks alongside young people who have experienced violence, helping them take their first steps back toward trust. Birds of prey confront individuals with power, fear, and self-perception. What is being created here is not romanticised nature education, but a consciously designed experiential space in which development becomes possible.

Genius loci – the potential of place

A key concept is the “genius loci” – the spirit of a place. Each place is thought to hold its own potential, waiting to be recognised and developed. Through careful observation, collaborative exchange, and artistic approaches, an attempt

is made to understand what a place is – and what it wants to become. The seven life processes according to Rudolf Steiner play a central role in this. They describe fundamental qualities such as breathing, warmth, nourishment, or growth – not just in nature, but also in organisations. For institutions are living organisms. When they lose contact with these processes, they become rigid. When the processes are revitalised, institutions can regenerate.

Equality and hierarchy

This vitality is also reflected in the way an organisation is thought about. Aonghus Gordon describes a tension between two basic forms: the circle and the triangle. The circle stands for equality, dialogue, and shared insight. The triangle stands for responsibility, decision-making, and clear leadership. Both are necessary – and only in their interplay does a sustainable structure emerge. In everyday life, this means that there are spaces without hierarchy, for example in educational reflection. And there are moments in which responsibility must be taken – such as working with authorities or funding partners.

Why good ideas fail

A central part of Aonghus Gordon’s work is the analysis of failed institutions. His diagnosis is clear: the problem is not the idea, but the loss of life. Where organisations merely administer instead of shaping, where processes become rigid and relationships are lost, decline begins. The seven life processes are then



Aonghus Gordon is the founder and executive chair of the Ruskin Mill Trust. Inspired by Rudolf Steiner, John Ruskin, and William Morris, he developed “Practical Skills Therapeutic Education”. As part of the New Year Honours 2022, he was appointed Officer of the Order of the British Empire for his achievements.



Tara Gratton is CEO of the Ruskin Mill Trust. Her professional career began in 1992 as a primary school teacher; from 2004 onward, she led various schools and educational networks. She has been leading the Ruskin Mill Trust since September 2025.



no longer lived – and this is precisely where regeneration begins.

That this approach works is shown by a concrete example: In one Ruskin Mill Trust Garden School, attendance improved dramatically, accompanied by significant progress in student progress. The decisive factor? The children enjoyed coming – above all to care for the animals. Learning emerged from relationship, not from compulsion.

From practice to vision

The Ruskin Mill Trust has meanwhile developed into a widely branched network. Several institutions, agricultural enterprises, places of education, and research approaches are connected through a shared basis: biodynamic principles. The vision extends even further. An independent university is part of the longterm vision, and steps are being taken toward its establishment– a place where spiritual scientific research and practical experience come together, beyond purely reductionist scientific models.

Transition as a new beginning

With the gradual withdrawal of Aonghus Gordon, a critical phase of succession is beginning for the Ruskin Mill Trust. Tara Gratton, CEO of the trust since 2025, is taking on responsibility with the aim of renewing the founder's impulse rather than imitating it.

Tara Gratton's concept of "conscious succession" turns succession into a deliberate process of continuity, renewal, and shared responsibility. Biodynamics forms the foundation, even within a highly regulated environment that is increasingly recognising the effectiveness of this integrative approach. In the end, a simple but far-reaching insight remains: succession means preserving what is living.

Research as a collaborative process

Researchers are taking new paths

Research does not begin in the laboratory, but with a question. More and more people are discovering it as a collaborative process – even in everyday life. An approach to a new culture of knowledge.

Everything we know begins with a question. This simple idea connects modern science with ancient traditions. Long before universities existed, people were researching and seeking knowledge – not separated from their everyday lives, but right in the midst of them.

This tradition is still carried forward today in a form of research that is not limited to measurability alone. In anthroposophical spiritual science, knowledge is understood as a path that the human being takes out of free will. Research here means touching life in its depth and recognising contexts that cannot always be immediately expressed in numbers.

Connection instead of isolation

Today, we face the challenge of revitalising this attitude and linking it up with practical social questions. This also happens in agriculture. More and more initiatives are attempting to connect scientific methods with practical experience in the field. From this emerges an open knowledge culture that does not take place only in academic spaces, but in exchange between agricultural practice and research.

Many researchers experience isolation, especially when their approaches do not conform to established norms. The agricultural scientist Julia Wright knows this experience well. In her international work, for example in Peru, she was often the only one interested in permaculture and organic agriculture.

Her perspectives were ridiculed and sometimes explicitly questioned.

This makes it all the more important to look beyond one's own disciplinary boundaries. Because around the world, new fields of research are emerging that build exactly such bridges: from ethnobotany through consciousness studies to plant neurobiology. It becomes particularly fruitful where different knowledge systems are consciously brought into relationship with one another – such as in collaboration with indigenous cultures or in participatory research. Here it becomes clear: research is not a solitary act. It lives through resonance.

Crisis as an opportunity for transformation

At the same time, pressure is increasing. Alternative approaches such as biodynamic agriculture are increasingly coming under criticism. The French researcher Cyrille Rigolot reports at times intense attacks on his biodynamic research. But what is initially a burden also brings attention – a potential that can be used.

Cyrille Rigolot sees the future in a radical step: letting go. Old ways of thinking, rigid structures, and even inner certainties must be questioned in order to create space for something new. Here, one thing becomes clear: the major challenges of our time cannot be solved within individual disciplines. Specialisation has enabled enormous progress, but reaches its limits when it comes to complex, living systems. What



Julia Wright is associate professor at the Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience at Coventry University, Great Britain.



Cyrille Rigolot is a researcher at the Institut du Vivant des Communs – COF-SA-France.



Christopher Brock is research coordinator, board member of the Forschungsring, and a member of the Circle of Representatives of the Section for Agriculture.



David Martin holds a chair of medical theory, integrative and anthroposophical medicine, and is director of the Institute for Integrative Medicine (IfIM).



NEW: Biodynamic Network

The “Biodynamic Network” platform for knowledge exchange and international networking is now online. Whether for practical questions or the search for research partners – here you will find what you are looking for.

Join now!



is needed here are transdisciplinary approaches – and the willingness to understand differences not as obstacles, but as resources.

Translating between practice and science

Communication plays a special role in this context. How can complex or unfamiliar practices be explained in such a way that they become understandable to outsiders? This is precisely where scientific research in the classical sense comes in. It structures, analyses, and makes visible what would otherwise remain difficult to grasp.

Christopher Brock, research coordinator at the Forschungsring Germany, describes this task as a kind of translation work. Together with practitioners, he develops research questions that both meet scientific standards and arise from real practice. In this way, it is ensured that the results are not only publishable in scientific journals, but can also be applied.

An example of this was a collaboration with beekeepers. Together, they researched which criteria are relevant for the quality of bee products. It quickly became clear that there is no single definition. Measurable parameters stand alongside holistic perceptions. Only through dialogue a picture emerged that sufficiently embraced the complexity.

Research that reaches into life

That research can also have a direct impact on everyday life is shown by the medic David Martin. From his work with children, he posed a fundamental question: why have certain diseases been increasing for decades? His answer leads him far beyond medicine – toward agriculture, the environment, and our ways of living.

Knowledge then no longer arises only within institutions, but wherever people seriously engage with the world. And perhaps this is one of the great opportunities of our time: that research moves closer to life again.

Community out of free will

Working together in connection and freedom

Between pride and loneliness, courage and humility, the modern I oscillates – free and at the same time searching for genuine connection. Starting from Rudolf Steiner’s idea of the consciousness soul, Ueli Hurter traces a development: from an experience connected to nature, through intellectual understanding, to the autonomous I grounded in itself. Yet this newly gained freedom comes at a price: it challenges us to shape community no longer as something taken for granted, but as a conscious decision. How does this affect the way we collaborate?

“You never farm alone” is the theme of the Agriculture Conference 2026. At the same time, people often say with courage, perhaps with overconfidence: “I can do that on my own.” But a quiet voice reminds us: “No, a biodynamic farm is too large and too complex a project. You cannot do it alone, you need partners.” Humility grows. Collaboration out of free will oscillates between courage and humility. Both are necessary.

I am speaking here about the community that has taken the initiative, about the people who take on a project and lead it. How can they work together? My experience comes from the Demeter training farm L’Aubier, where I worked as a farmer for thirty years, and from sixteen years of work at the Goetheanum.

Carrying community in the heart

In my experience, the actual field of collaboration is the inner core of an initiative. When those involved in the core cooperate out of free will, the surrounding community resonates. And where is collaboration put to the test as to whether free will succeeds or not? It happens – banal as it may sound – in meetings. The often monotonous meetings are the heart organs through which the free will of all is orchestrated. Free will is part of a free human being. And a free human being is someone who is able to think independently. Here lies

the origin of what is called personal freedom. I have found no other source of freedom than this independent thinking. “I think, therefore I am,” said René Descartes. We can also say: I plough, therefore I am. More briefly: I am because I am. The I, a being grounded in itself, needs no bond from the world for its grounds.

In his Table Talk, Martin Luther says that he fears his own heart more than the pope and all the cardinals. That means: I carry the pope within me. Here the personality stands at the peak of itself. This individualisation is the driving force for development in the social realm. Something very profound expresses itself in this individualisation. It is part of our constitution that we have this independence and are also proud of it.

We are social, but also solitary beings

To this pride is added a quiet feeling – a hint of loneliness, of isolation. Thus we swing back and forth from the proud I to the lonely, abandoned I that asks: do I still have a connection to anything and anyone? This underlying question arises from what Rudolf Steiner calls the consciousness soul. By this he means the youngest, third stage of the development of the soul, which has been forming since the Renaissance. The first stage, the sentient soul, refers to a landscape of the soul that resonates directly with nature, with the course



Ueli Hurter has been co-head of the Section for Agriculture since 2010 and a member of the executive council of the General Anthroposophical Society since 2020. Until 2020, he was a biodynamic farmer and part of the leadership of the pioneering Swiss Demeter farm L’Aubier with agriculture, cheesemaking, eco-hotel, organic shop, and residential community.



“The free will of the other is sacred.”

of the sun, and is carried by a natural sense of belonging within nature. In the second element, the intellectual or mind soul, it is no longer immediate sentience, but the intellect that confronts the world and grasps it in its laws. Calculating the course of the sun and planets, imagining a model of planetary orbits, is an expression of this conceptual relationship to the world. I can understand that the sun, in its course through the zodiac, within the context of the entire starry sky, is a “messenger” of the whole firmament.

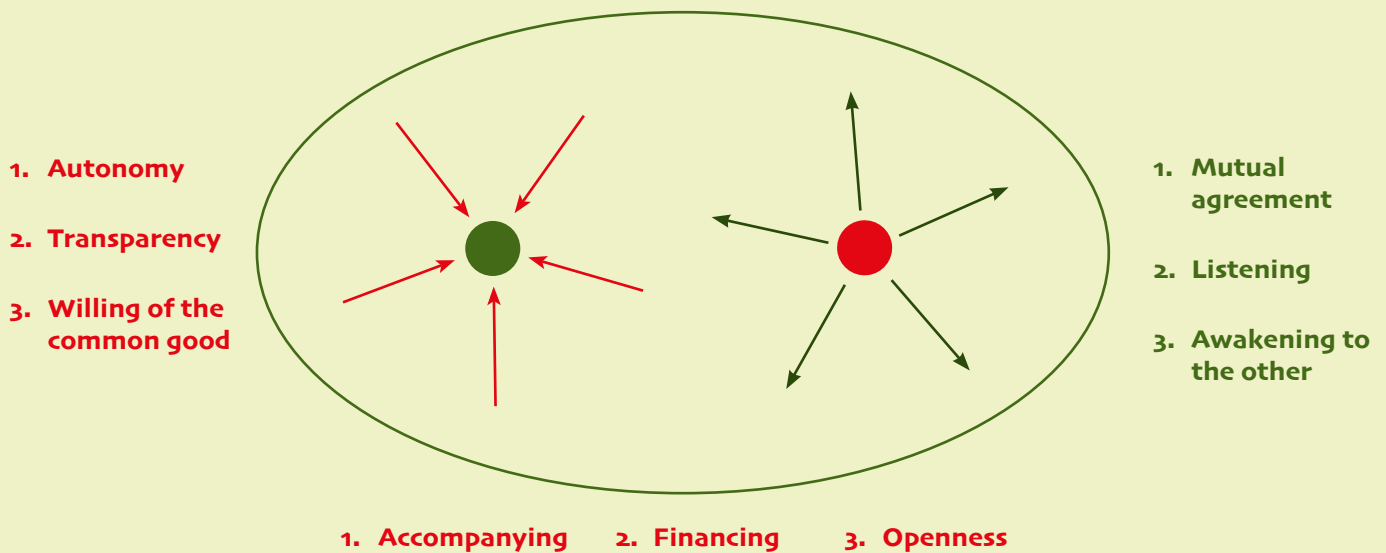
What outwardly took place with the Copernican revolution, placing the sun at the centre, corresponds inwardly to the step toward the consciousness soul. The sun now rests fixed at the centre. It is a centre, just as the human I, grounded in itself, is a centre. Because I can substantiate myself within this new constitution, I can think the sun as fixed cosmologically. I am sun-like – on the moving earth. That I have a part within me that is sun-like and at the same time am part of earthly existence, sun on earth, is the soul constitution that Rudolf Steiner calls the consciousness soul. Thus constituted, we are not

by nature a social being, but an individual being – and perhaps even a being of loneliness.

Free will as a new social force

This individualisation is the driving force. It brings freedom, but at the price that the essential brotherly and sisterly connection to our fellow human beings is lost. What I gain, however, is free will. From it, I can newly decide to collaborate with others. Within this cultural development of the consciousness soul, there are different stages, as first formulated in the Renaissance by the church scholar Johannes Trithemius. According to Christian tradition, the seven archangels each take turns in governing the times for about 350 years. Rudolf Steiner follows this idea and identifies the transition from Gabriel to Michael in the last third of the nineteenth century, the time in which Steiner lived.

Steiner is not only a contemporary witness of this epochal transition, but in a sense a pupil of the new spirit of the age, of Michael. If Gabriel represents the moon in Christian tradition, Michael is the archangel of the sun.



Connected with this is a movement toward freedom. To place the free human being into society and also into a relationship with the earth and the spiritual world in a new way is part of the essence of this archangel. Rudolf Steiner called this anthroposophy as a science about the spirit – a science about the I. One could also say: a science of the I. Anthroposophy takes the concept of the I seriously and understands it as the endpoint of a long development of the soul and sociological development, like a seed. As a seed, as the result of an old cultural cycle, the I at the same time becomes the starting point for a new development.

Agriculture as I-activity

In June 1924, this stream culminates in Rudolf Steiner’s “Agriculture Course”. In it, he says that we human beings, as I-beings, are made the foundation of agriculture. He takes the highest concept from the cultural consideration of the human being and now turns it into an agronomic concept. This is not meant only poetically, but in such a way that the agricultural individuality can be an entity that is grounded in itself and productive out of itself. He says: the farmer is a meditator. We can and should, I believe, understand this description from out of a future per-

spective: biodynamic farmers become pioneers of a farm management based on personal spiritual research.

How the cosmos reflects our collaboration

In the fourth and fifth lectures of the Agriculture Course, Steiner develops the preparations – briefly, concisely, and practically. Now this external impact becomes a turning point. Nature becomes the foundation of co-creative work. Emancipation becomes participation, especially through the compost preparations. From the closed agricultural organism, the preparations call the individuality toward a cosmic opening. Rudolf Steiner’s phrase “humans speak to stars” becomes reality. I believe that Michael stands behind this, transforming this external impact into a turning point and describing an agriculture capable of the future or even coming from the future. It seems evident that such an everted agriculture also requires corresponding social forms that are not only derived from traditional social forms, but also come from the future. What could collaboration out of free will look like? We do not want to give up personal freedom, and we seek a path from an emancipatory to a participatory characteristic social style.





“We swing back and forth from the proud I to the lonely, abandoned I.”

The sun at the centre of the planetary system – that was revolutionary, yet things continued to move on with Johannes Kepler. Using the observational data of Tycho de Brahe, he recognised that the sun is not actually at the centre. There are two centres, or rather two focal points, around which the earth moves in an ellipse. The sun stands in one of them. The planetary orbits are ellipses whose sum of distances to both focal points is always the same. Is this cosmological image not the basic design, the archetype of collaboration out of free will? I have my own will and I am in the one centre. And who stands in the other centre? Who helps me to become the person I want to be? Who is my helper in development?

Earthly and cosmic gatherings

Returning to meetings: there are two types of gatherings. We come together out of our autonomy for specific tasks, are transparent, and coordinate activities because we want what is shared: this is the work meeting, the earthly meeting. It requires a counterpart, a complementary gathering in which we research together, work through a text. Here, the quality of listening counts – not what the other has said, but what they meant – empathetic listening. It leads to a third step, which Steiner calls awakening to the soul-spiritual of the other. After coming to arrangements together comes listening, and finally awakening to the other. It means “listening beyond”, so that new horizons open. The earthly gathering, the earthly heart, needs a cosmic, opening, researching gathering. Of course, both can be combined, and yet they exist as a polarity. When a community comes under stress, there are many “earthly” meetings – and the “cosmic” ones lapse.

Surrounding the initiative are the many people who support and finance it faithfully: the surrounding circle. It brings questions and impulses that the core may not see sufficiently. In this way,

a double heart of free human beings is formed.

Gaining insight from a higher perspective

We want to collaborate despite free will, but we also want to collaborate out of free will. There is an unbreakable law: the free will of the other is sacred. Gatherings must be shaped in such a way that this is respected.

Awakening to the soul-spiritual of the other can be a painful process. Over the years, I have made the following a rule: if I cannot resolve something on the level at which I collide with the other person, I must “extricate myself” upwards. That means, if things get stuck at the earthly focal point, it is worthwhile looking toward the cosmic one. There, something can shine through that is not grounded in this life.

There are even moments when this can be fleetingly experienced by the whole community: moments in which something resonates of a new kind of being of community that carries the future within it. Such possibilities can be created through collaboration out of free will.

News from the Section for Agriculture

Biodynamic Network

The “Biodynamic Network” has been launched. The new online platform connects people worldwide to share experiences and to further develop biodynamic foundational knowledge together – also between in-person meetings.

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Professionals from the fields of cooking, agriculture, medicine, and nutritional consulting are warmly invited to regular online meetings. The focus is on shared exchange, deepening of knowledge, and the development of new perspectives for practice. The goal is to build an international network and to further develop the understanding of “Dynamic Nutrition” together.

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Current nutrition topics considered for you

What does healthy nutrition mean today – and how can it be in harmony with human beings, animals, and the earth? The articles in the health section address central nutrition questions of our time, examine them from different perspectives, and provide well-founded, practical impulses. Discover new connections and be inspired.

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All current events at a glance





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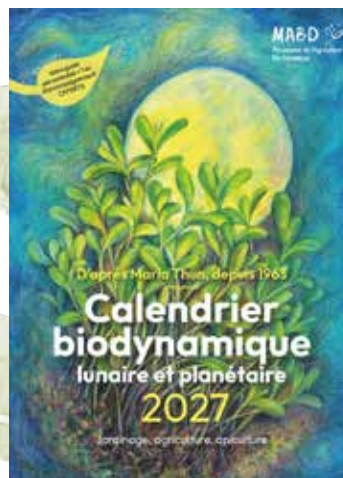
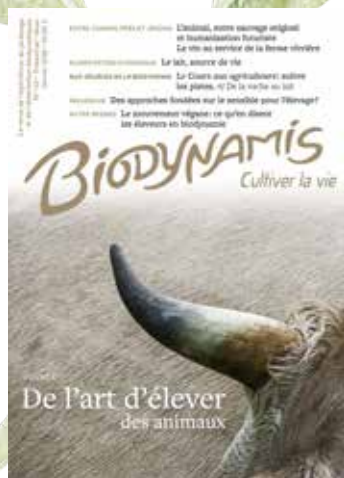
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Advances in microbiome research have, in recent years, changed the scientific understanding of life. When a biodynamic agricultural organism is viewed from the perspective of the microbiome, this can also give rise to a new understanding of the intelligence of life and open a new approach to researching the etheric.

The more differentiated our ability thereby becomes to understand living relationships, the more clearly it becomes apparent that agricultural activity cannot be based on knowledge and technique alone. The biodynamic wealth of skills in dealing with life – from perception through working with rhythms to trained intuition – proves to be essential.

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