Goetheanum · Freie Hochschule für Geisteswissenschaft
Sektion für Landwirtschaft
Section for Agriculture
Section d'Agriculture
Seccion de Agricultura

Annual Theme 2026/27

Working with the Intelligence of Life

Agriculture brings microcosm and macrocosm together

The rapid advances in microbiome research are transforming our view of life and how we relate to it. The concept of living beings as separate, self-contained entities is increasingly being replaced by an integrative understanding. Science shows that life forms dynamic networks invisible to us (bacteria, fungi, viruses, and other microorganisms) that connect soil, plants, animals, humans, and ecosystems, without observing clearly defined boundaries. Maize plants can collaborate with the local soil microbiome to increase their nitrogen uptake. Biodynamic spray preparations can serve as a kind of inoculation with microorganisms in the soil that promote plant health. A healthy digestive biome supports positive neurological processes. This challenges classical models of biology and conveys an image of living beings that are rhythmically shaped from within and without, and through their relationships with one another. "One Health" and "Planetary Health" alike become goals for practitioners and visionaries. In this sense, the emerging field of microbiome research can become a bridge for communication and a shared foundation between the experience of biodynamic practitioners and the wider research community.

While research on the human and soil microbiome is a rapidly developing field, an understanding of the reciprocal cooperation of microorganisms has long been part of the core knowledge of many humus and soil researchers. The crucial question that biodynamics must now bring into the research community is a shift in perspective: away from sequencing and analysis toward an experience-based understanding of the conditions that enable a healthy, locally adapted, and diverse microbiome to develop resilience—as an immune system of both Earth and human beings.

When a biodynamic agricultural organism is examined from the perspective of the microbiome, a new picture emerges that allows us to better understand the intelligence of life. A holistic understanding becomes apparent when we combine biomanalysis with our own observations and experiences, broaden our perspective, and work toward a balanced appreciation of the intelligence of life. Could viewing the biome also open up a new approach to the science of the etheric?

The better we understand how living relationships come into being, the clearer it becomes that the production of healthy food cannot rely on knowledge and technology alone, but requires advanced methods for synchronizing processes, rhythms, and relationships. The biodynamic wealth of skills for guiding life processes—such as perception, timing, and experience-based intuition—becomes

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essential. Managing holistic relationships becomes an art rather than a purely scientific endeavor. We can recognize that both agriculture and bread baking are practical art forms. When we act rightly at the right time, we can work creatively with life processes and support life on many levels. The development of this ability is based on attentive observation, sensitivity to change, and a relationship with the environment on both micro and macro levels. It is a form of knowledge that complements scientific insight, as Antoine de Saint-Exupéry described it: "One sees clearly only with the heart." Bringing these approaches together empowers farmers to work with the intelligence of life.

The Agriculture Conference 2027 at the Goetheanum invites everyone interested in the future of a living agriculture to explore these perspectives together. Through dialogue between microbiome research, qualitative understanding, and practical work, we aim to deepen our understanding of the farm as a living organism and to strengthen an agriculture that is truly rooted in the intelligence of life. We invite you to explore and develop together ways of better understanding, sensing, and working with a living agriculture.

Michael Letter
The Activity of Michael and the Future of Mankind
Rudolf Steiner: Anthroposophical Leading Thoughts, GA 26.

Date
Agriculture Conference, 3–6 February 2027