



**Freie Hochschule
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Sektion für Landwirtschaft

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Dear readers,

In this circular you will find elements that enable you to study and to deepen the theme of the year of the Section and that of the Goetheanum. After our first year in the new grouping as three leaders of the Section, a year that is not yet quite completed, we would like to present our 'work- strategy' to you.

We regard the Section as a quality of research, which can be realised everywhere in the world, where people, starting from their individual situation, connect themselves existentially with the biodynamic impulse and its foundations, whether it is through their daily life, the life on the farm, in a shop, a laboratory or in an office. In order that the Section lives more and more as a consciously fostered quality among us it is necessary that we have a good mutual perception and awareness of one another. This purpose is partly served by the annual agricultural conference at the Goetheanum. However, we would like to strengthen this 'culture of mutual perception and awareness' within the movement in order to improve our knowledge of one another and of the variety of biodynamic initiatives in the world. We are, nevertheless, astounded by the wealth of them time and again, as if we see it for the first time.

Thus, we invite you all warmly to report to us on your initiatives and actions. We shall endeavour to let them be known more widely. This is the first stage of being aware of one another so as to be able to strengthen relationships and establish active networks. This task was mentioned in several beacon-projects at the end of the 2011 conference. Let us make a common project out of them – all together!

With our best wishes for a good summertime

Ueli Hurter

Jean-Michel Florin

Thomas Lüthi

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Suggestions for working with the Theme of the Year 2011/12 – Onwards to the Wellsprings

Ueli Hurter and Jean-Michel Florin

From the text on the new theme of the year 2011/12 – Onwards to the Wellsprings:

“Biodynamic farms are the wellsprings for taking responsibility ourselves for the shaping of the natural and social surroundings. To put our finger on it the wellspring is the individual and the community of people who work at this place, here and now, in the sense of the biodynamic impulse. What is the core of my commitment? What is the essence of biodynamics for each of us? Is it the possibility of healing a patch of earth or the possibility of producing healthy food for the consumers? Is it the intimate character of running a farm completely for personal reasons and from personal intuitions? Or else, maybe, however, the fascination with the system with which the ‘spiritual’ can be worked into nature, e.g. through precise work with the preparations? Is it deep love towards the earth and nature, which carry and nourish us? Or is the actual driving force social-political commitment: honest, archetypal production as the basis of a healthy society? Is the earth or man at the centre? What do we mean by ‘cosmic forces’? Are the cows and their horns a symbol or are they a reality on our farms? Is the farm individuality an idea for the far future or is it a spiritual reality here and now? Is the quotation from the Agriculture Course, ‘The human being is made the foundation’ to be understood as an image or is it an instruction to act?”

We are facing the three-fold challenge:

- Pulling through every day, establishing something essential concretely in life on our farms time and again.
- Taking on the big issues of our time, working with others to shape essential aspects of our time.
- Nurturing the essentials within us, sensing the deep motifs of life time and again.

Accordingly, there are three directions the questions take or approaches to the theme:

- *The essentials in the practical work.*
Can I set priorities with the many varied elements that make up every day life?
What is important to me?
What would I never give up?
What are the wellsprings in everyday life for everyday life?
- *What comes towards me from outside?*
Which contemporary issues speak to me?
The World Agricultural Report, the climate problems, GMO- questions – do they concern me in any way?
Are there elements in these which concern the core of my commitment to biodynamics?
- *What happens on my inner building site?*
Which limits and barriers am I continually meeting?
Where do I sense breakthroughs and prospects?
Are there any inner wellsprings at all for my commitment to biodynamics?
Is anthroposophy one of these wellsprings?
In what manner is the Agriculture Course an inner wellspring?

How can we work on the Theme?

Of course, each person and each group is completely free to work with the theme as they wish. We would like, at this juncture, to draw your attention particularly to the dialogue form,

which we have got to know. The 'trick' with it is that you help each other through dialogue, to fetch the essentials, what lies deeper, up into conscious awareness, for the singular thing is that the ego-sphere, which moulds us so much, is not directly accessible at all just like that. The dialogue with another person works like a midwife – in the ego of the other person my ego-substance appears and can express itself.

Tools of Dialogue Researching and Working

- The four levels of hearing (and speaking) – sounding – listening to – listening into and listening through.
- Dialogue interview. I immerse myself with my dialogue partner in his or her world in that I work alongside him or her for two hours before I hold the interview. Then the questions proceed from the everyday to the essential. In the questioning and answering the quality of speaking through and listening can be striven for.
- A dialogue walk. Two of us go for an hour's walk with a selected subject of conversation. The opening up of being listened to makes speaking openly possible. Each one tells the other.
- The conversation of the generations. "What is the essence of biodynamic work for you?", the young person asks the old one, for example, or vice versa. That can be in an interview or a dialogue walk. Perhaps after a preparatory conversation in the wider circle and after the walk the experiences can be summarised again.
- World cafe. Starting a meeting, a conference, a workshop with a world cafe with a clearly directed question is something that is being done in many places in the biodynamic movement and is proving to be very worthwhile. It is good if the participants can prepare themselves for the theme.
- I hand over my farm, my enterprise – to myself. A period is completed, my old personality hands over, a new period begins, a new identity takes it over. What is old? What is new? What is to be handed over, what is to be taken on? What is the essence seen from the past, seen from the future? I can hold this dialogue with myself or with someone else. The dialogue may be in thought, spoken or written.
- Visualising. The question, what is essential or what would I never give up, is not tackled by thinking, but rather by modelling, building, painting. If the object is finished in, e.g., half an hour the others come along and describe what they see. Then in a third step I can complete the figure.
- Contemplative research (following an experience of Jean-Michel Florin on a seminar with Arthur Zajonc).
The idea of contemplative research is to connect meditative work with active life so that they can both fertilise each other reciprocally. Once you have chosen the theme (e.g. the theme of the year), you begin to bring about a meditative mood in yourself. To this end Zajonc recommends first of all nurturing a basic mood of humility: he speaks of a portal of humility, which leads to awe. It leads us to disregard our egoistic interests and to devote ourselves to what is higher. Afterwards we work on the theme via two phases, outer phenomenology: we gather inwardly all outer aspects of the theme and describe the facts, e.g. what I would never give up in my biodynamic work (then it is essential for me) etc. Inner phenomenology: after this first phase we search for the inner aspect of the theme for us personally. What inner impulse led me to biodynamic

agriculture, etc.? The key is to condense these results into a short sentence with a sketch or a small drawing. And with this result we enter into the exercising of meditative breathing; in other words, we focus our whole attention firstly on this result; and in a second phase we let go of the content and wait without any expectation for what arises in this open space. It is important to begin as well as to end the whole meditation in a certain basic mood; Zajonc suggests gratitude for this. We hand over the result to the group and do not keep it for ourselves. More about this method in "Meditation as contemplative Enquiry", Arthur Zajonc.

From the Preparation Work for the 2012 Conference

Jean-Michel Florin

After the 2011 conference with its mood of a new departure, as many participants perceived it, we felt the need to allow the still very open process to become firmer and more solid, to settle before the first fruits – as a new theme of the year and as preparation for the next conference – were picked. We took time to view all the posters of the initiatives which proceeded from the end of the conference in order to sense the essential themes they contained, the central theme running throughout. Some of this is to be found in the conference report. The subsequent evaluation of the 2011 conference then led on to the new theme of the year: Onwards to the Wellsprings.

Particularly after the last conference, where each person came with their own burning issues and actually left with their individual beacon of light, it seems important to us for the 2012 conference to get on together with the search for what unites all biodynamic farmers and gardeners around the globe. Despite all the differences of countries, cultures, languages etc. what do we have in common?

What is the essence of biodynamic cultivation?

There is something wonderful: if one biodynamic farmer or gardener meets another, and this may be at the other end of the world, then a full conversation can quickly ensue thanks to the common interest in this 'universal' thing which biodynamics is. And it is precisely this 'universally essential' element that unites us and leads to encounters; this is what we want to raise to people's awareness with the 2012 conference.

Is this essential factor – essential comes from the Latin root for 'being' – of similar nature to Goethe's archetypal plant, is it a spiritual reality, of which everyone sees an aspect, which, however, is infinitely greater and more open than each particular example of biodynamic reality? Goethe says that the archetypal plant is much more real and more genuine than each plant, because it contains every plant, even plants which do not yet exist, but which could exist. In parallel to this would not the essence of biodynamics be a 'core' which contains all existing and many future realisations of it; in other words something precise and at the same time very open and eminently full of life, accessible only to living thinking, as opposed to deductive, analytical thought?

Our suggestion is to hold a conference with a view to developing this theme and bringing it to life within ourselves; this would be completely suited to the theme, taking account of the interactive way of working that we have learnt at the 2011 conference. Each theme requires a form suited to it.

The following points have crystallised out in the preparation work for the 2012 conference so far:

- The form of the conference should make it possible for all who really want to come to the conference to be able to. No-one is to be turned away because the way of working only permits a limited number of participants.
- The welcome to the conference should be given by a person from the region. This is to be followed by an introduction to the programme and the theme of the conference. In the evening we would like to invite an individual, known around the world, who has got to grips profoundly with the question of the essence. Currently we are in contact with Ole von Uexkull and his nephew, the organisers of the alternative Nobel Prize.
- Each of the following three days is to have a specific quality, and the course of events is meant to allow us to open up the theme step by step in a dynamic way. At the start of each day there will be an keynote lecture.
- As usual, we will start each day with the reading and the study of the Leading Thought, which this year makes considerable demands on our capacity to understand it (Sleeping and Waking...).
- The second half of the morning, taking 2 to 2 ½ hours, will be given over to interactive work groups (eight to ten groups of approx. 100 participants, in which by means of dialogue, including art and phenomenology the essential element of biodynamics will be sought and inquired into.
- In the afternoon, after the artistic courses on the conference theme, short talks – “sketches of the essentials from experience” - are meant to illuminate the theme in a three-fold way; on the one hand, from farming experience through to trade, on the other hand from research and the current demands of the times and thirdly from the depths of personal knowledge and experience.
- Then a huge plenum is to bring a synthesis of the day. Our wish is to be able to hand over one plenum to a group of young people, perhaps the final plenum.
- Thursday and Friday evenings are to be given to art, i.e. to music and to eurythmy.
- In contrast to the 2011 conference we are seeking a final lecture for the Saturday with which the conference process will be rounded off, although, of course, further work on the theme for the movement is meant to remain open.

The preparations for the conference are under way. Some elements are in place, but a number of things must still be developed. We are really looking forward to reactions and suggestions which will allow us give clearer definition to the sketch so far.

Thoughts and Questions about the Leading Thought: Sleeping and Waking in the Light of the preceding Considerations

Jean-Michel Florin

The previous Leading Thought “What is the Earth in Reality in the Macrocosm?” demonstrated the total solidarity of earth and man: you cannot think of one without the other, as is often done nowadays. This goes right through to the point as it is put in the title of a recent French publication, “The human species is dying out, so much the better”. Quite

to the contrary we can say that in world evolution the macrocosm has died away so that man (as microcosm, not as the petty, everyday person) could become independent. At the same time the earth has come about which contains the germ of a new macrocosm in the realms of nature.

According to Rudolf Steiner it is such that all earthly things, besides the aspect of the dead which is to be seen with the sense organs, have the aspect that is accessible to contemplative consciousness: the aspect of a universal seed. The realms of nature (mineral, plant and animal) carry within them the seeds of a future macrocosm in the middle of the macrocosm that has latently died away. But what role is accorded to man? Steiner does not speak directly about this in the last Thought. However, he emphasises that man is meant to enliven his thinking within him about this fact so that he can perceive the universal germinating forces in all earthly things.

What is the role of each person on the earth at the present time? How can we gain insight into it. It seems to me that this is a part of the fundamental question, raised by this new Thought. I recently attended a seminar with Arthur Zajonc (author of the book "Meditation as contemplative Enquiry" – Departure into the Unexpected) which helped me to clarify a few viewpoints on this question. We all wish, by practising biodynamics in one way or another or else by contributing to it, we all wish to work in the spirit of the evolution of the new macrocosm. Thus we want to partake of the life of the earth and work with others on the healing of the earth (everyone will find his own words to describe what is living deep within him). Yet, how can we know this earth evolution or, as Arthur Zajonc calls it, the 'cosmic world plan', to which we would like to contribute?

During the seminar Arthur Zajonc suggested to us reflecting on how the fundamental changes, which make the history of mankind meaningful, emerge. We thought about the roles of the Buddha, the Christ and Rudolf Steiner, their goals, their plans and their methods of working and compared them with the methods of leadership of a modern manager. How did they act? Just the opposite from the way a modern manager does, who defines his goals, lays out his work plan and looks for means to realise them. They acted out of a complete presence, always remaining inwardly and outwardly in movement without fixing themselves in a particular direction. Above all, we may come to the realisation in the life of Christ of how totally wakeful he was, how he acts without an outward movement, without a place to use as a base of operations, etc., only through inner leadership. How can we find a way to a true awakening which allows us to act not just according to strategic viewpoints and deductive reasoning, but in the sense of the 'cosmic world plan' so as to advance in the direction of this new macrocosm?

This awakening is described the American philosopher, H.D. Thoreau, thus, "We must learn to wake up again and to remain awake – not through the use of mechanical aids, but rather through a constant inner expectation of the dawn, which is preserved even in the deepest sleep". It is not rare for meditation to make one sleepy, or for one to fall asleep immediately. This shows clearly that we approach a state similar to sleep as soon as our personal tumult quiets down and we leave sensory impressions behind in order to connect ourselves consciously with the world surroundings.

I have the impression that this year's Leading Thought, which is built up on the polarity of deep (dreamless) sleep and waking with dreams lying in between, asks us precisely the question about the possibility of this higher wakefulness for what inner impulses are living unconsciously in us. How can we understand that we contribute to the germinating forces of the earth during our sleep? What happens when we are falling asleep? We withdraw from

sense perception in order to open an inner space for ourselves, where we encounter the spiritual world. The alternating rhythm of waking – sleeping repeats on a small scale the great universal rhythm between life, where the individual experiences himself in his ego nature (separated from the world) and the life between death and a new birth, where he unites himself with the world.

In the Leading Thought Rudolf Steiner draws our attention repeatedly to the fact that man has attained a wakeful, selective consciousness, i.e. that he reduces his superficial perception to concentrating on selected points, which leads to dead, shadowy thoughts. Let us take an example to understand these shadowy thoughts. If I look at a plant as I normally do with my modern consciousness, I see a green something with a root, a stem, leaves and blossom. I can form an exact idea of it and thanks to the exact observation of the details (the plant appears dead to me, always disintegrating into more details) I can define the plant. I have a fixed idea of it which is much poorer than the reality of it. I observe it only as a 'thing', isolated from its real living background. To turn the plant observation around, if I now would perceive the life forces active in it directly, I would be connected with it with my life body, because this life is in me too. The distanced relationship would be removed, but also my self-awareness. The plant would no longer be merely a dead image, but alive and it would be directly connected with me. In order that human beings could attain their freedom, this analytical awareness (which has led to materialism) was necessary.

Steiner explains, "A being can only become conscious of something which it participates in with its own dying forces, not with the forces of growth, which enliven the being itself". He continues and explains how nature, if it is no longer active within us, becomes the power of thinking. With our thoughts we can inwardly model beings, i.e. understand them. Thus, the human being can 'understand' and 'grasp' nature through the 'organ' of thinking. We can wonder why we always want to understand the world. What does a child do, when it gradually separates itself from the world, becomes more conscious and then discovers the world? It does nothing but ask questions and tries to connect itself with the world, with nature in this way? The young child needs all its life forces to build up its body and can only gradually develop the forces of consciousness, for they are transformed, dead life forces.

How then can we reach this germinating life of nature and these deep impulses consciously? The possibility exists of progressing from 'modern' consciousness by means of a 'meditative path' to a new form of higher consciousness, a kind of hyper-wakefulness, which allows us to perceive the germinating forces of nature, as we do in sleep without being able to remember afterwards. Is a person not on the way to imaginative consciousness, when, instead of observing the plant as a thing, 'killing' it with a ready-made term (i.e. as soon as it is seen, it is labelled, "yes, it is a dandelion' and then the process of acquiring knowledge as well as the process of encounter is ended), he or she endeavours to bring it back again in thought to its connection with the great, wide world? This is the way Rudolf Steiner suggests in *The Philosophy of Freedom*, consciously bringing the perception together with the idea. For modern man just this connection of the perception with the concept makes up the whole thing.

If we observe a plant over a longer period of time, we experience its growth and notice too how every dandelion is different, according to where it grows: small and fine in a sunny meadow, large and broad-leaved next to the compost heap. Instead of 'killing' the plant with hard and fast concepts, I give it a place in the context of the great, wide world. And gradually, the term dandelion will become a 'point of germination' from which a whole new world, a wealth of connections will arise. The idea of the dandelion will begin to be alive. We can strengthen it by inwardly gathering all these aspects of the dandelion and attempting to

grasp the essence of them. This path of knowledge can equally well be taken through practical work: when I gather dandelion blossoms, I can make myself aware of the whole context and the various steps of the preparation. Thus, I may have the experience that with the preparation I am preparing something like a seed for my compost, which will bring about really special germinating forces for it.

Whoever connects him- or herself with the world in this way can get a first impression of what Rudolf Steiner means when he says, "A living process is there which sets aflame within the earth..."

A splendid further step in this direction is Rudolf Steiner's description of the realms of nature in the Agriculture Course, where this quality of germinating in nature can be perceived (e.g. the way each preparation plant has a special relationship to the elements, as cow manure can regenerate the soil and introduce the 'ego-organisation', etc.). We find corresponding perceptions among modern artists, who live in this 'open space', such as R.M. Rilke (Duisener Elegien), Paul Klee (lots of pictures with germinating plants), or Kandinsky in the moment in which he creates abstract art, which is actually an attempt to create 'spiritual art'. (He has written the famous book "*Das Geistige in der Kunst*" – The Spiritual in Art).

On page 203 in the Leading Thought Rudolf Steiner expresses in a more differentiated way what the human being can perceive, "In the age of self-aware ego development he loses from his spiritual view the true shape of his inner impulses as well as that of his surroundings".

- Which inner impulses are meant here? Are they the impulses which we bring with us to the earth, which inspire us in life which we can recognise, during moments of inner quiet, our role in the cosmic world plan?
- And the impulses of 'his surroundings'? Which surroundings are meant? Life of nature around human beings?
Questions upon questions...

Steiner states it more precisely on page 205 of the Leading Thought, "In the present cosmic world moment this is the rhythm of earthly human existence outside the innermost part of the earth with the experience of man's own being,...". We feel ourselves alone in the world, but we have a sense of ourselves; on the other hand, we are in the night in the world, but without conscious awareness. This rhythm is at work more strongly between life and the time between death and a new birth. Thanks to the macrocosm which has died away man can spend his life between death and a new birth in a higher state of consciousness than his waking life on the earth. Here, we touch on a deep mystery: the forces, which we perceive in dreams are really accessible in the life between death and a new birth and they are the forces which give us the impulse to form our earthly body. What does that mean exactly? Are they forces, impulses, which we bring with us (our contribution to the 'cosmic world plan') and which unconsciously give us will impulses in life? How can we help each other to recognise these impulses? For instance, it is interesting how the young generation has very strong impulses to freedom (events in North Africa, etc.) as well as impulses to nurture the realms of nature and to connect themselves with them, although our times do not give so many opportunities for it...

The ending of this Thought is formulated in an amazing openness towards the future. Rudolf Steiner says that what appears to us in dreams waits in the spiritual world until man (or the hierarchies) "summons it to form beings through creative working". Thus the freedom of individuals is addressed in the sense of the new macrocosm which is waiting for man to act.

Rosicrucian Impulses for Agriculture

Ueli Hurter

This year's theme of the Goetheanum is, "Anthroposophy – the Rosicrucianism of our Time". A spiritual stream is connected with the name Christian Rosenkreutz, which has been important for western culture since the late Middle Ages. In every century a few elements from this Rosicrucian stream come to the surface of history, but a great deal remains underground. Rudolf Steiner makes the link between exoteric and esoteric knowledge about Christian Rosenkreutz, just as he does for many other historical personalities and events. The theme of Christian Rosenkreutz is present with Rudolf Steiner during his whole time of working for anthroposophy; however, in 1911 there is a kind of culmination: in the Neuchatel Lectures of 27th and 28th September Rudolf Steiner speaks of Christian Rosenkreutz and his mission quite openly and clearly. These are followed a year later by a third lecture, on 18th December 1912 in Neuchatel. The historical reason for the theme of the year chosen by the Goetheanum is thus the centenary of Rudolf Steiner's speaking openly about Christian Rosenkreutz and his mission. The theme has relevance for me because L'Aubier, where I have been living for more than two decades and where I am running the biodynamic farm, is situated just ten minutes away from the town of Neuchatel. A further reason is that for several years I have seen a connection between the Rosicrucian impulse and Rudolf Steiner's agricultural impulse.

From the contents of the Neuchatel Lectures I would like to attempt to characterise Rosicrucianism so as to then ask how this is living in the anthroposophical-agricultural impulse. Thus, only a part of the theme of Rosicrucianism will be focused on. From both the year 1911 as well as from the whole of Rudolf Steiner's working there are several further aspects to this theme, which can perhaps be discussed later on, if interest is there.

The Neuchatel Lectures

Instead of a systematic and chronological summary of what Rudolf Steiner has said in the three lectures, this will be a description, which puts in the foreground what has proved to be important for me.

From my experience the central message of the Neuchatel Lectures is the following: in the present day I can carry out an outward practical activity in modern civilisation and at the same time follow a path of inner development. The fact that this is so we have to thank Christian Rosenkreutz for, for he has set western culture and civilisation on a new course from a cultural-historical perspective in that nowadays for each person who wants to do so inner activity and outer activity is possible. According to Rudolf Steiner's account, as the Middle Ages were coming to an end and the Renaissance was beginning, humanity in the West was in danger of falling into two groups, into a group of purely practical people, for whom it is simply a matter of dealing with life technically with the help of machines and into a group of pure mystics who live out a pure inner life in an excessive form. Christian Rosenkreutz recognised the danger of a split and in a wide-ranging operation with the help of his friend, the Buddha, and in the spirit of taming the Mars forces, was able to bring it about that practical outer life and practical inner life is possible for all of us at the same time (Lecture 3).

A further important characteristic of the Rosicrucians is their way of dealing with substances, matter. A lot of Rosicrucians were alchemists in their own way. Typically, their dealing with substances was quite physical, chemical, on the one hand, in the sense that their concern was to progress from the mixed, natural substance by means of alchemical processes to the pure substances. On the other hand, the production of substances such as gold, for example, was not at all the point for the Rosicrucian, but rather it was a matter of his soul experiences with the material-chemical, alchemical experiment. In connection with the transformation of

matter in the experiment he accomplished his soul and spiritual development. Getting to grips with matter so as to awaken thereby to one's ego in self-awareness is the basic hallmark of the Rosicrucian school. Thus the modern scientific attitude is characterised, which Steiner saw as corrupted in materialism and to which he committed himself explicitly with anthroposophy as spiritual science. Not belief but examining things with healthy common sense and reason was what he called for – and this attitude he characterised as a Rosicrucian one (Lecture 2).

A third motif concerns more Christian Rosenkreutz himself as a person and individuality. Rudolf Steiner leaves us in no doubt that this is a case of one of the truly great figures of humankind. His working under the name Christian Rosenkreutz started off with an initiation in 1250, in which from 12 representatives he received a synthesis of the complete knowledge gained by humanity to date. Later, he, in turn, instructed his followers in the spirit of this universal knowledge. Christian Rosenkreutz works out of an intimately close connection with Christ (as his name indicates) –without any denominational colouring–, but rather completely in the spirit of the cosmic Christ; thus for the understanding of the evolution of the macrocosm and for the microcosm, which is man, in the sense of St. Paul's words "Not I but Christ in me". The etheric body of Christian Rosenkreutz is extraordinarily large and powerful and constantly at work (Lectures 1 and 3).

As a fourth point I would like to mention the Rosicrucian law of working. It states that the significant cultural impulses provided by the Rosicrucians should only appear in the public domain after 100 years. This attitude that you leave a new impulse to mature testifies that, according to Rudolf Steiner's research, Christian Rosenkreutz and the Rosicrucians represent one of the great, carrying, spiritual streams of modern human evolution. Of course, the now imminent centenary of the Neuchatel Lectures and other events of the years 1910-1912 connected with Christian Rosenkreutz is a special event (Lecture 1).

As the fifth motif of my unsystematic summary, the manner in which Christian Rosenkreutz calls his followers seems worth mentioning. In a life situation, in which one approaches a situation more or less consciously and voluntarily which may mean death, one hears a voice, which holds one back from the abyss. This voice, audible yet clearly spiritual, is Christian Rosenkreutz's call. In this way one can be given a second life, and thus a relationship to Christian Rosenkreutz is founded.

The Rosicrucian Element in the Zarathustran Foundation of Agriculture

Rudolf Steiner's agricultural impulse, which has led to what we today call biodynamic agriculture, was born at Whitsun, 1924 in Koberwitz. It is very interesting to research the exact circumstances of the course in Koberwitz in relation to place and people and to take account of the special phase of Rudolf Steiner's life in 1924. A lot of what distinguishes the characteristic style of the Course can be connected with the circumstances of that time. And yet nonetheless, there remain a lot of open questions, where you will notice that, in order to gain an understanding of them, the search must be made in a larger evolutionary context. One of these questions is: how come Rudolf Steiner speaks in the Agriculture Course so decidedly about the substances? In particular, in Lecture 3 he speaks about the substances S, C, H, O, N and Si and Ca. In a pure form these substances do not occur in nature at all. How come he speaks now about 'chemical' substances? Of course, we can say that he took his audience along, starting at the point where they were and that was, in fact, the theory of chemical-material processes in agricultural production, which was modern at the time. I believe that this answer is correct but it only captures the superficial aspect. In the first and second lectures Steiner does not start off from the point where his audience are: putting the plants, the soil and the livestock into a great cosmic context was, after all, very surprising for the tried and trusty farmers, who sat in the audience in the Koberwitz mansion. Then a

pronounced and drastic change takes place from the first and second lectures to the third lecture. In the first and second the great macrocosmic relationships are described and how they are found again in earthly conditions. Above the sun – below the sun, above the soil – below the soil, what is above - what is below, front and behind with animals, what is cosmic – what is earthly, what is inside - what is outside with organic matter, what is hereditary and what is a new impulse with the seed formation, what is dead where and what is alive where, etc?

In great abundance everything is categorised into an archetypal polarity of above and below. You feel this is the true approach for agriculture. If you wonder where it comes from, then you will be led back to the starting point of agriculture, to where it was 'invented' actually, to Zarathustra in the Old Persian culture. In the image of the legend Zarathustra steps out from the temple onto the field in full priestly vestments and draws the first furrow in the earth with the golden plough, which is drawn by two white bulls in a sacred deed of inauguration. Above and below, heaven and earth are now taken out of their primordial separation, led into an encounter and made to permeate each other reciprocally. Thus, agriculture was invented. The God and nature given realms are shifted, the sun sphere with light, warmth and air can penetrate into the dark earth sphere and the fertility slumbering within in it is released. In a similar way with the cultivated plants and domesticated animals the cosmic and the earthly elements are led to penetrate each other reciprocally so that fruit, harvest, production come about. Archaeologically based historiography has found the transition from hunters and gatherers to settlers through the 'invention' of agriculture. Of course, this Zarathustran archetypal impulse was developed further in the most manifold ways in the course of the development of agriculture over thousands of years, but the basic gesture remains and is expressed in spiritual scientific terms at the beginning of the Agriculture Course.

And then we have the already mentioned change with the third lecture. The whole focus is on matter, on substance and then in such a way that each substance is described as a personality. As in the theatre each substance receives its character and its task. In order to describe silica, for example, he scarcely seeks outer references in the sense of comparative physical science, but progresses 'inwards' from the chemical substance into the being of the matter itself and the being of silica appears as "the well-bred gentleman, who actually does not want anything at all". In this manner we are led through all the protein substances and lime and silica.

I would like to draw attention to the entirely new viewpoint and standpoint, which we gain with Steiner through the manner, in which the substances are dealt with in the third lecture. It is not said that protein is a natural material which must remain as such because we want to farm in a natural way, we leave it with this naturalness. On the contrary, the substances S, C, H, O, N, which, to begin with, can only be found through chemical analysis, are taken as the starting point of the contemplation and each of these substances is now grasped in its depths through research into its being, in other words, spiritual research. The result is characterised in the style of a personality. And now the siblings work together to bring about the living substance, protein. This is a 'clever move' of not losing sight of life through the consideration of substances, in the way that this happens in chemistry for agriculture, but of pressing onward to the essential being of each substance so as to see life in protein from the spiritual side being formed through the working together of the personalities of the substances. This 'approach' of Rudolf Steiner bears the stamp of Rosicrucianism and it is new. At least for the time being it appears to me that it was completely new, in other words, unprecedented. It was not only new and unintelligible for his audience at the time, but even today it is a total challenge and will remain so for a while. I believe this approach is altogether new for

agriculture. Here something from the future, which I would like to characterise as Rosicrucian agriculture, counters the Zarathustran agriculture from the past. The interpenetration of the cosmic and earthly elements, directed by man, in the sense of the Zarathustran impulse, which results in the productivity of land cultivation, plants and animals is now met by the Rosicrucian impulse; this forms new 'spiritual substances in nature' in an original way by our encounter with beings inherent in the world of matter. This impulse can have an impact on the macrocosm in an agriculturally productive way, especially with the preparations and thus from particular locations. It goes without saying, in my view, that the preparations, in the way they are presented in the fourth and fifth lectures in the style of practical instructions, are created from the world which is opened up in the third lecture. The preparations are the will or active side of 'substance- agriculture'. In the eighth lecture the principle of working of the new substance-agriculture is sketched with the description of the agricultural individuality using the example of the relationship of the plant root to the fertiliser coming from the farm itself as the germinating point of the ego organisation. At particular, individual locations on the earth the concrete processes with substances are being handled in such a way in farming that the wider environment is being cultivated too.

The starting point is the concrete, individual, practical farming activity with matter. With this a new spirituality can link up, a new spirituality can come into operation, can incarnate tentatively. Here in the large scale of nature something takes place which, on a small scale, was accomplished by the historical Rosicrucian. The real material processes can be carried out in such a way that new substances arise – in the small laboratory or else in the large, agricultural organism – and in connection with this new stages of spirit- individualisation will become possible. The Rosicrucian principle of schooling, to gradually heighten spirit wakefulness with the process of the transformation of matter is at work here and, in the sense of this study, is mentioned by Rudolf Steiner as the 'agricultural individuality' for cultivated nature and as the 'personal relationship' for the active farmer.

The Rosicrucian cultural principle that the same people are in outer, practical life and in an inner schooling, and not two groups of people devoting themselves exclusively to practical life or meditation, I see fully realised in the Koberwitz lectures on agriculture held by Rudolf Steiner. In many places the practical person is reminded of his inner meditative life and similarly the meditand is directed to down-to-earth, practical work. Biodynamic work lives just from the fertilisation of being completely absorbed in the practical life but with a full inner accompaniment and researching of the agricultural activity. This dynamic balance between outer and inner engagement, which is to be striven for anew day in, day out, could almost be characterised as the trademark of biodynamic agriculture. And I believe by far the most of us know the tensions that accompany the striving and the deeply satisfying and in a biographical sense living element which is opened up with this inner-outer correspondence.

The Section for Agriculture's Work Strategy for 2011 to 2013

Ueli Hurter

The Basis: the two Wellsprings of the Section's Work

For our task as leaders of the Section we are starting out from the idea that there are two wellsprings for the biodynamic impulse: firstly, Rudolf Steiner and his work, in our case especially the Agriculture Course, secondly each individual person who connects him-or herself existentially with the impulse. This approach is not new, but it is gaining more and more relevance. People often see the Goetheanum in Rudolf Steiner's succession as the wellspring and thus as the centre, and the place where anthroposophy is applied, in our case

the biodynamic farms, as the places of the practical application, and thus as the periphery. We can see perfectly well that this viewpoint is correct and justified in its own way. It is just that our own life experience and our connection with anthroposophy are not completely covered by it. For the encounter with the biodynamic impulse is not only an outward encounter, but an inward encounter. In the course of getting involved in the practical work on the farm, or with the study of the Agriculture Course or in the practising of inner work we experience the moment, "now I have come to the point which I wanted to reach". It is like finding the motif of one's own life. This is only awakened by the outward encounter, but it was already there beforehand slumbering, in me. It belongs to me, I have brought it with me into this life. The world of biodynamics, the Agriculture Course are not any 'revelations', which the searching soul has found at last, but rather the encounter may have the character of discovering the biodynamic impulse to be the motif of one's own life. In this sense calling this inner discovery the second wellspring is justified. Of course, knowledge does not flow from this second wellspring to the same degree as it does from Rudolf Steiner as a source, but what flows is life energy, the will for engagement, the readiness to take on concrete responsibility. As it is a matter of practical activity the will element is the carrying factor. From the second wellspring flows will. The clarity of thinking involved in knowledge is lacking, we do a lot that we have not fully grasped, but that makes perfect sense to the active human being. And yet nonetheless, the active person is not mindless or dull, in his own way he knows what he wants, but he does not express himself through clear thoughts, but through the forward thrust into a future in which the individual biography and the further development of the farm are interdependent. It is a kind of 'Initiation through the will', which comes about in a differentiated way, layer by layer.

These two wellsprings feed the two streams which meet in the biodynamic movement. They are, so to speak, the poles between which the realm of the Section is created. The Section, or the realm of the Section, is in our view not one of the poles, but the tense relationship, the dynamic balance between the poles. How can the realm of the Section become fruitful, in the sense of a 'heightening of two mutually dependent opposites'? (Goethe). First of all the traditional roles – here anthroposophical knowledge as 'truth', there practical activity as 'the right life' must be overcome. Secondly, increasingly forms of working must be developed in which anthroposophy becomes accessible to inner activity and in which the practical activity of life reveals its hidden knowledge. A first step in this direction was made with the 2011 conference.

Agricultural Conference and Theme of the Year

Motto: "Biodynamic farms can become places of a new kind of human development"

The agricultural conference and the work with the theme of the year have been the main activities of the Section until now and will be until further notice.

As far as we know, the agricultural conference is a unique event in the realm of agriculture and agronomy: time and again it balances anew and synthesises the elements of a specialist conference with an orientation towards knowledge with an artistically shaped farmers' celebration and also with human encounters of individuals with one another against a background of world-wide participation. The Goetheanum as the conference venue is really formative for the atmosphere of the conference as well as for the honest striving for clear knowledge, for the depth and inwardness of the personal commitment as well as for the raised level of celebration. Between the world-wide biodynamic movement and the agricultural conference there is mutual give-and-take on a high level and each of them would be unthinkable without the other.

The theme of the conference arises from the theme of the year formulated by the Council of Representatives a year and a half before the conference. As a rule core themes of biodynamic agriculture are combined with current situations. The form of the conference is developed from year to year as an ongoing learning process; here it is always vital to find a new balance between lectures, work groups, artistic courses, presentations and intervals.

With the 2011 conference with regard to both its theme and form a radically new departure was chosen: the theme was not given a structured content, but rather the personal concern of the participants with burning issues was taken as the starting point. With the U-process and the laboratories for the future the form was completely shifted in the direction of the cultivation of conversation. At the conference a powerful mood of a new departure came about and now the task in the next few years is to open up and to conquer new horizons for the biodynamic movement. The way we are planning for the next two years is formulated in the paper "On the Theme of the Year 2011/12, 'Onwards to the Wellsprings'".

The three-fold steps - new departure, deepening, encounter with the world – will have a strong general influence on the work of the Section and we hope that an 'inner spiritual bond' will connect the individuals and the projects in the realm of the Section. In the following an outlook for the forms of work and possible projects for the three tasks of the Section, research, training, and co-ordination, is to be presented.

Research and Development

Motto: "The Section as a permanent laboratory for the Future"

The Research Institute at the Goetheanum, which is run by the Science Section and the Section for Agriculture, is at present almost abandoned in respect of agricultural co-workers and research questions. How and whether professional research at the Goetheanum is to be further developed is open for the time being.

Spiritual and practical innovative Research

Biodynamic farming is in no way a self-contained thing. In every place, in every climatic zone, in every particular specialist branch and for every new generation it must be discovered anew and refined in its application. However, biodynamics is not just a practical method of farming, but a new – actually revolutionary – way of viewing farming as well as of treating nature and of producing food. The result of this basic situation is that spiritual and practical innovative research is being permanently carried out by many people everywhere in the movement. "Every farmer as a researcher" would be the shortest expression. Now this research activity is so closely interwoven with the life situation of the individual and the everyday work that it often remains in obscurity and as such does not reach the light of day. The Section is meant to be the soil where this activity and the 'results' are intended to come to light and are supposed to. This does not have to lead to centralisation in Dornach, but it can live in a decentralised way and as a network in many places. In the sense of the methods of the U-process and of action research it is a question of 'open mind'. 'open heart' and 'open will'. In other words head, heart and hands are involved in the practice of research in the specialist, social and general cultural dimensions of the biodynamic movement.

Possible projects:

- *'Les Ambassadeurs', a personal network comes about between North and South, between East and West.*
- *Bees "What are the bees telling us?" Every swarm of bees needs its swarm of people.*

- *'Connect', attentiveness to a new way of building community in contact with young people.*
- *Learning through activity. You cannot grasp, develop or research biodynamics in your head. It only works through activity.*
- *Who does the earth belong to? For instance, can we take new ways of establishing a social context for the land question?*
- *Cattle in the vineyard. More and more farms are without livestock, for example, the vineyards. How do we reach innovative solutions with respect to this problem?*
- *Of course cows have horns! Of course a biodynamic farm has cows? "Socially we cannot stand our concept of the farm with livestock". See Ueli Hurter's article in Circular no. 98, autumn 2010.*
- *The pressure of rationalisation versus an area for experiencing life. "Just now as more and more people are yearning for farms with diversity, we are in the process of losing them". See Jean-Michel Florin's article in Circular no. 98, autumn 2010.*
- *'Farm individuality', 'personal relationship', "The human being is made into the foundation". How can these 'seeds' from the Agriculture Course be brought to germinate anew for modern life?*
- *From food sovereignty to the spiritual sovereignty of the farmer. Where do the conclusions of the World Agricultural Report meet the fundamental ideas of the Agriculture Course?*
- *'Les jardins de l'utile et de l'agréable'. Landscaping at the meeting point of town and country in public parks, on the edges of conurbations and in the 'agricultural deserts'.*
- *'Inner security'. What leads to inner security on what level? Basic research work and study with the motto of educational activities.*
- *"What is the earth in the macrocosm in reality?" This leading thought resonates like a base note through the Section's work and we want to work time and again on the questions linked with it. There is an idea of having a small publication with the contributions to the 2011 conference.*

Scientific Research

This is a matter of research in the classical scientific sense. For a research question an experimental design is developed and the results are evaluated statistically. This kind of science is important for biodynamics, especially for its presence in scientific dialogue and for it to be represented credibly vis-a-vis officialdom, e.g. for the lobbying work in Brussels. Up until now it is not envisaged to carry out this research within the framework of the Section. However, we do see it as our task to nurture research work through:

- *Giving impulses, synthesising and accompanying research work in this area.*
- *Entering into strategic partnerships with institutions that are able to co-operate. Above all we have in mind FiBL and possibly the University of Witzenhausen. – After the collapse of the Foundation Chair in Witzenhausen establishing strategic partnerships with friendly institutes and chairs seem to us to be the needs of the moment.*

Questions of Method

The question of research method has long been a theme of debate in the biodynamic movement. In close connection with biodynamic agriculture the phenomenological method (Goetheanism) and the morphogenetic method (rising picture methods) have been developed to complement the classical scientific method. Currently, two new approaches are available: on the one hand, in his booklet "Wie weiter mit der biologisch-dynamischen Forschung?" (How will it continue with biodynamic research?), Nikolai Fuchs asks the question about the further development from on-farm research to in-farm research. On the other hand, in his book "Lebenskraefte – Bildekraefte, methodische Grundlage zur Erforschung des Lebendigen" (Life Forces, - Formative Forces, methodical Basis for Research into the living World) Dorian Schmidt describes a method which, in his understanding of it, goes beyond phenomenology and researches directly in the spirit.

Of course, there are fundamental demands on the Section as a part of the High School for Spiritual Science in the question of method. But, basically, we do not see the Section as the place where it is decided in an authoritarian manner which method is adequate and which not; rather the Section is supposed to be the place where the methods and their representatives meet and get into conversation. It is legitimate to have a variety of methods.

Task:

- *Forming a platform where the researchers and methods can meet each other.*

Education and Training

Motto: 'Attaining inner security'

The Section is meant to be a place of education and training. The main quality, which is meant to be fostered in all educational activities is the attaining of inner security. The biodynamic movement suffers like other anthroposophically based fields of work from a not completely clarified relationship to authorities. In the broad area between spiritual indications and practical activity people and groups install themselves who are accepted for a period as authorities. We believe that this is not beneficial for the movement or its progress. Therefore, the focus is on 'developing inner security' as the Section's goal for education and training. I need instruments which I can call upon when I am faced with new facts and instructions in the practical field, in the border-line region of sensory- supersensible perception, on the path of inner development.

Furthermore, the educational work of the Section is meant to have its sights set on the long term. Who will represent the biodynamic movement and the Section in twenty years' time internally and externally? Twenty years is a generation. The concern is to develop the next generation for inner leadership and outer representation of the biodynamic movement.

Projects:

- *The Intensive Study Week. A new approach to the Study Weeks on agriculture and anthroposophy in January at the Glashaus, in German, English and French.*
- *Summer University. The Cultivated Landscape in the Mirror of Mineral, Plant, Animal and Man, discovering, deepening, discussing. In collaboration with the Science Section at the Goetheanum, in German and French.*
- *Washington University. Guest week for 20 students. English.*
- *Stage cuisine. A practical week for cooks from canteen kitchens in France with a chance to work in the wholefood kitchens Dornach-Arlesheim and introductory course. French.*

- *Landscape week. Interactive process week with examples of landscaping questions concerning the Goetheanum grounds. German and French.*
- *Teacher training. Study of Man and education theory for the teachers at basic agricultural training courses in various countries.*
- *The Goetheanum and its landscaped park. Developing a day's module for groups of visitors.*
- *Wine-growers' Conference. International meeting with in-depth questions about the nature of the vine, landscaping and the question of livestock-keeping. With a Goetheanum visit. In several languages.*
- *Conference on the young child. In collaboration with the Medical Section and the Pedagogical Section. The basis of the organisation of an ELIANT-event in Brussels or Strasbourg on the positioning on the example of 'early childhood'.*
- *Nutrition Conference. Involvement in the Sektionskreis for Nutrition, consisting of the Medical Section, the Section for Agriculture and the Working Group for Nutrition Research.*
- *Radioactivity leaflet. In collaboration with the Medical Section and the Pedagogical Section. Editing a simple guide in the case of radioactive pollution of the habitat.*

Co-ordination and Representation

Motto: "My God, what is our role for this planet?"

A cosmopolitan spirit is meant to pervade the co-ordination within the realm of the Section and the representation and networking with the surroundings. A quote from the preparatory interviews as for the 2011 conference serves as a motto, "My god, what is our role for this planet?" Here it is always a question, in the sense of the quality of the High School, to look for the conversation of person to person. The gaze into the lofty heights is not meant to be abstract, but rather the 'you' of the person facing us can be the gateway to the far distance. Can we learn how to go on improving a culture of conversation and encounter without getting stuck in an exchange of everyday problems, but open up deeper and wider dimensions for one another? In the area and in connection with the realm of the Section the awakening of the I through the spirit and soul of the other person is a true event for the Section. In this sense the Section is accessible to everyone. In this sense the Section is also a quality – it is supposed to spring up everywhere as far as possible and inspire encounters.

Of course, 'home affairs' are important. We have now realised that the profile of the Section for the protagonists in the biodynamic movement is blurred. Accordingly, the flow of funds from those engaged in biodynamics is very small and not firmly agreed in comparison with the Pedagogical Section or Medical Section. This requires a great effort to communicate. With the preparation for the 2011 conference, with the conference itself and the conference report we have given this a clear direction. This effort includes the wide distribution of the new theme of the year in four languages. Generally, we shall take account increasingly of multilingualism. The Section really needs to be visible across the world and people on all continents and from many linguistic regions need to feel a sense of belonging to the realm of the Section.

'Foreign policy', i.e. the networking with other movements taking initiative towards a future partnership of man and the earth seems to us to be the need of the moment, if we want to join in the battle of our civilisation on the issues of seed, soil and nutrition. We understand the task of the Section to also entail getting involved in the direction of the impact of

anthroposophy on civilisation. Nowadays there are learnable techniques as to how people can co-operate in civil society without losing their independence or denying their own character. We think the biodynamic movement as a whole is indispensable in the assemblage of champions fighting for a planet worth living on. The picture of the earth as a seed (R. Steiner) does not belong to us exclusively, it is meant to encourage many of our contemporaries, directly or indirectly.

Tasks:

- *Council of Representatives. New and younger members. A greater commitment to working together.*
- *Circular letter. At least two issues per year.*
- *Collaboration DI –IBDA – Section. Who does what in an international context?*
- *Brussels/ELIANT. Continual lobbying and targeted interventions with the processes of legislation.*
- *Continual contacts with the various regions. At the present time there are especially close contacts of Thomas Luethi with China and a planned visit by Jean-Michel Florin to Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia.*
- *The Collegium of the High School and Goetheanum . Involvement in all committees and events of the High School and the Society at the Goetheanum.*
- *International Preparation Group. Accompanying the half-yearly meeting.*
- *Liaising with the biodynamic training courses. World-wide platform with regard to on-line apprenticeships, which are being prepared.*
- *Advisers' charter. The advisers who are internationally active and also a lot of wine-growing advisers are not tied into structures and only answer to themselves. The aim is to have a binding charter according to the example of France.*
- *Workshop before the agricultural conference for those responsible in the various countries.*
- *Visits and talks world-wide.*
- *Receiving visitors at the Section and the Goetheanum.*
- *Leading the Section and the Section's team. Continual work in the groups of 3, 4 and 5.*

Co-operation among various Bodies which are active on an international level for biodynamic agriculture

Thomas Luethi

Since 1924 questions from farming have been worked upon within the Science Section at the Goetheanum. From 2004 on the work has been continued in the independent Section for Agriculture. The agricultural conference takes place yearly at the beginning of February, a well visited meeting place for the entire biodynamic movement world-wide. Creating meeting-places to give impulses to biodynamic work world-wide is an important task of the Section. The Section for Agriculture has a leadership and the Council of Representatives as an important working body, which meets twice a year.

In 1997 after seven years' groundwork Demeter International (DI) was founded in order, above all, to co-ordinate the guidelines and the certification internationally. Later on, the whole question of administering the trademark and the protection of the trademark were added among other things. DI has national Demeter certifying organisations as members and organisations that are not yet certifying as guest members. Every year in June the DI Members' Meeting with an AGM takes place in one of the member countries or guest member countries, this year in Germany. The Annual General Meeting chooses the Council for two years each time.

The International Biodynamic Association (IBDA) was founded in 2002, above all so as to bring together the Demeter trademark ownership rights in one organisation world-wide. This has been carried out to a large extent. IBDA has chiefly biodynamic associations as members. Once a year an annual meeting takes place in Dornach, which also chooses the Council for seven years.

All three workings bodies have been developing their activities further since their formation and organise various meetings among other tasks. In the course of time it has emerged that to some extent similar enquiries are put to all three bodies. For example, help with building up a national organisation in a country where there is none so far, advisory work etc.

The financing of the three bodies is very different. The Section has a basic budget from the Goetheanum from the members' contributions to the Anthroposophical Society and is reliant upon the support of direct donations. In the past few years the budget has become tighter and tighter.

IBDA has a meagre income through members' contributions that have been kept low and is in need of donations.

The income of DI is financed by the members' contributions of the national Demeter organisations and licence income from countries where there is no national Demeter organisation and DI carries out the certification itself.

In the course of the years a whole series of issues have emerged, which are pressing for closer co-operation and mutual consultation of these working bodies. The leadership of the Section and the councils of DI and IBDA began to deal with these questions in the current year at meetings on 6th February and on 20th May with the assistance of Aender Schank. The meetings took place in a constructive and very good atmosphere. On 31st January they were all invited to a common workshop.

At the last meeting with small work groups tasks and goals were identified for the whole biodynamic movement. Subsequently, in the plenum the lists of tasks and goals were extended and in a concluding conversation the particular tasks and goals were allocated as well as possible to the various bodies, the Section, IBDA and DI. It became apparent that, to some extent, it was clear and obvious what belonged where most sensibly, for instance, the trademark ownership with IBDA, the certification process, the application of the trademark and co-ordination of the work on guidelines with DI and conferences on biodynamic cultivation, training courses, etc. with the Section.

However, examples appeared with uncertainties, where at present tasks and goals are looked after by several bodies or individuals such as, for example, advisory work, support for the development of projects and organisations in countries where biodynamic agriculture is at the beginning of its development etc. Then tasks emerged which have not yet been picked up internationally; for example the exchange of products and co-ordination of the flow of goods.

Through this process a fundamental question became clear: for which tasks and goals is it meaningful to work on a regional, national or international level and what is to be developed further in particular through concrete, personal contacts?

With certain questions and tasks it is appropriate that all the various bodies work together, for example in the development of a conscious awareness for the situation in various countries in relation to preparations, breeding or seed work, the quality of food etc.

At the Members' Assembly of DI in Loheland at the end of June 2011 the following questions will be worked upon among others:

- Which tasks and goals have not been mentioned?
- What is the difference between the biodynamic and the Demeter movement? Is there a difference?
- How can the relationship between the biodynamic movement and the Section be strengthened – spiritually and financially?

At the next combined meeting of the councils and the Section's leadership from 15th-16th October the issues will be worked on further.

A clear view of each body's own work in relation to the whole and a common understanding for the tasks as a whole should strengthen the joint endeavour.

The autumn Council Meeting takes place in Norway this year. Our hosts will be Ola Aukrust in Lom and Sigune Ingvaldsen in Stange . Here is a view of their farms.

Among high Mountains in the far North

Ola Aukrust

Natural Foundation

The highest mountains in northern Europe are to be found in Norway, roughly in the middle between Oslo, Trondheim and Bergen. In the West it rains a lot, in some parts an awful lot, in the East seldom. Here we find the driest region of northern Europe, with only 350mm. precipitation per year. Farming would hardly be possible without irrigation – as in many mountainous regions in the world.

I grew up here, on my parents' farm; 15 cows, a milk allocation of 75,000 L, 15 hectares of arable land, and then grazing land, wood and alpine pastures. A good farm in this area as a starting point in 1985.

Cultural Foundation

Henrik Ibsen travelled around here in his youth in order to gather fairy tales. Going out into the wilds of nature, unspoilt nature, life on the farm, having an interest in folk tradition – these are all fruits of the great tree of Romanticism. Edvard Grieg often had to come out to the fresh air of the mountains, sickly and weak as he was. Knut Hamsun was born in Lom. Traditional folk culture is rich, with its stave churches; a lot of houses are listed buildings. Folk music is varied and lively. My grandfather's brother is a well-known Norwegian poet. He also knew anthroposophy and on a journey to Rome even heard a lecture by Rudolf Steiner at the Goetheanum. Together these things form the surroundings, for it is not only a natural

foundation that belongs to a place, but also a cultural foundation. This can be summed up by the term 'genius loci'. In biodynamic parlance we talk about the 'farm individuality'.

25 Years of Biodynamics

Before I took over the farm I was able to take part in the Scientific Study Year with Jochen Bockemuehl and Georg Maier at the Glashaus. There I received the tools for practising thinking and perceiving, which were and are most important.

I took on the farm from my parents in 1985, converted it straight away and received the Demeter recognition. Dairy farming was able to carry the farm well. We took up the alpine grazing with dairy cows again and started growing vegetables as well as laying out a herb garden for visitors.

There has been very much a growing interest in organic herb cultivation in Norway, and in 1990 we helped to found a co-operative. We have received the first collecting point. The work has grown very quickly, but the co-operative has not been able to achieve enough turnover. For this reason we have been working towards our own farm trademark, the basis of which is our own herb-growing. Our contact with Sonnentor in Austria was a strong source of inspiration, also as far as packaging and aesthetics are concerned. In the meantime, we are importing and marketing exotic herbs too so as to have a comprehensive assortment. It is said: the future in Europe belongs to the regions, with regional landscape, traditions, culture – and food culture too. In Gudbrandsdalen we have built up a fruitful regional marketing organisation (www.gudbrandsdalsmat.no). Businesses and hotels can order produce from 18 producers at one address, from meat products, farm cheese, bread right through to our produce: fresh lettuce and herbs, salami from our own animals, teas and spices.

Another regional co-operative venture is called 'Cultural Farms in Gudbrandsdalen' (www.Gardmillom.no). Around 10 farms are open to visitors each summer for 10 days in July with an extensive programme: guided tours, concerts, courses, our own specialities on all levels. For such purposes and the like we have built a new house in recent years and have set up a foundation for the farm as a 'meeting place'.

Today

Seen realistically, the times when 15 dairy cows formed a good basic income are long gone. In the meanwhile we have a large family with five children. Building up a milk processing workshop we do not find very realistic. We have decided to convert to suckler cows.

In this way, we hope to allow more time and space for the further development of the farm as a 'meeting place'. It is a strength - or weakness - that we enjoy working with people who think and work differently from ourselves. However, we are all basically 'different' – no matter under what 'flag' we find ourselves. In the country we cannot get along without working in a co-operative and 'ecological' way.

Hopes and dreams for the Future

You could say ironically, biodynamic farming is a movement with a great future behind it. As a pioneering movement we have initiated a large, world-wide movement; just like the Cistercian movement in former times. It has also experienced times of great flourishing, times of decline and renewal and it is still alive 1,000 years on.

It is important, as Claus Otto Scharmer describes it at the beginning of the U-process, to look reality in the eye, honestly, and to take what you have perceived seriously. Maybe a certain resignation, an uncertainty towards our task is growing?

Our task has to do with life in the country and the cultivation of nature. World-wide this culture is in rapid decline. Just as Vandana Shiva said at the agricultural conference in February, the distinction between various ecological impulses is not the most important thing for the future, but what we have in common. Of course, the differences are interesting and exciting. In this sense we are a part of a large movement which (as Claus Otto Scharmer expresses it) is built on three pillars: ecology, the social dimension and spirituality. In this sense closer co-operation world-wide would be possible – a 'Sophia-movement' for the future.

Fokhol gard

Sigune Ingvaldsen

Fokhol Farm is situated approx. 120 km. North of Oslo, on the east side of Mjosas. After five years of groundwork including the funding work it was bought by the Stange District and turned into a charitable foundation, which now owns land, buildings, livestock and machines. Fokhol lies 220 metres above sea level and comprises 100 hectares of farmland and woodland rights, 25 hectares of it are leased. The soil consists of stony end moraine sand, rich in raw humus, with an average precipitation per year of 650 mm.

The farm is run independently by a farm community, consisting of Inger Ivarud, Rune Myrseth, Morten and Sigune Ingvaldsen as well as co-workers and apprentices.

In the market garden forage plants, grain, field vegetables and potatoes as well as small scale garden vegetables are grown. There are 34 cows (Norwegian red cattle) with calves and young cattle and 13 workhorses altogether (Ardenne horses).

The guest house has 35 beds and is used for conferences, courses and seminars (www.fokhol.no).

Enquiries to Sigune Ingvaldsen, Fokhol gard, 2335 Stange, Norway

Tel: +47 625 71 325 or Tel: +47 994 25 641, fokhol@fokhol.no

Intensive Study Week

15th-20th January 2012 at the Goetheanum, Dornach

I have responsibility on the farm, in the enterprise, for the family – how shall I do justice to the demands:

- So that the farm runs well?
- So that I do not sleep through the major issues of our time?
- So that the inner dimension of my existence gains depth?

We will get into this week at the point where we got out of everyday life. How does my situation present itself to the view of the others? Does this result in an opening for thinking, feeling and willing in the sense of the U-process? Do I run into a threshold, can it be stepped over? Do archetypal pictures become accessible for my work with mineral, plant animal and man? Do I find prototypes in my inner world with which I will become capable of acting in the outside world?

Thus, an intensive path is described from everyday speech via threshold experiences to a language of archetypal pictures. The experience as individuals and as a group is meant to be intensive as well in this week. The team of organisers – Jean-Michel Florin, Ursula Hofmann, Ueli Hurter, Johannes Witz – is present during the quite brief time of the course.

A detailed programme will follow.

Diary Dates:

Int. Working Group biodynamic Preparations	23 rd -25 th October 2011, Dornach
Council Meeting	25 th -30 th October 2011, Norway (incl. Trip)
Intensive Study Week	15 th -20 th January 2012, Dornach
Agricultural Conference	1 st -4 th February 2012, Dornach
Landscape Week 2012	2 nd -8 th September 2012, Dornach
Stage cuisiniers (in French)	12 th -16 th March 2012, Dornach

Translated by John Weedon (jweedontranslations@yahoo.co.uk)