

BIODYNAMIC AGRICULTURE

Biodynamic agriculture is based on the conception that a farm is a living organism with a closed cycle, which is a part of the great organism of cosmos; moreover, this kind of farming, considers and utilizes the influences of the stars, in particular of the Moon.

The creator of biodynamics is the Austrian philosopher Rudolf Steiner, who dedicated himself to Agriculture before his death, to answer some farmers questions, he gave 8 lessons in which the central theme was the health of the earth and the maintenance and development of fertility, to improve the quality of food for humans.

The three principles of biodynamics are:

- 1) maintain the fertility of the earth;
- 2) make healthy plants that can resist diseases and pests;
- 3) produce foods of the highest quality.

Biodynamics, in its cultivations, maximize the organic processes of decomposition, which cause an improvement of the soil, of the cultivated land, and respects the rhythms of nature; avoiding the use of chemical fertilizers; introduces the rotation; that's the practice of agronomy that consists of dividing a soil into several portions, used for different crops every year or every 2/3 years. Using this method, the soil can regenerate the substances that help the development of plants. In order to fertilize the soil, biodynamic farming uses manure and compost. Compost is a natural fertilizer that fermented and decomposed vegetable waste that contributes to the creation of humus, that is the most productive layer of the soil. In biodynamic agriculture, compost is considered as a vital impulse, which, thanks to the typical preparations of the dynamics, provides to the development of the plants. Biodynamic agriculture uses biodynamic preparations, and many people consider them magical or irrational practices. There are eight biodynamic preparations. Two are sprayed on the fields directly and six are put in compost. The preparations are made by a particular mixing that is called "dinamizzazione". One of these, based on manure, stimulates radical activity and growth. To make it, it is necessary to fill the cow's horns with fresh manure and leave them for a period underground. An other, based on quartz powder, stimulates the process of assimilation and maturation. The preparations put in the compost are based on medicinal plants.

Moreover, biodynamics thinks the earth as a part of the universe and so it depends on the cosmic laws and influences. In his farming course Steiner talks about the influences of the various planets on earth, but in practice the biodynamics farmers refers to the sowing calendar. It is the result of 20 years of research and studies on the lunar's influences for agriculture, conducted by Maria Thun. She discovered that the plant develops more or less each of its parts, (root - leaf - flower - fruit) according to the position of the moon at the time of sowing. These observations are true only in biodynamic soils.

SELF-SUFFICIENCY, IDEAL OF A FARM

Each biodynamic farm wants to obtain a self-sufficiency and complete the natural biological cycle, which starts in plants with photosynthesis and with the formation of organic compounds, and ends with the absorption and transformation of these organic substances in minerals by humans and animals.

So, the biodynamic farms want to become a self-sufficient biological unit, where, in equilibrium, land, vegetation, animals, men, try to produce everything that is needed..To do this, you must use a proportionate number of animals, practices such as green manure, compost, drainage and plowing to get the right balance between air and earth, and finally the use of biodynamic preparations. So, the only difference between organic/biodynamic farming is the use of biodynamic preparations and the exclusion of all the chemical substances, such as copper sulfate, allowed in organic farming.

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SOURCES: https://www.rudolfsteiner.it/biodinamica/che_cosa