

Biodynamics in the world

Newsletter January 2018

Picture: Uli Johannes König

Dear members and friends of Biodynamic farming,

The most impressive experience for me in India was the way Biodynamic farming can really improve the living conditions for small farmers – even without an organic market. Fewer inputs, better soil quality and therefore better water efficiency and a higher price through better product quality lead to an improved income.

Let us work with joy and energy for a further spreading of Biodynamics on our earth.

“Sometimes life brings challenges and we end up feeling lost. But the seeds of joy are alive in us all. We invite you to support us in bringing more of this joy into the world.”

Archbishop Desmond Tutu and His Holiness the Dalai Lama “The Book of Joy. Lasting Happiness in a Changing World

Christoph Simpfendorfer

Agricultural Section at the Goetheanum

- The Indian Trip of the Section for Agriculture
From 3rd to 16th November, after more than two years of preparation, about 70 representatives of the worldwide biodynamic movement from 20 countries and 6 continents met in India.
- New International Herb and Medicinal Plants Division of the Section for Agriculture
At the Agriculture Conference in February 2017, a professional group for Herbs and Medicinal Plants as part of the Section for Agriculture at the Goetheanum was founded.
- Associative Economics in organic Trade
A first step was taken in this direction within the framework of a conference of the Economic Circle of the Agriculture Section and of the Grundlagenforum (Basic Principles Forum) of Demeter Germany from 23rd to 25th November 2017 at the Alanus University in Alfter.

Demeter-International

Team

- Ute Ritter: new in the office in Echterdingen
- Christoph Simpfendorfer now full time
- Petra Derzken now for the operational level

International Certification Office

- New certifications
Since October there have been seven new certifications.

Market

- Website about organic goods export
The new website OrganicExport.info provides up-to-date import regulations for the main importing countries of organic products.

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Demeter-International supports Slow Food and the Biodynamic Garden Project in Sekem with €3000.
- Demeter USA Announces First International Biodynamic Wine Conference in U.S.
Biodynamic viticulturists and winemakers from around the world will gather May 6-7, 2018 in San Francisco's scenic Presidio

Reports/ various

- The Second Turkish Biodynamic Conference
The 2nd Biodynamic Agriculture Conference took place at Burdur Ağlasun Sagalassos Lodge Hotel and in Tefenni Seydiler Village on 21-22 October 2017. The main theme was husbandry.
- CONAGRECO December 2017 in Cali
In December 2016 at the second meeting of Biodynamic Initiatives in Colombia one of the common goals was to prepare the formation of a Biodynamic Association.
- The preparation Box
The preparation box is a new online platform that deals with topics related to Biodynamic preparations, Demeter farming, Demeter horticulture and Demeter viticulture.

Dates & events

- 5th - 6th of February: International Demeter Wine Trade Fair , Angers, **France**
More information
- 7th - 10th of February: Agricultural Conference, Goetheanum, Dornach, **Switzerland**
Theme: The preparations - the heart of biodynamic agri-culture
Programme and registration
- 10th-11th of February: International Working Group Biodynamic preparations - Meeting on preparation research, Goetheanum, Dornach, **Switzerland**
- 11th-12th of February: International Biodynamic Advisors: Meeting of the international Advisors, Goetheanum, Dornach, **Switzerland**
- 22nd-23rd of February: Congress - The Biodynamic approach of vine: knowledge, research and practice, Troyes, **France**
Programme and registration
- 25th -27th of February: International Days of Demeter Wine, Museumsquartier, Vienna, **Austria**
Programme, registration
- 10th of March-13th of October: Beehive impulse: Practice and Background of Bee-keeping in tune with their Being. Ongoing course with Martin Dettli and Johannes Wirz, Science Section, Goetheanum, Dornach, **Switzerland**, Contact: science@goetheanum.ch
- 6th - 7th of May: International Biodynamic Wine Conference, San Francisco, **USA**
Programme
- 11th-13th of May: Swiss organic agricultural fair BIO-AGRI and organic wine fair BIO-VINO, Grange-Verney, Moudon, **Switzerland**
BIO-AGRI , BIO-VINO
- 5th - 8th of September: Research Conference (English): Evolving Agriculture and Food - Opening up Biodynamic Research, Goetheanum, Dornach, **Switzerland**
- 21st-22nd of September: Building up the Ether- the Human being as a Creator - Intersectional Meeting, Goetheanum, Dornach, **Switzerland**
- 31st of October-3rd of November: Circle of Representatives - Meeting of the Members of the Circle of Representatives for Biodynamic Agriculture, probably Dornach, **Switzerland**

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Agricultural Section at the Goetheanum

The Indian Trip of the Section for Agriculture

In our meeting space, out in the open on a Biodynamic farm in India it is never silent, even when everyone is quiet. The sounds of birds, monkeys, dogs and the rustling of the bamboos of tree height form an unaccustomed tapestry of sound for the meeting of the Circle of Representatives of the Agriculture Section in November 2017. It is the first time ever that we have met outside Europe. Our host is Sarvdaman Patel, the president of the Biodynamic Association of India. We are meeting on his farm. And that is no coincidence....

In recent years within the Biodynamic movement the outlook has changed. Instead of a centre, nowadays the central point of the movement is located wherever active people work in their own situations. At the same time, we learnt to connect up with other movements and to engage more strongly in civil society in order to tackle the great question about the future of the earth and of humankind. In tune with these changes a request came from Patricia Flores, the IFOAM-co-ordinator for South America: Biodynamic agriculture, as an integral part of and source of inspiration for the organic movement, should have a strong presence at the 2017 Organic World Congress (OWC) in India. So from 3rd to 16th November, after more than two years of preparation, about 70 representatives of the worldwide Biodynamic movement from 20 countries and 6 continents met in India.

The places where we stopped on our travels were:

Gujarat for the Circle of Representatives' Meeting

A 4-day meeting of the Circle of Representatives of the Agriculture Section with invited guests on the farm of Sarvdaman Patel in Gujarat (www.organichutbkk.com). We had a guided tour around the diverse, innovatively run farm, met with the Council of the Biodynamic Association of India and listened to interesting reports of outstanding Biodynamic initiatives. Some examples were:

- Coffee-growing in Adivasi villages (indigenous population of India) in Araku Valley (Andhra Pradesh). Naandi Foundation: www.naandi.org
- Production of healing plants and of etheric oils in Madurai, Tamil Nadu, in order to support social initiatives. Muhil Health Center & Karmuhil Organic Farms: www.muhil.org
- Agricultural and socio-economic projects for sustainable development with marginalised groups in Andhra Pradesh. Timbaktu Collective: www.timbaktu.org
- Production of Biodynamic preparations as well as the training in and spreading of Biodynamic agriculture through the SARG Organisation at the foot of the Himalayas (Uttarakhand). www.sargindia.org



*The «Bamboo Cathedral»
Picture: Uli Johannes König*



*The Circle of Representatives with guests
Picture: René Piamonte*



*The Biodynamic farm of Sarvdaman Patel
Picture: Verena Wahl*

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Organic World Congress 2017 (OWC) and international Biodynamic meeting

On 8th November, approx. 80 farmers and representatives of the world-wide Biodynamic movement met at the invitation of the Section for Agriculture and participated in World Cafés on current topics, tasting of Indian coffee and a meeting between the members of the Circle of Representatives and the Biodynamic speakers at the OWC.

There were over 30 contributions of Biodynamic farmers and researchers at the OWC. We made lots of contact with the world-wide organic movement and especially with Indian farmers, who were represented in large numbers at the IFOAM Congress for the first time.

Field Trip to the Preparation Producer in Uttarakhand

The last stage of our journey was Nainital in Uttarakhand (www.sargindia.org/nainital.htm). There Binita Shah had organised the event “listen to the farmers”; through which the international group of Biodynamic farmers came into direct conversation with Indian farmers. Besides this we also visited Binita Shah’s initiative and his Biodynamic training centre high up in the mountains. There Biodynamic preparations are produced for several tens of thousands of farmers and training courses are carried out with farmers.

We are taking lots of impressions and impulses home with us. Wonderful landscapes and a most diverse plant and animal world have left lingering impressions in us. However, we were deeply impressed especially with the people, with their energy, their dignity, their courage and their strong commitment. All of which is required, especially in a country, in which the negative effects of our life style are so starkly evident: the most bitter poverty, poisonous smog, polluted waters and degraded soil. The tasks are enormous. We had the privilege to get to know some remarkable personalities from the organic and Biodynamic movements, who have undertaken impressive initiatives, working with lots of small farmers; great hope for India and the world!

The trip has brought the world-wide Biodynamic movement together in a completely different way than would have been possible in Europe and has brought it into closer contact with the large organic movement. The participants at the Organic World Congress noticed the strong presence of the Biodynamic farmers and researchers. This will enable the Biodynamic movement to better position its significant contribution towards the organic movement in future. Being together with them led to a strengthening of our own impulse and a greater opening out to those beyond our movement. The trip helped us to inwardly and outwardly take the step from being a relatively Eurocentric movement to being a world-wide one. It will go down as a milestone in the history of world-wide Biodynamic agriculture. Now we are on the way to becoming a truly world-wide movement.

Jean-Michel Florin and Verena Wahl



*International biodynamic meeting near Delhi
Picture: Krishnan Venkatraman*



Deepak Upadhyay, a biodynamic farmer from Uttarakhand. Picture: Sektion für Landwirtschaft



*At Binita Shah's project in the Himalayas
Picture Uli Johannes König*

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New International Herb and Medicinal Plants Division of the Section for Agriculture

At the Agriculture Conference in February 2017, a professional group for Herbs and Medicinal Plants as part of the Section for Agriculture at the Goetheanum was founded. It was created on the initiative of Ola Aukrust, a many sided grower of spices and plants for teas from Norway, together with Michaela Spaar, herbalist and cultural historian.

About 70 people came to the trilingual founding meeting. The aim of this section is to realise and network the various projects and initiatives in the Biodynamic cultivation and processing of herbs and medicinal plants. In addition, there should also be enough space for the exchanging of experiences and the following-up of research questions. So far, the division communicates in German, English and French. The wish is that various countries from Europe and overseas are represented in the division in order to maintain an international exchange. A collaboration between Hortus Officinarum, - Association for Biodynamic Seeds of Medicinal Plants, and the Netzwerk Kräuter, - Association for the Promotion of Medicinal, Herb/Spice and Cosmetic Plant Cultivation in Baden-Württemberg, has already begun.

In 2018, at the Agricultural Conference at the Goetheanum there will be a specialist forum on medicinal herb cultivation, which will be led by the division. In addition, there will be further opportunities to talk and meet at the specialist group meeting.

In August 2017, a steering group was formed, which is committed to the development of the division. The coordination has been taken over by Michaela Spaar. For further information: info@odilienzeit.ch or sektion.landwirtschaft@goetheanum.ch www.sektion-landwirtschaft.org



The steering group (from left to right): Bettina Pfeffer, herbalist (D), Ola Aukrust, herb grower (N), Jasmin Peschke, International Coordination of Nutrition at the Agricultural Section of the Goetheanum (CH), Henrik Hoeren, business economist, in training as a Biodynamic farmer and specialist in medicinal plants (CH), Michaela Spaar, herbalist and cultural historian (CH), Michael Straub, director of the Weleda Medicinal Plants Garden (D), and Bettina Billmann, graduate horticulturalist and alternative health practitioner (D).

Michaela Spaar
info@odilienzeit.ch

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Associative Economics in organic Trade

Even in the organic trade 'conventional' structures with the corresponding business practices are spreading more and more. The Biodynamic movement wants to counter the spiral of competition, personal profit and lower and lower prices by involving the idea of associations. For those people who want to work on this goal the Economic Circle of the Agriculture Section has been offering a forum for the past 5 years. With associative economics the key is for people to be aware of one another and together to weigh up and find a balance of the interests of all involved together, from the producers/breeders right through to the consumers. The instruments for doing this are regular "round tables", conversations on developing enterprises as well as further training courses. One practical goal is an overall calculation to cover the whole chain of value creation that is as transparent as possible.

A first step was taken in this direction within the framework of a conference of the Economic Circle of the Agriculture Section and of the Grundlagenforum (Basic Principles Forum) of Demeter Germany from 23rd to 25th November 2017 at the Alanus University in Alfter. With the support of students as well as a university lecturer and inspired by lectures by Wolfgang Tomaschitz and Udo Hermannstorfer, the participants identified elements of an economic system of working which accords value all the way from the breeder right through to the consumer; they also formulated the basic elements of a declaration of intent. The Economic Circle continued this work in Luxemburg at the organic network "oikopolis" and formulated the first draft of the "Charter for associative Economics in the organic Trade". Approximately 50 people involved in all areas of the Biodynamic value creation chain signed it. The "oikopolis" group, for instance, has already made a contribution towards turning it into reality; with their label "fair and associative" they are leading the way in this endeavour. The Sekem Group is also a pioneer of a comprehensive associative approach, which was impressively portrayed in the public lecture of Helmy Abouleish. This draft of the Charter will now be further developed in the Agriculture Section and the idea is that the many associative projects that there are in the Biodynamic movement are brought together under the roof of the Charter to form a solid network.

At the conference in November Ueli Hurter, who is responsible for the Economic Circle of the Agriculture Section, summarised his impressions with the words, "There was a definite mood and a sense of an entrepreneurial new departure among us, particularly with the formulating and signing of the Charter!"

Ueli Hurter and Jasmin Peschke

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Demeter-International

Team

Ute Ritter: new in the office in Echterdingen

Since 1st of December Ute Ritter has supported the office staff in Echterdingen. She has taken over several administrative jobs from Ute Bucholski and Cornelia Hauenschild. All questions not directly related to certification can be addressed to her. This allows Cornelia Hauenschild and Ute Bucholski to concentrate on the increasing amount of certification work.

Ute Ritter also assists Christoph Simpfendörfer in trademark and other secretarial work. Her contact Email is: ute.ritter@demeter.net.

**Christoph Simpfendörfer now full time**

Now that a second young farmer has taken over responsibilities at Reyerhof, Christoph Simpfendörfer can concentrate on his work for Demeter-International. In the course of this reorganization, Christoph took over all work related to the association, e.g. support of the organization of the Members' Assemblies.

Petra Derkzen now for the operational level

Since 2015 Petra Derkzen is a member of the Board of Demeter-International. She has been working for six years as certification manager for Stichting Demeter in the Netherlands. From now on, she will work as well on the operational level for Demeter-International: responsible of the themes training, research and advisory work. Her contact Email is: petra@stichtingdemeter.nl



"My name is Petra Derkzen. I live in Wageningen, the Netherlands, just north of the river Rhine. Since 2017 I am full time entrepreneur, combining different activities, both in the Netherlands and internationally, with one common theme; biodynamic agriculture and personal development. I grew up on a conventional mixed farm with open air horticulture, enclosed chicory enforcement and heifer management for dairy farmers. I loved farming when I grew up, but chose an academic career. During this, I volunteered on organic and biodynamic farms in my free time and learnt a lot, most of all that my love for farming was still alive! It was only in 2011 that I learned about biodynamics from courses of Michiel Rietveld. This felt as coming home. Currently, I joined as a farmer on Ekoboerderij de Lingehof in Randwijk, just south of the river Rhine. I work together with my colleague André Jurrius at this 100 hectare arable farm, which will be a Demeter farm in 2018 with 12 different crops and collaboration with the neighbouring organic dairy farmer. See www.ekoboerderijdelingehof.nl

The theme of 'personal development' has been central to all work I have done so far and is reappearing again as central to activities at the moment. I have worked and qualify as a university lecturer and have taught in BSc and MSc courses at Wageningen University until 2013. Currently, I teach again to MSc students of Organic Agriculture from farming practice at the Lingehof. I also teach the Conversion-to-Demeter courses in The Netherlands and Flanders.

From 2018 onwards I will focus on two main activities, farming in The Netherlands at the one hand and coordinating research training and advisory on the international level as Coordinator Research and Training for Demeter International on the other hand. In the latter function I have a supportive role in close collaboration with the Sektion for Agriculture and country organisations."

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International Certification Office

New certifications

Since October there have been the following new certifications / contracts:

- **Aleksandras Algirdas Juškys / Lithuania:** 121ha of arable / fodder production with cattle, in conversion to Demeter. BD advice from Reto Ingold. Demeter inspection by the Lithuanian control body Ekoagros. Contact: eitvydasjuskys@gmail.com
- **Solarplant SRL / Romania:** Second operation of Szakács Csaba with 65ha, mainly herbs and roses, in conversion to Demeter. Inspection by the Hungarian control body HÖG. Contact: prodplantimpex@gmail.com
- **Panagiotis Michalakis / Greece:** small farm with 1ha of oranges. Demeter inspection by the Greek control body Bio-Hellas. Contact: michfot@yahoo.gr
- **Living Farms Quintas Vivas SA / Portugal:** 25ha with mainly vegetable crops for seed production for Living Seeds Sementes Vivas SA, in conversion to Demeter. Andre Tranquilini is an experienced BD farmer. Demeter inspection by the Portuguese control body Sativa. Contact: andre.tranquilini@ls-sv.eu More at www.ls-sv.eu
- **Alonso Martin / QOM Community - Stay True Clothing / Argentina:** first cotton project in Argentina with initially 1.5ha in conversion to Demeter, extension under development. BD Advisor Antonio Heinze, Demeter inspection by Demeter-Argentina. Contact: martin@staytrueclothing.com.ar More at: www.staytrueclothing.com.ar
- **Sociedad Agrícola Frutícola Forestal y Ganadera Martini Blueberries Ltda./Chile:** beautiful operation with 20ha blueberries, in conversion to Demeter. BD Consultation by Rene Piamonte, Demeter inspection by Ecocert Chile. Contact: elaihue@gmail.com More at www.martiniorganicblueberries.com
- **FMC Greenland / Malaysia:** distributor of juices. Contact: customerservice@bmsorganics.com more at www.bmsorganics.com

We warmly welcome all new licensees!

Cornelia Hauenschild

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Market

Website about organic goods export

The new website OrganicExport.info provides up-to-date import regulations for the main importing countries of organic products. Information on certification and control bodies, compulsory and voluntary labels, as well as further references and contacts are currently available for 23 countries. The website was created by FiBL with the support of the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, Economic Cooperation and Development. The website language is English.

Lebendige Erde 6/2017

Lobby

New EU Organic Regulation largely agreed

On 20 November, the compromise text for the new EU Organic Regulation was adopted by the Special Committee on Agriculture of the EU Agriculture Council. On 22 November, the European Parliament's agriculture committee also approved the text. Confirmation in the Council and in the plenary of Parliament is pending and is likely to be followed up in the next 4-5 months.

Relevant press releases:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/de/press-room/20171120IPR88434/organic-food-green-light-for-fresh-eu-rules>

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-17-4686_en.htm

<http://www.ifoam-eu.org/en/news/2017/11/22/press-release-strong-institutional-commitment-needed-ensure-good-legislative>

What happens next?

- The regulation enters into force on 1 January 2021, with a three year implementation period to adapt to the new rules
- Legal details are defined in delegated and implementing acts. The EU Commission is in charge, but also the specialist departments of the ministries are involved. In the BÖLW as well as in the IFOAM EU group, the first consultation is now beginning to tackle the work on the downstream legal acts.
- At Biofach congresses, seminars, webinars, etc., the EU Commission, BÖLW, IFOAM EU along with other providers in the coming year offer a number of opportunities to understand the new ordinance and its effects, as well as the interpretation of certain paragraphs (especially Art 20).

How is the current text to be assessed?

Unfortunately, after five years of negotiations and many recommendations from the eco-sector, the text still has some technical flaws, inconsistencies and ambiguities. These must be clarified in subsequent legal regulations as far as possible.

Particularly critical is the new text dealing with unintentional contamination. Although no new legal thresholds have been introduced, measures must be taken immediately in suspected cases. The justification added that they must be "proportionate". However, it is still unclear how to prevent far-reaching measures being implemented even for minor incidents which would negatively affect organic producers. Smaller companies in developing countries in particular could be affected by the new import rules. This is because the

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being implemented even for minor incidents which would negatively affect organic producers. Smaller companies in developing countries in particular could be affected by the new import rules. This is because the principle of equivalence no longer applies; compliance with the EU organic regulation must also be observed 1: 1 for all goods from third countries.

There are interesting changes for seeds. The EU Commission has announced a pilot project for the recognition of organic seeds. The use of organic seed lines is made much easier. For the first time, the regulation defines organic plant breeding. The problem, however, is that the definition in addition to excerpts from the IFOAM standard for organic seed breeding also presupposes a genotypic and phenotypic diversity within varieties (?). This is not an aim in organic breeding, if a variety is bred (in populations in any case).

The baby food producers are looking forward to more legal certainty, because up to now, on the one hand the EU baby food regulation stipulated fixed vitamin values, and on the other hand the addition of vitamins was not really allowed in the current EU organic regulation (a legal grey area, there was a court ruling). Now the legal text has been aligned.

The last version of the text can already be found in English [here](#). Translations will be available in the new year.

Antje Kölling

Towards a healthy digital ecosystem: Values, Competences & Responsibilities

ELIANT's contribution to Digital Literacy

ELIANT Conference November 28th 2017 in Brussels

Computers, smartphones, tablets - we use these digital devices daily. Are they helping us to complete the goals we have set according to our own will or are we instead drawn into their world losing our will and our "I"? What kind of use can the children, whose will and "I" are still developing, make out of them? Is it reasonable to include more and more of these devices into the education process of children in order to prepare them for the "contemporary world"?

The topic is indeed relevant today. The core issues related to the topic of digital devices within education were presented and argued by paediatricians, scientists, teachers and EU officials. Why are we resisting these devices increasingly becoming a part of kindergartens and schools? Could there be a balanced use of these gadgets? What types of methods could we use in order to help raise awareness within society as a whole concerning this topic? The experts mostly argued for keeping young children away from digital devices. In his opening speech, Prof. Thomas Fuchs, an international expert on embodied cognitive science, University Clinic Heidelberg, presented a panorama of scientific studies showing that digital devices were counterproductive for the development of a child during his early years. He presented an "embodied cognition", which can be traced back to Heinrich Pestalozzi's (1746-1827) views on education: the learning processes are best when all the three are involved together, "head, heart and hand". The brain is a mediating organ that is shaped by continuous interaction with the world, it is not a hard drive or a computer. And Prof. Gertrud Teuchert-Noodt's final message (quoting Einstein) was: "Learning is experience. Everything else is just information'. (...) Use your brain more than your smart phone or Sat Nav."

Nuancing the debate

ELIANT does not stand in favour of banning all devices from schools. The discontent of ELIANT is essentially linked to the absence of a nuanced vision. According to Edwin Hübner, Free University Stuttgart, a child's development should be respected: the first seven years are focused on the physical development, which is trained through bodily engagement in everyday experiences. Every hour spent in front of a digital device during that crucial period is an hour lost for the essential development that occurs through sensory experience. However, digital devices can well be implemented in the education process at a later stage, when the child is ready for that type of stimulation. Joan Almon from the Alliance for Childhood, USA, argues

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Adapting education to the contemporary world

Konstantin Scheller, DG for Education, Youth, Culture and Sport, raised the issue of modernisation within the education process. One of the concerns of the Waldorf pedagogy is to prepare children for adult life in all its facets. It is indisputable that digital technologies are ubiquitous in our professional and personal lives. Adults should keep in mind the realities of the contemporary world and construct the recommendations for education accordingly. Parents also have a vital role to play in teaching their children responsible usage of digital devices. Georg Soldner, paediatrician, Deputy Head of the Medical Section at Goetheanum, sees the need for educating future parents.

The high school level students who were present at the conference defended the idea that the issue should be nuanced, without demonising the digital devices. They placed major importance on a balanced approach to the issue and a positive mind set. They estimated, that guidance in the use of social media can be beneficial and that productive use of the digital devices by children can only be made once a certain individual maturity is reached.

Acting on a societal level

How should these issues be propelled onto a wider public stage so that society as a whole could be engaged in the discussion? Educating parents is one potential way, however, another option is educating the educators themselves, according to Franz Glaw from the German society Freie Waldorfschulen. Joan Almon has proposed organising public campaigns aimed towards raising awareness.

The importance of a holistic view of society can be one of the conclusions to the conference. Indeed, the complexity of the subject lies in that we cannot view the school, the child, or the family as being entirely independent one from another or from the society.

Finding a balance

If it is to create a healthy social ecosystem, Europe needs citizens who uphold these values. ELIANT is committed to support this development. In her opening speech, Martine Reicherts pointed to the importance of the digital debate organized by ELIANT by saying: "We need to return the human being to the centre of society. People like you are needed, it's a question of heart, friendship and common values and we should focus on all that unites us even if we see many things differently".

With this conference, ELIANT, as an organisation whose aim is to make its ideas heard in the European Union, has taken a step further.

The [link](#) to the conference.

If you would like to support ELIANT, you can register [here](#) as a sponsoring member. Thank you very much.

Sofia Lismont / Susanna Küffer Heer

kuefferheer@sunrise.ch

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Reports from member countries

Slow Food and Biodynamic Garden Project in Sekem/Egypt

I am very happy to inform you that in October 2017 the Board of Demeter-International agreed to my proposal to support the Slow Food and Biodynamic Garden project in Sekem/Egypt to the tune of €3000.

For a long time I had been looking for a project that linked the significant activities of Slow Food (www.slowfood.com) with Biodynamic Agriculture. Within the terms of reference of the “10,000 African Gardens” project promoted years ago by Slow Food there is now also a Biodynamic garden thanks to Sekem’s support.



It consists of: **Garden’s program in schools**

Various learning experiences for children and adult focused on connecting more with nature through activating senses and developed a journey into the wonders of plant life to help see more what this amazing world is able to teach. Gardening in Egypt is becoming an essential skill in today’s world as the availability of clean and healthy food is becoming more and more scarce. The aim of this program is to develop the awareness of the students and include the following activities:

- Organising field trips for the schools to visit the Slow Food garden in Sekem and engage in learning activities on the principles of Biodynamic growing.
- Developing a plan with the schools in the setup a Slow Food garden model in the school.
- Supporting the schools through capacity building and regular coaching.

So far 9 field visits and workshops in the Sekem garden have been organised, reaching out to more than 170 school students and adults and there is currently discussion with 4 open spaces across Cairo where food gardens in cooperation with adults, youth and children could be set-up.

Training and Coaching of trainers (ToT) program:

This program would like to build the capacity of educators who can deliver concepts related to Slow Food / BD gardening. This would ensure the sustainability of this project and include the following activities:

- Organising at least two ToT workshops for educators to become facilitators and coaches on the Slow Food gardening principles and Biodynamic planting methods.
- Providing internships and work opportunities for these educators to practice their skills and become part of the project.
- Coaching the educators through their learning journey.

Already 10 educators with different levels of expertise who are interested in becoming gardening facilitators have been identified and a program through which they can build their capacity and practice throughout their learning journey is under development. An internship program is proposed for the coming months. Many thanks to Nazarena, Sara, Shereen, Soraya and all the friends in Sekem and Slow Food who are working for this project.

Lapo Cianferoni
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Demeter USA Announces First International Biodynamic Wine Conference in U.S.

Biodynamic viticulturists and winemakers from around the world will gather May 6-7, 2018 in San Francisco's scenic Presidio for the first International Biodynamic Wine Conference.

The first day of the two day conference is designed especially for Demeter certified wine grape growers and winemakers and will cover Biodynamic viticulture, winemaking, certification, marketing and wine business topics.



**INTERNATIONAL
BIODYNAMIC
WINE** MAY 6 & 7/2018
SAN FRANCISCO
C O N F E R E N C E

DAY 1: BIODYNAMIC EDUCATION DAY, SUNDAY, MAY 6

Soil and the microbiome: expert David Montgomery to keynote

Geologist and author David Montgomery, a former MacArthur Fellow who has written three bestselling science books on soil, including '*The Hidden Half of Nature*', will deliver the keynote address, focusing on soil and the microbiome

International Perspective: Biodynamic wine expert Monty Waldin to moderate

British Biodynamic wine expert Monty Waldin, international authority on Biodynamic wines and author of more than 10 books including several on Biodynamics and wine, will present a brief introduction to Biodynamic wines and will moderate multiple sessions on both days of the conference, bringing an international perspective to many of the conference topics.

In addition, vineyard and winery representatives from Europe, South America and other wine growing regions will be included.

Panel moderators and expert panelists

Also featured are:

- Glenn McGourty, author of numerous scientific and economic studies on Biodynamics, Biodynamic farming costs, and viticulture. He is the U.C. Farm Advisor in California in Mendocino County, home to several top Biodynamic wineries.
- John Reganold, professor of soil science and agroecology at Washington State University, who has conducted many of the leading scientific studies in the U.S. on Biodynamic farming and viticulture
- Elizabeth Candelario, Managing Director of Demeter USA, who is a 25-year veteran of the wine industry and is working with leading organic food companies in the development of Biodynamic food and drink in addition to wine.

Viticulture sessions will cover:

- *The Future of the Biodynamic Preparations* with an all star list of participants including Joseph Brinkley of Bonterra (and Josephine Porter Institute) and Sonoma BD pioneer Mike Benziger
- *Compost and Compost Teas* with David Johnson of University of New Mexico and August York of Growing Solutions, among others
- *Disease, Weed and Pest Control* with U.C. Farm Advisor Glenn McGourty and Daphne Amory, Biodynamic vineyard consultant, and others
- *Improving Wine Quality with Biodynamics* with Philippe Coderey, Biodynamic vineyard consultant, and others

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Winemaking sessions will cover:

- *Mastering the Art of Making Demeter Certified Wines: The How and the Why* with Jim Fulmer, Co-Director from Demeter USA, Dan Rinke from Johan Vineyards, winemaker Paul Frey of Frey Vineyards, Bob Lindquist of Qupé, and natural winemakers (using Demeter certified grapes) from the U.S.
- Additional topics to be developed

Business and marketing sessions include:

- *A Place at the Table: The Biodynamic Marketplace and Wine* with Elizabeth Candelario, representatives from Whole Foods, Master of Wine and wine industry consultant Bree Boskov of Oregon, and others
- *Scaling Up: Vineyards of 100 Acres of More* with Rudy Marchesi from Montinore Estate in Oregon, Julian Malone, vineyard operations director of Sea Smoke Estate, Rob Izzo, general manager of Eco Terreno in Sonoma, Ray Nucló, winery operations manager of King Estate (the largest Biodynamic vineyard in the U.S.) and a representative from Emiliana Vineyards in Chile (the largest Biodynamic vineyard in the world)
- *Know Your Buyer* with leading sommeliers, wine directors, distributors and retailers

One conference session will focus on opportunities for foreign Biodynamic producers who are interested in entering the U.S. marketplace. (Demeter USA requires U.S. Biodynamic certification for foreign producers who sell wine in the U.S.)

DAY 2: TRADE & MEDIA DAY, MONDAY, MAY 7

The second day of the conference, Monday, May 7, is for trade and media and will kick off with a keynote by David Montgomery followed by a panel on how Biodynamics improves wine quality.

Other sessions with leading Biodynamic experts will cover the latest scientific research on soil and the microbiome. In addition, experts will address the positive impacts that Biodynamic vines and wines have on climate change and carbon sequestration and the growing appreciation and appetite in the marketplace for eco-certified wines, including consumer interest in Biodynamically grown wines.

In the afternoon there will be a grand tasting featuring more than 60 wineries in both the U.S. and abroad for trade and media.

The conference will be held at the Golden Gate Club in the Presidio in San Francisco. Tickets for Demeter certified wineries from all countries will be available online starting Jan. 22. Tickets for additional attendees will be released on in mid-February.

Check the conference web site for more details at <http://www.biodynamicwineconference.org> or please contact Elizabeth Candelario at elizabeth@demeter-usa.org

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The Second Turkish Biodynamic Conference

Life is shaped from pieces that come together to form a whole

The 2nd Biodynamic Agriculture Conference took place at Burdur Ağlasun Sagalassos Lodge Hotel and in compost preparing areas in Tefenni Seydiler Village on 21-22 October 2017. The main theme was husbandry.

This 2nd BD Conference was prepared with the collaboration of Birlik A.Ş. and İstafil Bio-dinamik Tarım Çiftliği Ltd.Şti. together with the efforts and presentations of our agricultural advisor Hans Supenkämper and Dr. Anet Spengler-Neff from FIBL. Farmers, export companies, supervisory firms and guests from different sectors also attended along with university students from all over our country - a group of 60 mostly young people with high energy who were all hungry for knowledge. Guests from Iran, Bulgaria, Germany and Switzerland also participated.

The presence and the enthusiasm of the young people increased the overall energy. It was a privilege for all of the participants to work with the students who were able to attend the conference through the support of İstafil Bio-dinamik Tarım Çiftliği Ltd.Şti. from Ege University, Ondokuz Mayıs University and Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa University Agriculture Faculty, Garden Plants and Zootchnics Division. We wish to continue increasing our collaboration with our universities.

Our conference day in Tefenni started with an introduction by Hans Supenkämper. Engin Fırınıncı, Project officer of Birlik A.Ş. and Ramazan Çelik, one of the farmers in Tefenni. They gave detailed information about the beginning, development and aims of the Biodynamic project. At the Compost and Biodynamic Preparation Centre in Seydiler Village, we stirred BD-500 (Horn Manure) and CPP (Cow Pat Preparation) in wooden barrels on the upper floor of the Biodynamic house, built with the support of Birlik A.Ş. The effort of the participants involved in this special mixing method was wonderful to see.

Also the boxes in which the BD preparations were preserved downstairs, were very interesting. One of the main points that makes Biodynamic agriculture different from the others are the herbal preparations that must be used. All of the preparation storage boxes were separately surrounded by peat moss, filled with horn manure, yarrow, chamomile, stinging nettle, oak bark and dandelion.



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Then stag bladder, which was filled with dried yarrow in spring, was taken from its place under the roof of the preparation house where it had been hanging from spring until autumn to collect the sun energy of the summer. It was buried at a corner of the compost site. There the 'winter sun energies' will work into the bladder and be captured by the yarrow blossoms.

Our next task was to bury the BD-500 horns filled with fresh cow manure to be used next year. This preparation helps humus formation and the plants to root more deeply. Filled cow horns, passing from hand to hand to add our energies, were buried in a wide hole at a fertile place of the field. There they will spend the winter until spring. The happy faces of the participants during this activity were worth seeing. In my opinion, thanks to this positive energy, Tefenni farmers will have a rich and fruitful year.



Lastly, we examined and turned the compost piles which consist of old and fresh manures brought by the farmers from their own farms, straw, soil, mother compost and the BD preparations. It needs a balanced composition of carbonic, nitrogenous and structured materials. In the beginning there should be a ratio of C:N of 30:1. We controlled the temperature and the CO₂ content. It shows how the rotting process is running and when the heap has to be turned again.



The aerobic microorganisms need oxygen!

With a compost turner the windrow must be mixed to incorporate fresh oxygen into the compost when the CO₂ content gets higher than 12%.

At another heap we could observe how the finished and ripened compost material looks after 6 - 8 weeks processing: Wonderful crumbly, fine smelling, dark brown humus soil!

We could not believe how fast the time passed. We took a break at the centre of the village and everyone was happy to have the freshly brewed tea.

After dinner in the hotel, a presentation on 'Biodynamic Husbandry' was given by Dr. Anet Spengler-Neff, from the Swiss research station FIBL, an experienced agronomist (MSc), and animal scientist. First of all physical characteristics of the animals were examined and information on their needs for natural mobility, life and correct nutrition was given. The importance of getting information about the health of the animals by close observation of their behaviour was emphasized. Dr. Anet Spengler stated clearly that we must be aware of the fact that all of the animals on our farms depend on us, and we must meet their daily needs. This includes making it possible for them to wander freely without any restriction on their natural movements – in fact one of the most important duties we have.



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The second day began in our meeting centre at Tefenni. First Arzu Duran introduced the farm in Istanbul/Ihsaniye village, on which Biodynamic agriculture has been practiced now for three years. On that farm a stable was built to the Demeter standards with support of Hans Supenkämper. Arzu showed that the cows are living in the stable partly sheltered outside in summer and winter. They can go out grazing in the forest around. She was proud that despite all the objections from neighbouring farmers dealing with husbandry, her open stable adventure which started last year, resulted in success this year.



This summer sunflower and corn seeds were planted in the available areas of the farm. The aim is to produce all of the fodder in Biodynamic quality because the animals that eat the plants growing in the field, will give it back to the soil following digestion. The manure given back to soil enriches where it falls and can be used to grow plants through the increased fertility.

Lastly Arzu gave information about three different things that started this year. The first one is that she created a website to introduce the activities of Demeter to Turkish farmers and to help the farmers who want to convert to Biodynamic agriculture. Arzu told that information required could be taken from the website www.demeter-turkey.com. They handed out a guidebook entitled 'Conversion' for the those interested in Biodynamic agriculture in a wide sense. Arzu told that anybody can contact her whenever needed.

The second item concerned establishing a 'Biodynamic Agriculture Association'. It's hope to establish a framework to build upon, as soon as possible, and an invitation was made to those who love nature, are aware of the value of our soil and our efforts to come together under the umbrella of an association. The ones who want to be with us can send a message to info@demeter-turkey.com or they can call us (Tel: +90 532 616 25 79).

Lastly, Arzu told about a very important initiative. FREE INTERNATIONAL WANDERING SCHOOL FOR BIODYNAMIC AGRICULTURE was established for the purpose of teaching organic and Biodynamic agriculture. It is a big chance for us, as Turkey was chosen as the pilot area. This school that was established by our advisor Hans Supenkämper and his four expert friends aims to organise courses for anyone interested in these subjects. The course dates and venues will be fixed soon in consultation with participants and the training will be provided as soon as possible. Training will take place at Biodynamic farms where practical work will be the main thrust, accompanied by theoretical explanations. Our brochure was handed out to everyone participating in the conference. You can contact directly İstafil Çiftliği Bio-dinamik Organik Tarım Ltd.Şti., Turkey contact Office for detailed information.

Hans Supenkämper made a short presentation of the husbandry activities on Luzernhof, a farm in Germany <http://www.luzernhof.de>. Information was given on the portable and low-cost stable construction on the field. This construction makes it possible for cows to graze during summer time. Otherwise they would be on the farm which is in the middle of the village far away from all pastures.



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We visited some farms in that area to see husbandry activities and the stables together with Dr. Anet Spengler-Neff and Hans Supenkämper. We understood what 'Just observe, no comment, no judgement' means, said by Hans just before we started our visits.

The first farm we visited was a conventional one. The conditions of the animals were an example of how it should not be. We were all astonished by the conditions we saw there.

The second farm we visited was owned by the DEMETER farmer of Tefenni and it was clean, tidy and it was obvious that the animals were looked after with love and concern. Our experts made suggestions but left there happy. It was very good that all fodder was produced on the farm!



But there are still improvements to be done, especially the yard and access to pasture land.

In the third farm we visited the stables of the animals similar to the ones we commonly see in our villages. Some of the animals were standing in the open area in front of the stable. Our experts wanted us to concentrate on what the animals wanted to say with their voices and behaviour. These can give us clue about what they wanted although they can't talk. We watched with interest. It was a farm



where warm people live with positive energy, with smiling faces. It was accepted by our farmers that the husbandry conditions should be changed and the time for reform has already come. What they wanted from Hans Supenkämper was assistance with a stable construction project in line with the standards.

We reached the hotel with delay. In our final meeting we tried to summarise the conference.

1. What have we done and seen?
2. What moved or touched us the most?
3. Discussion about the contents and experiences.
4. Try to concentrate 'your harvest and impulse' in one or two words.

The result was great!. That means humans can return to their origin in nature so quickly! Finally we received our participation certificates feeling very happy to have been together, to have done very productive work together and with the excitement about what we can do next time. The next day we have left with wonderful impressions and with the hope to come together again as soon as possible.

At Sagalassos area, we felt a new, very positive energy in which an ancient civilisation had reigned.

In the hope that we can come together to further develop these new ideas in the next Biodynamic Conference...

Arzu Duran

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CONAGRECO December 2017 in Cali

In December 2016 at the second meeting of Biodynamic Initiatives in Colombia in "El Carmen de Viboral" one of the common goals was to prepare the formation of a Biodynamic Association.

It quickly became clear that it would be very important in this step to involve the campesinos, the small farmers. It was obvious from the visits as part of the excursion programme of that Congress that a serious interest in the economy, a recurrent need, a longing for cooperation and an incredible potential especially for Biodynamic agriculture exists ... and exactly that is what motivated us to tackle the Congress in Cali in December 2017. Four of us started planning in January 2017, unaware of the challenges that would be associated with this task.

We quickly agreed on the procedure for the congress: we wanted to reach each participant personally with their questions and their potential, we wanted to deepen the emerging topics and create a space for their initiatives. We wanted to design the congress together with the participants.

From the beginning of October there was no turning back, mainly because of the interest and support of the people and institutions in Colombia. The last two weeks before the congress we four had an intense preparation time during which we visited all the contributors involved in the program personally. This proved to be a valuable foundation for all participants, and for the running of the congress. Due to the fact that Alexander Gerber was not able to participate we additionally took over the facilitation and translation.

On Friday, 8.12.2017 reality struck. A tent that could accommodate three hundred people, was filled at 11 o'clock with 230 people – something not able to be predicted until the last minute.

The welcome by the organising group, the Headmaster, the Chamber of Commerce of Cali, IFOAM, Demeter-International and A.Gerber by video offered, through their personal and global characteristics, a coherent beginning. The keynote lectures from the value-added chain worked in addition to the greetings and as a preparation for the subsequent group work. The very personal contributions of representatives of the consumers, a large trading house, a processor and two very different producers, inspired the participants for the following work.

Rotating in groups of four people challenges on the one hand, and motives and visions on the other hand were shared using previously written questions with careful listening and speaking. This work developed a wide mutual acquaintance and in the coming together similarities were found. You have to imagine being in a tent at 30°C with rushing fans and an open front end that invites you to go in and out, 230 people from different regions, small farmers with 1 ha or large farmers, small traders and processors or large entrepreneurs and people from international institutions; in this atmosphere, in this constellation, an intensity of speaking, listening, encountering, even opening the heart, was indescribable. Physically invisible this unconditional opening became visible in the subsequent activity, the eurythmy, in which an enthusiasm and openness appeared. This day was rounded off by a farmer from the south with his personal vision for organic agriculture in Colombia. The conclusion is the visualisation of the personal challenges and questions on the one hand and the visions and motives on the other hand as summarised on all the written cards of the participants that were hung up together, arranged by topic.

On Saturday in-depth working groups took place covering 15 different topics, from which people could choose. The basis of the work in the groups was formed by the personal questions and opportunities of the participants on the topics after a keynote speech by the working group leader. Each group developed perspectives and solutions to common questions. The working groups turned into a marketplace of possibilities in the afternoon. Here all working groups presented their results and each participant had the opportunity to contribute. This was followed by a marketplace of initiatives. Inspired by the many possibilities the urge arose among the participants to become active. Lots of initiatives arose, which were named and written down on prepared cards. The conclusion on Saturday were two lectures on Biodynamic agriculture. Both lectures were characterised by a personal approach to topic. The first one painted connections, making the big picture of the cosmos down to personal activities, tangible. The second one made the vitality of Biodynamic agriculture in South America accessible.

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The short sequences of eurythmy eased the crowded day and showed how noticeably open and active the people were. In the evening Pacific folklore music was enjoyed and danced to.

On Sunday morning, with an active, shared review, the topics, questions and results of the last two days were reviewed. The next task was to get together in initiative groups. In spite of all predictions, the highest number was reached on Sunday with 250 participants. Many had already said goodbye on Saturday, but came back.

The following topics brought people together: the foundation of a Biodynamic Association, an initiative for the political representation of organic agriculture in Colombia, Biodynamic husbandry, organic education in Quindio, export, education and training in organic and Biodynamic agriculture, organic spice and medicinal plant cultivation and the theme of a national organic association (a national organic association exists, but is being challenged).

All initiatives have independently worked out their goals, concrete steps and needs for their tasks. These results ended up in a marketplace again.

Although every initiative is equivalent for us because it is made up of the people who live and work here in the country, we would like to report to the Biodynamic Community that the Biodynamic association named ASOCIACION DE AGRICULTURA BIODINAMICA DE COLOMBIA-Demeter was founded with 73 founding members at the congress.

Looking back at the whole process of preparation and implementation, an idea has become carried on more and more shoulders during the course of a year until every participant turned into a contributor during the congress. This became visible at the end of the thanksgiving, which culminated in the fact that everyone was standing at the front, because everyone was thanked. The intensity of the congress, the encounters and the feedback show how deeply moved people, who have returned home full of new questions, ideas and new contacts, are. A step into a common future took place; shaping the future is the next step of which we are already right in the middle. The challenge now is to support the initiatives, to benefit synergies and to make networking and cooperation possible, to help shape the Biodynamic Association into a living community with concrete tasks, goals and visions.

We would like to thank everyone for the help, the support, the participation!!!

Ingo, Samuel, Thomas and Reinhild

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The Preparation Box

The preparation box is a new online platform that deals with topics related to Biodynamic preparations, Demeter farming, Demeter horticulture and Demeter viticulture.

On www.praeparatekiste.de and on www.biodynamicpreparations.com as many questions as possible about Biodynamic preparations, their production and their application should be answered from now on.

Behind the preparation box stands a young team of motivated creators, thinkers and visionaries. Equipped with a lot of knowledge in Biodynamic agriculture, new thinking and a large network of experts of all shades and hues, it takes the courageous step of combining the classic Demeter world with the online world, making knowledge more widely available.

Most of us met at Eichwerder Demeter farm in the north of Germany and learned how Biodynamic agriculture works - particularly what a good preparation is like - directly from one of the pioneers of the German Demeter scene, Wedig von Bonin.

Wedig von Bonin was not only the founder of the preparation box, but also a close confidant of Maria Thun and was present from the beginning in the development of the famous Fladenpräparat of Maria Thun.

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The Fladenpräparat was also the first product that could be ordered online (with the permission of Maria Thun, herself).

2018 is an important year for the preparation box. In 1968, exactly 50 years ago, Wedig von Bonin converted his farm Eichwerder to Biodynamic farming and in 2008, exactly 10 years ago, the preparation box was founded as an online shop.

As there are more and more inquiries from all over the world, this year the international version of the preparation box under the domain www.biodynamicpreparations.com will be published in English.

Since the generation change in May 2017 there is also regular information, tips and tricks about Biodynamic practice on the free e-mail magazine "preparation letter". It is planned to offer it also in English and, depending on its success, also in other languages.

The aim of the preparation letter is to share more Biodynamic knowledge and to even offer online courses in different languages in the future.

Until then, however, the heart of the preparation box is still the online store for Biodynamic preparations and accessories. Here the preparation box is a popular contact point for all those who cannot make their own preparations or whose preparations may not have been successful.

In the course of the generation change the shop product range has been greatly expanded; in addition to the Biodynamic preparations themselves, there are now more and more accessories for self-production and application. Sheaths and raw materials for self-production make up a larger proportion of the online inventory.

It is also intended - initially in Germany - to create a range of different services to be offered in cooperation with other providers. This includes, for example, assistance with the application of the preparations via a spraying service, on-site preparation courses and making of preparations on behalf of others. Thus, the preparation box should become a central point of contact in which various Biodynamic offers from different service providers can be found.

In the future, this offer will also be available on the international platform www.biodynamicpreparations.com. Correspondingly, suppliers of Biodynamic services are welcome to get in touch with the creators of the preparation box. Exchange and cooperation are welcomed.

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