

Review of  
Ueli Hurter (Ed.). *Agriculture for the Future. Biodynamic Agriculture today*  
Dornach, 2014

Let me start this review with my disappointments:

English language, style and proofreading definitely deserve some additional work. Obviously those involved worked under time pressure, and even the proofreading feels left incomplete. Then, a few photos are way off in their colours. Digital programs for the manipulation of photos seem to offer their specific traps and pitfalls.

However, I was positively surprised by the range and quality of the articles. Here I focus on a few contributions that are of specific interest to me:

Regina Haller writes about “Biodynamic agriculture in tropical and subtropical regions”. At last here is someone who addresses the fact that there are huge differences in eco-systems and soil types, and that biodynamics is based on temperate climate conditions and eco-systems. Unfortunately also Regina does not elaborate on the fact that BD has not yet been “tropicalized”. For example in India, we have the eco-systems and the temperatures to grow all the herbs of the BD preparations, yet all BD practitioners depend on supply of BD herbs or preps from cooler regions and higher altitudes. The tropical farmer in the lowlands is not yet empowered to run a biodynamic farm based on self-made preps.

Pierre Masson gives a brilliant overview on practices in BD preps, offering great insight into this field of active and lively research.

Georg Meissner writes on biodynamic wine growing and points out, amongst other things, that growing and tasting of wine gives great respect to regional characteristics and to the qualities of location-specific soils and conditions; this is an aspect that deserves very much to be applied to other crops.

Jean-Michel Florin points out that biodynamic agriculture has a role to play in landscaping. This is an aspect that is easily neglected by the farmer, dairy farmer, or horticulturist who focuses exclusively on issues of productivity and quality of produce.

Peter Lange’s summary of the educational implications of farming and gardening at various ages is immensely humane and heartwarming; this contribution comes from someone with rich experience in working with children and school students.

Änder Schank’s article on new social and economic structures summarizes the attempts for finding new modes of economic collaboration respectively brotherhood. He stresses the need for action and for courageously experimenting with various models that are alternatives to the mainstream of competition.

There is no need to continue commenting on each and every article, most of which I greatly enjoyed and appreciated. I came to the conclusion that this lovely little book could be a wonderful introduction to the lively and dynamic world of biodynamic farming – if it was not for the deficient proofreading and editing.

Lastly, let me point out that there is yet another aspect that has not been addressed with this publication. While everybody seems to agree that the foundations of biodynamic farming are the occult insights of Rudolf Steiner resp. of anthroposophy, no perceivable attempt is being made to bridge our modern state of mind with spiritual experience; or to link those planetary spirits that are claimed to be important for quality farming with our own “astrality”; or to recognize the anthroposophical and biodynamic search for some deeper truths as a much

wider and global phenomenon, in which biodynamic practitioners and researchers should happily feel at home.

Auroville, 25.05.2014

Lucas Dengel

Secretary / Biodynamic Association of India