

2013 Biodynamics Workshop
Sunday, August 24th through Monday, August 26th, 2013

Session Descriptions

“Foundations of Health”

Making Farm Sausage. (Henning and Elizabeth). As the saying goes, “The proof of the pudding is in the eating.” In this first session of the workshop, we will make sausage from farm-grown pork and wild rabbit in order to demonstrate how good biodynamic food is and how easy it is to make it. The sausage will be grilled for lunch and served with potato and green salads, sourdough rye bread, butter, cheese, fruit juices and whey smoothies, with all the food for the entire workshop produced biodynamically on the farm and prepared with time-honored methods to bring out the best in flavor, digestibility, and nutritional quality.

Steiner’s Concept of Nutrition in light of Weston Price’s Research (Roy). The biodynamic farm integrating plant and animal production offers unique opportunities to implement a complete and healthy diet: high-quality animal proteins from grass-fed beef, lamb, pork and poultry raised on non-GMO grains, vegetables, fruits, and dairy products; saturated animal fats, organ meats, bone broths, and eggs, all of them rich in vitamins and minerals; fresh and fermented dairy products, as well as fermented grains, nuts, legumes, fruits and vegetables. The discussion will connect Rudolf Steiner’s concept of plant, animal and human nutrition (ref. *Agriculture Course, Lecture IV*), with diets in traditional cultures (ref. the research of Dr. Weston Price and his students, notably Sally Fallon, *Nourishing Traditions*). The session will address how people who do not produce their own food can still secure a wholesome diet to protect themselves against obesity, diabetes, autism, cardiovascular disease, cystic fibrosis, allergies, food intolerances, and other consequences of the industrialized food system.

Biodynamic and Lacto-Fermented Foods: Preparation and Preservation. (Elizabeth). Traditional cultures preserved food by processes of lacto-fermentation. Biodynamic food preparation, like biodynamic farming, enhances microbial action and has benefits far beyond food preservation. Lactobacilli in fermented vegetables enhance flavor and digestibility, increase vitamin and protein content, promote healthy flora in the intestine, and provide antibiotic and anti-carcinogenic enzymes. This session will demonstrate the making of butter, whey, yogurt and cheese, fermenting cabbage into sauerkraut, and ferment bread dough to neutralize gluten in the grain (the bread will be baked in an outdoor, wood-fired oven).

“Goethean Science and Biodynamic Farming Practice”

Goethe’s Theory of Color on the Farm. (Henning). Ever wondered why the sky is red in the morning and evening but blue at noon? Goethe’s color theory based on phenomenological observation explains it better than any other. Much of biodynamic farming is rooted in the scientific approach exemplified in Goethe’s practice of observation. This lecture/demonstration will give workshop participants an opportunity to experience the phenomena of light and color directly instead of reading about it in textbooks.

The Biodynamic Farm as Bee Sanctuary. Although pollinators continue to be plentiful on Lopez Island, we consider it important to provide sanctuary to domestic honey bees on the farm in order to call attention to the worldwide collapse of bee populations. S&S Homestead Farm cultivates honeybees using non-chemical, biodynamic methods and housing the bees in a top bar hive. This workshop will explore the reasons for the demise of pollinators and what farmers and homesteaders can do about it in their own gardens, fields, and forests.

Rhythms in the Life of the Farm Organism. (Barry). We hear much of Maria Thun’s zodiacal moon signs, but there are more subtle and complicated moon rhythms and there is a wealth of chronobiological research to consider. Not only plants, but microbes may also respond to cosmic rhythms. We will explore the wider range of rhythmical phenomena in farm life as well.

“Harvesting Animals and Making Biodynamic Preparations”

On-farm slaughter of beef and lamb (Island Grown Farmers’ Coop butcher and crew; Joseph Freeman). Motivated by the desire for humane treatment of farm animals, S&S Homestead Farm spearheaded the development of the first federally inspected mobile slaughter unit in the U.S. Animals that are butchered where they were born and raised are healthier, and the meat superior in nutritional quality, tenderness and flavor, than animals that are factory-farmed and processed. The solemnity of the slaughter and butchering process exemplifies the love and respect with which these animals have been treated all their lives. Joseph Freeman will lead us in understanding the process animals go through in death and in rejoining the animal group soul.

Composting of slaughter offal (Barry & Henning). Slaughter offal on an industrial scale can pose pollution and health hazards. On the small-scale, biodynamic farm, properly processed offal provides an important and health-promoting resource for fertility.

Harvesting animal sheaths (Barry & Henning). The horns, hooves, mesentery, intestines and skull of a lactating cow are some of the vessels which Rudolf Steiner indicated for fermenting biodynamic preparations. We will demonstrate how to identify and harvest these animal parts and process them for making the preparations.

Soil fertility, composting, cover crops, BD preparations (Henning). This presentation will demonstrate the practices by which a biodynamic farm achieves and maintains soil fertility without purchased inputs. The role of humus in supporting soil microorganic life, water and air retention capacity will be examined, and how humus can be built using sheet and other forms of composting and green manures, and how to stimulate soil metabolism through the application of BD preparations to composts and directly to the soil.

Making and Applying Biodynamic Preparations on the Farm (Barry & Henning). Biodynamic preparations help to maintain healthy, and to restore abused, soil by creating conditions under which plants and soil are sensitized to absorb the incoming energies from the cosmos, and by facilitating the metabolism of the soil and compost. Participants will gain hands-on experience in making the Koepf/Goldstein Compound Preparation, an improved “barrel compost” with nettles in the mixture. We will make the various preparations and the equisetum spray. We will also demonstrate a farm-built spraying rig.

Presenters:

Jacqueline Freeman, biodynamic farmer and internationally known bee steward. Her farm, Friendly Haven Rise, is a honeybee and pollinator sanctuary in Battle Ground, WA.

Joseph Freeman, founder of the Equine Natural Movement School where he teaches a career program in equine Structural Integration and Healing. He is an animal communicator and biodynamic farmer.

Barry Lia, PhD, Educator, S&S Center for Sustainable Agriculture; Regional Coordinator for the North American Biodynamic Apprenticeship Program and Washington Biodynamic Group; Biodynamic Research Working Group member; Lia BD Consulting; Adjunct Faculty, Bastyr University, Holistic Landscape Design Certificate Program.

Roy Ozanne, MD, HMD practices homeopathy on Whidbey Island. In 2007, he started Whole Health Programs on S&S Homestead Farm, and began participating in health-related workshops at S&S Center for Sustainable Agriculture.

Emma Jane Richardson, Intern, S&S Homestead Farm.

Elizabeth Simpson, PhD, S&S Homestead Farm; Co-Director, S&S Center for Sustainable Agriculture; Ecological Food Production Educator, Lopez Island School District.

Henning Sehmsdorf, PhD, S&S Homestead Farm, Director, S&S Center for Sustainable Agriculture; Adjunct Faculty, WSU Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources, and WWU Huxley College for the Environment. Member, Committee on Sustainable Agriculture, National Academies of Science, 2009-11.