

# Foundation Course Program for Biodynamic Agriculture

## LEVEL ONE

### *Course Registration*

### *Introductory Lecture*

#### Module One Session One:

#### **A New Perspective for Agriculture**

We explore Man's relationship to Nature through history and the realm of agriculture. We gain an understanding of how our current agricultural practices based on chemical farming were developed from a materialistic viewpoint of the world, where the whole is divided into its separate parts.

We explore the need for a new outlook in agriculture, one which encompasses the totality of Nature and identify how Biodynamic agriculture can solve many of the problems associated with conventional agriculture through a science that is in harmony with the very essence of Nature.

*“Let us then work together in this way; it will be a genuinely conservative, yet at the same time a most radical and progressive beginning. And it will always be a beautiful memory to me if this course becomes the starting point for carrying some of the real and genuine ‘peasant wit’ into the methods of science.”*

Rudolf Steiner ‘Agriculture’

# **Day One**

## **Module Two Session Two: 9.00am - 10.30am**

### **The Role of the Biodynamic Preparations**

We look at why the biodynamic preparations were developed and their role in revitalising the earth, plants, animals and ultimately man himself.

We learn how they work in a practical way to create the right conditions for the forces of the spiritual realm to gain access and explore what Steiner referred to as the Etheric, Astral and Ego forces of Nature.

## **BREAK 10.30am - 11.00am**

## **Module Three Session Three: 11.00am - 12.30pm**

### **Two Realms of Existence**

To be able to work with biodynamic agricultural practices we must begin to open our minds to the invisible realm of forces in Nature and to understand that what we see manifested in the physical world is the result of the interplay of these forces.

We gain an understanding of what Steiner referred to as the Terrestrial and Cosmic realms and how the influences of these two realms are manifested on Earth.

We must acknowledge that growth does not depend on chemical and mechanical inputs, but on the balance of energy relationships.

## **LUNCH 12.30pm - 1.30pm**

## **Module Four Session Four: 1.30pm - 3.00pm**

### **Biodynamic Preparation 500 (Horn Manure)**

We look at the role of BD500 in agriculture and learn of the many benefits that can be achieved by using this preparation.

We look at how BD500 is made and the scientific principles behind this process.

## **BREAK 3.00pm - 3.30pm**

## **Module Five Session Five: 3.30pm - 5.00pm**

### **Preparations for Spreading BD500**

We gain an understanding of the physical preparations that are required before the spreading of BD500.

We explore the benefits derived from the application of this preparation.

### **The Art of Vortex Stirring**

Each participant will learn the art of vortex stirring used when we apply the biodynamic preparations. We will look at the different stirring methods used when applying BD500 and will learn the process of rhythmic vortex stirring.

## **Day Two**

### **Module Six Session Six: 9.00am - 10.30am**

#### **Using the Biodynamic Planting Calendar**

We look at how in biodynamic agriculture through careful observations and on-going scientific trials we are able to gain detailed information of how the heavenly bodies influence all life on earth. We learn how the moon influences different aspects of plant growth and learn to read the signs and symbols on the biodynamic planting calendar.

We learn how to use these influences to increase the vitality and strength of our plants.

### **BREAK 10.30am - 11.00am**

### **Module Seven Session Seven: 11.00am - 12.30pm**

#### **Rhythms in Nature**

We learn about the rhythms in Nature and how they affect plant life. We learn to work with these rhythms in Nature; daily rhythms, lunar cycles and the daily and seasonal cycles of Nature when working with plants and applying the biodynamic preparations.

### **LUNCH 12.30pm - 1.30pm**

### **Module Eight Session Eight: 1.30pm - 3.00pm**

#### **Using Preparation BD508 (*Equisetum arvense*)**

We explore what influences lead to the development of fungal diseases in plants and how these can be effectively controlled.

We learn to make the biodynamic preparation 508 and how to use this preparation to mediate excess moon forces which can lead to the development of fungal diseases in plants.

We learn about the apogee and perigee moon cycle and its relationship to the watery element in the earth.

### **BREAK 3.00pm - 3.30pm**

### **Module Nine Session Nine: 3.30pm - 4.45pm**

#### **Review of Previous Session – Rhythms in Nature**

We will review rhythms in Nature so the information is clearly understood.

#### **Preparations for Spreading BD508**

We learn about the equipment needed for the spraying of BD508.

### **Session Ten: 4.45pm - 5.00pm**

#### **Course Summary**

An overview and revision of the main concepts.

#### **Course Evaluation** - Questionnaire.

# **LEVEL TWO**

## **Day One**

### **Module Ten Session One 9.00am - 10.30am**

#### **Within the Living Realm**

We explore what Rudolf Steiner referred to as 'within the living realm' and how this principle should be a guide for all our agricultural practices. We learn the vital importance of the correct feeding of the plant through elements that are colloiddally bonded to an organic molecule.

### **BREAK 10.30am - 11.00am**

### **Module Eleven Session Two 11.00am - 12.30pm**

#### **Biodynamic Preparations BD502 to BD507**

We learn the role the biodynamic compost preparations have in bringing order and balance to the breakdown process. We explore how the biodynamic farmer and gardener can provide anchoring places for the workings of the planets with these preparations and bring about an organisation in the composting process that takes it to a more dynamic form of life.

### **LUNCH 12.30pm - 1.30pm**

### **Module Twelve Session Three 1.30pm - 3.00pm**

#### **Biodynamic – A Total Farming System**

We learn of the many components of biodynamic farming that work together to create a healthy and sustainable farming or gardening system. We explore how by using biodynamic principles we can overcome many of the problems we currently see in agriculture today. We explore how the health of plants and their resistance to disease and pest attacks is directly related to the health of the system and its biological balance.

### **BREAK 3.00pm - 3.30pm**

### **Module Thirteen Session Four 3.30pm - 5.00pm**

#### **Practical – Making Manure Concentrate**

We learn how to make manure concentrate which is a useful medium for applying the beneficial effects of the compost preparations. We learn how this manure concentrate stimulates soil metabolism, enhances growth and increases crop yields.

## **Day Two**

### **Module Fourteen Session Five 9.00am - 10.30am**

#### **Balancing the Forces – The Role of BD501 (Horn Silica)**

We learn the function of BD501 and how to apply this powerful preparation to produce crops of the highest nutritional value, with the best flavour, strongest seeds and enhanced keeping qualities. We learn how the preparations BD500 and BD501 balance the two realms of existence, the earthly and the cosmic.

### **BREAK 10.30am - 11.00am**

### **Module Fifteen Session Six 11.00am - 12.30pm**

#### **The Importance of Humus**

We learn of the key role the formation of humus plays in the sustainability of the farm or garden. We explore the importance of humus in the soil and how it acts as a chelating agent to make minerals available for plant growth. We learn of the biodynamic practices that create and maintain soil humus levels.

### **LUNCH 12.30pm - 1.30pm**

### **Module Sixteen Session Seven 1.30pm - 3.00pm**

#### **The Element of Water**

We learn the vital role water has in the formation of all Nature. We explore water as having life energy and how its capacity to support life is determined by its quality. We learn to recognise the stresses on our water and explore how we can work with our water to ensure it is always of the highest quality. We explore the uses of flowforms and their application in a biodynamic system.

### **BREAK 3.00pm - 3.30pm**

### **Module Seventeen Session Eight 3.30pm - 4.30pm**

#### **Taking and Reading Soil Profiles**

We learn how proper soil structure is as important to the success of farming or gardening as the chemistry and humus production. We learn to read a soil profile to determine soil types and understand what soils in a biodynamic system should look like.

### **Session Nine 4.30pm - 5.00pm**

#### **Course Summary and Evaluation**

An overview and revision of the main concepts.

#### **Course Evaluation - Questionnaire.**

# **LEVEL THREE**

## **Day One**

### **Module Eighteen Session One 9.00am - 10.30am**

#### **The Vortex – Connecting with the Universal Laws of Life**

We explore the importance of creating the vortex and chaos movements used when preparing the biodynamic preparations. We explore how through this movement we are connecting with the universal laws governing all life on Earth and are able to make the forces of the cosmos effective in the earthly realm.

### **BREAK 10.30am - 11.00am**

### **Module Nineteen Session Two 11.00am - 12.30pm**

#### **The Art and Science of Compost Making**

We learn the art and science of biodynamic compost making to ensure the conditions for proper composting are met which lead to the production of stabilised humus. We learn to balance the four elements in the composting process to create an environment in which the even decomposition of materials takes place with the minimal losses of nutrients.

### **LUNCH 12.30pm - 1.30pm**

### **Module Twenty Sessions Three and Four 1.30pm - 5.00pm**

#### **Practical – Building a Biodynamic Compost**

We learn the requirements for the building of a biodynamic compost heap, the correct materials, site and physical requirements.

We build a biodynamic compost and work through all that was covered in the previous session through this practical activity.

## **Day Two**

### **Module Twenty-One Session Five 9.00am - 10.30am**

#### **Formative Forces in Nature**

We explore the need to develop a conscious awareness of the dynamic interplay of forces in Nature. We explore the effects of the formative forces on the forms and appearances in the physical world and learn how the biodynamic preparations can be used to enhance the etheric streams passing through the soil.

### **BREAK 10.30am - 11.00am**

### **Module Twenty-Two Session Six 11.00am - 12.30pm**

#### **Biodynamic Methods of Pest and Weed Control**

We learn to use the biodynamic technique called 'peppering' to clear an area of a certain weed, animal or insect that is not in balance with the environment. We learn how these 'peppers' are made and applied to prevent uncontrolled reproduction.

### **LUNCH 12.30pm - 1.30pm**

### **Module Twenty-Three Session Seven 1.30pm - 3.00pm**

#### **The Farm as a Self-Contained Unit**

#### **Green Manuring and Crop Rotations**

We learn to develop the farm's own resources to the point where production, quality and quantity will sustain a balanced farming system. We then explore the importance of green manuring to increase soil organic matter levels and crop rotation to avoid disease buildup.

### **BREAK 3.00pm - 3.30pm**

### **Module Twenty-Four Session Eight 3.30pm - 4.15pm**

#### **Practical – Tree Pasting**

We learn how to make and apply biodynamic tree paste, which is used for its beneficial influence upon the health of the tree, its cambium, sap circulation and therefore its proper nutrition. We learn how this paste is used to protect the tree and heal lesions.

### **Session Nine 4.30pm - 5.00pm**

#### **Course Summary and Evaluation**

An overview and revision of the main concepts.

#### **Course Evaluation** - Questionnaire.

Where to from here? Establishing local groups and support networks.