

*About Biodynamics*

Biodynamics is the oldest form of organic farming and gardening, and in Europe it is still the dominant mode of organic food production. Biodynamics goes beyond organic, however, by involving a metaphysical element. The US Department of Agriculture today defines organics mostly by requiring that substances used to fertilize crops or fight plant disease must be of organic rather than synthetic origin. Biodynamics, on the other hand, considers soil substances agents of vital life force comparable to what in Polynesian tradition is known as mana, in India as prana, and in China as chi. This life force is both physical and metaphysical, material and spiritual, which to the founder of the Biodynamic movement, Austrian scientist and philosopher, Rudolf Steiner, meant that the farmer and gardener produce not only food and fiber but take on responsibilities as stewards of the earth as a whole, and for the bodily and spiritual health of plants, animals and humans. It follows that biodynamic farming does not consider the soil and everything that grows in it exploitable resources, but rather living organisms whose life force must be nourished and strengthened. Biodynamic management involves intuitive and meditative practices as much as scientific observation and practical applications. In contrast to conventionally produced and processed foods, biodynamically grown foods are rich in vital energy and not just in chemically identifiable nutrients. The ideal unit in which to practice Biodynamics is a garden or small farm where plant and animal organisms above and below ground support each other as in a self-renewing whole. Such a unit most likely produces more than it needs to sustain itself and so is able to support the local community and beyond. Personally, for me this type of farming is a form of yoga or worship.