

Biodynamic Agriculture

Bringing Spirit into Matter

Biodynamic (BD) agriculture is the practical application of the spiritual thinking introduced by Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925). His lifelong curiosity about human nature and our purpose on Earth led him to develop Anthroposophy—meaning "human wisdom." Steiner defined it as "a path of knowledge to lead the spiritual in the human being to the spiritual in the universe." This spiritual science is applied globally by teachers, doctors, artists, farmers, and many other professionals.

Steiner's Teachings as Applied to Agriculture

Biodynamic agriculture is based on three underlying principles:

1. Cosmic/spiritual forces in the universe influence life on Earth.
2. Each farm strives to be self-contained, functioning in wholeness.
3. The farmer is central to achieving equilibrium on the farm.

Cosmic Influences

The connection between cosmic forces and Earth is often overlooked. While we notice the Sun's seasonal movements, we rarely observe the Moon's. We generally pay much less attention to how the Moon does this same ascending and descending pattern every 27.3 days and more visibly, the Lunar cycle of 29.5 days — New Moon to next New Moon. Biodynamic farmers use Solar and Lunar patterns in planting, pruning, and harvesting, following an ancient practice refined by modern agricultural researchers.

Farm as a Living Organism

Steiner proposed that each farm be as self-sufficient as possible, with the land feeding the animals, and the animals providing manure to enrich the soil. He likened the farm to a living organism, with its own digestive system (compost), sensory system (watchdogs that ward off intruders), bones and skin (fence posts and cairns), and heart (the kitchen where everyone gathers).

Timing Is Everything

The planting calendar helps farmers track key solar, lunar, and stellar events, offering guidance from past practices. As planets move through the Zodiac, they channel energetic impulses from constellations. This knowledge allows farmers to work harmoniously with stars, planets, plants, and the land.

Preparations

Science teaches about our planetary environment, but quantum physics suggests layers beyond what we can perceive. Rudolf Steiner's biodynamic preparations help bridge these worlds, enhancing crop vitality.

Composting

As trace nutrients in the soil deplete due to overproduction, awareness of composting is growing as an essential practice for sustainability. Unlike conventional composting, biodynamic composting involves adding special fermented preparations to the compost pile to transform raw ingredients. These enriched components accelerate decomposition and create an environment for fungi, bacteria, and other microbes, aiming to supply nutrients and enliven the soil with energized forces.

Interconnectedness

The essential theme of biodynamic agriculture is interconnectedness—between sky and earth, plant and soil, and humans and their surroundings. Our role as both observers and participants is crucial; our inner nature—emotions and intentions—affects the outer world, including environmental conditions, pests, and animal health. This sense of oneness extends beyond farm boundaries into the communities they nourish, fostering a living dynamic that nurtures life.

Is Biodynamic Agriculture the Solution?

By Tilo Crass, Director of Biodynamic Farming Education, Rudolf Steiner College Canada

When the development of the human consciousness depends on the inner quality of the food we eat, it urgently needs more people who are able to start, run, and operate fully diversified biodynamic farms that are able to provide life-giving food.

But what skills are necessary for this? What perceptions and ideas are sustainable in the long run?

Every farm is unique. Soil, climate, landscape, and animals play a role—but the most decisive factor is always the farmer. Does the farmer possess true knowledge of his craft? Entrepreneurial competence? A living relationship to the animals, the soil, the people?

Today, Canada's 62 million hectares of farmland are largely specialized, chemically sustained, and demand massive financial inputs through subsidies. Farmers often serve as mere executors of an externally imposed intelligence. The ecological, social, and nutritional consequences are devastating.

If agriculture is to serve life again, we need farmers who combine practical know-how with an awareness of the central responsibility agriculture bears for the soil, the plant realm, the animal kingdom, and human health.

The New Diploma Program

To meet this need, Rudolf Steiner College Canada is launching the first 2-year Online Diploma in Biodynamic Agriculture in North America. This pioneering program is designed for organic farmers, young people aspiring to enter agriculture, those seeking professional development, and anyone wishing to deepen their understanding of biodynamic agriculture.

The course combines 200 hours of live online instruction with four on-farm practicums at biodynamic farms. Graduates will receive a government-accredited diploma, a milestone in the professional recognition of biodynamic farming. 15 expert faculty teachers from diverse fields will bring their deep expertise to guide

students through specialized subject areas, ensuring both breadth and depth of knowledge.

Year One: The Farm as an Organism and Individuality

Students explore the philosophical and historical foundations of agriculture, the polarity between industrial production and agriculture, and the farm as a self-contained individuality. Practical modules cover soil, geology, cosmic influences, plant development, crop rotations, animal husbandry, veterinary homeopathy, the social dimension of farming.

Year Two: The Three Pillars of Soil Fertility

The focus shifts to advanced practice: soil cultivation through the seasons, sustainable crop rotations, on-farm seed production, and biodynamic preparations. Students study composting, manure management, cover crops, weed control, and the formative forces behind fertility. The year concludes with business, marketing, and certification topics, as well as reflections on the farmer as an artist and mediator of the farm individuality.

Looking Ahead

Only by understanding and working with the life-shaping forces behind the physical can farmers contribute to an evolutionary development of agriculture—one that delivers the quality of food humanity urgently needs today. This diploma program offers not just training, but a path toward renewal: the cultivation of farmers who can carry the torch of biodynamics into the future.

This program is offered in collaboration with Demeter Canada.

For more information and to apply, please visit: rscc.ca/biodynamic-diploma



Tilo Crass is a seasoned biodynamic farmer, consultant, and founder of Bear River Farms with over 25 years of hands-on experience. A recognized Biodynamic Advisor, he brings vision and grounded expertise to

the Biodynamic Diploma program.