



demeter

Conversion

How to Convert to the
Biodynamic Method
of Agriculture

demeter – Biodynamic since 1924

What Demeter farms and market gardens fulfil

For centuries a caring attitude to the earth has been a farming tradition. Today it is more important than ever to shape the landscape in all regions of the earth. Biodynamic farming principles are scientifically proven to be the best method for preserving soil fertility. This in turn lays the basis for the production of high quality food.

This oldest ecological agri-culture is the most **sustainable form of management for all climate zones**. With the strong Demeter brand, consumers connect the most consistent ecological production with processing craftsmanship to the highest standard. They trust the trademark and thus offer good sales opportunities.



THE FARM AS AN ORGANISM

Already in 1924 Rudolf Steiner developed the idea that a farm can be seen as an organism in its own right, and can be organised appropriately – each locality having its own unique requirements. Soils, soil life, and the plant and animal world all depend intimately on each other. Human activity shapes them within the framework of cosmic / earthly interplay.

Conversion applies to the entire farm - including all crops, livestock and the areas for self-sufficiency. Alternatively, e.g. for smallholder groups, a clear separation of the Biodynamically managed project from the organically managed part with clearly defined responsibilities is strictly enforced.

The basis for successful cultivation is a diverse crop rotation with a high proportion of legumes (e.g. using perennial clovers) as well as the establishment of a composting system guided by the Biodynamic preparations. The use of seed and seedlings preferably in Demeter quality, but if unavailable at least organic, is necessary.

Conventional seed may only be used with prior written permission from Demeter-International. Treated seed is prohibited.

The authorised inputs listed in Annexes 4 and 5 of the Demeter-International standards must be complied with. No copper is permitted in Demeter vegetable production. For permanent crops, an average of 3 kg of copper per hectare per year is allowed.

The basic prerequisite for Demeter certification is a valid organic certificate and an annual Demeter inspection of the entire farm at harvesting time. This includes processing as well.

SPECIES APPROPRIATE ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

Demeter farmers respect the innate being of the animal. They enable the creatures entrusted to them to express their instinctive behaviour. Pasture or access to the open air, species specific husbandry,



appropriate feeding with fodder from the farm and natural reproduction are integral parts of the animal husbandry on Biodynamic farms.

Demeter cattle keep their horns, because they are an important sense and communication organ – husbandry conditions may have to be adapted accordingly.

In order to maintain and develop soil fertility on arable farms, as well as on horticultural farms bigger than 40 hectares, the keeping of ruminants, e.g. cattle, sheep, goats, horses is obligatory. The minimal stocking rate is 0,2 LU/ha. Exemptions are possible for horticultural farms with less than 40 hectares, orchards, vineyards and enterprises with specialised crops.

BIODYNAMIC PREPARATIONS

Characteristic to Biodynamic farming and accordingly anchored in the Demeter standards is the use of special preparations. By means of these Biodynamic preparations, the life processes in a farm enterprise are specifically promoted, quality of the plants at maturation is increased and through this the highest food quality for humans and animals is achieved.

Medicinal plants, such as yarrow, dandelion, chamomile, nettle, oak bark and valerian, which are processed according to defined procedures, ensure that valuable compost is produced from animal manure. Together with the spray preparations from cow dung and finely ground quartz, soil fertility can demonstrably be considerably increased. This is essential especially in view of climate change, because large amounts of carbon dioxide are bound in humus, which counteracts the greenhouse effect.

The Biodynamic preparations are generally produced on the farms themselves, and are used in fine doses, because their effects do not depend on the quantity used, but rather on the basis of their etheric information – comparable to the principles of classical homeopathy. They make plants more sensitive to cosmic rhythms and thus promote the interaction between soil and plant under the influence of the stars. They have a balancing effect on plant growth and promote the ripening processes. At least once a year, the Biodynamic preparations ‘Horn Manure’ and Horn Silica’ are to be applied to all fields of the farm completely and appropriate to the growth stage of the plants. All organic fertilisers such as manure and compost must be treated with the Biodynamic compost preparations.

On all commercial areas, either prepared fertiliser or, alternatively, a manure product prepared with the compost preparations is to be spread.

PROCESSING

The Demeter processing standards regulate the processing methods for each product group. For example, the homogenisation of milk or the use of nitrite salt curing in meat and sausage production is prohibited. Instead of so-called “natural aromas”, real plant extracts are used. The inner quality can be represented with the help of “picture forming” methods of analysis and differences to other ecological and conventional production methods demonstrated.

The most important motivation for conversion lies within you

The success of the conversion to Demeter is determined not only by the interest in and knowledge about the Biodynamic method, but importantly an optimal organisation of the work, sound and competent Biodynamic advice and above all the people who live on the farm. The farmer is also “converted”. He learns not only to think in terms of cause and effect but to create an holistic farm organism.

HOW YOU START ...

Contact Demeter-International by telephone or email. Here you will find information on conversion, Biodynamic consultants, inspection bodies, the Demeter standards and the conversion questionnaires. We will be pleased to provide you with all essential and helpful contacts.

The following questions can help you make a good decision:

- Are you interested in an holistic understanding of nature that goes beyond purely scientific knowledge?
- Is only organic farming good enough for you?
- Do you want to produce food full of vitality and manage a sustainable and holistic agriculture with fertile soils, vital animals and plants?
- Are your employees and family members also interested in Biodynamic agriculture, convinced by Demeter and able to offer you support, or will they be sceptical?
- Are you willing to embrace new and unconventional paths? This may include, for example, the fact that you will work in future with horned cattle.
- Do you appreciate debate about new ideas, are able to be inspired and make up your own mind. Are you looking for personal development?

THE CONVERSION QUESTIONNAIRE

You return the completed conversion questionnaire. This gives us an initial overview of your business. After an evaluation, we give you feedback on the prerequisites for Demeter certification, give you information about changes needed and recommend Biodynamic consultants.

YOU DECIDE

Were you able to clarify your questions about conversion, where you want to go with your farm, the Demeter inspection body, Biodynamic advice and marketing? In addition to the costs for the Biodynamic consultation and the effort needed for Biodynamic preparation work, you will add in expenses related to the obligatory organic inspection as well as to the annual Demeter inspection and certification. You will take into account the necessary investments in animal husbandry, for instance improvements to stabling. You are aware of revenue related license fees that are calculated after successful Demeter certification and marketing of Demeter products using the trademark. Then you can make your decision on a sound basis.

YOU START CONVERSION

For effective conversion planning, cooperation with an internationally experienced Biodynamically competent consultant is essential. It makes you aware of the production and application of the Biodynamic preparations on your farm. Everyone interested in converting needs to develop a conversion plan with a Biodynamic consultant which defines the most important short and long term goals on the way to Demeter certification. This plan is used as a timetable for the conversion and is submitted to Demeter-International for approval. Demeter-International will conclude a conversion contract with your enterprise. The agreement governs further cooperation but does not yet authorise the use of the Demeter trademark logo.

DEMETER INSPECTION

You then sign a binding audit agreement with an inspection body approved for Demeter inspections. After preparing the farm well according to the Demeter standards, it can be registered for the first Demeter inspection. A Demeter inspector checks on-site compliance with the

Demeter production and processing standards. The Demeter inspection documents are passed on to the International Certification Office of Demeter-International for evaluation.

CONTRACT WITH DEMETER-INTERNATIONAL

After successful evaluation of the Demeter inspection documents, you will be issued with a certificate defining the Demeter status. It usually takes three years to achieve Demeter certification. Certification as “In conversion to Demeter” can be attained after farming the whole enterprise Biodynamically for at least 12 months. If it can be proven that previous farming methods were organic or extensive, the time to full certification can be shortened.

You also sign a trademark use agreement with Demeter-International. It regulates the use of the “Demeter” and “Biodynamic” brand. You can decide whether you want to have your company listed in the International Demeter product database to facilitate contact with customers and other interested people. A quarterly license fee is calculated from the Demeter sales. With this contribution, the contracted Demeter partners from production, processing and trade support diverse association tasks: public relations, research, trademark protection, quality assurance and policy development, the establishment of new Biodynamic organisations worldwide and also political lobbying.

PROCESSING

The quality of the Demeter production should be reflected in processed products. The Demeter processing standards include processing methods and additives that can be used. Clear separation and traceability of different qualities is imperative for production, transport, processing, storage and export.

MARKETING

Please note the necessary conversion times. The current recognition status can be found in the certificate. Check the marketing pathways of your future Demeter products in good time and get in contact with Demeter processors or Demeter-International. The raw materials coordinator will be pleased to assist you in the procurement of Demeter raw materials.

All processors and traders of Demeter goods have contracts with a Demeter certifier. Packaging and labels must be submitted to Demeter-International for approval before printing.

*This is the correct
usage of the
Demeter trademark*



- the Demeter logo must be clearly visible on the front label
- it is to be placed in the upper third of the etiquette or the packaging, preferably in the centre of the upper edge
- the colour and proportions are defined (usually orange and green)



A vibrant community

Circa 6,000 producers around the world work on more than 200,000 hectares of certified Demeter land and there are over 900 processors and many traders in the network as well.

Demeter-International – a worldwide network

Farmers, gardeners, winemakers and beekeepers actively fashion the soil and landscape for plants and animals. Their goal is to produce healthy food – this has been the case for Biodynamicists since 1924. At that time, attentive farmers increasingly noticed degenerative phenomena in the reproduction of cereals and other crops. They approached Rudolf Steiner, the founder of Anthroposophy. Through his subsequent lectures on practical farming, he initiated the Biodynamic method of agriculture. Through his “agricultural course”, which has been translated into many languages, he became the pioneer of organic farming worldwide. The people on Demeter farms work practically with these ideas and continue to develop the method further. Not all are anthroposophists – but a lot of them are curious and open, wanting to work differently with greater effect.

Consumers place the utmost trust in the work of these committed people – Demeter products are for most people a guarantee of the highest quality, a treat, but produced with responsibility.

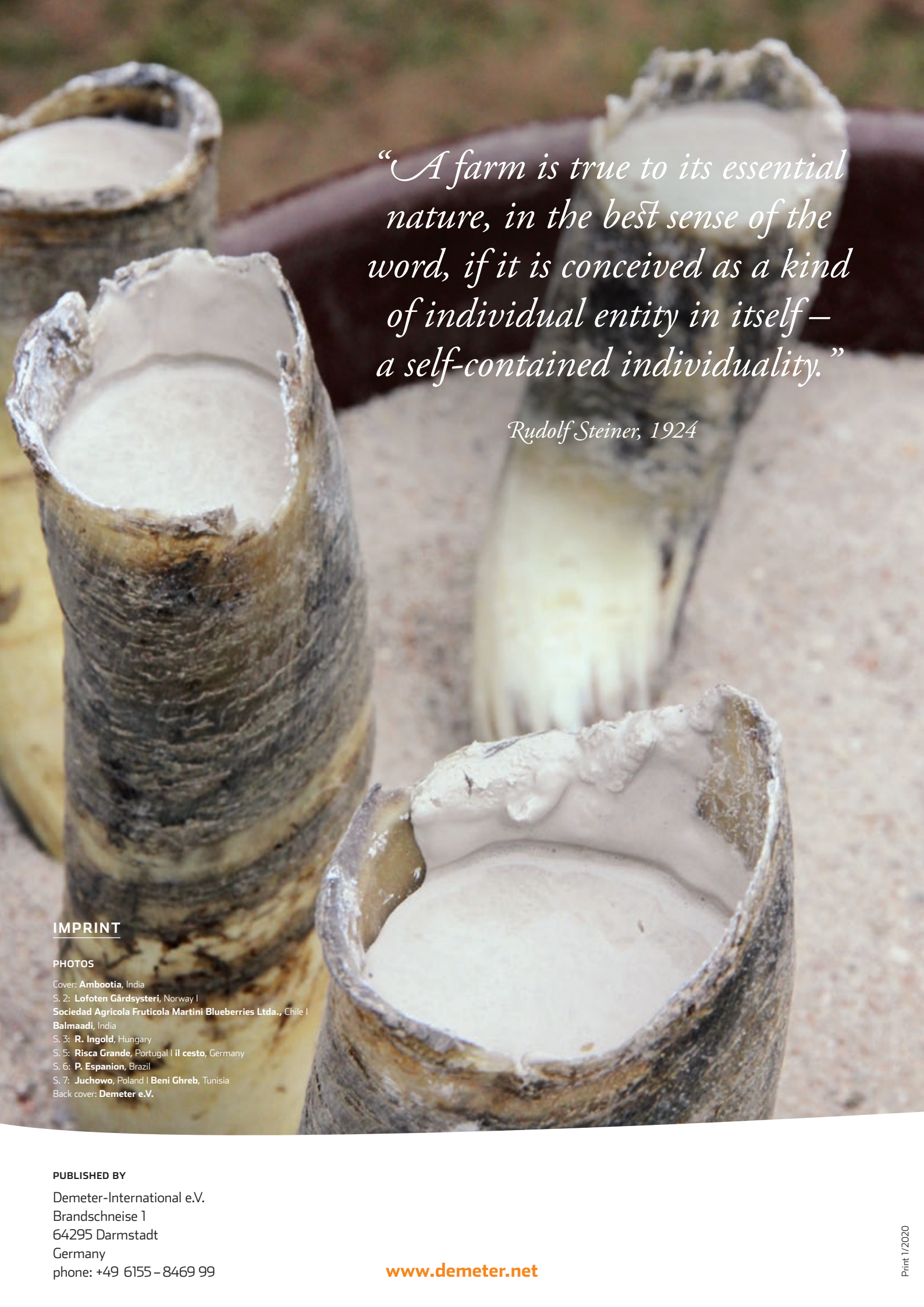
Demeter is the only ecological association that has established a network of individual certification organisations around the world. In 1997, Demeter-International was founded to facilitate closer cooperation in the legal, economic and spiritual fields. At the moment Demeter-International has 19 members and additional guest-members worldwide.

Co-operation on an international level is a challenging but mutually enriching task for all concerned. The Biodynamic activities on a Dutch market garden are different from on an Indian tea plantation or grape production in Argentina. Marketing in Germany requires a different strategy from that in New Zealand. Demeter-International is a contemporary example of co-operation based on commitment, transparency, and regional autonomy.



Contacts of the member countries of Demeter-International

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|---|---|---|--|
| 1 Austria
Demeter Österreich
www.demeter.at | 5 Finland
Biodynaaminen yhdistys
www.biodyn.fi | 10 Italy
Demeter Associazione Italia
www.demeter.it | 15 Slovenia
Demeter Slovenija
www.demeter.si |
| 2 Brazil
IBD Certificações Ltda.
www.ibd.com.br | 6 France
Association Demeter France
www.demeter.fr | 11 Luxembourg
Bio-Lëtzebuerg
www.bio-letzebuerg.lu | 16 Spain
Asociación para
la Agricultura Biodinámica
www.demeter.es |
| 3 Denmark
Demeterforbundet i Danmark
www.demeter.dk | 7 Germany
Demeter e.V.
www.demeter.de | 12 Netherlands
Stichting Demeter
www.stichtingdemeter.nl | 17 Sweden
Svenska Demeterförbundet
www.demeter.se |
| 4 Egypt
Egyptian Bio-Dynamic
Association
www.ebdaegypt.org | 8 Great Britain
Demeter and BDA Certification
www.bdcertification.org.uk | 13 New Zealand
Bio Dynamic Farming and
Gardening Association
www.biodynamic.org.nz | 18 Switzerland
Demeter Schweiz
www.demeter.ch |
| | 9 India
BDAI
www.biodynamics.in | 14 Norway
Biologisk-dynamisk Forening
www.biodynamisk.no | 19 U.S.A.
Demeter Association, Inc.
www.demeter-usa.org |



“A farm is true to its essential nature, in the best sense of the word, if it is conceived as a kind of individual entity in itself – a self-contained individuality.”

Rudolf Steiner, 1924

IMPRINT

PHOTOS

Cover: **Ambootia**, India

S. 2: **Lofoten Gårdsysteri**, Norway |

Sociedad Agrícola Frutícola Martini Blueberries Ltda., Chile |

Balmaadi, India

S. 3: **R. Ingold**, Hungary

S. 5: **Risca Grande**, Portugal | **il cesto**, Germany

S. 6: **P. Espanion**, Brazil

S. 7: **Juchowo**, Poland | **Beni Ghreb**, Tunisia

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