

Waldorf Alumni Forum

Colyn Cameron, Vancouver Waldorf School

Colyn Cameron was born in Berkeley, California, in 1989 and the following year moved with his family to San Diego. In 2000 Colyn's family moved from Southern California to the "cold North" of British Columbia. Colyn attended the Vancouver Waldorf School until 2008, when he graduated from high school. Colyn has spent the last two years attending the biodynamic agriculture training at Emerson College in England and working on different farms in England, Germany, Chile, and Canada. Colyn's passions include music—he plays the guitar and handbells, sings, and writes songs—biodynamic farming, and writing.

Biodynamic (BD) farming is based on indications given by Rudolf Steiner in 1925, less than one year before he died. Steiner envisioned an approach to farming that would produce nutritious, organic food crops and would also "heal the Earth." BD farming uses natural methods of fertilizing crops and controlling weeds and pests, as well as specially produced "preparations" to enrich the soil. The ideal BD farm is a self-sufficient organism that grows a wide variety of food crops—grains, beans, vegetables, fruits, nuts—and also supports farm animals such as cows, chickens, goats, and geese. There are hundreds of BD farms all over the world.

—R.E.K.

Biodynamic Agriculture: More Than a New Agriculture

Indeed, not many people know that during the last few decades the agricultural products on which our life depends have degenerated extremely rapidly. In this present time of transition from the Kali Yuga to a new Age of Light, it is not only human moral development that is degenerating, but also what human activity has made of the Earth and of what lies just above the Earth.

—Rudolf Steiner
*Agriculture: Spiritual Foundations for the
Renewal of Agriculture (1924)*

When I first encountered biodynamic agriculture, I was enrolled in a creative writing program at Capilano University in Vancouver, British Columbia—I wanted to become a poet. I had decided to work on a small BD farm (C-Dar Biodynamic Farm in Squamish, BC) for the summer. I thought it would be a great place to have the space and inspiration to write. Well, things changed a little. As the summer progressed and heated up, I found myself engaged more with the daily rhythm of the farm and less with my writing. I found the farm community there to be rich and unique, as we practiced new ways of living together with common interests away

from the mayhem of urban life, discovering what is possible when people come together, gathered around the soil in spiritual awakening. This is really the modus operandi of BD agriculture: together working with the Earth, to consciously take part in its healing—which becomes our healing—but with a new kind of spiritual awareness, spiritual presence.



For young Colyn Cameron, biodynamic farming is a way to heal the Earth and to discover what it is to be human.

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I was so artistically engrossed with the work of the farm, the effortless chores, such as feeding animals, cleaning their living areas, weeding, harvesting, making and spraying the BD preparations, that it became a kind of “writing of poetry with Nature.” The experience became a creative-rhythmic process belonging to Nature and to me. It brought into being a subtle, spiritual awakensness in me, both for the Earth and for myself. This was when I realized

lectures to practicing farmers, gardeners, and veterinarians based on the conditions of the time, including soil depletion, crop failures, and unhealthy livestock. But there is more to it than that. Steiner was not merely a scientist who had studied agroecology and by deductive measures created some eccentric remedies for Nature. He was not simply looking to create the most efficient food production system. He was not only anticipating global warming.

Biodynamic agriculture must remember its essential nature as an art, a creative work involving body, mind, and soul.

that what I was doing was more than just farming. This realization gave me the beginning of a true relationship to what Steiner was trying to enkindle in us through his lectures on agriculture.

By midsummer I was reading all the BD literature I could get my hands on, including *Secrets of the Soil* by Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird, Wolf-Dieter Storl’s *Culture and Horticulture*, and, of course, Rudolf Steiner’s *Agriculture*. I was lucky to come across a wonderful documentary film on Peter Proctor’s work with biodynamic agriculture in India—*One Man, One Cow, One Planet*. This film was eye-opening for me as it linked my longtime interest in the spiritual traditions of India to the soil. It showed how people can be actively and wholly engaged with the land, with the soil, while retaining the spiritual striving of their ancestors, and do this while making a transition away from destructive chemical agricultural practices. Wow!

By the end of the summer, I had stirred and applied preparations 500 and 501 on numerous different occasions, eaten fresh BD eggs, harvested a field of potatoes by hand, dropped a water pump in the river (oops!), sat in Native American sweat lodges, and had many other memorable experiences. I had been a participant in a process of engaging with ancient wisdom, modern insight, and real living, all in the context of a biodynamic farm. In September, I was not at university studying creative writing, but at Emerson College in England studying biodynamic farming. How things do change!

Why is biodynamic agriculture more than just a new agriculture? Rudolf Steiner gave the agriculture

Rather, Steiner was creatively engaged with consciousness and with spirit, and this engagement led to intuitive insights that would awaken the Earth, that would awaken the human being. We cannot remove biodynamic agriculture from the context of Anthroposophy to understand it as a way of farming.

Today many young people like myself want to work with and develop Anthroposophy in a new way, free from the dogmas that can gather around it. Biodynamic agriculture, to stay true to its original impulse and to become a true impulse in minds and souls of people today, must remember its essential nature as an art, a creative work involving body, mind, and soul. It cannot be understood and practiced only as a solution to the chaos of the present agricultural Armageddon. BD agriculture is an answer to the food and climate dilemmas of our time. But we must not lose our ability to recognize and experience its essential spiritual task, which is to enlighten consciousness through the interface with our Mother Earth.

There is a beautiful, subtle way of being totally engaged with something practically—as a real solution and work—and yet maintaining the experience of the innate whole reality to which we belong. Through biodynamic agriculture, we can use the context of the farm, the interface between what is human, animal, plant, and mineral, to strengthen our meditative life, the attention to consciousness. Biodynamics is not only a new agriculture. It is a new method of discovering what it is to be human, but to be human in a relationship with the Earth and the cosmos. ☺

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