



Some Words on the principles of biodynamic farming

According to Pierre Masson

Biodynamic agriculture has numerous common points with organic farming such as the non-use of synthetic products during treatments against the diseases. On the other hand, in vine growing for example, half less copper is used than in organic farming.

The causes of this restriction are simple, copper being a fungicide has, during its washing down into the soil a direct impact on the microflora by destroying the fungi populations in the ground. To limit the use of copper, herb teas and decoctions of plants such as horsetail, stinging nettles or wicker are incorporated into the treatments, natural substances contained in these plants are spread into the water of the herb teas and protect against mildew allowing the use of much lower copper doses than in organic vine growing.

The respect for the rhythms of the day, of the year as well as the lunar cycle are essential, the astral rhythms are also taken into account, but in a less draconian way. The reflection to be made on the lunar cycle is simple to imagine. Science has proved the influence of the moon on the water of the seas and oceans with the tides. Plants are made of 80 to 95 % of water, they are subject to the influence of the moon in the same way though it is less perceptible to the naked eye. On the other hand the sap reacts to the lunar cycle so that the sap tends to go down when the moon is said to be descendant and to rise when the moon is said to be rising. The wine grower can use this rhythm during pruning to limit or increase the vigour of his vineyard the following year.

The grounds are ploughed to limit the impact of adventive plants (formerly called weeds, but they are not bad!) on the cultures. The contribution of fertilizer in the form of compost or in the form of manure allows to feed the microbial populations doing the work of assimilation and transformation of the organic matter. Several times a year, the spraying of a horn manure called "500" revitalizes and allows to enrich the ground with bacteria and fungi. "500" is obtained by filling the horn of a cow with cow dung.

A heap of these horns is buried during the winter. The microbiological activity around the heap is intense and when extracted the dung contained in these horns has been transformed into humus rich in fungi and bacteria.

As for the 501 preparation or silica of horn, which has been revitalized, it is a kind of "spraying of light", being able, depending on the case, to favor the vegetative vigour or on the contrary limit too luxuriant a growth. The treatment brings a bright quality to the plants and limits the diseases.

Science is a beautiful invention, but only to be followed as far as it does not make us forget the farming experiences of our ancestors which go back to more than 7900 years according to Rudolf Steiner.