

# **XXIX International Convention of Biodynamic Agriculture \***

## **S.O.S. Agriculture**

### **A different kind of Farming for the future**

### **Biodynamic Agriculture: proposals and experiences**

Farming and the landscape, soil fertility, biodiversity  
and product quality

**18th - 21st November 2010**

Aula Magna, Bologna University

The La Vialla Farm, Castiglion Fibocchi (AR)

"S.O.S. Agriculture" is the title of two initiatives which aim to bring attention to the crisis situation which is affecting farming in Italy today and on the need for change. The day of an "institutional" Convention in Bologna, open to the public and organised by the FAI (Italian Environment Fund), the WWF and the Biodynamic Association, attended by ministers, politicians, scholars, university professors and agricultural entrepreneurs; and the annual biodynamics convention is in an important farm, La Vialla, which, complementing the day in Bologna, offered itself as a didactic meeting point for the study of farming and the landscape, soil fertility, biodiversity and product quality. A convention in a farm, thus enabling the studies to start from the land itself together with the experience, matured in their everyday work, of farmers, technical experts, entrepreneurs and university professors. Biodynamic farming has existed for little more than eighty years and is present throughout the world. Thanks to the results of comparative research between conventional farming and organic farming methods conducted in Europe and the United States, it has been defined as the farming of the future. Biodynamic methods, in fact, are able to preserve high levels of

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fertility in the soil, to affix CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, to guarantee biodiversity and to protect the health of people and animals. A biodynamic company maintains an environment which extends beyond its own borders, it cares for the welfare of life forms and offers young people an area of study leading to a qualified profession, capable of creating a connection between man, nature, economic sustainability, the quality of products and renewed social relations. These are innovative methods which have enabled the creation of areas of sustainable development in countries like India and Africa which in just a few years have improved the wellbeing and lifestyle of populations otherwise destined to hunger. And in Europe and in the United States to obtain sought after, top quality products.

At the Convention, there were talks given by leading figures in their sector on an international level, farmers, teachers, technical experts and researchers; working groups were organised bringing them in contact with farming realities and the host company's many structures. The La Vialla farm and agriturismo is an example of a modern, family-run entrepreneurial activity which has decided to dedicate itself to quality. More than a thousand hectares: 200 of vineyards (producing red, white, rosé and spumante wines, vinegar and Vin Santo), 190 of olive groves, 185 divided between arable and pasture lands as well as 1,000 sheep and 800 Valdarnesi hens and a dozen horses. Including also laboratories for the transformation of wine, oil, cheeses, preserves, sauces and honey. Certified organic since 1992 and biodynamic with the Demeter symbol of guarantee since 2006, it was chosen by the European Environment Agency as a model of an eco-sustainable company to represent Italy at the Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen.

At La Vialla, wastewater from production is recuperated using methods of phyto-purification, 3 small lakes collect the rainwater destined for irrigation, the 700 hectares of woodland serve as vital lungs for the quality of the air and for the existence of millions of life-forms. An example of how biodynamics can contribute to making the countryside the foremost driving objective amongst the other aims of an agricultural method that looks towards the future and to the excellence of its products.