

STIRRING THE BIODYNAMIC PREPARATIONS USING FLOWFORMS - by Peter Proctor

I have been working with the biodynamic preparations now for almost 35 years mostly in New Zealand but also helping farmers get going in quite a few countries including Australia, California, Hawaii, South Africa, parts of Europe and latterly in India. It seems as though the best results come from using preparations that are well made and are of the highest quality, and also that they are well applied which means they should be stirred well.

WHAT ARE THE BIODYNAMIC PREPARATIONS?

500 and Manure concentrate

Rudolf Steiner suggested using various preparations which would enliven the soil and bring life and fertility back to our earth and bring a strong connection between cosmos and earth.

The main field sprays are the "cowhorn dung" Preparation 500 which is spread over the ground in a very high dilution and often along with the manure concentrate which is cow manure that has been "composted" using the BD preps 502 to 507. The rate of application is 15g of 500 and 150g of Manure concentrate per HA in 34 litres of water.

These two field sprays work on enlivening the soil by encouraging and stimulating the microbial life and earth worm activity. They tend to work on the root activity of the plant.

It is sprayed in large droplets directly onto the soil in the afternoons.

Prep 501

The other field spray is one made from quartz crystals and is known as "horn silica" or Preparation 501 [2g of 501 in 34 litres water per Ha] and is used to encourage the leaf activity, bringing health and nutritional quality to the plant.

It is sprayed in the early morning as a mist over the plant.

HOW DO WE STIR MIX THE PREPARATIONS?

To apply these field sprays Rudolf Steiner suggested that they should be stirred in water in a rhythmic manner for one hour to enliven the water. He suggested for small areas of land to use a bucket and a stick and stirring the water in a circular motion till a whirlpool or vortex is created and then the movement is reversed and another whirlpool is made in the reverse direction, and so on. This should go on for one hour.

During this stirring action the water pulsates. The pulse thus created is in harmony with all the pulses associated with the fluids in and of the earth. The power of this pulse connects the forces of the preparations with those of the earth. The main pulse we are all aware of is our heart beat or the wave actions of the sea. .

Stirring by hand [130 litres in a barrel] can be done by one person relatively easily for an area of up to 4 Ha or 10 acres

But where there are large areas of farmland e.g. "the Broad acre" it involves more preparations and more water is needed to be stirred or mixed to cover the larger areas.

FLOW FORMS

How can we do this?

The biodynamic farming world must be grateful to John Wilkes an English sculptor who developed a cascade of bowls which when water flows through is similar to the action of a mountain stream with vortices flowing down the cascade. and creating the pulse as it does so. These he called the flowform. Here we have a perfect way to stir large quantities of the preparations in an enlivening and sympathetic manner.

There are two models of flowforms which are popular with farmers and market gardeners,

The Jaerna form which has a flow rate of 50 litres per minute and which will stir/mix up to 600 litres of preparation in an hour enough to cover 16 Ha or 40 acres

And the Vortex form which has a flow rate of 200 litres a minute and is suitable to stir/mix up to 2500 litres per hour and which is enough to cover 75 Ha or nearly 200 acres.

SPREADING

Can be done with a tractor or land cruiser equipped with a spray tank and a single wide covering nozzle [20 metres] for smaller areas. Maximum of 16 Ha or 40 acres.

For the broad acre using an aircraft.

The flowform can be mixing a second batch while the first one is being spread

OPTIONS OF USE

Certainly the flowform is my preferred option for the mixing of all the different biodynamic preparations. It is so versatile as it can be used for the field sprays, and all liquid manures including the manure concentrate before applying on the land or crop.

A well managed Biodynamic farm will try if possible to apply the field sprays up to four times a year on the land and the liquid manures can be sprayed on crops at fortnightly intervals.

Set yourself up well with the right flow form for your job, right from the start with a good pump and water supply and easy tractor access. You have an easy and efficient way to stir or mix your preparations or liquid manures which is relatively maintenance free. You can easily mount them on a trailer to take to the more distant areas of your farm. And so you will put the preparations on easily and as well enjoy the experience.

Many of the farmers in the countries in which I have been working are using the flow forms to stir the preparations.. I have seen some very good biodynamic farms where this method is been used...

They can be used as a feature in your farm garden landscaping. Children love watching the flowing water as do many adults.