



Bio-dynamic workshop report Held at Wirra Wirra November 2008.

A group of 21 participants attended the Bio-dynamic workshop held at Wirra Wirra vineyards at the beginning of November. This course is the 2nd one that has been held in McLaren Vale and the interest in and undertaking of BD concept is beginning to be noticed around the region. Many people however remain sceptical when considering the concept of the BD approach to agriculture but as the workshop progressed the participants began to accept the practical nature of this remarkable philosophy.

In a nut shell Bio-Dynamic farming looks upon the soil and land as living organisms. It regards maintenance and development of soil life as a fundamental necessity if the soil is to be preserved for generations to come, and it regards the land as being true to its essential nature if it can be conceived of as an individual entity in itself. The maintenance of soil life is vital in order to protect the soil from erosion and to create, improve and develop the humus content. The result is a fine, crumbly structure containing the necessary organic colloids. This leads to the production of high quality crops which, in turn, means better feed for livestock and better food for human beings.

Practising BD to enhance soil life includes developing an understanding of the geology, soils, climate, plant and animal life, human ecology and the economy of ones bioregion.

How To Start

Bio-Dynamic practitioners use two sprays: Horn Manure 500 – a soil spray enhancing soil biology, plant vigour and root depth, and Horn Silica 501 – an atmospheric spray increasing photosynthesis and improving plant quality. Sprayed sparingly over the land, these sprays promote more balanced plants that are less susceptible to insect and fungal attack. Insect, fungus and weed problems are viewed as symptoms, or messengers, of imbalances in the soil and of stress in plants. Use of these two sprays quickly brings renewed life and character to the land.

There are also the 6 compost preparations made from a range of herbs that are used in the process of making composts and liquid teas to enhance mineral balances in the soil.

A Personal View.

The bio-dynamic approach to agriculture is not just about spraying BD preparations and immediately improving soils but rather is a complete thought process encompassing all things in a living system and their connections and then developing the techniques to enhance natural processes. Unlike the application of chemicals that is skewed towards a reductionist process, in contrast Bio-dynamics can be considered a system of abundance. It represents an exciting shift in thinking for all people who embrace the concepts and can only be good for our entire wine region. BD opens our minds to new approaches and makes us ask ourselves more questions about why are we doing what we have been doing and what are the affects?

Stay tuned for this ripple to turn into a wave. It's all about the soil!!!

