



USA Country Report - 2020 BF-DI Member's Assembly

We are excited to share a significant step forward in strengthening the capacity of the biodynamic movement in the United States to bring greater health and vitality to humanity and the Earth. The work leading up to this moment has been many years in the making, and the current global crisis only underlines its importance and urgency.

Building on our [community-wide biodynamic movement visioning process in 2018](#) to sense into the future of biodynamics in the US and surface courageous questions facing the biodynamic movement, and [the work of Council of Biodynamic Organizations over the past year](#) to creatively reimagine a healthy, associative, collaborative, integrated, transparent, accountable, and functional ecosystem of biodynamic organizations in the United States, **the boards of directors of the Biodynamic Association and Demeter USA have voted to initiate a process to bring our two organizations together into one new organization: the Biodynamic Demeter Association.**

This decision to unify is inspired in part by the [recent unification of Demeter International and the International Biodynamic Association to form the Biodynamic Federation-Demeter International](#), and is also grounded in the unique context and landscape of the United States. Our vision for the Biodynamic Demeter Association is that it will serve as a backbone for a more fully networked biodynamic movement in the US, holding functions that are best met by a national organization while strengthening and supporting local and regional biodynamic work and the interconnection between individuals and organizations.

Our conscious intention is to infuse an understanding and application of Rudolf Steiner's social threefolding throughout the structure and work of the Biodynamic Demeter Association, with balanced effort in the spheres of culture, rights, and economy. We intend to continue to deepen and grow the cultural work that has been carried by the Biodynamic Association and the certification work that has been carried by Demeter USA, while developing new capacity to nurture the economic aspect of the biodynamic movement in alignment with the cultural and rights work. In the creation of the new organization, we will take great care to create clear structural separation between certification and marketing functions so that the integrity of certification is protected from any undue influence. The Biodynamic Demeter Association will continue to nourish and draw from the deep spiritual roots of biodynamics, and cultivate diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout its work.

Woven into the governance of the Biodynamic Demeter Association will be a collaboratively-developed community of agreements to guide who and how we are together as a biodynamic community and how this backbone organization relates to other organizations, with regard to issues such as decision-making, transparency, the use of the term "Biodynamic", fundraising, and communications. Representatives of the various organizations in the movement will continue to come together through the Council of Biodynamic Organizations, which will act as a sensing organ for the movement in connection with the Biodynamic Demeter Association, and carry a vision of the wider biodynamic movement as a whole. The Biodynamic Demeter Association will also continue to participate actively in the worldwide biodynamic community as a member of the Biodynamic Federation-Demeter International.



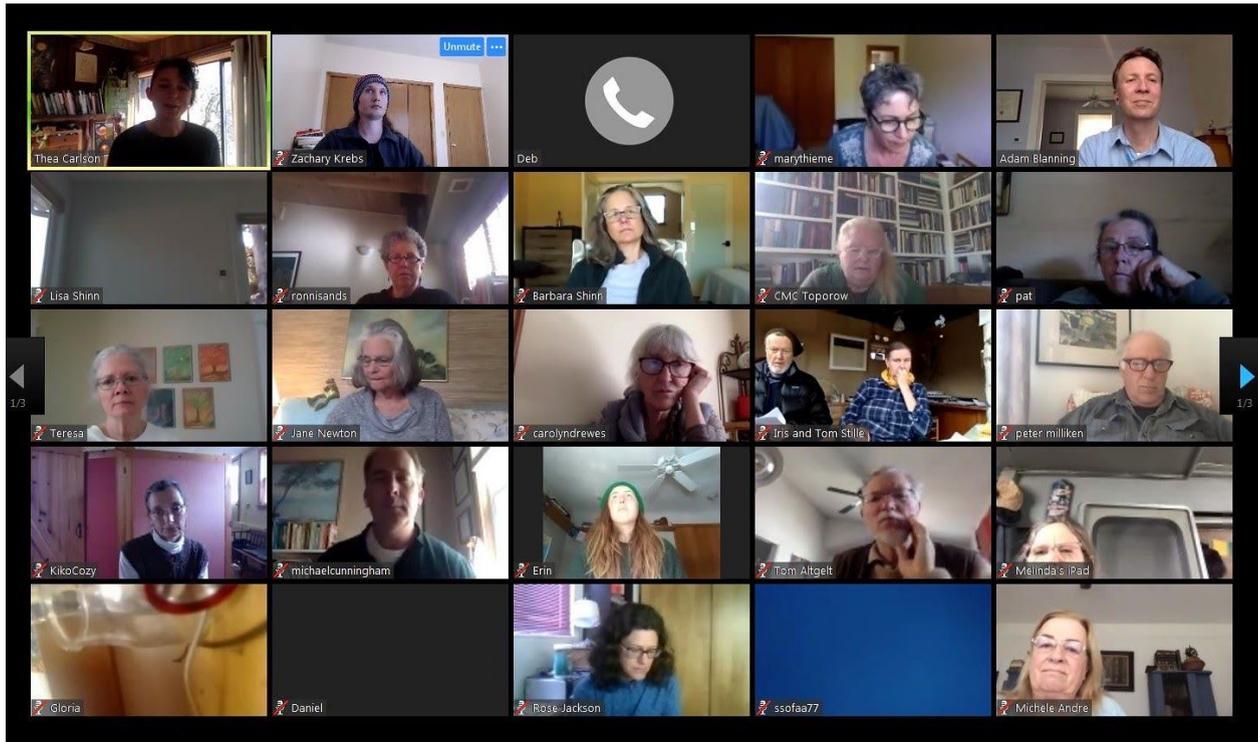
Representatives of the Council of Biodynamic Organizations at the 2019 North American Biodynamic Conference

Highlights of Biodynamic Association Work Over the Past Year

The Biodynamic Association currently has a [nine-member Board of Directors](#) and a [team of seven full-time staff, four part-time staff, and two contract employees](#). Our budget is approximately \$700-900K USD per year. At the conclusion of our [spring membership campaign](#) this April, the BDA reached a new milestone with 1,800 members, the most in our 82-year history.

Adapting to current needs and opportunities

In response to the outbreak of COVID-19 in the United States and around the world, the BDA has developed new means of connecting our members and providing information in more accessible ways. We offered a new online Q&A and collective skillshare series called [Learn and Grow with BDA Members](#) for 4 weeks this spring, and will continue that on a bi-weekly basis into the summer. We also created a new [web page on biodynamic gardening](#) where we are collecting resources such as articles from our *Biodynamics* journal archives, videos, and webinar recordings to help meet the increased demand from new gardeners. We offered our planned four-part series on small-scale biodynamics on a by-donation basis, which dramatically increased registration, while also somewhat surprisingly increasing revenue. Finally, we postponed our planned [2020 Biodynamic Conference in Colorado to November 10-14, 2021](#), and are developing alternative programming to take place during the 2020 dates in November.



Member conversation salon on engaging our community during the COVID-19 outbreak

Developing and expanding the accessibility of biodynamic education and resources

Through conferences, training programs, and learning experiences, the BDA creates pathways for new and experienced practitioners to deepen their understanding of biodynamics.

Our [2019 Biodynamic Conference. Cultivating Relationships: Earth. Cosmos. Community](#), held November 20-24 in Lake George, New York, brought together more than 650 individuals from at least 40 US states and 20 countries. Thanks to the Biodynamic Scholarship Fund, 98 individuals were able to attend the conference with a scholarship. We were also pleased to partner with Demeter International to host the International Biodynamic Banana Conference in conjunction with our conference. Banana Conference sessions were open to all conference attendees, and the convergence of these two events greatly enriched our conference experience.



Opening session of the 2019 North American Biodynamic Conference

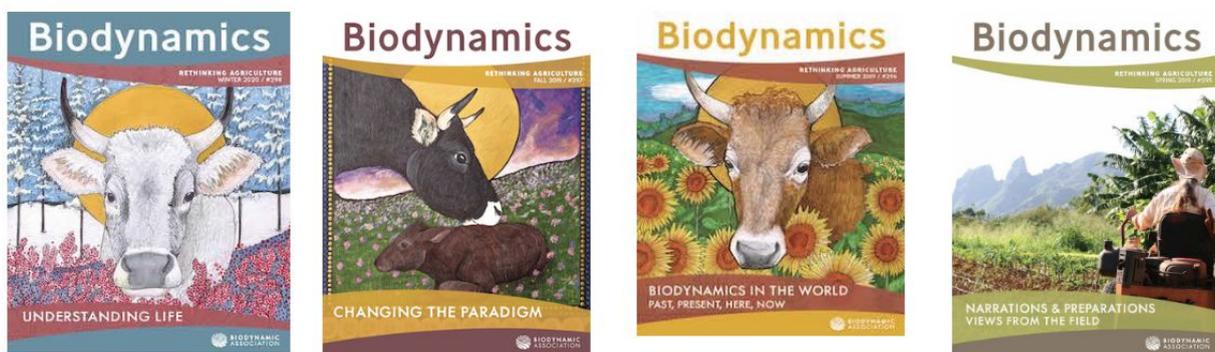
We continued to evolve and strengthen our farmer training program, the [Biodynamic Farmer Foundation Year](#), welcoming 17 participants in the second cohort in April 2019. We are continuing this work in 2020 with nine participants in the third cohort of the Farmer Foundation Year and seven in the first cohort of the follow-up Farmer Development Year. Trainee numbers are lower this year due to COVID-related challenges in some prospective trainees' lives that have prevented them from participating at this time.

We also continued to increase the scope and diversity of our [interactive online learning opportunities](#), offering five online courses and nine webinars in 2019 and offered a popular series on small-scale biodynamics this spring on a by-donation basis.

We awarded a total of \$60,963 in scholarships to 152 individuals in our 2019-2020 fiscal year. These funds helped current and aspiring farmers and land stewards to participate in biodynamic education opportunities offered by the BDA and participating education centers in North America.

Sharing biodynamic stories, news, and research

This year, we published four issues of the *Biodynamics* journal on the themes of “Narrations and Preparations: Views from the Field” (Spring 2019), “Biodynamics in the World: Past, Present, Here Now” (Summer 2019), “Changing the Paradigm” (Fall 2019), and “Understanding Life” (Winter 2020).



On our [Biodynamic Stories blog](#), we posted 27 stories in 2019, sharing inspiring and informational stories from our members, conference speakers, the international biodynamic community, BDA staff and Board, and more. We also launched a new Spanish-language resources page, Recursos biodinámicos en español, and translated many of our existing online resources into Spanish.

Partnering and collaborating to promote and strengthen the biodynamic movement

We collaborate closely with other organizations in the movement, and we are actively developing a strong network of emerging leaders and connecting them to the tools and opportunities to advocate for biodynamics with related movements like community gardening, organic and regenerative agriculture, permaculture, holistic health, and nutrition.

This year, we strengthened connections and collaboration with biodynamic organizations and practitioners across North, Central, and South America through our participation at the inaugural [Biodynamic Agriculture Festival of the Americas](#), held in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, September 18-21. We continued to support the Bridging the Americas Initiative, which seeks to cultivate an inspiring ground in which to strengthen bridges between the different biodynamic communities of the Americas, nurturing the heart culture as the foundation for the renewal of agriculture. Additionally, we continued our work to build bridges between biodynamic, Indigenous, and traditional farmers and land stewards, establish new ongoing collaborative relationships, and facilitate cross-cultural learning. This work

included conducting field visits to traditional, Indigenous, and Latin American agricultural communities or projects to meet in person and explore potential for collaboration, creating space to share stories and knowledge from different cultural traditions.

Highlights of Demeter USA Work Over the Past Year

Demeter USA certifies 143 farms with a total of 7,179 hectares, 111 processors and 55 traders/brokers. Our annual budget is approximately \$500,000 - \$600,000 USD. We have four full-time and one part-time staff, two contractors, 8 contracted inspectors and eleven Board of Directors.

Demeter USA is no longer operating a USDA accredited organic certification agency, and so now we are coordinating our Demeter inspections with various organic certifiers. We arranged dual inspections for all but a few operations last year and adjusted our documentation to reflect our Demeter-focused certification work.

In August of 2019, Demeter USA welcomed Everett Lunquist as our new Director of Certification. He has a degree in Sustainable Food and Agriculture Systems from the University of Minnesota. Everett started inspecting operations for Demeter USA in 2001 and then certification reviewing later. He has operated a certified Biodynamic farm in Nebraska with his family since 1998. Everett attended the recent DI Certification Workshop in Dornach and was pleased to begin forming relationships with the international Demeter community.

Last fall for the first time in our 35-year history, Demeter USA called for nominations and held a democratic election for new Board members. Nominations were called for people representing farming, dairy/livestock, preparation making and certification along with an at-large seat. Four positions were voted on by the licensees. The new members were seated in January of 2020. The certification specialist was then appointed from the list of nominated candidates by this expanded Board. Seats of previous Board members represent viticulture, legal, brands/processors, accounting and two other at-large positions.

Last November Demeter USA held a Members Assembly at the North American Biodynamic Conference for licensees to have an open forum discussion with the staff and BOD with topics ranging from Standards Development, increasing value in the marketplace and integrity in certification.

We have re-invigorated our Demeter Standards Committee for reviewing exemption requests and Standards development. We are also bringing together Standards Advisory Committees for Hemp/Cannabis, Apiary, Social Justice, Wine/Cider and Preparation Making to bring in the expertise of those with experience in specialized areas.

Demeter USA held four recorded inspector training sessions that are available on-going as resources for reference by experienced inspectors and training new inspectors. We are conducting regular on-the-job training for staff and contract reviewers.

This year we streamlined our material input review process with the development of a growing positive and negative list of reviewed inputs. Our goal is to create an easy reference for our farmers and processors to see at a glance what inputs are Demeter approved.

Previously, Demeter USA played a large role in developing new markets for Biodynamic products in the US. We ended this work in fall 2019 due to budget restrictions and in the interest of focusing only on certification. Demeter USA collaborated with other organizations as a member of the Council of Biodynamic Organizations to develop ideas to address the need for Biodynamic market development in the US. This work is one going.

Lastly, responding to the spread of COVID-19 has resulted in major changes to inspection protocols. A few inspectors and licensees have been comfortable with on-site inspections, but these tours have been brief and at a distance. The document review portion of the inspections have moved exclusively to virtual events using technology like video conferencing, screen sharing, emailing, texting and Facetime. We are actively monitoring the national health climate to determine the potential for in-person inspections, virtual tours and/or physically distant inspections. The inspection process has remained unchanged for decades and, in just a few months, we revised best inspection practices from start to finish.