Nature and landscape development on biodynamic farms
Farm-individuality as an aim

Hans Vereijken, Tom van Gelder, Ton Baars

Zusammenfassung

Wenn man die Landschaft auf einem Hof weiterentwicklen will, hat man viele Möglichkeiten, dieses oder jenes an (Natur)Maßnahmen zu ergreifen. Die Frage ist aber, welche der vielen Möglichkeiten sachgemäß oder im diesen Fall hofgemäß ist. Es ist die Frage nach den Kriterien oder nach dem Leitbild für eine Weiterentwicklung eines Hofes. Der biologisch-dynamische Landbau hat hierfür das Leitbild des «Hofes als eine Art landwirtschaftliche Individualität» (*Steiner* 1924). Damit läßt sich die Frage neu formulieren: Wie macht man einen Landschaftsplan für einen Hof auf Basis der «Landwirtschaftlichen Individualität»?

Die Bauern vom Hof «Noorderhoeve» haben sich diese Frage mit den Zusatz gestellt, dabei eine goetheanistische Methodik zu verwenden, und sie haben dafür das Louis Bolk-Institut um Mithilfe gebeten. Die hieraus entwickelte Methode wird in diesem Artikel beschrieben und am Beispiel des Hofes «Noorderhoeve» erläutert. Inzwischen wurde auf dieselbe Weise auch ein Landschaftsplan für den Hof [Warmonderhof» entwickelt.

Introduction

If nature and landscape have to be developed on biodynamic farms, two questions emerge:

1. How does a biodynamic farmer view the natural environment and the landscape on his farm?
2. What are the criteria by which, out of many possibilities, the measures are chosen?

In this paper both questions are discussed. As an introduction an experience about grasslands and biodynamic farming is given.

Grassland on biodynamic farms

In a survey the differences in appearance between conventional and biodynamic grasslands on Terschelling were studied (*Vereijken* 1988). Differences in amount of plant species in the grasslands were found. Under biodynamic circumstances:

– more species;
– species belonging to different types of vegetation and
– more flowers and more flying insects visiting them were found.

The differences in colours, flowers and insects made the biodynamic grassland biologically and visually more interesting than the monotone blue-green colour of the conventional grassland. The visual appearance of the biodynamic grasslands was most impressing, because here the influence of the different soils (clay, sand, wet, dry), the seasons (spring, summer, autumn), earlier use (e.g. as arable land) and the differences in management were visible. Each grassland had its own individual appearance. It was difficult to group the biodynamic grasslands into a few „types". The conventional grasslands situated next to the biodynamic grasslands were tended by different farmers as well. Nontheless they all looked more or less the same and it was easy to group them in three types.

Afterwards these impressions were described, saying that the visual appearance of the conventional grassland reflects an industrial farming-system. All diversifying factors, including the farmer, are eliminated. On the other hand each of the biodynamic grasslands reflects an individual farmer's management in „cooperation" with nature.

The visual appearance of the grassland shows us very clearly the impact of two different ways of handling nature to produce food. The conventional farmer gets his information out of agricultural „laboratory"-science and field experiments. This leads to a general management by which the site-specific natural conditions are counteracted and disappear.

The biodynamic farmer deals with the specific natural circumstances of the site of his farm and needs tailormade knowledge in order to deal with the peculiarities of the site. This leads to the questions: What kind of knowledge is necessary for a biodynamic farmer and in what way can research be organised to produce such information.

Before answering these questions, let us first look at the view a biodynamic farmer can have on landscape.

The view of a biodynamic farmer

The main ideal in biodynamic farming is known as „farm-individuality" – «der Hof als eine Art landwirtschaftliche Individualität» (*Steiner* 1924). The example mentioned above gives a first impression of what „farm-individuality" can mean. It shows that biodynamic farming can lead to individual grassland, farms, agro-ecosystems and landscapes. From an ecological point of view „farm-individuality" can be put as „the farm as an organism" – «Betriebsorganismus» (*Steiner* 1924). This means that the farm is compared with and seen as a „living being". These points of view are not only used for farms but also for landscapes. Then one speaks of „landscape as an organism", „genius loci" and the „biography of a landscape" (*Bockemühl* 1992).

Farm-individuality

Farm-individuality usually indicates that each farm has its specific combination of natural environment (e.g. soil, geomorphology, hydrology, climate, plants and animals)