



Charles Beedy, Jean-Paul Courtens, and Chris Velez at the Zinniker Family Farm

LETTER FROM THE NATIONAL OFFICE

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Reviewing the history of the Association—in celebration of its seventieth anniversary—from the perspective of the minutes of past board of directors meetings has been a very interesting “project of understanding.” After the 1947 meetings (reviewed in the Winter 2008 issue), the minutes begin again in 1950 with discussions of the biodynamic work in England and of uniting the three groups there. There was no new business about the trademark at this time, with only three people using it. Many questions were raised about the magazine, and Dr. Pfeiffer reported that he had not written recently for *Organic Gardening* magazine because of a feeling of unfair treatment of him by Rodale and other individuals. He also spoke of developing a business using his B.D. Compost Starter, which became the Compost Corporation of America. Dr. Pfeiffer had been asked to work out plans for a large composting plant using garbage from the City of Oakland, California. Agreement had been made with the Compost Corporation, assigning them the use of the Compost Starter and the machine composting process, both developed by Pfeiffer.

A feeling was expressed in 1951 that “the work with Biodynamics seemed to have reached a dead end with no news from B.D. farmers.” In 1952 the work of the Bio Chemical Research Laboratory was divided into two sections: (1) pure research and (2) applied biochemistry and microbiology in connection with the B.D. Compost Starter and the manufacturing of compost. The composting with the City of Oakland received great positive publicity, and it was hoped that it would finance research with income from the Starter. However, the relationship with the Compost Corporation was severed due to “certain differences” in regard to the contract. This resulted in considerable financial loss to the laboratory. As a result, the Pfeiffer Foundation, Inc. was formed to handle, propagate, and exploit all rights to inventions made by Dr. Pfeiffer. Also in that year, it was decided that the *Biodynamics* journal should continue as long as possible.

Dr. Pfeiffer reported in 1955 about having worked out twenty seven different tests to determine the quality of biodynamic preparations. He concluded that, at the moment, only experts should make preparations, not every producer their own. The following year a lengthy discussion ensued about (1) what to do to increase the Bio-Dynamic Association’s membership, (2) how to turn the movement into something more than a

hanger-on of the organic movement, and (3) a suggestion that the biodynamic movement change its primary emphasis from agricultural methods to food production—that is, from growers to consumers. This was echoed in 1959 in the sentiment that there were not enough producers. The Natural Farming Association reported that there were only 500 producers of organic food: “Consumers are yelling for good food but there is no supply.”

In August 1961, Heinz Grotzke was elected to the board of directors, and towards the end of that year came the announcement: “We regret to have to inform you that Dr. E.E. Pfeiffer died of a heart attack on Thursday morning, November 30th. We have received many letters expressing appreciation, not only for the achievements of his research work, but of his personality as adviser, teacher and friend. These kind communications show a wide-spread awareness of the value of his endeavors to find new and effective ways to build up the fertility of soils, strengthen the resistance and productivity of plants and animals, and help towards overcoming human health and nutrition problems. You are doubtless aware of how, out of practical field experience as well as research work, Dr. Pfeiffer had, through the years, developed a series of methods and techniques for the testing of blood and amino acids, analysis of soils, nutritional value of foods, etc., and how, along with the research programs, these have been applied in the day-to-day work of his laboratory here.”

Dr. Pfeiffer’s death brought to a close the first one-third of the seventy-year history of the Association. We were reminded at the close of that year that “it was thought by some that the Association, the Laboratory, and the Pfeiffer Foundation were three entities, but this is not so. The Laboratory is the Association’s laboratory. The Pfeiffer Foundation is entirely independent.”

1962 ushered in a new beginning and different times. Dr. Herbert Koepf responded favorably to the Association’s proposal to come to this country and carry on the work of the Laboratory. Three trademarks were mentioned along with the wish to register the term “Biodynamic.” A Bio-Dynamic Seed Growing Project was initiated by Heinz Grotzke. The minutes from the 1960s were handwritten, and it did seem that “the problems are larger.” There was tension between the Pfeiffer Foundation and the Laboratory, as well as talk of not publishing the *Biodynamics* journal and whether Dr. Koepf would stay or leave.

And so we leave the deliberations of the board for now and the recurring concerns of membership, training and education, regional groups, anthroposophy, finances, and the journal. Next issue, we will reach upwards towards the present time.