

SUMMARY OF FELLOWSHIP OF PREPARATIONARATION MAKERS
INTERVIEW
WITH HARALD HOVEN
JANUARY 2019

(Written answers to interview questions)

What was the doorway that led you to biodynamic agriculture?

1. I had a strong desire to work practically with something that was *real*. I was looking for a challenge to work with nature and to develop practical skills. At the time, my mother began a biodynamic market garden, without understanding much of the background of biodynamics. Watching her project inspired me to begin my four-year apprenticeship training in Germany, before I moved to the US.

What inspired you to begin making preparations?

2. I wanted to understand the preparations. I chose the first farm where I apprenticed because the preparations were being made there. In the second place where I apprenticed no one was responsible for preparation making, so I offered to make them. In California, there was a need again.

How has your preparation making changed over the years? What insights have come to you as your preparation making has evolved?

3. Through personal observation, I was able to develop a personal relationship to the preparations. That became more intimate over the years. Plant observation and continuous study of the *Agriculture* lectures brought an ever-greater certainty in my choices and changes in my work. It became clear, for me, that the ultimate step for the development of the farm individuality was the use of preparations made on that land.

What unique techniques in making preparations have you adopted, that you feel may be useful to others?

4. I am not sure that I can speak of unique techniques. Probably all of us as preparationmakers are developing our particular approach, evolving practices that protect the preparations in the ground, or in the air. We might all develop unique processes in the way we stuff the sausages, or in the way we handle questions of fat on the sheaths. It all has to feel right.

What are the biggest challenges you face as a preparation maker? Which preparation is the greatest challenge for you?

5. The biggest challenge is to learn how to keep the preparations in a state of becoming, thereby preventing them from going to a final, end product. Sometimes bugs get into the dried herbs or the curing preparation, changing the preparation into an unrecognizable compost. I prefer that the preps keep their own identity, which means that I hope to be able to identify some smell specific to the herb.

I wish I could make the valerian preparation without the need of a fridge in the first year; after that, the preparation is stable for decades.

Finally: I don't like the compost worm to change the 500 into vermiculture.

Has your work with the preparations changed your perspective in life? If so, how?

6. The preparations are powerful bearers of spirit, that can only come about through our dedicated work. They “astralize” or sensitize the soil, so that the plants can reach their highest potential, bringing health to us and the animals. The more the preparations are individualized to our land, the better they will work. That is a reason why now, after my “retirement,” I travel around the world to teach others to make their own preparations. There, I have to learn to see which local plants can best be used if the preparation plants won’t grow in that location. In teaching, I see the great responsibility I have to make sure people learn the methods in the right way, so preparations can work.

I have also become more and more aware of the elemental beings related to the preparations. They need to be more consciously included in the preparation work.

What advice would you offer to new preparation makers?

7. Join experienced preparation makers, get different views. Record well what you are doing. Observe, study and meditate on the plants and the preparations. Find your individual understanding, then share it with others. Don't talk with others about something you don't understand yet. Give it time.

What social relationships have you developed as a preparation maker?

8. We welcome everybody who is interested in learning. We all understand by doing. Most of my preparation work is with Biodynamic Association of Northern California (BDANC) members or friends, at the annual fall meeting. I make preparations as a service for BDANC members. The proceeds from sale of preparations benefits both me, who is doing most of the work (growing and gathering herbs and storing and distributing the preps), as well as BDANC.

What do you and the preparation makers in your vicinity need to meet the demand for preparations in your area?

9. My first aim is to interest people so that in the future they can make their own preparations. More herbs need to be grown. I prefer to use herbs from local biodynamic cultivation. We need more suitable sheaths, particularly bladders. I prefer elk bladders whenever possible. With all the needs for preparations for the many vineyards, it would take a lot of concerted effort to offer locally made preparations for everyone.

Would collegial sharing with other preparation makers be of interest to you, beyond this interview? If so, how can we help you to develop relationships with other preparation makers?

10. I am definitely interested in collaborating with other preparation makers. Any suggestions are welcome.

Do you have a vision for the future of preparation use in North America?

11. I hope more and more regional and local preparation making groups can form so that more and more people will be allowed to deepen their relationship to the preparations, and thus local preparations will be available everywhere.

What steps can or should be taken to make the understanding and use of the preparations more accessible to the world?

12. More courses offered throughout the country. More exemplary farms that will draw crowds, with the people that can teach!

(Recording)

PF: Today is January 7, 2019, and my name is Pat Frazier. On behalf of the Fellowship of Preparation Makers, I and my colleague Brian Wickert are interviewing Harald Hoven (Biodynamic Association of Northern California).

Harald, to begin with, would you be willing to give your **contact information** to our listeners?

HH: Of course. My email address is hhoven@att.net and my number is 916-837-8776.

PF: Thank you for that. Harald, I really appreciate you agreeing to be interviewed because of your long history of making preparations here in the United States. I want to start the interview by reviewing your responses to the pre-interview survey. First, I want to say “Wow: you have been making preparations a long time!” One thing that I noticed in your pre-interview survey was that you have a predilection for **making preparations in a local area**, and you feel that is a strong indication of what we would call “good quality” preparations. I wonder if you could speak a little bit more to that issue before we get started with the formal interview?

HH: There is always a connection, for all of us, between the place where we live and what we eat. The food we eat gives us the focus that we need for life. It comes through the earth and we should be connected with the land we live on. In the same way, then, preparations made locally will have the best effect if they are made from the land where they are grown, and if they are applied there. Of course, preparations from anyplace else in the world will be effective, but if we take our inspiration from the idea of the farm individuality, then it will be clear why local preparations will have a different effect. The more the activities and the inputs used on the farm can be individualized, the stronger the relationships become. The preparations should naturally have a relationship to where you are. That is the reason why I always make preparations out of plants that can be obtained where I am, and I think it works best if I don’t have to take them from elsewhere.

That is what I have come to understand more and more over time. Now that I work more internationally, I continue to focus on this practice. I want to help people to make preparations where they are. I want to support farmers to be able to stand on their own feet, so that they no longer need to use something that is not related to their enterprise, something from somewhere else in the world. Yet, even as I do this work, I recognize that this does not take away the need for a larger distribution center, such as something like JPI.

PF: Can you tell us please, how **long you have been making preparations? How did you get started, and how did you become so deeply connected to them?**

HH: I attended the first preparation making gathering in 1978 in Germany, when I was checking out my first apprenticeship position. On that farm we made mainly horn manure, although we may have made a few others as well. After that, in 1980 and 1981, I apprenticed on another farm in Southern Germany with a farmer whom I chose specifically because he was making preparations. We made all the preparations there. In the next place I worked -- a large biodynamic market garden in Germany -- there was nobody making preparations, so I took on the responsibility. I learned a lot by doing so. A couple of years later, in 1983, I moved here, to Sacramento. Already in my first year here I began making preparations, together with a colleague at Sacramento Waldorf School. It was rather easy then: we just got our sheaths from a local butcher. I have been making all the preparations every year since that time.

PF: Every year? That is really amazing. In the next question, I want you to kind of elaborate on *how you make the preparations. Do you do them individually, or do you make them in a group? If so, with whom?*

HH: I have always made the preparations as a group endeavor. I have never made them just for myself. In the beginning, when I first came here to Sacramento, I made them with the local farmer at the Sacramento Waldorf School. Then, in 1986, several of us local farmers and gardeners formed BDANC, the Biodynamic Association of Northern California. Since that time, the preparations have always been made as an activity of BDANC. In the beginning, the work was a little bit more collaborative -- Dennis Klocek in the beginning was part of it -- but I have been leading it pretty much from the start, and I am still doing so.

BDANC hosts quarterly meetings for members and friends, gathering at various farms and market gardens throughout northern California. We welcome members and friends at all of our meetings. In the beginning we had maybe 20-30 people at our meetings, but now sometimes we have 80 people, particularly for the fall meeting. It could even be, at times, 100 people. We make most of the preparations in at our fall BDANC meeting. It has always been a learning experience for the participants of BDANC.

PF: *Can you tell us more about these seasonal meetings?*

HH: Most of our fall meetings are at Live Power Community Farm (operated by Steve and Gloria Decater), in the small rural town of Covelo in Mendocino county. The Decaters identify a cow from their herd to be butchered on the Saturday morning. Participants who want to honor the cow gather together around her in the early morning, before she is slaughtered. After the slaughter, we look at the “innards” of the cow with great respect and examine all of the organs of her digestive tract. We then gather together the specific parts that we need for the preparations. We separate into smaller work groups and fill the sheaths with their respective herbs. We like to work with sheaths that are still warm, still fresh from the slaughter. All that work is done in the morning. By noon, we are able to bury some of the preparations right there, on the Live Power farm.

In the afternoon, we have other activities, including farm tours, conversations, studies, social sharing, and, of course, lots of good food! So, our farm meetings consist not only of preparation making. although that is a main activity of our group work.

During the spring meetings, we dig up the fall preparations, and we make the silica preparation. At the summer meeting, we make the yarrow preparation and, if we are in the proper location, we make stinging nettle and valerian as well, although that is not always possible. Even if we have not been able to make them during the summer meeting, I have always been able to make the valerian and the stinging nettle preparation. It was especially fruitful to make them together with my apprentices as part of the course that I taught at Rudolf Steiner College.

PF: *Do you find that the people that come to your group have varied levels of experience, or is it mostly folks that have had some experience before making preparations?*

HH: It is a mix. When we make the preparations in the fall, I always appreciate it if we have more experienced preparation makers, so that different individuals can take on responsibility for different preparations. We work in groups, and some people rotate through the groups to have various

experiences. Others may be especially drawn to cleaning the skull, getting the oak bark, or cleaning the intestines or the mesentery. Because we are usually working on so many preparations at the same time, it is good that there are people who are more trained who can help guide the different activities. It always is a very interesting time of education in our group. We do not offer it as a workshop but, in BDANC's case, a social time and an educational time. It is a sharing time and has been most successful with BDANC.

PF: Nice. That is what it struck me when you were talking about the gatherings in the fall, spring and summer. It seems to be a kind of celebration. It is not only work, but it is also collegial, educational and festive.

HH: That is right. But I have done it differently, too. When I taught classes at Rudolf Steiner College, it was a little different in nature. There, it was more instructional. But my favorite times are when the activity includes the social aspect, the social celebration and festival.

PF: Okay, we are going to move to the next question about **obtaining the preparation making ingredients.** How do you obtain them? Who grows them? Or, are they wild crafted? Speak a little bit about the preparation plants and, if it is relevant, also about where the sheaths come from.

HH: When I first arrived here in 1983, I was invited to work with the Raphael Association to help grow herbs and began by growing medicinal plants for use in anthroposophical medicine. But I knew from the start that I also wanted to make preparations for our farm and for the region, and I included enough of all the preparation plants to make plenty of preparations. I grew these for my own use, and also for the community that was growing through BDANC. There were also groups of physicians who came for the anthroposophical physician training, and I joined with them to do plant studies.

So, how do I get my plants? I had to learn how to find the right plants for our region. The local **white oak**, *Quercus lobata* or Valley Oak, for instance, is a good choice for the oak bark preparation.

Dandelion, however, does not grow here very well. Its flowers are small, with lower yields. Thus, initially, I introduced seeds from Germany and planted them in beds. I harvested the plants daily.

I re-planted **chamomile** every year anew in my garden.

As for **stinging nettle**, there is a local subspecies of *urtica dioica* called "creek nettle," but it is also unreliable. For that reason, I used seeds of the European nettle from Germany.

Valerian also definitely needs to be specially grown. We have a wild variety that could be wild crafted in the mountains but, those plants are smaller and more sparse.

Yarrow can possibly be gathered from wild populations, but those specimens are usually harder to find.

In time, I learned to grow all the preparation plants here, with the exception of oak, which are abundant in this area. I have come to know the plants well over the years. All the experiences I have gathered have helped a lot in my current work as an international consultant. Knowing the preparation plants and what they look like helps greatly when I go to other places and see what

people have for choices. If I look at the white yarrow, for instance, I can see how it is totally different from a yarrow that has been bred for ornamental purposes, such as the more pinkish ones or yellowish ones. One can see that just by looking at the leaves. The leaves of the wild yarrow are very finely feathered, while the leaves of the ornamental yarrow are much more undifferentiated. I would always use the wild yarrow. My experience with plant observation helps me to know which plants should be used when I go to other places.

Anyway, I have grown all of the preparation plants and can choose from them. If I look back now, I could say that I began by introducing seeds that were not native to my place. I got some nice dandelions from Germany that are as full as what you would have in the East Coast. I find these are much better than the ones we have in the West, which are quite small. They are possibly even a subspecies of dandelion, and not necessarily the official ones. I then collected the seeds of the herbs that I grew and continued to plant successive generations. Since I have been here for a long time now, these have become ever more and more native over decades.

In this way, I have grown all the plants and have provided them for the group. I have felt responsible for it, and always tried to introduce more people to it. Perhaps I did not stimulate people enough to grow their own in the beginning. Now, however, there are some regions here in Northern California where more preparation work is being done. The people there have created a county-wide group that makes all the preparations on their own.

If we turn now to the topic of the **horns** and **sheaths**, I can begin by saying that I have gotten very few horns from our own, local cows. There was a time when we could get horns from a local slaughterhouse that Luke Frey found here in California, but by now they probably all come from a big slaughterhouse in Nebraska.

For the **stag bladders** that we use for the yarrow preparation, we get as many as possible from roadkill. We have also been able to get bladders from hunters. Most of them come from here in California, but others from as far away as Montana. We are very happy when we can get elk bladders.

In the very beginning of our preparation work here in California, I got the rest of the sheaths we needed from a local butcher. It has been wonderful, however, that for the last twenty-five years or more -- close to thirty years -- we have been able to make the BDANC preparations with organs from a cow butchered at a biodynamic farm in the fall. And, on occasion, we at Raphael Garden made some of the preparations with the organs from the sheep and cows on our farm. For us, those were the best, the most individualized for our particular needs.

PF: You have said that you prefer elk bladders to deer bladders. I wonder if you could speak a little bit about why.

HH: The deer that Rudolf Steiner talked about is the European red deer, the *Cervus elaphus*. This is the same species as the North American elk, so I feel we need to pay more attention to that. Most of the preparation makers in Europe will only take red deer bladders, and they are huge. We have elk in Northern California, sometimes I have been able to get elk bladders through Luke Frey. Just imagine, just think of the elk and its huge rack, which is just so much bigger, so much more open to the cosmos than the deer. The rack of a little deer may have four or six ends. The elk is much more

massive. Of course, the process of forming antlers has a very strong influence on the animal. The elk antlers could weigh 50 pounds or more. Can you imagine?

As I said, most of the European farms will not settle for anything less than the bladders of the European red deer: they will not use the smaller deer bladders. So, we should definitely use the elk bladders if possible. If you have read the international reports of the *Worldwide Practice of Biodynamic Preparation Work* published by the Agriculture Section at the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland, you know that there are many people who are convinced of the importance of the red deer. The red deer bladders are also exported from Europe to biodynamic farmers internationally. I know of farmers who always stock up on red deer bladders when they come to the annual agriculture conference in Dornach. That's just how it has been done!

PF: Let's talk a bit more about some of the individual preparations. Can we begin with the **horn manure** preparation? When you are using manure for the horns -- I do not know how many horns you bury there, but I assume that that activity does not always necessarily take place on one single day.

HH: That is right. At the BDANC meetings we may bury forty horns or so, at Live Power Farm. Those are normally just for the Mendocino County area -- for Live Power Farm and some other farmers who are interested. Sometimes people bring their own horns, fill them there, and then take them away to bury at home. We gather the manure for the horns on site in the morning, or possibly on the day before, and fill the horns there on the farm.

Before I get into further specifics, it is good to mention first that our climate here is Mediterranean. That means we have rains in the winter, and it is dry in the summer. We have to deal with these realities when we make our preparations. We have to make sure that the spot where we bury the preparations is moist right up to and through the time that the preparations are buried.

I also prefer that the manure that we use for the horn manure is green, and not brownish, which is made by cows that feed on dry grass. Thus, farmers who are preparing to gather manure for the horn manure preparation need to make an effort to have some green pasture ready for cows to graze on during that season.

Of course, horns could be buried in multiple locations. When we had cows at Rudolf Steiner College, we would collect manure from the cows there with the apprentices or maybe the students from Rudolf Steiner College. I have always done that, but always with a group. We would also fill the horns with a group.

PF: It sounds like you have a vibrant community, which also helps with regional preparation making. Could you describe *where you bury the preparations* -- the soils, the climate, the landscape? You have alluded to the horn manure, the chamomile, the dandelions and the silica; perhaps we could continue in that vein and talk about all the remaining preparations and how you have created and selected their particular homes.

HH: I feel it is important to bury the preparations in a variety of places, which enables me to take into consideration the different qualities of the soil and the light needed for the different preparations. I am a little bit selective about the places where I bury the individual preparations.

Here in Sacramento, we have a geological hard pan made of a kind of sandstone, which makes it somewhat harder to bury preparations. So, the presence or absence of rain has always been very important for my choice of location at Rudolf Steiner College, where I worked until two years ago. I created a special preparation pit there, where I designed extra drainage from above and below, choosing a slope where I could be sure that there was never too much standing water. That way I made sure that the preparations would not be too wet.

In the beginning, I buried my preparations in the lowest location, reasoning that the topsoil would be the best and the deepest there. I learned, however, that too much water gathered in such a low spot. Then I changed to a slope where the soil was not as deep, and I improved it through adding some compost.

I still use space on the campus at Rudolf Steiner College and also at the Sacramento Waldorf School for burying some of the preparations, because those properties are very open places with a lot of light. They are well suited for **dandelion** preparation and horn **silica**. The **chamomile**, on the other hand, is buried at a higher altitude in the Sierra Nevada mountains, in a place where there is snow in the winter.

We have also made and buried preparations in other places in the greater region, like at Fulcrum Farm with Marney and Lisa in Nevada County. There they have a place which has better drainage than we have in our soil here, and they have plenty of cows.

I am not in favor of burying all of the preparations in close proximity, or even in the same place, though other people may choose to do that. I have the feeling that the preparations need more space to draw in the forces of the environment, so I tend to spread them out more, further away from each other. Thus, after our BDANC meeting in the fall, I usually travel around my local area in Sacramento and then up into the foothills and up to the Sierra Nevada mountains to bury the preparations. I often take apprentices or friends along, and we generally have quite a little caravan of cars!

After we wrap our **dandelion** flowers in mesentery, I like to hang it in the air for a day or two, so it will become more firm. Then I bury it in a pasture at the Sacramento Waldorf School, and mark the location so I can find it again.

The **horn silica**, which is made of Sierra Nevada smoky quartz, is also buried in the same pasture a little further away. Both dandelion and horn silica do best when they are buried in light-filled areas. **Yarrow** is buried in the cow pasture, where I always have to have good locations along the fence so that I can easily find it.

We initially buried the **oak bark** preparation in a tiny creek next to the Sacramento Waldorf School. In time, we decided that the place was too urban, and the water is not clean enough. Now I bury it in a nice place higher up in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountains. There I found a place near to, but not in, an irrigation ditch, where there is always some water flowing. It is a relatively flat spot, where I can make a little furrow that allows the water to flow through. I put the skulls in fencing mesh and use T posts to secure them. It works quite well.

The **chamomile** sausages (like the dandelion preparations) need to be hung for a couple of days after they have been made. We then bury them at a secure location in the Sierra Nevada mountains, about

a ninety-minute drive from here. We have chosen a kind of alpine meadow at 4500 feet elevation, complete with a lovely creek. This is public land that used to be used for cattle grazing. It is high enough that it always receives snow in the winter. I first found this place one year when I was taking preparations up to the mountains with Manfred Klett, and I have been using it for the past twenty-five years or so. There we can be sure we have some moisture when the sausages are first buried in the fall, and then later have plenty of rain and snow. Unfortunately, at that location we have trouble with little rodents known as voles, who sometimes get the preparations in the winter. So, I now put the sausages in the middle of kind of a cage made of hardware cloth so that they are protected, and I improve the soil a bit with compost.

Stinging nettle needs to be buried in a place with good drainage. At Rudolf Steiner College I found a place next to a little seasonal creek: any rain that fell there drained into the creek.

When I choose spots for the various preparations, I look for open locations away from trees so that the roots do not get into the preps. Those roots can go far! I have permanent burial sites, although if tree roots get into the preparations I tend to change their locations.

PF: I am struck with the absolute dedication that this endeavor, from gathering the people together and hanging of the sausages for curing, to traveling those distances between farms and selecting the locations, it is really quite heartwarming, Harald, that you put all of this care and love into what you are doing with these preparations.

HH: *I should say a little more about my background.* I was introduced to preparation making when I was living in the mountains of the Black Forest in Germany. The farm where I worked was at a higher elevation. There was a man who came to this farm twice a year, and he was an artist, a painter and a farmer. He came to bury his oak bark and his chamomile preparations in this higher elevation. I met him there and I chose to apprentice with him. For him, preparation making was always also sort of a journey, and he always dedicated time for it.

This has also become a practice for me. So, for two days in spring and fall, we preparation makers just travel and work with preparations, and this is the celebration of being a biodynamic farmer! I believe I was inspired by what I experienced there in the beginning. And so, even now, with my apprentices and others choosing to get involved in preparation making, it is always sort of a festive time.

PF: On average, *how much are you making? Where do they go, who uses them, and how do they make it into the hands of people in your region?*

HH: We make preparations every year, regardless of whether we use all of them or not. I feel it is important to make them all which has the benefit of ensuring that we will always have enough, even if one year turns out to be a failure for one of the preparations. We make probably a quart or more of each of the compost preparations and bury about 200 to 300 horns. We bury roughly one to two horns with silica preparation each year: unfortunately, it is not used a great deal.

Not of all the compost preparations are used every year, although more and more people are asking now for preparations.

Because the preparation making is an activity of BDANC, we do not run it as a business. Rather, it is a service primarily for the members and friends of BDANC. We also make them available for anybody else in our region, since I am interested in local and regional preparation making. I especially invite people who live here to get preparations from here. If people contact me from other areas that sell them, I will tell them to look for some in their local area or get them from JPI. It is important to us that people from here can find preparations from here, if they are interested.

Ideally, I like people to call me a week before an upcoming meeting and place their orders with me. Then I can bring the preparations to the meeting and distribute them there. I have them stored at my home, but if other farmers also have a good place to store preparations at their home, they can call me and order in advance what they anticipate that they will need for the coming year.

There are also, however, a lot of people -- particularly wine growers -- who do not have the necessary relationship to the preparations. They may call to say, "I want it this amount, and I need to have it next week. Send it to me." So, I do mail preparations, but I experience that the relationship that comes with that is different from what occurs when I personally hand preparations to the user.

It is a little bit like what was described in the Agriculture Course discussions. Rudolf Steiner mentioned the process that happens when a physician passes a remedy directly to a patient, which generates a kind of "enthusiasm." I feel that the same thing occurs when we are able to pass the preparations on to others personally, accompanied by a few words and, if needed, some directions for how to store and use them. It's better than just putting them in an envelope and sending them.

I distribute mostly to BDANC members at the meetings, but I also supply preparations to some nonmembers. I may send to Southern California, or maybe Southern Oregon or Nevada (even though now we have a person in Nevada who makes most of the preparations). I am trying to help develop the idea of localized, regionalized preparation making by focusing these areas and not beyond.

PF: And this is how you sell the preparations?

HH: No, we did not talk about selling. First of all, I have not seen myself as a businessman with preparations. I work for an ideal! Thus, I have grown all the herbs that we needed. I have spent a considerable amount of time harvesting and then later also caring for the plants and the preparations. We have certain direct costs: purchasing the horns, maintaining a storage space, mailing, and all of that. I have come to an agreement with BDANC that 70% of the fees from the preparation sales goes to either to Raphael Garden or, now, to me because I no longer work with Rudolf Steiner College. Then 30% goes to BDANC, which helps us to have more resources.

For pricing, I try to charge approximately the same as JPI, because I do not want to compete. We have different prices for members of BDANC than for nonmembers. Currently, my price for a set of compost preparations is \$18 for members and \$21 for nonmembers. Horn manure is \$5 for members and \$7 for nonmembers, horn silica is \$3 for members and \$4 for nonmembers, and barrel compost is the same as horn manure

I have been reconsidering how to charge for barrel compost, also known in some countries as cow pat pit (CPP). I have the feeling that people in some countries in Asia use more of it, in larger amounts, and I am considering how to charge differently. That is something I am thinking about right now, but I have not yet made a decision.

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PF: We could have a long discussion about that trend of using barrel compost differently, because we have certainly also begun to experience that at JPI.

HH: It is very important to me that people who use preparations get to know them. They should not simply think of them as numbers---as “500” or “507,” for instance -- but they should know what each preparation is made of. Ideally, people who use them would have participated in growing them, touched them, and developed a personal relationship to them. To strengthen this relationship ever more, we do a study of the plants at many meetings when we make a preparation, so that everyone can develop a personal relationship to them and their presence in the preparations.

PF: *How do you store the preparations?*

HH: After digging up the compost preparations, I first cure them for about a week in clay pots, until they are stable. I then put them into separate Italian glass jars (jars with hinged lids and often a gasket – KDB), taking care to note the year. I have been using a storage place in an area that is more or less a basement.

Many people use individual wooden storage boxes for the different preparations. I find these too limiting. You can instead use one large box for all the preparations, filling the spaces between the individual preparations with peat moss, and you will have enough space. Uli Hack in Ontario showed me this system for the first time. The investment in such boxes is far less, but they are much more functional. The jars or crocks can all be stored in that large box, and they can be moved around as needed. There should be at least three inches of peat moss between the jars of the different types of preparations in the box. In addition, the preparations should be covered by a kind of pillow filled with peat moss to protect them from above. In this way, you can have greater or smaller quantities of each preparation.

I remember the first time that I visited JPI, I saw the preparations were all together in one large container, without being separated according to their age. I personally had a different opinion, feeling that it would be better to store the preparations of each year in its own container, so that one could see them individually. Then you can also “retire” them when they get too old. I experience that the preparations lose their power over time. I have seen the results of experiments done with sensitive crystallization that show pictures of preparations of different ages. They show how the preparations show less form from one year to the next.

I feel the preparations should be taken out of circulation after a time, as long as you have enough. If you have two- or three-years’ worth of preparations on hand and you get in trouble, you can still use some that are a bit older, but I wouldn’t go too far back.

My experience is different with Valerian. It retains its fragrance for years or even decades. Nonetheless, I always use it within a few years.

PF: Can you share your thoughts about how long you can store the preparations before they are no longer useful?

HH: I think we need to do some more study about the aging of the preparations. I do not like to use the preparations immediately: I like to cure them somewhat after I make them. Yet I feel we should

probably know more about the strength of the preparations and how long they last. I learned from Peter Proctor that he uses only fresh preparations. I said, “Well, I always have some left over,” and he asked “Why would you use the old ones? The fresh ones are more alive.” I feel it would be good to do more study on this. I feel they are most alive when they are fresher, but I do use preparations from previous years. I feel that I can tell when my preparations are not good any longer.

Actually, I feel that the preparations show what they are. I do not understand the nature of the preparations to be compost. They are *stimulating* the compost, but they do not have to be *like* compost. And although I definitely have moist storage, I do not think the preparations should be entirely, fully “finished.” I worry if they go that direction, or if there is too much earthworm activity in the horn manure. To me, when I read about the making of the horn manure in the *Agriculture* lectures, or even in the comments that accompany the course, it seems that the preparations should be in a state of *potential*. They are not something that has come to an end: they do not have to be entirely changed. They will continue to develop, and I prefer if they are still waiting to come to the final end even when we stir and then apply them. So, I would recommend maybe for future work, too, that you go a little bit more into that in the interview process, because the making is one thing, then the storage, and how we go towards the end is another.

I have recently been reading a copy of the *Worldwide Practice of Biodynamic Preparation Work*, the case studies published through the Agriculture Section at the Goetheanum. I find it fascinating to read the different approaches people use, and to see the breadth of possibilities. Here again, we see the individualizing of how different people work. Demeter may be asking for definitive guidelines, but I do not agree that they should only recognize one way or doing things. I cannot agree, for instance, that there is only one standard for determining when horn manure is considered “ready.”

PF: I agree actually. That has always been an interesting discussion. When the Fellowship of Preparation Makers joined with Jim Fullmer in an effort to craft a document that is discussed as “practices,” we purposely called it that, because if we were to call it “standards,” that leads to a different imagination with more limitations. “Practices” conveys more of an idea of what is ideal as far as temperatures, plants, manure, etcetera. The guidance for much of the “standard” piece of that document was more directly from the lectures, which obviously are interpretable. So, I appreciate a lot of what you are saying about the judgement of the practitioners, what is necessary as far as their own preparation making and then the application thereafter. Here in Colorado we sometimes get our horn manure and feel that, if it cured for just a little longer, it would be a different being and that it does do that, particularly in storage. From my standpoint at JPI, it is interesting that you speak about the preparations being distinct year to year and whether it is important to use up what was there last year versus just diving into the new year. We have always had that discussion, too. It is difficult when you are making preparations in the quantities that JPI makes them, to make that decision and be consistent with it.

HH: I always look at the unique quality of the different preparations in each year. Each season seems to leave its own imprint, which is why I prefer not to blend preparations from different years if I can avoid it.

PF: As we begin to bring this interview to an end, I would like to ask you how have been your primary *mentors* in learning how to make and store and apply the preparations?

HH: My first mentor was my farm mentor where I was apprenticing in Germany, Friedemann Hergarten. I mentioned him earlier in the interview. He worked as an artist and farmer. He was an interesting character and he made preparations. He would make a special session twice a year, when he would make preparations and bring them up to the mountains. We would have coffee together when he came and enjoy long conversations. It was just a special time. He was a very important teacher for me, for the two years we made preparations together.

Next in Germany, I was mostly building on the experience that I had on the first farm but there was also a good amount of self-learning. I knew the basics, but then how do I go from there? I observed that when situations were different, I needed to do some things differently. This is, in part, the feedback that I got from the preparation itself. For instance, do I use the mesentery or the peritoneum? I felt that the peritoneum was easy to use, but the mesentery seemed to be more what it was really about. And, if you use the mesentery “as is,” it is way too fatty and you get silage. You learn quickly and you do it differently.

I have enjoyed learning from making preparations with others as well. I was able to make them once with Manfred Klett, when he came to visit California. Then others, like Luke Frey, helped people make some on their own and later we would talk. “How does that work for you? How do you protect them in the ground?” Then, when I served as the representative for the North American Agriculture Section, I was able to go to the Agriculture Conference in Dornach every year. This conference was followed by a preparation makers group meeting that started in or about the year 1999, where people talked about preparation making. Out of those interactions and conversations, I was able to learn even more.

PF: I am hearing that you engage in continual study. So, the last question is: ***Would you be comfortable sharing contact information with other preparation makers in your area?*** Clearly, you have already done that.

HH: Absolutely, I would be very happy for people to contact me. Also, just to fill you in, preparation making is one of my main goals, not just here but also internationally. I am helping right now in China and Taiwan with preparation making. Internationally, it is important that people learn. For instance, the Chinese are very dependent on Australian preparations. Now, Australia is different from China, but people who are Demeter-certified through the Australian organization in China are told that they should get biodynamic preparations from Australia. China is becoming dependent on Australian preparations, and people do not have the personal relationship to the preparations. And, if the Chinese government ever clamps down on imports, this will be very great trouble for Chinese biodynamic growers. Then, I am also very much interested in helping people to begin to look at how they find substitutes if the preparation plants do not grow where they are. That is now a big issue for me, and I am very happy to help anybody here and internationally.

PF: Do you have an idea how many acres might be cultivated in China biodynamically at this point?

HH: I don't have a clear idea. There are a number of different certification agencies involved, and I haven't found any clear idea of the whole picture. It could be a few thousand acres.

PF: That is really amazing, I am glad to know that you are out to the front lines of that kind of international education. So, ***anything else you want to add*** to our conversation, Harald, before we close?

HH: Yes. I think that, with these interviews, you should in the future add more questions, to know what we stand for nationally. When we gather more information for North America, people can look to see the differentiated picture of preparation making. That way we can develop a picture of the whole work here. It is very important to celebrate that we do it in different ways but all earnestly. I think it is very important that we create a forum to make that possible. So, if even more support can come towards this the better. I would like to see that we develop more research into the preparation work, and help other people learn. Of course, the very best way of learning preparation making is by going to somebody and learning that way. Dewane Morgan is sort of an exception in this respect. because he somehow just found the agriculture lectures and figured it out. That is okay, but we have so much to share too. So, the exchange is extremely important.

I was one of the people who got the Fellowship of Preparation Makers together in the beginning. When Hugh Courtney announced his retirement, I visited him as a member of the Agriculture Section and a representative of the BDA board of directors, and we talked about having a meeting. That brought about the preparation makers group, which was done in the beginning by the Agriculture Section. So, I have been very much connected to this and it is very much in my heart. I am very glad that it has continued with strong activity from so many people, so congratulations and keep it going!

I was on the BDA board where Charles was kind of an adviser at the time. We visited Hugh together. It was partly for the BDA board, and then also the Agriculture Section had an interest. I brought it there and we talked about it within the Agriculture Section, so that brought it about.

BW: Harald, I want to thank you for what you contributed by helping get the Fellowship of the Preparation Makers started. You carried that for the first nine years, to make sure it got done. So, even though you moved on to other things, your perseverance at the beginning and vision is where we are today. We stand on yours and Hugh Courtney and Charles Berkham's shoulders. Hugh said there were three of you that got together and, Hugh always told the story, he said that, "At that moment, I knew we were going to go forward." He said that you were the one that carried it for years after the idea was born, so thank you for that.

PF: I want to thank you as well. It was definitely the impetus of the Dornach study that created this project, and it is really getting some momentum.

HH: Maybe I should say a little more about the horns. I think we should talk more in the movement about how long to use them. I use them, probably, six times or so, but if I do use them that long, I cut them back, keeping only the part of the horn that is still good. If you use the horns for only a few years you have to replace them more often, which becomes expensive. In the early years when we just started the preparation makers group there were some of us who said, "Look, where did all of this come from? Rudolf Steiner tried to be practical and help the farmers with what they had, but which farms nowadays provides itself with its own horns?"

Just to be realistic, we cannot rely on being able to get things from outside of our own place. We must consider whether we are right with the amounts that we are using, or should we use less? And, how many times are preparations applied? Going back to this report from Europe, most people use horn manure maybe twice a year. Some people may only need to use them that often, but some

vegetable growers use a lot more. I have used them, maybe, up to eight times a year and some people use them even more. So, how can that be sustainable in terms of the horns you need. In a way I feel we have not been forced to think enough in terms of how often to use the horns or how much of the preparation we use, in relation to the resources of the farmers.

PF: In terms of our sources for horns, for primarily horns, there is a limitation and it needs to be addressed, certainly, for large scale use. I had a conversation with a grain farmer who would like to turn 8,000 acres of grain in Montana biodynamic, and one of the main limitations we spoke about was getting him to the place where he felt comfortable burying enough horns to cover that kind of acreage. It is daunting, you know, even from the standpoint of getting horns.

BW: This is Brian. You know, this is so interesting. I have those same questions all the time because I collect horns for people. This would be a wonderful topic at the conference in Colorado at our open space.

PF: I have wondered if I should be taking off that slivered portion of the horn that is tan, that clearly looks like it is deteriorated, and actually making the judgement to take that off but still use the part of the horn that does not have that papery, slivered appearance. It is something I just have not done. What I typically do is I just do not fill it as full, but I do not actually cut it off. I am going to try that.

HH: That, too, raises the question of how you bury the horns. I put them upright with the tip up and then, if they are not full, stuff comes out. That is the reason I like to have them really kind of flush. I fill them well and press them firmly down in the ground so that they stay. And if you say papery, that is right when they are too far. If you cut through, then you see the individual layers. That means it has disintegrated too far. I want to go to where you do not have the papery layer, like a phyllo dough.

PF: Yes, more like a fingernail, like a fingernail.

HH: Right, like layers of fingernails. Then comes the time when you see you have cut back too much and you cannot use them any longer or that you have too little of the horn cavity left. I feel that we could have more of an open discussion about this, because I think we may be fooling ourselves. Dr. Steiner said that people can use the horns four times, but I do not know if any of us are really only using the horns four times.

PF: What about hooves? What is your thought there, Harald?

HH: I have tried it once or twice and I kind of liked it, but there is so little space. I did not feel that it was sustainable in the long run. It is just too small a cavity and it is very open too.

PF: What did you think of the quality? Did you check the quality when you just did it a couple of times?

HH: I think when I did it the first time it looked all right. I started and did it two or three times, but I did not think it was worth the trouble. However, it may well be a solution for people who make preparations for their small farms.

PF: That is what I thought, too: to create an environment of experimentation with it with small scale gardeners. We would get a lot of information that way.

BW: Male or female hooves?

HH: It probably makes some difference, and, of course, you would not imagine that the process is the same throughout the body. If you simply look at the thickness of the bull horn versus the cow horn, the bull horns tend to be thinner. But I have not done enough systematics checking on this.

BW: I have, it is true.

HH: Okay, it is thinner right?

BW: Yes, and they are straighter, they do not have the curve, they are straighter. And thinner. That's research, too, to work more on the horns.

PF: The other question I have about using hooves is the idea of communication. You know, we have an idea, or we have created a long-standing idea of the communication between the cosmos and the horn. But, I am not sure that we have created that same imagination as strongly with what kind of communication is happening with the hooves.

HH: Yes, I think in a certain way it is still the same in insulating the cow on these two ends, but it is the closing off more than anything. I do not think that the horns should be looked at similarly as the antlers. Antlers are definitely much more of a valve going through and coming in and out, and I do not think that the horns have that really. Rather they are holding in, they are holding back, holding in and insulating, so I do not know.

BW: I think it is always great to do these interviews, we get more questions than we get answers.