



Freie Hochschule für Geisteswissenschaft

Sektion für Landwirtschaft

Press release

How can we accompany the animals with dignity into the future?

**Agriculture Conference at the Goetheanum
4th – 7th of February 2015**

The Agriculture Conference at the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland, is the annual international gathering of biodynamic farmers, gardeners and of all those who are interested in an anthroposophically inspired agriculture and food culture. At the next conference, from 4 to 7 of February 2015, questions concerning the relationship between humans and animals will be explored.

Animals in agricultural systems can provide multiple and outstanding benefits. Livestock keeping however is facing serious challenges today. These relate in the first place to our ethical connection to the animals, secondly, to the way we understand the essential nature and purpose of animals; and thirdly, the integration and management of animals in daily farm life.

As a result of factory farming, awareness of animal welfare is increasing and year by year it is becoming more difficult to get social acceptance even for sound livestock keeping. Every use of animals is considered an abuse and exploitation. If we keep the several thousand year old partnership between humans and animals in mind, this attitude represents a turning ones back on the cultural image of „brother animal“. We are facing the question: How can we accompany the animals with dignity into the future?

To answer this question, we need to ask ourselves: what is the essential nature of the animals? What is their task? In many ways they are closely related to us humans, evolutively we are siblings, and the animal kingdom, with its huge diversity and simultaneously specialisation, has formed the foundation for our human physical body. The human being, as a being capable of spiritual development, carries the responsibility for the animals. „Please tame me“ the fox said to the little prince. This means: take me on in your cultural development. Are we able to do this in agriculture and society today?

In nature and on the farms, animals create habitats. Each animal species creates and supports its habitat. How can we live together on the farms in such a way that a cultural biotope for the animals is created? In practice: how do we manage the 24/7 animal care that is needed? How do we economically keep cattle? Are there means to breed a farm specific herd?

These are questions that we will explore together at the Agriculture Conference 2015 in lectures, dialogue workshops, research and experiential sketches. Newest developments from all around the world will be presented, that can be an inspiration for our life and work with the animals.

The conference is open to all who are interested in this topic. A warm welcome! All contributions will be translated simultaneously into German, English, French, Spanish and Italian. The programme will be available on 1st November on www.sektion-landwirtschaft.org and flyers will be in print in mid November.

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