

BioDynamics at Delatite

With all the interest in Organic and Biodynamic viticulture recently I thought it was about time to write a short history of BD here at Delatite – as we haven't really pushed this in terms of publicity in the past.

We started following Rudolf Steiner's teachings on agriculture back in 2001 and so have now been using some of the methods for over six years. What's clearly evident is that our soil structure has improved markedly and there are far more earthworms and tiny invertebrates evident close to the surface under the vines. The immeasurable benefits include better fruit structure and flavours and therefore improved wine quality. We do try to follow the moon cycles when putting out BD preps and in future we'll also use moon phases to guide our planting.

In the beginning we used BD 500 (the cow horn preparation used on the soil) and manure concentrates concurrent with cutting out the use of insecticides and most fungicides.

In 2003 we stopped using compound fertilisers – replacing with rock phosphate, fish and kelp liquid/foliar fertilisers.

In 2005 we eliminated all fungicides except for copper and sulphur, which have been used in agriculture for over 2000 years.

In 2006 we started making our own "teas" (for use on both the soil and the vines) and also making our own cow manure concentrates.

In 2007 we're going to start up our own BioDynamic compost heaps using stockpiles of some of the ingredients we've built up over the last two years. Although our last use of herbicide occurred in Spring 2005 we'll invest in an alternative method of weed control this Spring – either using steam or mechanical equipment such as the Pellenc machine.