

Letter to Demeter Community from Board of Directors

There has been a great deal of activity on the Board level in recent weeks that we want to share with you , the supporting members of Demeter USA.

Most significantly there has been a change in executive leadership. After over a decade of service to our Demeter organization Elizabeth Candelario has elected to resign as President/Executive Director effect 2/28/19. We appreciate her years of service and wish her the best in future endeavors.

Also resigning from the Demeter Board and its chairmanship is Paul Dolan who has been a steadfast leader and supporter of Demeter for years whose leadership will be missed.

The Board has elected Rudy Marchesi as Board Chair and Victoria Byrnes as Secretary/Treasurer. We appreciate their willingness and commitment to lead the Board as we move forward.

We also would like to welcome our new Board member Zach Wolf.

Zach grew up farming at Whippoorwill Farm, in Northwest Connecticut. Currently, he serves as the Director of Farm Operations at Caney Fork Farms (CFF) in Carthage, Tennessee. At CCF he is bringing a diverse team of scientists to the farm to track soil health dynamics across 400 acres of silvopastures and native warm-season pastures.

We have heard the call for greater representation on the Board and have been reviewing ways to improve the Board structure to have it be more democratic but at the same time avoid politicizing its activities and staying within the guidelines of our By-laws. Looking at the structure of similar boards we are contemplating the creation of new elected Board positions representing segments of our community defined by product. This is a work in progress but changes won't be made until we are confident that we have settled on the right structure and solution.

The Board has reasserted that the primary role and responsibility of Demeter USA is to function as a certification agency that upholds the Biodynamic farming standards as defined by Demeter International. To that end our Director of Certification Tarry Bolger is continuing to work closely with our staff and board to strengthen our inspection and certification process. New certification applications are being processed in an efficient and timely fashion and are on schedule for completion.

There are structural changes being contemplated for the Biodynamic community on an international level. During the Agriculture conference in Dornach in February there was a meeting of the International Biodynamic Council which oversees the activities of the Section for Agriculture, the International Biodynamic Association and Demeter International. Rudy Marchesi attended this meeting. The council presented to the attending members from associations around the globe a proposal to merge the IBDA and Demeter International into one working group but with two divisions with distinct responsibilities. This is being done in the

interest of efficiency, democracy, inclusiveness and consistency in upholding the Biodynamic standards. The proposal was approved by the attending members and details are now being worked out.

The Board views this as new guidance from the IBDC and is currently contemplating ways to move Demeter USA into the vision of this impulse. To that end we have formed an outreach committee to reach out to the US Biodynamic community (BDA, JPI) to find areas of continuity and agreement as well as those of duplication and overlap. Our goal is to find ways we can work together more effectively to create educational opportunities and activities of outreach through which we can grow our Biodynamic farming community and the awareness of the general public of our goals and activities. This is a big task that needs to be approached thoughtfully and deliberately with the goal of a positive outcome for all involved and most of all the growth of Biodynamic farming in the US. We will continue to report on this as we progress and look forward to hearing your thoughts and feelings on this direction.

We had our beginning of the year financial review and budgetary meeting and we can report our organization is financially stable with positive cash flow and is to remain so throughout 2019.

As you can see there is a lot of change in the works. We have heard the requests for greater inclusiveness and transparency and are working in ways to achieve that goal while protecting the workings of Demeter and maintaining the highest standards in our certification process. We will not be making changes for change sake but rather to further advance and protect Demeter and the Biodynamic standards. Our aim is to be thoughtful and deliberate in achieving the best outcome for Demeter and all its members.

Wishing you the best in the upcoming season,
Demeter USA Board of Directors