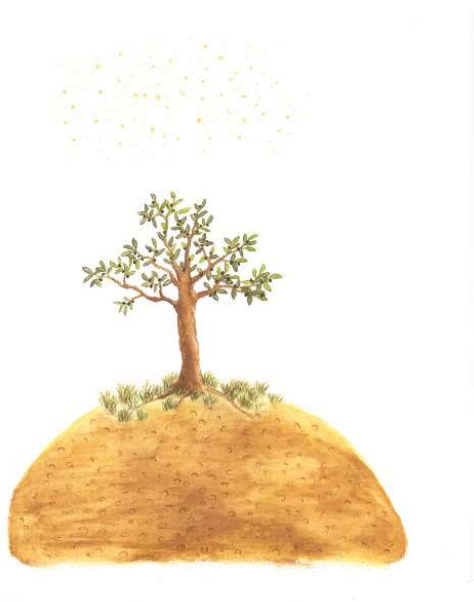




MINUTES PROFESSIONAL GROUP OF OLIVE GROWERS, ITALY, April 2019

The olive trees are like natural monuments in Calabria



**TOPIC OF THE MEETING: MANAGEMENT OF THE BIODYNAMIC OLIVE
ORCHARD**

PLACE: FAMILY MINISCI, LA MOLAZZA, C. da MEZOFATO 42, CALABRIA

DATE: Tuesday 16th and Wednesday 17th April 2019

The third international olive growers meeting in Italy followed the first one which was organised in Demeter certified olive orchard at Risca Grande in Portugal, in October 2016 and



second one in Greece, in April 2018 hosted by the company Epikouros in Kalamata region and Kontogiannis family from Korinthos. The initiative for professional meeting comes from the Section for Agriculture, Goetheanum (Jean-Michel Florin) and it was organised in cooperation with dr. Reto Ingold (Oekologie & Innovation), dr. Maja Kolar (GaiaMaia) and our host Minisci family from Calabria. The invitation to the meeting was sent to all Demeter certified olive growers and was opened to all interested people in biodynamic olives growing.

Goal of this year's meeting was to focus on:

- the management of the biodynamic olive orchard
- to deepen the exchange between olive oil producers internationally
- trying to find the ways to communicate with the consumers to make them aware of Biodynamics and high quality of Demeter certified olive oils

TUESDAY 16th April, MINISCI FAMILY, CALABRIA

PARTICIPANTS: Andreas Kurt BERNHARD (PT), Labis CHRISTOPOULOS (GR), Katsumi Luiz YAMAGUTI (BR), Edna YAMAGUTI (BR), Francesco LE DONNE (IT), Mario RIZZO (IT), M. SERRATORE (IT), Kostas STAMOU (GR), Eric REIFFSTECK (FR), Arcaro ROCCO (IT), Daniele BARLETTA (IT), Alfred ZEHNDER (PT), Claudia BUONFIGLIO (IT), Laura HILLERICH-ZEHNDER (PT), Carlo NORO (IT), Alberto BUA (IT), Anita MINISCI (IT), Zmago PETRIČ (SLO), Angelo MINISCI (IT), Reto INGOLD (CH), Maja KOLAR (SLO)

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Angelo Minisci welcomes all the participants in their company. He explained that the company Minisci is ran by himself and his two sisters, Maria Grazia and Anita. The company produces and markets extra virgin olive oil, fresh and processed fruit, vegetables and



candied fruits coated in superior quality chocolate. They are the third generation after their grandfather who established the company and running the business.

The Minisci company believes in organic farming and the cultivation of local products. It is certified Demeter, Naturland, Biosuisse, Jas and satisfies all the requirements foreseen by the NOP regulations relative to USDA standards.

They cooperate with the University of Naples, prof. Sacchi, as they believe the research is needed in order to develop further and research the process of quality.

They work in two different sectors: olive oil production on one hand and citrus (clementines, lemons, oranges, grapefruits and some other vegetables) on the other hand. For this reason they created a cooperative system.

Reto Ingold and Maja Kolar welcomed the participants from the Section and from the Demeter International.

VISITING THE COMPANY OF LA MOLAZZA

Angelo showed and explained the main steps in the processing of olives. 800 olive growers bring olives here for processing. Some of them bring the olives and they want to have their own olive oil back. It is somehow a tradition and they would like to keep it like this. Because of this also some conventional olive growers are bringing their olives and they are pressing it separately from organic one.

Most important aspects in the processing:

1. Staff (the relations and passion)
2. Hygiene
3. The quality control is a continuous process, important to stabilise the oil
4. Storage, filtration
5. Bottling
6. Flavouring of oil
7. Cleaning the tanks with hot water.

In the laboratory they are checking the quality with spectrometer. They are taking samples of olives from the trees and checking the quality. The results obtained from the measurements they realised there are differences in quality and it could be caused by different factors like: microclimate, soil, cultivar, the ripening phase, person who is working with the olives, altitude. In terms of sensory they found out that in general the biodynamic olives and olive oils are better in quality.



PRESENTATION FROM PROF. DR. RAFFAELE SACCHI

The Minisci family works in a close and constant collaboration with prof. dr. Raffaele Sacchi, a full professor of Food Science from the University of Naples because they are aware that practice and science should work hand in hand in order to improve quality and bring theory and new knowledge into the practice.

In the introduction part he explained some important facts about the quality of olive oil, the work that they are developing together in La Molazza and the connections between quality and biodynamics.



He pointed out the recent research topics like:

- Selection of olives and oils;
- Study of biophenols, flavour and oxidation stability;
- Checking up the critical points in processing of the olive oil;
- Innovation in malaxation, extraction, oil storage and filtration.
- New research about the olive fly and antagonist *Opius concolor*; the communication between the fly and the olive tree.
- Eco-physiological role of olives.

The development of a quality system is of crucial importance in olive oil production. Analyses are the first step in improving quality. The quality system can be established on this base. Critical points are checked and improvement of the processes can be based on these measurements.

(More in the attached PP presentation, Raffaele Sacchi, University of Naples).

TESTING OF OLIVE OIL

Participants were asked to bring their own olive oils in order to obtain an image and experience of different varieties of olive oils. The tastings was made according to sensoric description of quality of olive oil (O.N.A.O.O. <https://onao.it>). The instructions how to make the tasting was given by an experienced colleague from family Minisci.

We tried out olive oils from different regions in Italy, from Portugal, Slovenia, Tunisia.

Main goal of this exercise was to emphasize the unique quality of a certain place, climate and soil. To convince the consumers about an unique product, the producers have first to know their own products better.

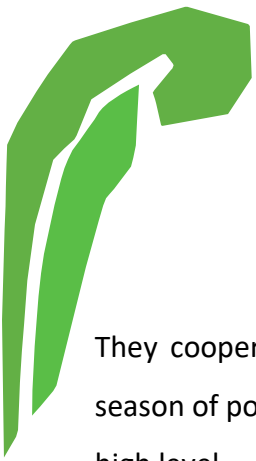


Minisci family is producing typical Calabria olive varieties that are: Dolce di Rossana, Leccino, Corolea and Tondino. Their Certified Organic Molazza Extra Virgin Olive Oil is made predominantly from Dolce di Rossana olives which yields a thick, soft oil with a mild almondy flavour.

VISITING THE OLIVE ORCHARD FROM FAMILY MINISCI

The Minisci farm lies in a unique, rich territory on a sunny plain of Sibari, with mild temperate climate. They are growing 50 ha of olives and 55 ha of peaches and nectarines on the location that was visited. The whole farm is certified Demeter.

Olive trees are related with particular characteristic of immortality, low nitrogen, low organic matter and all these is connected with quality. The plants grow vigorous and strong and can be observed that they are connected with the tradition and history of the place. Because of the good climate conditions (windy every day) they do not need a lot of control and do not have big problems with pests and diseases. They make one treatment of copper per year. They are cutting the trees every second year what is strongly related to the management of the farm.



They cooperate with the beekeepers who bring their bees into the peach orchard in the season of pollination. The diversity of plants and herbs that are growing in the orchard is on a high level.

They dedicate a special area for making compost heaps and composting. They cooperate with another farmer for bringing the manure. They make the compost out of residues from olive mill, cut grass, olive leaves and manure. During the summer there is irrigation to maintain the humidity and the low temperature for the compost microflora to survive. Two times a year the compost heap is moved to bring in enough oxygen.



In the evening session everybody from the group presented himself and his own project in olive growing and making olive oil.



WEDNESDAY 17th April, LA MOLAZZA

ASPECTS OF WORKING WITH BIODYNAMIC PREPARATIONS IN THE OLIVE ORCHARD- LECTURE FROM CARLO NORO

Carlo Noro is a professional preparation maker from Labico, 45 km south of Rome. On his farm he produces biodynamic preparations that are sold throughout Italy and also exported to other European countries. He is working in collaboration with dr. Michele Lorenzetti, a biodynamic winegrower and consultant. In the last decade they are cooperating with different universities on the research of biodynamic preparations, like for instance the microbiological analyses of 500.

We invited him to share with us his great knowledge and experiences that he has collected working and making the biodynamic preparations.

In the introductory part of his lecture Carlo pointed out that Anthroposophy is an important basis, the concept of life. Dr. Rudolf Steiner gave us with the Agriculture Course the important instructions how to make preparations and our task is to develop them further. We are the ones who have to solve the problems appearing in agriculture today as we have instruments to make the medicine, the preparations. The main objective of agriculture is to produce healthy food. Quality food is essential for healthy life.

1. ASPECT - REGENERATION OF SOIL

Who feeds the soil? Plants and plant roots and it's excretes. We have to ensure that the seeds express the secret in it, to develop the life. Leguminose (lupines, trifolium, ...) are superficial plants because they live in symbiosis with bacteria. Also grasses and other plants like Brasicacae are important because their roots have the ability to go deep into the soil. With them bacteria can go into the deeper level of the soil. Without biodiversity of species, recolonization of the soil is not possible.



In collaboration with a research institute they found out that there are over 1600 different bacteria species and over 200 colonies of fungi in the preparation 500. Carlo reported that the scientists were astonished about the richness and diversity of life that can be measured in the preparation. They also found out that by using 500 (and its bacteria) the roots are stimulated to develop deeper into the soil profile.

2. ASPECT- PREPARATION 500

Dynamisation of 500 is a physical action and by this we activate 500.

Acclimatisation is an important step in preparing the 500. We prepare pure water with around 15 °C and bring the preparation from storage into this water. We should warm the water gradually to 30 °C by addition of warm water. We increase the temperature slowly in order not to destroy the bacteria. This procedure takes around 10-20 minutes. The distribution technique of 500 is really important. Carlo prefers the **distribution** by hands as with the different machines the soil is compacted too much.



3. ASPECT - COMPOSTING AND INNOCULATION OF THE COMPOST PILE WITH COMPOST PREPARATIONS

In biodynamics the compost technique is very important. It is easy and difficult to make a good compost at the same time. We need to observe the process. In nature all the organic matter accumulated in plants return to the soil. Microorganisms use organic matter and transfer it into the humus of the soil. There is an agronomic mistake in general to bring inside the soil big masses of organic matter. In biodynamics the green manure is not fully incorporated into the soil but it is left on the surface. It is important to remain roots in the soil, the degradation of roots increase the production of humus. Minimal working of soils, partly moving the soil is feeding the plants. Ripper only partly move the soil. It looks chaotic but makes the microorganisms work well. Biodynamic preparations support processes and regenerate soil.

Rudolf Steiner did not speak about olives directly. But our grandfathers never fertilised olives. An olive orchard is not made only for 10 years, but for several generations.

Due to lack of time Carlo just briefly explained how to make the different compost preparations and outside he guided us how to inoculate a compost heap with the compost preparations.





The first thing that we need to take into consideration is to wait that the temperature in the compost heap is stabilised, that means it remains below 50 °C. We insert the preparations 20-25 cm deep as the demolition of organic matter begins on the surface and not in the deep. Anaerobic processes still can happen in the deep of the compost.

After 2-3 months, the temperature of the compost heap is around 25 °C and this is the time to make a distribution. We can make a test with water in order to be sure that it is ripe.

More details about the preparation work from Carlo Noro you can find:

https://www.sektion-landwirtschaft.org/fileadmin/SLW/Literatur/Praeparatestudie/The_biodynamic_preparations_in_context_EN.pdf

THE MARKETING OF BIODYNAMIC OLIVE OIL – ANITA MINISCI

Anita Minisci presented us the experiences in the marketing of olive oil and the current situation of Demeter products in Italy. In the last 10 years Biodynamic agriculture has developed and extended a lot. It seems it was pushed by demand and not by the farmers. This growth came so quickly that we doubt if it worked very well. It seems that Demeter today is an instrument to point out quality, not the philosophy anymore. Biodynamic agriculture and Demeter mark became now so important that all wholesalers want to get it. It is not in line with Demeter as producers need time to grow and find their way with Biodynamics. This is really the responsibility that we have.

It seems nowadays that biodynamics and Demeter are the key for consumers to paradise, everybody wants to have Demeter in Germany. Out of this aspect we have a strong responsibility to make sure that consumers know what they get with Demeter. We need vision to tell the consumers, we need to meet each other to share our problems and go further. We need to share the concept of Biodynamic Olive growing to get this vision clear.



We speak about olive sector but we are not the only ones with this problem. In this context olive growers have a big responsibility and can be the teachers because of the history and the long tradition. Olive oil has a story and this is the right instrument to teach. Demeter olive producers should take part in this big change which also includes a big risk (that the consumers can get disappointed!).

Supermarkets are calling every day and they press as they want to have Demeter products. It is a dangerous situation and we need to find a solution. It is a big question what will happen with small specialised organic shops. If the supermarkets want to have biodynamics in their vision, they can get it without Demeter mark with their own inspection body that is accredited. Such a label could be established it only to get the quantities. This situation has already happened in Italy. Biodynamics is not protected enough. What will happen if there will be a confusion of low and high level Biodynamics? The consumer will not know what is good and what is bad quality, what is the right and what is the wrong way.

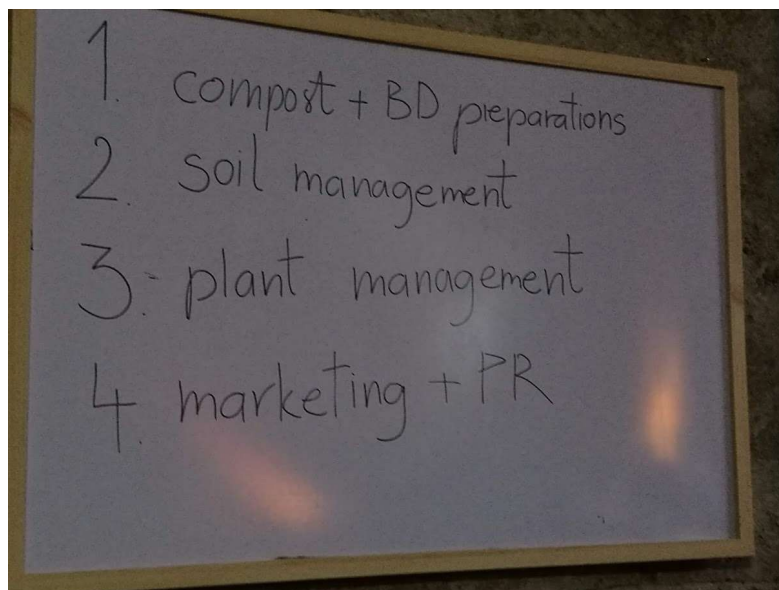
In her opinion Demeter should take care of their evolution, focus on the vision, the system and the research.



The inspection bodies should really take care to work on a high level. More people are needed in Education, Advisory and research to share this knowledge.

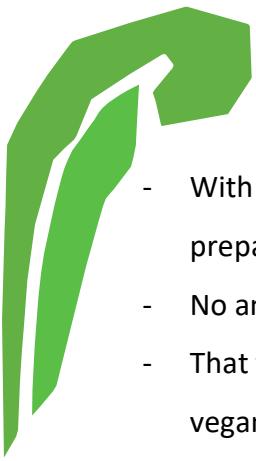
WORKING GROUPS

We continued our work in the four small working groups trying to find out how can we show our story from different fields of biodynamics to the consumers. Most of the consumers want to have a simple message. It is a challenge how to tell the story to the consumer not too simple and with respect to the whole complexity.



1. COMPOST AND BIODYNAMIC PREPARATIONS

- Need to observe what the olive tree is telling us from thousands of years;
- We can have the situation where we have animals/no animals in the orchard;

- 
- With Indigenous animals in the orchard: compost out of manure, preparations inoculate the compost;
 - No animals – green manure, mulch it, semi-dig it – 500P = make a surface composting;
 - That will cause a problem- two production system, it is complicated, one can be nearly vegan and could be dangerous;
 - This might be a way to be opened with the olive plantation;
 - For DI both options are good, for Demeter Italy one option (with animals) is good;
 - It just shows the difficulties how to find the way to explain this to the customers.

2. SOIL MANAGEMENT

- Want to improve, develop the soil – this is the message to give to consumer;
- Care about soil because it is alive, the soil must nourish the plant, not diminish biodiversity in the soil;
- Olive growing consumes nearly no nutrients;
- We want to keep soil green;
- To cut as late as possible;
- Our techniques are mulching, ripper, no tillage (not turning the soil);
- We sow additional crops, mix of diverse plants;
- Green manuring is very important, keep it over winter to protect against erosion.

3. PLANT MANAGEMENT

- What are the essential elements to consider before making a new olive plantation?

The points to consider are 5:

1) Production area and climate of the territory.

Plain - Hill - Terraces.

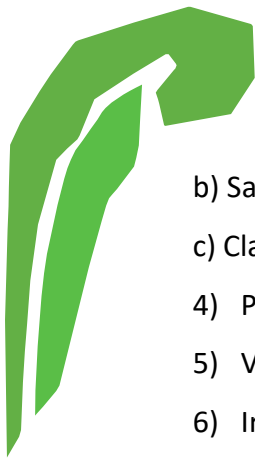
2) Type of land:

a) Deep soil

b) Land with little soil and maybe stony ground

3) Type of terrain:

a) Medium mixture



- b) Sandy
- c) Clay or silt
- 4) PH of the soil
- 5) Varietal Choice of Olive Cultivar
- 6) Irrigation system

4. DEMETER TRADEMARK – MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

- DEMETER is the name of the brand;
- Protect the brand;
- The strongest promising brand worldwide;
- Demeter is a fashion right now;
- Develop the brand, luxury brand, what is behind the brand;
- Association of olive growers;
- To be heard by politicians;
- We prefer the old one with the flower;
- Doesn't show anything what the meaning behind is;
- What happened in Switzerland, traditional shops are closing down, supermarkets have organic in their hands;
- Only the big ones will take over;
- Big choices- on which side they want to be;
- It is so easy, there is so much money on the table;
- The biggest can come and eat all the cake at once;
- To be protected – we do not feel protected;
- The more the brand gets strong, the less strong anybody is who shows up.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE MEETING

- That kind of meetings are very important;
- We are not enough people in the olive sector and in biodynamics all over;
- Everybody of us must take the right steps in order to be close to our vision;

- Not enough advisors, experienced staff;
- Few people are aware of the standards;
- The main objectives, the protection of the environment, healthy food;
- The part of the protection is missing;
- Educating of the farmers and also consumers;
- The supermarkets are calling the way that they say: we just know that you have Demeter products we ask for the products and they do not know what is behind (inspection, certification, philosophy).
- We are in the beginning of a big change. We have to do the right steps now. The other opportunity is chemical agriculture. We need to focus on our agriculture. We can't go back. We need to change the system (worldwide).
- We are here a group of experts in olive growing and we need to add a story and standards of olive oil making. We need to add the voice of experts. From the BD practice. It is not about the theoretical concept, it is from the practice. Tell the story of the olives.

We would like to thank again the Minisci family , their employees and friends who hosted us in the best possible way from the beginning until the end with extraordinary, delicious food and traditional music and dance.



Minutes: Maja Kolar, Slovenia 24-7-2019