

January 1st, 2008

Patrick's Biodynamic Farm Newsletter

2007 was a good year for growing as you well know if you are a regular at the farm. Last year was also the start for other things too. Our cow, Daisy, we think was successfully bred so she will probably calf in March. Also, we purchased 50 chicks from Honolulu for egg production. Those eggs have been drifting down steadily for the past few months. Pu'u O Hoku Ranch Beef from Moloka'i has also been available to the delight of the omnivorous.

What a strange thing it is that there is still so little Certified Organic grass fed beef raised and marketed in Hawai'i. Is it that people don't care? After all what grows so well in our climate? Grass. And guess what likes to eat it? Cattle. What is probably the best fertilizer for composting? Cow manure. Well managed grassland improves when cattle are properly managed. The wheels turn slowly for Biodynamic farm systems especially when most folk are sold on Organic agriculture which brings me to this point. Most conventional farms converting to organic have simply substituted A for B in terms of fertility inputs. Conventional chemical agriculture inputs mineralized and processed fertilizers from off the farm while conventional Organic systems import their nutrients in the form of manure or other natural material in the same way. Of course you ask well what's the problem?

Both systems are not creating needed fertility on the farm and are at the whims of whomever is supplying the materials. Also, there is the nagging question of what is in the imported fertilizers. The Biodynamic Farm strives to create fertility on the farm which IS sustainable agriculture. So, any entity trying to sell itself as sustainable without the caveat of working toward or having a "closed farm system" is deceptive and bogus.

There are varying degrees of sustainability and that is what is confusing these days. For instance, the label "Natural" also muddies the waters when looking for an acceptable food source. It seems to me that the sooner people make the connection between the environment and what we put into our mouths the better our natural resources such as water, soil, and air will become for they have been squandered for short term profit for the powers that be.

Now, where does Patrick's Ha'iku Biodynamic Farm fall in terms of sustainability? Given what I was born into and the resources given, the farm is somewhere inbetween total Biodynamic (closed farm system) and conventional Organic. I do import manure and greenwaste material for compost on the Organic side. Biodynamically I do use the compost preparations, and field sprays to enhance and enliven the compost and soil. The chicken yard compost is the closest Biodynamic material on the farm and does go beyond your average compost. The important part of this exercise is to bring awareness to the public about implementing healthy agricultural practice.

There's nothing much to say about 2008 since it's just started. I hope this next year is just as fulfilling and productive as the last and look forward to seeing you smile as always on Friday and Saturday vegetable pick up times.

Patrick