

## From the project Regulation of Dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*), 2003-2009<sup>1</sup>

Walter Weidmann, Bach's ZH, reported by Albert de Vries

### The intuitive action

"I saw the dock problem as one of the biggest problems when I switched to organic farming in 1995. My father had been fighting the dock chemically for decades, but they are still everywhere. I could never get enthusiastic about the stabbing. At the edge of the forest, where extensification took place, there were no more dock. This extensification would be a way to get rid of the dock, but for economic reasons it cannot be done all over the farm.

I had another problem. Every year I worked in a nature reserve, a reed near the farm, where litter was mown and then removed. But nobody wanted to have the litter. The litter is a mixture of rushes and marsh grasses, with a lot of horsetail and mint in it.

Then I had the idea to spread the litter on the harvested corn fields and to work it in while ploughing. The litter was spread in autumn. Afterwards I plowed. Afterwards it looked terrible. The plants were so long and tough that they looked out of the ground everywhere. In spring the new sowing was done with artificial meadow.

After the maize harvest the soil is very compacted, because the maize can only be harvested very late on our slopes and the soil no longer dries up. Normally you would have to work twice with the harrow in spring to get the soil fine enough for sowing. Now once was enough. The soil was loose and crumbly. The dock had not all disappeared, but the field was not recognizable. The meadow resulted in a very good yield.

Since then we have also applied this procedure to the other maize fields. The dock didn't disappear completely, but they don't cause such a strong panic anymore."

### What led to this plot?

"The experience of extensification at the edge of the forest was an occasion to experiment in this direction within the project. Various experiments were carried out. A fertilizer experiment on one plot of one hectare of crop rotation area and one plot in the new orchard. For various reasons, however, the experiments were not carried out consistently. Nevertheless it led to an intensification of the observation of the dock way of life. I noticed, for example, that the best soil was present around the root, with many worms. This led to the question: Can I support the soil in such a way that this effect occurs everywhere? And: Can I do what the dock do, namely bring air into the soil, myself?

These experiences were complemented by the points of view that we worked out during the six-monthly working meetings. Within the framework of the project, it means saying YES to the dock and not just being fixated on "how do I get rid of them". The idea of help is then: "If the farmer does in practice what the dock shows him, then the dock no longer needs to do it". The point is not to eradicate the dock, but to learn from the dock and to integrate in a meaningful way into the farm what the dock perhaps do in an exaggerated way. The expectation is that the dock will

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<sup>1</sup> For the full report (A. de Vries, et al.; 2010: Biodynamic agriculture as a culture of intuition. Using the example of the regulation of dock) see [www.academievoorervarendleren.nl](http://www.academievoorervarendleren.nl)

disappear with time. By means of a living perception<sup>2</sup> we came to "creatively spreading out" or "spreading out creating", "holding out spreading out" as what the dock does. The verbs came because they settled into the movement that became visible in the rosette as well as in the rootstock or leaf as an outwardly striving movement that was at the same time grasping in the core, grumpy, squat. Professions such as discus throwers, bassoonists and bakers came along the way to condense and express the experienced qualities of these movements".

### **Background of the project**

As a biodynamic farmer, I accept the farm as it is. I seek the encounter with the individuality of the farm, from whose laws I would like to act. From saying yes, a connection with the situation, the challenge is taken up to creatively design the farm as an individuality. In this way we can help the potential of the farm to its right and its power.

With the maintenance of cycles the basis for the individuality of the farm is laid and at the same time the possibility for the farm and the farmer to learn from the experience increases.

Durability is founded in this situational action and learning. In this sense, biodynamic agriculture is intuitive agriculture.

Society fights in various fields to maintain or even develop the current autonomous decision-making authority. It is time to focus on and cultivate the intuitive approach.

Does everyone then have to find out for themselves how to proceed? Yes - and at the same time you can learn from others. Learning from individual cases requires experiential learning instead of school learning (De Vries, 2004).

In an intuitive agriculture, the results can only be examples of how everyone finds their own way. At the same time, there is something to be said about the area that this path leads to when one tries to replace the dock. It is the area that is indicated by the will direction of the dock: "holding out spreading".

It also became clear in this project, where space was given specifically for the intuitive, that the questions must be existential. Only then does intuition come.

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<sup>2</sup> A. de Vries (2004): Cultivating experiential learning. R. Steiner (1920): Limits of knowledge of nature.