

# PROSPECTUS 2020-2022

Now with ONLINE training – available  
throughout southern Africa



Accredited Diploma  
On-farm, 2-year training  
in Organic and  
Biodynamic Agriculture

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## Introduction:

**Through on-farm organic and biodynamic training we aim to address the aspirations of the youth to create a new agriculture.**

Surrounded by the challenges of climate crisis, trans boundary spread of disease through animals and humans, poor food quality and the escalating food costs, our course aims to play a pro-active part in addressing these challenging issues.

We believe that knowledge is best learnt through doing and for this reason we have a number of key farming partners who are either practicing or converting to Organic or Biodynamic agriculture. It is on these farms where learners get real practical experience. Most of our learners live full time on the farms where their learnership takes place, but a minimum of 3 days on-farm participation is also acceptable on our programme. They work alongside the farmer or trainer and gain invaluable insights into the practical realities of farming. Entrepreneurship or Enterprise Management is also a key component of our learnership programme and we aim to provide a good foundation for individuals who want to manage their own enterprise or who wish to enter the agricultural sector with credible and relevant, vocational training.

Biodynamic Agriculture's holistic approach to agroecological and organic agriculture is to build a FARM ORGANISM in which all the elements of the farm are

interconnected thus creating a unique farm individuality.

Essential to our training programme is the belief that innovative co-working and co-operative partnering between students and farmers through enterprise creation and practice, results in benefits for both students and farmers.



## Two-year accredited diploma:

The training combines practical work on farms with training workshops throughout the year. Furthermore, the workshops are experiential and aim to acknowledge new ways of knowing to encourage each student to discover creative solutions as the next generation of farmers and gardeners.

Our course has transitioned to **online** with around 12 days online and 5 to 10 days practicals (depending on farm trainer) per annum. So, you can based on your own farm or garden, from anywhere in southern Africa (includes neighbouring countries) and be part of the training programme.

Now in our 8<sup>th</sup> year (going on 9 years) of existence, the course is well tested and we are excited to be looking at a larger student intake, as well as more host farms.

Our Diploma offers the following:

- Full-time or part-time, on-farm practical work experience on a variety of organic and biodynamic working farms, to gain meaningful experience in a variety of farming activities, and experience various adaptations of agriculture relevant to farm size, climate, topography, location and other factors;
- Practical entrepreneurial experience in the form of an enterprise development module;
- A strong theoretical component, in addition to seminars



## Benefits

Benefits for farmers or enterprise holders by taking on a learner through our training programme:

The host farms benefit from upskilling of their employees and management. This in turn contributes to:  
Social responsibility and upliftment;  
Development of middle management; Better productivity,  
Alignment with global best practice; Farming community connectivity;

Benefits for students:

Carefully compiled content and curriculum recognising growing cycles and practical considerations unique to our environment.

Land based – on the farm (full-time or minimum 3 days p/week). Although our reading list is comprehensive (and we stock many of the books in our resource centre), we encourage you to learn by doing.

Entrepreneurial skills - we encourage independent and entrepreneurial sustainable best practice, not only in farming but also developing people.

Better employment prospects – you will be graduating with 2 year hands-on, land-based, experience.

Connected to the wider like-minded agricultural community

Pooling of local knowledge and insights into global best practice with our visiting international lecturers

Conscious alignment with like-minded people

Take the learning back 'home' and transfer knowledge to the wider community.

## Upon completion

You will have an accredited Diploma with an understanding of:

The principles and practices of biodynamic and organic agriculture;

The farm or agricultural entity as a complex eco system/farm organism;

What it means to run an agricultural enterprise;

The international benchmark of Demeter Standards;

Personal development and Reflective practice skills.

## Programme structure

The Biodynamic Agricultural Training Group coordinates the training and supplements the practical learning with courses designed to inspire a deepened understanding of biodynamic agriculture. As mentioned before, Learners are expected to participate fully in the life of the farm.

In addition, seminars on key subjects are arranged by us according to the Unit standards. Assessments and tasks are set at these seminars which must be completed to the required Unit Standard learning outcome criteria, and within the set target time frame. These assessments are included in the learners' portfolio of evidence which are assessed and then quality controlled before being submitted for a final audit for the certificate awarding process. The keeping of a daily diary which must be signed off by the trainer/employer, a portfolio of evidence and the independent completion of assessed work is an essential component of the training.

Seminars are held throughout the year either online or for those who can attend, in person. Training plan dates are available upon request. All lectures, course notes, basic accommodation (where possible) and most of the seminar meals are included in the monthly fees where applicable. (Learners who are able

to attend but with special dietary needs or who wish for specific accommodation may have to contribute to these separately.)

A number of our seminar sessions are given by international speakers when they visit and we endeavour to coordinate our seminars to accommodate these visits for the benefit of our learners. Where possible we will endeavour to host our speakers on digital platforms instead and we are working on this aspect. It is compulsory to attend/join in every seminar in full.

## Learning hours and methods

We host workshops/seminars either on a digital platform or in person. Seminars are presented and hosted by experts in their field and at times includes international speakers. Attendance is compulsory.

The learnership is self-study and farmer guided.

We use a variety of assessment criteria such as written assignments, oral presentations, diaries, research and projects and group-based witness statements. Notional learning hours are allocated to each unit.

## Syllabus:

### Unit Title:

The following organic and biodynamic unit standards are aligned for competencies or outcomes:

Farm organism;  
Preparations;  
Habitat management;  
Soil science & phenomenology;  
Farm fertility;  
Soil cultivation;  
Composting;  
Land-based machinery;  
Plant science & phenomenology;  
Seeds;  
Animal science & phenomenology;  
Agricultural astronomy;  
Weather;  
People and agriculture;  
Nature and human life;  
Nutrition and food;  
Enterprise planning;  
Reflective practice.

Land-based farming practice can include 2 optional units:

Vegetable growing;  
Fruit growing;  
Flower growing;  
Herb growing;  
Seed production;  
Protected crop growing;  
Grassland and fodder;  
Arable production;  
Cattle husbandry;  
Sheep husbandry,  
Goat husbandry;  
Pig husbandry;  
Poultry husbandry;  
Dairy husbandry;

and 1 optional unit from this group:

Bee husbandry;  
Fencing;  
Land based social pedagogy;  
On-farm processing; and  
Sustainable resource management.



# Human Animal Plant Soil

## What's expected of you?

You should keep a detailed daily diary with reflections on daily learning and insights which will form part of your Portfolio of Evidence (POE).

You must carry out all tasks assigned to you as part of the learnership training programme by the trainer/farmer.

Attendance or online participation of all seminars throughout the year where practical and theoretical workshops are used to deliver the course content. From time to time international speakers contribute. Regular Zoom/other channels are also used to conduct study sessions, hold discussions and provide essential feedback.

Assignments and set criteria are given. Deadlines must be adhered to and all other requirements to support the portfolio of evidence. Feedback is given and received during the IQA (internal quality assurance) cycles.

The Portfolio of evidence along with IQA are submitted to external EQA (external quality assurance) party who assure the diploma on our behalf. The final submission is made to award the diploma.

As mentioned before, the Programme structure is based on Unit standards which cover the main aspects of Soil, Plant, Animal and Human. These are Assessed through Learning Outcomes. A portfolio of evidence is built up based on this and will include photographs, witness statements, diary and reflective practices.

You will need to set aside time on a weekly basis to consolidate your learning, be it practical or theoretical. Checking in with your trainer/farmer regarding questions or specific details on a daily basis or at least weekly is recommended.

**Essential:** Access to internet and a computer or a good cell phone (preferably with a scanner app) are essential for submitting work for assessment (we currently use DropBox) and for participating in on-line content delivery and connecting. Data is therefore also required.



# Entry Requirements

We review each application individually, however the following general guidelines for accepting applications are also used:

**Age** The applicant should ideally be over the age of **twenty-one** (21). However, if all the other criteria are met, we may decide that someone under this age is eligible for the learnership.

**Language** Although BDAASA acknowledge the diverse language use in our country, the course content (written and oral) will be conducted in English. All applicants must be fluent in written and oral English communication skills.

**Numeracy** The applicant should at least meet the requirement for NQF Level 4, or Matric equivalent with Mathematics or Maths Literacy.

**Physically able** The applicant should be physically able to carry out such tasks as are demanded by the nature of the work at the particular farm.

**Interest and motivation** The person applying should have the interest and motivation to work with the land, and be able to understand what it means to learn practically.

**Attitude** The person applying should be able to work independently and as part of a team.

**Criminal Convictions** Learners will be required to disclose their criminal history/any convictions whereupon BDAASA will consider whether such convictions are compatible with a place on this programme.

**Alcohol and Drugs** The learnership programme is mindful of the welfare of its entire learnership body and is concerned that the use of alcohol and/or drugs by its learnership body should not impair their health and social life. Learners applying will be required to disclose their drug usage history/any convictions. (BDAASA will consider whether such usage/convictions are compatible with a placement).

**Variations** Due to the diverse nature of the individual farms (employers) participating in this learnership programme, each farm (employer) may stipulate variations on the general guidelines for entry requirements. For example some farms (employers) will require the learner to hold a valid and current driving license. Others farms (employers) will require a learner to work and live with people with special needs. These will be discussed during the interview stage.

# Fees

## **Payment and accommodation**

Learners are expected to participate fully in the life of the farm. Accommodation may be offered to full-time learners. However if this is not possible the learner will be responsible for his/ her own accommodation and transport.

Some farms may cover the monthly learnership fee or provide a small allowance or pay a wage, which is entirely at their own discretion, however not all farms will offer this and the *learner is responsible for ensuring that all course costs are covered.*

It is also possible that a learner will participate in the programme as unemployed or as a volunteer.

## **Monthly fee and registration:**

Due to the flexible and individualized nature of the programme, fees are quoted on before the enrolment of any student.

In some cases, fees may be subsidised depending on all the criteria being met and this will be discussed also prior to enrolment.

Please request an obligation-free quote as our training programme is both flexible and individualised to meet the unique needs of each farm enterprise and student.

# APPLICATION PROCESS



## 1. PROSPECTUS

Thoroughly read the Prospectus. Email us with any questions you have or to set up an initial chat.

Email : [training@bdaasa.org.za](mailto:training@bdaasa.org.za).

## 2. INTERESTED? LETS CONNECT!

You can email us to set up an appointment to chat via Whatsapp/Zoom/Skype or telephonic. We will send you an obligation-free inquiry form so that we have all the necessary information. If you are interested in taking things further we will approach a farm enterprise on your behalf if necessary to establish if there is a suitable placement and what their conditions are generally.

Email: [training@bdaasa.org.za](mailto:training@bdaasa.org.za)



## 3. QUOTE

We will simultaneously present you with a quote which will include registration costs, monthly fees etc as well as our T's & C's. If you accept that quote in writing, we begin the enrollment process.

## 4. ENROLL

Once we have ironed out the placement details and the quote has been approved we begin the enrollment process whereby you will have to fill in the enrollment forms and any supporting documents etc. Then we get you started ASAP on the programme!



## Next step:

### Prospective Students:

E-mail Training Academic administrator:

[training@bdaasa.org.za](mailto:training@bdaasa.org.za) You can set up an appointment to chat or to get an obligation free inquiry form.

### **Alternatively:**

Do you want more information on farm participation or to start a conversation with us about consulting, ad hoc training, mentoring, or customized training on your farm?

Email Helen van Zyl: [Programme co-ordinator:](#)

## Short introductory online sessions on biodynamics

We offer short online sessions throughout the year. Would you like more information or to be added to our notifications? Please email [training@bdaasa.org.za](mailto:training@bdaasa.org.za)

These will be presented by Helen van Zyl and guest speakers.

### **Non-accredited – foundation programme:**

Please enquire if this is of interest to you. Email [training@bdaasa.org.za](mailto:training@bdaasa.org.za)



## Credentials:

We are endorsed by Crossfields UK (regulated by OFQUAL) as well as locally AgriSeta Accredited through Agriskills Transfer Pty Ltd. We are members of BFDI (Biodynamic Federation Demeter International), IFOAM, International Biodynamic Association and SAOSA (South African Organic Association).

BDAASA is a NPO and has PBO status.

NPO Registration Number: 106-491-NPO

PBO Number: 930066484

Our financials are independently audited annually.



## Contact us:

Programme  
coordinator:

Helen van Zyl

[helen@bdaasa.org.za](mailto:helen@bdaasa.org.za)

We are always happy to chat.  
Connect with us and lets  
schedule a  
Zoom/Skype/WhatsApp  
session.

Academic  
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Biodynamic Training Website:  
<http://www.bdatraining.org>

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Biodynamic agriculture training - South  
Africa



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