

Permaculture Farming

A Natural Revolution



Sepp Holzer - the Rebel Farmer of Austria

Our initial plans were to introduce wonderful Sepp Holzer to you, along with his internationally celebrated, beautiful Permaculture farm Krameterhof in Austria. There, the Holzer family has lived on this ever-thriving and expanding hillside paradise for decades. But then we thought again: What will many people and groups need first and foremost, even before they might plant seeds and maybe practice Sepp's amazing Permaculture approach on their Spaces of Love, their Kin's Domains? And we had to answer: They will need land. And more so, many of you will need help with the acquisition of land.

The information below, which Sepp graciously shared with us, is not necessarily focused upon methods of obtaining government land. But we nevertheless see it as a courageous call-to-action and call to take heart, for all of us, from a man who has been called the Rebel Farmer for good reason. (The latter is also the title of his wonderful book.) While Sepp, assisted by his son Josef, is now in great demand as Permaculture authority and trainer internationally, and finally considered a national treasure by many people in Austria and around the world, his life as a farmer of unusual growing-methods has been quite challenging - and NOT via challenges from Mother Earth, although those have been many. But Sepp has had to fight and face down the most amazing opposition to his simple wish to practice agricultural methods upon his family's land which were neither understood nor appreciated by bureaucratic systems which seemed intent on thwarting his efforts at every turn.

Right along with all those challenges, Sepp and his wife Veronica, along with their beautiful children, maintained their good-natured spirits and thriving Garden of Eden on their mountain side.

Sepp himself was inspired more recently by a courageous Czech Mayor, Petr Pavek, who seems to have taken matters into his own hands with regard to the menace of bureaucratic control. Pavek's community, it appears, sports signs at the entrance and exit to the township, forbidding bureaucrats from entering, with the penalty for perpetrators set at 10.000 CZK. More power to those two!

May Sepp's Open Letter and the letter of Michael Schilt, here reprinted by special permission, serve to inspire our undertakings as we go out into the world to introduce another way of life which will feel threatening to some, and might need heartfelt strength and loving, soulful fortitude.

Thank you, dear Holzers! May we all move forward at the exact clip which is needed to help our beautiful Mother Earth to right herself and turn into the paradise we see in our shared vision!



Open Letter to Members of the Political, Economic and Scientific Communities

by Sepp Holzer

Owner: Permaculture Krameterhof, Austria

My vision for a responsible, natural life.

The presenting problems and my proposal for their solution:

We come into the world, usually in a sterile hospital where immediately, our natural roots are cut. We are then inoculated and nursed with a chemical cocktail and begin our journey into and through an unnatural world, increasingly severed from Nature and from natural processes. Instead, would not a natural birth in the circle of one's family and a natural childhood be the correct start for the future life of a young person? And should not every planetary citizen have the birthright to their own piece of earth upon which they could develop and maintain their essential need to be nurtured and sustained by their natural environment? I maintain that a land reform which confirms these realities is long overdue.

By growing up in insulation and isolation from Nature and our *Mitlebewesen*, the creatures co-existing with us, we lose the natural relationship to our environment. Growing up in symbiosis with plants, animals and humans, however, enables an experience of meaningful belonging and sharpens the task and ability to act as a

thoughtful individual, the task of mastering the challenge of Directing rather than Fighting. By observing the life all around us, our *Mitlebewesen*, do we discover that Nature is perfect already and that Creation has considered everyone; that everything is in relationship one with the other and that there is nothing to improve.

Our task is to conserve and protect this perfection.

There are no "dumb-ones" or "clever-ones" in Nature. Everyone can find their way if they are not managed and patronized. It is us humans who create the Dumb and the Clever, so that we can then exploit the "weaker-ones". With my projects with human beings all over the world (adults, children, orphans, alley and homeless children etc.), I made only the very best experiences. But do I patronize them? No! Rather, I offer them a space to unfold and experience their own abilities. Experiences of success, joy and honest acknowledgment are the highest wages, the best therapy and also make great economic sense. A practical example for this would be my life assistance project BERTA in Bad Aussee/ Steiermark. It is the first wheel-chair *Holzer Permakultur* installation in Europe.

Generational problems - a large gap in our society.

Our parents and grandparents languish away in utter boredom in old people's homes. Their children and grandchildren are "dumbing down," as it is called, by way of computer and video games and sitting in front of their television sets. It is an evolutionary given that our Elders should pass on their experiences and wisdom to their children and grandchildren. The children are entitled to this and, with such guidance, can prepare themselves so much better for their lives. We must become aware of the fact that we have been committing a tragic mistake here. However, a *Generationenhaus* (Ed: residential complexes which revive the tradition of multi-generational living to normalize the challenges of elder and child-care) and community projects would go a long way to help close this gap in our society.

Education - Specialization - Progress - "Dumbing Down"

Education should be devoted, half and half, to practical experience and theory: to every Kindergarten belongs its own food-garden; to each school its own agricultural establishment and to each University a working farm. Those should be the natural places for exploration and practical experience and the training centers for the future of our children and thus, for the future of society.

By way of today's modern, so called progressive, education, young people are educated away from Nature and lose their deep roots. If we have been unable to observe the connections, reciprocal effects and symbioses in the cycles of Nature, we will also be unable to recognize and understand them. We will also be unable to link ourselves into Creation's cycle of perfection. What is the consequence? Instead of understanding how the cycles of Nature function, we believe we can improve them and begin fighting instead of grasping them. Your task should always be a mere directing of Nature, never intervening *with* Nature. Common sense and creative thinking are most necessary.

Our children and grandchildren are "dumbed down" in their schools and universities, and some are lost to us completely, but rarely because the teachers and professors are becoming more ignorant as well. But no, this occurs because teachers must teach a curriculum which they frequently do not even support. They agree to be the pawns of politicians and lobbyists. However where there is a will, dear Professor, there is always a way! But if our teaching professionals depend upon political support, or that of lobbyists, then they can and will not be able to affect change. The theoretical sciences have so removed themselves from practical and experiential considerations that they have become neither comprehensible nor useful to the majority of the

population [which they are to serve]. Several integral parts of this essential cycle have already been lost. To this day, neither the scientific nor the political communities have responded appropriately to the tremendous ongoing environmental degradation (with results such as Global Warming). Financial interests and corruption seem to be at the root of this lack of responsibility and appropriate action. The disasters which will necessarily ensue will take on proportions which can only cause the ultimate collapse of such a sick and ailing system.

The contamination of the air, the water and the soil.

The contamination of the air, the water and the soil as a consequence of the use of chemical and artificial fertilizers as part of monoculture farming robs us of a healthy foundation for life. Food is our medicine. The farmer is supposed to produce food for life, and not merely to fill bellies with chemically contaminated, inferior, burdened and burdening mono-cultured food. The farmer, as teacher, shall model to his fellow men respectful relationships with their *Mitlebewesen*, the plants and animals of Mother Earth. Unfortunately, reality looks very different. European Union Guidelines und subventions have made the farmer dependent, even addicted to that process. The farmer has been degraded to that of a subsidy recipient. Premium-payments are there to make up for the restrictions and limitations. These promotions or so-called compensations represent nothing but a partial damage-payment for a failed agriculture policy of national and European Union laws and regulations. "Expand or fold" is the motto of the European Union.

Specialization, modernization and mass-meat production.

Animals are treated as mere commodities. The relationship with our *Mitlebewesen*, the creatures which co-exist with us, is lost. The result is mass and massive animal-torture. Further consequences are the crippling effects upon these, our *Mitlebewesen*, by way of de-horning, clipping of bills, wings or tails, electrical shock by way of cattle-trainers, mutilation by way of careless ear marking, etc.. A creature who has been abused in such a way cannot provide healthy food. If the animal does not feel well, its meat will be burdened as well.

The farmer represents the living soul of the people! If the farmer dies, the country dies! Old cultural lands are irretrievably lost through regulated land-management. Old and century-proven refinement and processing methods have been prevented and/or forbidden by way of European Union regulations. Centralized, enormous processing centers such as slaughterhouses, large bakeries, distilleries, dairies and cheese factories, etc. are assigned as processing-facilities and strongly promoted as such. So that these centers can continue to work at full capacity, however, the individual farmer's opportunities for special processing and refinement of their own products are hampered if not stopped altogether.

The small remainder of bio-farmers were chastized by way of the European Union's reductions of rebates and increases of nuisance-fees. Anything else, as we all know, will happen automatically from there. The farmer as a slave on his own farm is usually highly indebted as a consequence of over-mechanization and specialization, exhausted, patronized and overwhelmed by the bloated bureaucratic tasks and chicaneries of an administrative leviathan, and vegetates his life away in total dependency. Who is surprised that his children do not want to continue their parent's path of suffering?

The Solution for all Problems

Social courage rather than "lemming-behavior" is necessary to defend oneself against this bloated, estranging administrative Leviathan. Put yourself into the position of your "Other" - into the experience of the plants, the animals and Yes, the human beings as well and ask yourself whether you would feel good in their stead. If the earthworm feels good, the soil is healthy. Plants as well as animals feel good when they are able to live in the correct biological environment if they can, and to live in freedom. You will have greatest success and advantage, if you properly direct all these natural events. Do use, not abuse, the soil. Variety rather than specialization maintains a healthy system. It is your mandate from Creation to direct and not to fight natural events. ***Nature is perfect. There is nothing to improve.*** If you do attempt it nevertheless, you are fooling and defrauding yourself. Nature is also complete in itself; errors are made by us humans. You have been fed fear - free yourself of it, because fear is the worst companion in life. ***Relating respectfully with Creation and all living things around you, your Mitlebewesen, you profit more than anyone and Farmer becomes the most beautiful calling.***

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Personal Letter to Sepp Holzer from Swiss Architect Michael Schilt (with gratitude for permission to reprint):

Permakultur Krameterhof
Sepp Holzer
Date: 23/10/08
RE: World Agrarian Report IAASTD

Dear Sepp!

Holzer Permaculture stands ready for a world-wide break-through, offering exactly those answers to the open questions and suggestions of the recently published international IAASTD report. Attached I am sending you the short German summary of the World Agrarian Report IAASTD (International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development.) This IAASTD is advice arranged particularly for this report (World agriculture advice), consisting of approx. 400 independent representatives from various disciplines, such as science, research, politics, business, agriculture, consumer protection, etc. Also represented were the FAOs, World Bank, UNEP, UNESCO, WHO, UNDP, GEF. Whether this group, in the form of a constant advisory organization will remain in existence remains open to discussion. It is safe to say, however, that according to a

statement of the director of CO Hans Miller (?), additional nations continue to confirm that they would like to officially align with the recommendations of this report.

At present the IAASTD informs world-wide and publishes both the report as well as their policy via press-releases. In Switzerland alone, already four organizations (Swiss Farmer's Association, SWISSAID, Greenpeace and Bread for All) have joined to publicly support this report and they would also, in the immediate future, like to see increasing pressure upon public policy-makers.

Dear Sepp, without my knowing the details of the approximately 2000 pages of this comprehensive report, I am firmly convinced that your *Holzer Permaculture* stands ready with strong and proven solutions, above other available methods. The time is now! We must commit to immediately and comprehensively inform both the IAASTD and all its scientists and policy-makers about *Holzer Permaculture*. This report does acknowledge the true causes very well. The initial solutions suggested also point into the right direction. I fear, however, that the lobbying pressure world-wide is extensive enough so that a possible turn-around of international agricultural policy will once more come to a grinding halt. Once more, those so-called Sciences and their global "players" would not aim toward a natural solution to the problem but again succeed to enforce technical "solutions" because those, naturally, will procure more income. In the process, the demand for and the development of genetically engineered organisms could, paradoxically, increase and force development of even so-called superplants, etc. and we must prevent this. Also, with all this in mind, we must make all decision-makers acutely aware of the fact that right now, we have a *natural* solution, for all climates and continents, which could be applied immediately - namely *Holzer Permaculture*. It is not acceptable that further decades are lost with ill-advised research. The large danger I also see is that in looking for solutions, the field of science as well as those decision makers cannot "see the forest for the trees". ***Holzer Permaculture is ready for the world now!***

With respect and cordial greetings,

Michael Schilt

Dear Regina!

Yes, I checked with Michael, and he does give his permission to publish our private correspondence. But let me add this with regard to the World Agrarian Report: With due respect to the thousands of research-pages, ***Nature needs no more instructions nor research, and neither do we. Our approach to Permaculture can help Nature immediately to renew itself, regardless of climate or soil-conditions, and can show the humans of this Earth that she can feed them, if only they learn to live and work with her, not by way of confrontation, but with respect and cooperation.***

Liebe Gruesse,

Sepp

Our gratitude to Michael and Sepp for letting us "listen in" on their private exchange, urgent words which we must heed, whether we read this in our city-flats or on our Kin's Domains. ***We must speak, write, cry, laugh and sing these news to everyone: The Holzer approach to Permaculture and that of other like-minded centers all over the world can change the tides right now - along with the land-reforms and ownership efforts inspired by Anastasia's Vision - Permaculture Spaces of Love as Family Domains spreading like millions of wild-flowers all over the Earth. We can plant and nurture a seed for food TODAY - anywhere!***