

Cultivation of Industrial Hemp in Vermont

Frequently Asked Questions

Why hemp?

Hemp is an extremely versatile plant with a multitude of uses. It can be cultivated for use as a fiber crop, seed crop, or for production of cannabinoids found in the flowers. Hemp products manufactured from the fibrous stalks and seeds include rope, clothes, food, paper, textiles, plastics, insulation, oil, and biofuel.

How do I grow hemp?

Hemp must be cultivated with the end product in mind. Cultivation practices will differ for growers wanting to grow for seed oil, fiber, forages or cannabidiol (CBD). Hemp growers should research appropriate growing conditions for their desired end products. Vermont-specific research on hemp cultivation can be found on UVM Extension's web site: <http://www.uvm.edu/extension/cropsoil/hemp>

Does hemp look like marijuana?

Yes, it can. Hemp and marijuana are different varieties of the same plant species, *Cannabis sativa L.*, and may not be able to be distinguished visually. Hemp cultivated for seed oil, fiber or forage are cultivated differently, resulting in plants will have different growth habits. Hemp cultivated for the female flower for the purposes of extracting CBD resembles marijuana plants.

Does hemp contain THC?

Plants in the genus *Cannabis* contain unique compounds called cannabinoids. There are at least 113 different cannabinoids produced by cannabis plants. The most notable of these cannabinoids is delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol, also known as THC. THC is the primary psychoactive compound found in marijuana. While marijuana plants contain high levels of THC (typically between 5-25%), the cultivars that are considered hemp contain less THC. Hemp has been selectively bred and is identified as not containing more than 0.3% THC measured on a dry-weight basis.

How many people are registered to grow hemp in Vermont? How many acres?

To date, over 450 entities and over 3,000 acres are registered in Vermont.

What is the average size plot registered?

The average size plot is 5 acres. Most registrants have registered one acre or less.

I have been hearing about changes to Vermont's Hemp Registration Program. What are the changes?

On May 21, 2018 Governor Phil Scott signed [Act 143](#), supporting the expansion of Vermont's Hemp Program to help grow the rural economy. This Act results in many changes to the program that went into effect on July 1, 2018:

- The AAFM must adopt rules for the registration of processors of hemp and hemp-infused products and to establish how AAFM will conduct research within the pilot program.

- The rules may also require hemp to be tested during growth for THC levels, and to require inspection and supervision of hemp during sowing, growing, harvesting, storage, and processing.
- The Agency must establish a Cannabis Quality Control Program to develop potency and contaminant testing protocols for hemp and hemp-infused products, to verify label guarantees, test for contaminants (pesticides, mycotoxins, heavy metals etc), and certify testing laboratories that can test for both potency and contaminants.

Where do I get seeds? Does the Agency sell or certify seeds?

On or after July 1, 2018 under Act 143 hemp growers can purchase hems seeds or import hemp genetics from any state that complies with federal requirements for the cultivation of industrial hemp. The Agency does not sell or certify seeds.

Where can I sell my product(s)?

A crop or product confirmed by the Secretary of the Agency to meet the definition of hemp under State or federal law may be sold or transferred in interstate commerce to the extent authorized by federal law.

What if my product tests just over the 0.3% THC range that defines hemp?

Act 143 provides that “a person registered with the Secretary as growing the hemp crop shall not be subject to civil, criminal, or administrative liability or penalty under 18 V.S.A. Chapter 84 if the tested industrial hemp has a delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol concentration of one percent or less on a dry weight basis.” [6 V.S.A. § 568].

When is the State going to have more guidance?

The Agency is drafting its rule, will engage stakeholders in the rule-making process and in developing guidance. Stakeholders include members of the public, growers, processors, laboratory personnel, municipalities, law enforcement, and others.