



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Maryland's Hemp Farming Program & Hemp Research Pilot Program

The following information is provided as a guide and is not a legal interpretation of the Act.

Q: What is industrial hemp?

A: Industrial hemp is a versatile plant that has been used for thousands of years as a source of fiber and food. While grown commercially in the U.S. until after World War II, industrial hemp became regulated along with marijuana and its cultivation was prohibited.

Q: What is the difference between industrial hemp and marijuana?

A: Industrial hemp and marijuana are different varieties of the same species of plant, *Cannabis sativa*. Marijuana is cultivated because of its production of the psychoactive plant chemical delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol, also known as THC. Industrial hemp is cultivated for fiber, seed, and other purposes, and federal and state law requires that the concentration of THC must be less than 0.3% in industrial hemp.

Q: Who can legally grow hemp in Maryland?

A: To legally grow hemp in Maryland a grower must be enrolled in the Maryland Hemp Farming Program or the Maryland Hemp Research Pilot Program. The Maryland Hemp Farming Program is open to growers who want to produce and cultivate hemp for commercial purposes. The Maryland Hemp Research Pilot Program is available for growers interested in partnering with an institute of higher education or the Maryland Department of Agriculture for research purposes.

Q: How can I apply to grow hemp in Maryland?

A: Growers will need to apply to the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) to register the site where they plan to grow hemp. Those interested in the Maryland Hemp Research Pilot Program can apply by filling out a PDF application on the program's website and mailing the completed application and supporting documents to MDA headquarters. To apply for the Maryland Hemp Farming Program, growers must complete an [online application](#).

Q: Will there be fees for the participants of the project?

A: Yes, MDA will charge \$550 per site for the Maryland Hemp Farming Program and \$250 a site for the Maryland Hemp Research Pilot Program.

Q: How many acres will be approved for each project?

A: At this time there is no limit to the number of growers or acres that may be used in these programs.

Q: What affect did the 2018 Farm Bill have on growing hemp in Maryland?

The 2018 Farm Bill establishes hemp as an agricultural commodity. It also re-classifies hemp with regard to the Controlled Substances Act administered by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). This change now offers hemp growers access to financing and crop insurance and removes trade barriers across state lines. The 2018 Farm Bill also describes regulation of hemp production at the state level. The department of agriculture for any state interested in allowing the cultivation of hemp may submit their plan to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) once approval is obtained from the state's legislature. The Maryland State Hemp Production Plan was approved by the USDA and took effect on November 1, 2020.

Q: How can a participant obtain industrial hemp seed?

A: The department will not be involved or participate in any seed orders to be obtained from other states, including ordering, shipping, or approving such seed procurement. Seed sourced from another state shall be the sole responsibility of the person sourcing and/or procuring and shipping the seed and such person shall bear all legal liability and responsibility for such procurement and shipment.

Q: Can I sell the hemp from my project? Outside of the state?

A: Hemp and hemp products produced from hemp grown in Maryland may be sold as part of the Maryland Hemp Farming Program and the Maryland Hemp Research Pilot Program. All products or substances distributed or sold must meet all state and federal laws, and regulations that are applicable to the commodity.

Q: What happens if the industrial hemp grown tests higher than the 0.3% permitted for THC content?

A: By definition, the plants are no longer industrial hemp. The crop must be destroyed.

Q: What does industrial hemp need to grow?

A: Research projects from the past several years have shown that good soil fertility, with adequate nitrogen, proper planting depth, and pre-plant weed control, is important for a good crop. Growers also need to evaluate available harvesting options because many combines are not designed for use with this crop, which is well known for its strong fiber and stalks.

The Maryland Department of Agriculture's role with industrial hemp is limited to the registration of sites where industrial hemp is to be grown.

The Maryland Department of Agriculture does not have jurisdiction over the processing, sale, or distribution of industrial hemp. The department does not have referrals or market information at this time.

Maryland Department of Agriculture

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