



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Maryland Industrial 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 United States 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: Why is Maryland allowing growth of industrial hemp now?

A: In section 7606 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Farm Bill), the federal government opened the door to limited legal growth of industrial hemp as part of agricultural research pilot programs. During the 2018 legislative session, the General Assembly passed House Bill 698, which established an Industrial Hemp Pilot Program administered by the Maryland Department of Agriculture. The purpose of which is to authorize and facilitate the research of industrial hemp and any aspect of growing, cultivating, harvesting, processing, manufacturing, transporting, marketing, or selling industrial hemp for agricultural, industrial, or commercial purposes.

Q: Who can legally grow hemp in Maryland?

A: Industrial hemp may be grown or cultivated in Maryland for research conducted under an agricultural pilot program established by the Maryland Department of Agriculture. Site registration can be obtained by institutions of higher education or by persons partnering with a institution of higher education to conduct research. Industrial hemp may not be grown in Maryland for general commercial activity, only as part of a research project.

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

A: Growers will need to apply to the Maryland Department of Agriculture to register the site where they plan to grow hemp.

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

A: Yes, the Maryland Department of Agriculture will charge \$250 to certify and register a site.

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 this program.

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.

The permit holder must be aware that until the federal government reclassifies industrial hemp, it is still considered a Schedule 1 Drug. The Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) has jurisdiction covering imports and interstate movement. Under current federal law and DEA regulations, industrial hemp seed is restricted from interstate shipment.

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

A: Products produced from hemp grown in Maryland may be sold as part of the pilot program. Due to current federal regulations, raw or unprocessed hemp plants or plant parts are not permitted to move across state lines. Once processed, most materials can move freely within and outside of the Maryland. 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. Crop must be destroyed.

Q: What does industrial hemp need to grow?

A: The two previous years of research projects showed 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

Turf & Seed Section

50 Harry S Truman Pkwy | Annapolis, MD 21401

Phone: 410-841-5960

mda.hemp@maryland.gov