

# GROWTH AND USES OF HEMP IN WEST VIRGINIA

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# IS IT INDUSTRIAL HEMP OR MARIJUANA?

It's the same plant (*Cannabis sativa*) but

- Bred for a different purpose
- Different production practices

Industrial hemp is NOT marijuana

- 2014 USDA Farm Bill definition  $<0.3\%$  THC
- WV definition  $< 1\%$



# MYTHS, RUMORS, AND OUTRIGHT LIES

- Hemp will grow anywhere
- Hemp does not require fertilizer
- Hemp does not need herbicide















Felina 32











# CHALLENGES PART I

- Annual
- Needs a finely prepared seed bed to compete against weeds
- Machinery
  - Soil preparation
  - Grain drill to plant – not broadcast!
  - Harvesting
  - Drying





# CHALLENGES PART 2

- Seed can expensive (up to \$10/lb); minimum orders
- Not legal to ship across state lines
- Seed from Europe (Poland, France, Italy) is old by the time it gets to farm – poor germination and vigor
- Two & four-legged and winged pests
- Processing infrastructure





# HOW TO GET STARTED

## 1. Must have a permit from WV Dept. of Agriculture

- FBI and State Police background checks
- Will need to explain your 'research purpose'
- Pay application fee (~\$50)
- Submit to inspection and end of year sample collection and pay for THC testing

## 2. Join WV Hemp Farmers Cooperative

- ~\$1,000
- They have the agreements with the seed companies



# WHAT'S THE UPSIDE?

- WV is an ideal location for certified seed production
- Has a chemical manufacturing base
- Good potential as a niche crop for small producers & value added products
- Some evidence that it suppresses soil-borne pests → rotation crop
- Can produce a lot of biomass in short period of time



# WHAT ARE WE DOING AT WVU?

- Focusing on organic grain production
- Some work on variety trials, response to soil fertility and nematodes
- Some literature suggests hemp is an accumulator for metals
- Preparing a production guide for interested growers
- Need for basic and applied research
  - Varieties, fertility and lime
  - Environmental conditions and THC concentrations
  - Value added products
  - Variety development?



