

Approved: 2-12-97  
Date

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Steve Morris at 10:00 a.m. on February 11, 1997 in Room 423-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Senator David Corbin (E)  
Senator Don Sallee

Committee staff present: Raney Gilliland, Legislative Research Department  
Jill Wolters, Revisor of Statutes  
Nancy Kippes, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Others attending: See attached list

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Morris.

Senator Karr made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 5 meeting as submitted. Senator Biggs seconded and the motion carried.

**SCR 1605: Requesting Dept. Of Commerce and Housing form task force to investigate and research viability of nonpsychoactive industrial hemp as alternative crop**

Handouts were distributed from The Ohio Hempery, Inc. (Attachment 1) and National Conference of State Legislatures Legisbrief (Attachment 2).

Raney Gilliland, Legislative Research, provided some background information on the viability of hemp as an alternative crop.

Committee discussion ensued as to the possible fiscal note and legal barriers to the growing of hemp.

As there was no one appearing as a proponent or opponent to **SCR 1605**, hearings were closed.

Additional literature is available in the Office of Legislative Research Department.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30a.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 12, 1997.

# SENATE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE GUEST LIST

DATE: 2-11-97

NAME	REPRESENTING
Jeanne Hanson	Washington Social Work Student
Becky Kingler	KDOC & H
Chris Williams	KDOC & H
marty Vanier	KS Ag Alliance
Curtis Chrystal	KDOC & H
Sherry Schoonover	KTEC
Cindy Denton	Div of Budget



# The Ohio Hempery, Inc.

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1-800-BUY-HEMP

February 2, 1997

Senator David Corbin  
Statehouse  
Room 120-S  
Topeka, KS, 66612

Dear Senator Corbin:

Best regards to you and all the courageous people in your forward-looking state legislature who have seen fit to give SCR-1605, the Industrial Hemp bill fair consideration.

Enclosed please find a dozen copies of our most recent catalog. I am sending this to demonstrate that practical products can be made from hemp and that this is not a short-lived fad as some people suggest. Our company has been in business for six years and we are growing fast. Our 1995 sales exceeded one million dollars. The American hemp industry will exceed 60 million dollars this year. The only thing that can prevent its continued growth is government interference.

As a farmer myself, I know of the importance of having alternative crops available to offset losses from poor planting conditions or low prices as well as to, in hemp's case, break the harmful effects caused by nematodes and other pests. (As you know, hemp does not harbor nematodes in a rotation with grain and bean crops.)

If Kansas were to become the first hemp friendly state, it would spark a large amount of economic development there. This would benefit both your farmers and your associated industries. My company, for one, would certainly consider moving much of our operation to your state. There are many others.

I am willing to come to Kansas to testify before any committees that may hold hearing on this bill though I am sure that there will be plenty of Kansas residents who will want the opportunity to testify in this bill's favor. Please keep me informed as to the progress of SCR-1605 as it moves through the Senate.

Sincerely,

Don Wirtshafter, Pres.

*Senate Agriculture  
Attachment 1  
2-11-97*

January 1997

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## INDUSTRIAL HEMP: FERTILE DREAM OR LEGAL NIGHTMARE?

By Robert E. Frohling and Eric C. Staton

*There's new interest in growing industrial hemp.*

*It is different from its better known relative marijuana.*

Around the nation, there's a new interest in growing industrial hemp. Industrial hemp is very similar to jute and flax. Its three principal raw materials—fiber, hurds (the woody inner portion of the stalk) and seeds—are used to produce textiles, ropes, cellulose plastics, resins, particle board, paper products and oil.

Industrial hemp is very different from its better known relative marijuana. They both are derived from the *Cannabis sativa* plant, but marijuana comes from the leaves and flowers and contains levels of 3 percent to 15 percent tetrahydrocannabinol, the chemical responsible for its psychoactive properties. *Cannabis* plants grown for industrial hemp contain less than 1 percent of this chemical.

Several developments in recent years have led to this heightened interest in hemp. Faltering state agricultural economies have created pressure to investigate alternatives. Additionally, the 1996 Farm Bill will reduce government subsidies over the next seven years, pushing farmers to look for alternative cash crops. Increased foreign competition in established markets, such as tobacco, as well as precedent-setting work with industrial hemp by the European community and Canada, has prompted increased interest as well. And scarce fiber supplies for the textile and paper industries have caused rising prices, creating heightened interest in a plentiful domestic source for alternative fibers.

### State Actions

The Industrial Hemp Production Act in **COLORADO** in 1996 passed the Senate but failed in the House. It would have legalized, for research purposes, the possession and cultivation of industrial hemp with seed purchased from authorized sources. The hemp would be inspected twice for tetrahydrocannabinol levels, and crops exceeding the limit would be destroyed. **HAWAII**'s Legislature passed a resolution in 1996 to study the economic potential and problems with growing nonpsychoactive industrial hemp. The **MISSOURI** Senate introduced a bill that would permit industrial hemp to be grown for commercial purposes under the control of the Missouri Department of Agriculture. The bill would have allocated up to \$50,000 for research. It stalled in committee, so the Senate adopted a resolution authorizing the University of Missouri to apply for a Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) permit to grow industrial hemp. **VERMONT**'s new hemp law authorizes research and includes analysis of market economics, soils and growing conditions in the state, and law enforcement aspects. It does not authorize cultivation.

### ESTIMATES OF NET RETURNS PER ACRE FOR KENTUCKY CROPS

Tobacco	\$1,050
Processing tomatoes	\$775
High fiber hemp*	\$500
Low fiber hemp**	\$200
Wheat and soybeans	\$175
Soybeans	\$100
Hay/silage	\$100
Corn	\$75

\*High fiber hemp is grown more for its fiber.

\*\*Low fiber hemp is grown more for its seeds and hurds than its fiber.

Source: Report to the (Kentucky) Governor's Hemp and Related Fiber Crop Task Force, p 33.

In **KENTUCKY**, the governor established a task force in 1994. The task force's report released in 1995 concluded that hemp production was not economically viable and that legal and political issues would be difficult to overcome. Agricultural departments in **WISCONSIN**, **MINNESOTA** and **GEORGIA** have been negotiating with the DEA to find ways for their farmers to legally cultivate hemp. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture sponsored four hemp meetings during 1995.

### **Agricultural Opportunities**

- The plant serves as a good rotation crop—choking out weeds and surviving without the aid of polluting pesticides, while taking no more nutrients from the soil than a corn crop.
- The mature plant's strength makes it impervious to storm damage.
- All parts of hemp (fiber, hurds and seeds) are economically important.
- Hemp can be grown in many climates and under many conditions.

### **Economic Opportunities**

- Many industries, including those in textiles, foods, oil and building materials, have shown a growing interest in hemp. American clothing manufacturers grossed about \$5 million in 1991 and \$50 million in 1995 on hemp products.
- The proposed state research projects as well as the new technology and machinery needed for a developing hemp industry will provide new jobs.
- Import costs for American industries using hemp, currently estimated at \$120 million, would drop considerably if it could be produced domestically.

### **Legal Barriers**

- Interpretation of federal law regarding marijuana makes legislation difficult. DEA testimony in **COLORADO** stated that they will not issue any kind of registration or permit until the federal law changes to allow industrial hemp production.
- The DEA opposes industrial hemp production because it is difficult to distinguish a field of legitimate hemp, with low-narcotic concentrations, from a field of illicit cannabis with high levels. Laboratory testing is required.
- The DEA fears that industrial hemp advocates have a hidden agenda to legalize marijuana. Legalization of industrial hemp could give the impression that marijuana is legal.

### **Economic Barriers**

- It may cost more money to harvest hemp. In the past, harvesting has been very labor intensive, involving no less than 11 separate operations from initial cutting to final shipping to a processing center. The plant's bulk also makes it difficult to transport.
- Harvesting hemp has proved tough on today's agricultural machinery. Existing equipment must be modified to deal with the plant's rough fibers.
- European hemp production has yet to prove economical. Most European governments provide substantial subsidies for growers.
- Currently no one knows just how prolific hemp may be. Unlike crops such as corn, hemp has not benefited from modern research in plant genetics.

For hemp to have a chance in the future, states interested in pursuing its potential should work closely with the DEA and other law enforcement groups. Significant progress in agronomics, marketing or infrastructure development is unlikely unless the major legal issues are resolved.

### **Contacts for More Information**

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*The pros and cons of allowing industrial hemp to be grown are numerous.*

