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Sixth Annual *Hemp History Week* Campaign is Biggest Yet

Spring Hemp Plantings, Hemp Home Building Courses & Over 1,500 Events Across the Country Build Momentum to Lift the Ban on Industrial Hemp Farming

WASHINGTON, DC – June 1-7, 2015 marked the biggest and most expansive *Hemp History Week* campaign to date, with over 1,500 events that took place nationwide. Spring hemp plantings, hemp building workshops, fashion shows, documentary film screenings, menu offerings at restaurants and cafes, retail promotions, and educational outreach brought public awareness to the movement to lift the prohibition on industrial hemp farming in the U.S. Encouraged by federal support in Congress, with the Industrial Hemp Farming Act re-introduced in both the House and Senate in the first quarter of 2015, the campaign's theme *Sow the Seed* highlighted spring plantings in states that have passed legislation legalizing industrial hemp pilot programs, and encouraged consumers to participate in our call for support among legislators to support industrial hemp farming and the growth of the hemp industry nationwide. Organizers have announced plans for the seventh annual campaign to take place June 6-12, 2015. More details about the 2016 campaign can be found at: www.HempHistoryWeek.com.

"Each year, *Hemp History Week* grows and educates more Americans about the economic, environmental and health benefits of industrial hemp. The hundreds of hemp crops planted in 2015 demonstrate how much progress has been made since the campaign's inaugural week, six years ago. But farmers are still prohibited from commercially growing this versatile and sustainable crop," said Eric Steenstra, Executive Director of Hemp Industries Association. "Organizers are already looking forward to next year's campaign, and we hope to finally achieve the grassroots and Congressional support needed to legalize industrial hemp farming throughout all 50 states."

Spring Hemp Plantings

HIA and Vote Hemp partnered with University of Kentucky's College of Agriculture, to coordinate a press conference and tour of the university's industrial hemp research program, which occurred on June 2, 2015, on the site of the university's hemp pilot program fields. Throughout the country, farmers in states that have legalized the cultivation of industrial hemp began to plant hemp this spring and *Hemp History Week* coordinated events to celebrate the return of hemp to the American agrarian landscape. An environmentally sustainable crop, industrial hemp does not require chemical inputs of pesticides and herbicides to flourish. As farmers opened their hemp fields to the public, grassroots activists offered educational events about industrial hemp—its history, agronomy, health and ecological benefits—as we joined together to *sow the seed*.

Farmer Spotlight

Hemp History Week launched a new aspect of the campaign in its sixth year: Farmer Spotlight Interviews. Farmer Spotlights document hemp history in-the-making, focusing on a prominent hemp farmer each month and interviewing the farmer regarding such topics as hemp agriculture practices, benefits of hemp farming, successes and challenges to pioneering this crop, how they became interested to grow hemp, and other issues pertinent to hemp farming and hemp industry. To view our Farmer Spotlight series, visit the Hemp History section of the website: <http://hemphistoryweek.com/hemp-history/u-s-hemp-farmers/>.



The Health Benefits of Hemp

Among the fastest-growing categories in the natural foods industry, hemp seed is a rich source of Omega-3 and Omega-6 essential fatty acids (EFAs), providing both SDA and GLA, highly-digestible protein, and naturally-occurring vitamins and minerals, such as vitamin E and iron. An excellent source of dietary fiber, hemp seed is also a complete protein making it more digestible by the human body.

Hemp Building Courses

Hemp construction was showcased in celebration of *Hemp History Week* at the Hawaii Ohana Open House (Sugar Beach, HI) and the Highland Hemp House hemp building workshop (Bellingham, WA) in which members of the public were invited to participate. Hemp structures were built with hempcrete—a natural material that is energy-efficient, non-toxic and resistant to mold, insects and fire, and which is more quickly renewable and sustainable than lumber. These programs cover contemporary construction methods and hands-on practical applications of working with hempcrete, including forming or shuttering, mixing and casting the hempcrete within a framed structure, as well as finishing with plasters and coloring.

Celebrity Endorsements

Hemp History Week is endorsed by celebrities and high-profile wellness experts, including Dr. Andrew Weil, Alicia Silverstone, Phil Lempert, Ashley Koff R.D., Brendan Brazier, Elizabeth Kucinich, Ziggy Marley, Alexandra Jamieson, Dar Williams, Michael Franti, John Salley, Kevin Danaher, John Trudell, and Grammy award-winning band Ozomatli. For the 2015 campaign, musician Jason Mraz, and author Doug Fine have signed on as endorsers of *Hemp History Week*.

Grassroots Engagement

Over 300 grassroots events occurred nationwide, including an educational tour of college campuses, a restaurant program, film screenings of the documentary “Bringing It Home,” hemp fashion shows, community outreach at farmers’ markets, state lobbying days, a letter writing campaign, spring plantings and other exciting engagement opportunities. Specific details for these *Hemp History Week* events are listed on the website: <http://hemphistoryweek.com/events/>.

United in the Effort to Bring Back Industrial Hemp Farming

An incredibly versatile crop, hemp fiber, oil seed and flowers are used for a myriad of products—including health foods, dietary supplements, cosmetics and body care products, building materials, automobile parts, bio-composites, batteries, bio-fuel, textiles, paper and other products. Now in its sixth year, *Hemp History Week* is an industry-wide effort made possible by the support of the leading natural product brands known for manufacturing the highest quality hemp products. These HIA members and platinum sponsor brands include Daily Greens, Dr. Bronner’s, Living Harvest, Manitoba Harvest, Nature’s Path Foods and Nutiva, silver sponsor Himalania, and supporting sponsors The Wonder Seed, Satori Movement, and Just Hemp Foods.

Legislative Progress and Challenges in 2015

When the 2013 farm bill was signed into law in February of 2014, the hemp amendment to the farm bill, Sec. 7606 Legitimacy of Industrial Hemp Research, defined industrial hemp as distinct from marijuana. This was an historic moment in the longstanding effort to legalize hemp as the act asserts that industrial hemp is not psychoactive, having less than 0.3% tetrahydrocannabinol on a dry weight basis and therefore presenting no drug value.

The bill further allows for states that have already legalized the crop to cultivate hemp within the parameters of state agriculture departments and research institutions. Read the full text of the Legitimacy



Sow the Seed

www.HempHistoryWeek.com

of Industrial Hemp Research amendment on the Vote Hemp website:
http://www.votehemp.com/PDF/Pages_from_farm0127.pdf.

In defiance of clear Congressional intent regarding the legitimacy of industrial hemp for agriculture and industrial applications, the Drug Enforcement Administration has hindered attempts at progress made by agriculture departments in many states that have legalized industrial hemp farming, by refusing to grant permission for state licensing of potential hemp farmers and by not granting import permits in a timely manner for certified hemp seed. In 2014, Congress passed an amendment to the Commerce, Justice and Science Appropriations bill that directed DEA and the Dept. of Justice not to spend any funds in contravention of Sec. 7606. Despite that amendment, states continued to face challenges importing legal hemp seed due to DEA delays and lack of cooperation.

In January of 2015, The Industrial Hemp Farming Act was introduced in both the House and Senate, H.R. 525 and S. 134 respectively. If passed, the bill would remove all federal restrictions on the cultivation of industrial hemp, and remove its classification as a Schedule 1 controlled substance.

Despite contradictory actions among federal authorities, the number of states that have pro-hemp legislation continues to increase. Currently, 23 states may grow hemp per Sec. 7606 of the Farm Bill, including California, Colorado, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New York, North Dakota, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, and West Virginia.

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Hemp History Week is an industry-wide initiative of the Hemp Industries Association (HIA) and Vote Hemp. The HIA is a non-profit trade group representing hemp companies, researchers, farmers and supporters. Vote Hemp is a national, single-issue, non-profit advocacy group founded in 2000 by members of the hemp industry to remove barriers to industrial hemp farming in the U.S. through education, legislation and advocacy. For further information, please visit www.TheHIA.org and www.VoteHemp.com.