



Breaking Ground

June 5-11, 2017

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CONTACT: Lauren Stansbury 402.540.1208

lauren@votehemp.com

Tom Moylan 202.870.3184

tom@wearovementmedia.com

Organizers Debut Promotional Video and Announce Dates for *Hemp History Week*: June 5-11, 2017

8th Annual Campaign to Focus on Sustainable Agriculture and the Hope Hemp Gives to the Next Generation with Theme 'Breaking Ground'

WASHINGTON, DC – The Hemp Industries Association (HIA) and Vote Hemp have announced the dates for the 8th annual *Hemp History Week*, to be held **June 5-11, 2017**. During 2016, a record volume of hemp was planted and harvested in the U.S. since the passage of the 2014 Farm Bill, with successful crops in Colorado, Hawaii, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Minnesota, Nebraska, Nevada, New York, North Dakota, Oregon, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia. Over half of all U.S. states have lifted the ban on industrial hemp farming at the state level, however federal law still prohibits commercial industrial hemp cultivation due to outdated and inaccurate drug policy. With momentum building across the country, and increasing consumer awareness about the health benefits, economic opportunities, technological innovation and sustainability advantages of industrial hemp—advocates and organizers are eager to see 2017 be the year industrial hemp farming expands across the American agriculture landscape once again.

Filmed on the Pine Ridge Reservation, the 8th annual *Hemp History Week* campaign video *Breaking Ground* tells the story of Alex White Plume, Oglala Lakota hemp farmer and activist, whose hemp crop was unlawfully raided and destroyed by the DEA in 2000. An interview with White Plume underscores why the crop should be grown to support sustainable solutions for the next generation; and subsequent scenes elaborate on how *Hemp History Week* supports this message by generating momentum for hemp advocacy around the country. To view the new video for the 8th annual campaign, visit:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F-TqInCnvEU&feature=youtu.be>.

“Vote Hemp is actively engaging with hemp farming supporters in Congress, to assure that sovereign tribal nations and U.S. territories are included in any federal legislation that would lift the outdated prohibition on farming this versatile, sustainable crop,” said Eric Steenstra, President of Vote Hemp.

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—meaning it contains all ten essential amino acids, with no enzyme inhibitors, making it more digestible by the human body. Hemp seed, milk, ice cream, oil, cereals and snacks, as well as hemp protein powder, and dietary supplements are increasingly popular and available at natural grocers everywhere, as consumers become turned on to the nourishing health benefits of hemp foods.

Innovative Hemp Technology

Advancements in hemp research and manufacturing demonstrate the remarkable versatility and product-potential for hemp. Hemp bast fiber has shown promising potential to replace graphene in supercapacitor batteries, which could then be used to power electric cars and handheld electric devices and tools. Hemp fiber can also be used to create environmentally friendly packaging materials, and hard bio-plastics for use in everything from airplanes to car parts. Hemp houses are also on the rise, as hempcrete has many advantages to synthetic building materials, lumber and concrete. Hempcrete is energy-efficient, non-toxic, resistant to mold, insects and fire, and is much more sustainable and renewable.



Hemp for Sustainable Agriculture

Hemp is a renewable resource that can help reduce market dependency on wood, oil, and other non-sustainable industrial agriculture practices, thereby contributing to environmentally responsible food and fiber production, forest conservation, reduction in agriculture pesticide use, and soil remediation. Hemp sequesters carbon from the atmosphere, mitigating the rising rate of CO₂ levels responsible for climate change; and furthermore, pollinators thrive on the prolific pollen created by hemp plants.

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, Jason Mraz, Dar Williams, Michael Franti, John Salley, Doug Fine, and Grammy award-winning band Ozomatli.

Grassroots Engagement

Over 300 grassroots events will take place nationwide, including a restaurant program, film screenings, 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 will be listed on the campaign website beginning in early April.

United in the Effort to Legalize Hemp Farming

Now in its eighth 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 sponsor brands include Dr. Bronner's, Farmer Direct Co-op, Living Harvest, Manitoba Harvest, Nature's Path Foods, Nutiva, and Pacific.

Legislative Challenges and Opportunities in 2017

When the 2013 farm bill was signed into law in February of 2014, it allowed for states that have legalized the crop to cultivate hemp within the parameters of state agriculture departments and research institutions. Read the full text of the Legitimacy of Industrial Hemp Research amendment on the Vote Hemp website: http://www.votehemp.com/PDF/Pages_from_farm0127.pdf.

Despite federal progress toward commercial hemp farming since 2014, the hemp industry faces a number of challenges and barriers to full scale farming of industrial hemp, including: inability of hemp farmers to obtain crop insurance and financing, difficulties involved with sourcing certified hemp seed, lack of adequate processing infrastructure in the U.S. for raw hemp materials, barriers to interstate commerce for hemp products, and the regulation of CBD products.

The 31 states that have legalized industrial hemp farming, per provision Sec. 7606 of the farm bill, include: Alabama, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, and West Virginia.

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Hemp History Week, June 5-11, 2017, 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.