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Leading Natural Product Brands Team Up to Produce Second Annual 'Hemp History Week'

*Dr. Andrew Weil, Alicia Silverstone and Members of Congress Join Campaign
in Support of Industrial Hemp Farming*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Hemp Industries Association (HIA) and Vote Hemp are excited to announce that the **2nd Annual Hemp History Week will be held May 2-8, 2011**. As a national grassroots education campaign designed to renew strong support for hemp farming in the U.S., **Hemp History Week** will feature events in cities and towns all over the country. The campaign will also feature a day of action and an online petition drive to encourage the Obama administration and Congress to change federal policy and allow American farmers to once again grow industrial hemp.

"During a time of economic distress, we need to be encouraging American enterprise and American job creation. It simply doesn't make sense to restrict a viable industry because of unfounded fears. There are many success stories in my district about companies who use or sell hemp products, and I don't believe we should be limiting their potential. The **Hemp History Week** campaign is a great opportunity to educate other elected officials and the American public about the tremendous benefits that the ability to grow hemp in America will bring," explains Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-Oregon).

The 2011 campaign will promote the theme of "Hemp for Health and Sustainability" and has attracted endorsements from physician Dr. Andrew Weil, actress and author Alicia Silverstone, TV personality and consumer advocate Phil Lempert, registered dietician Ashley Koff, Ironman triathlete and nutrition expert Brendan Brazier and holistic health counselor Alexandra Jamieson. This year's effort seeks to build on the inaugural campaign held in May of last year, which mobilized supporters of hemp farming nationwide, including hundreds of volunteers who organized around 200 events in thirty-two states, and generated tens of thousands of letters and postcards to the President and Attorney General in support of hemp farming. Volunteers are being called upon once again to organize events in 2011, with specific details about those planned events to be announced in early April.

"Through **Hemp History Week 2011**, we will continue to build support for a federal policy change, while celebrating America's rich history with the crop," says Eric Steenstra, President of Vote Hemp. "Allowing American farmers to grow hemp will promote sustainable agriculture in the U.S. by supporting local farming, creating new jobs and ultimately fueling the economy," explains Steenstra.

Hundreds of natural product retail outlets across the country have signed up to participate in **Hemp History Week** through promotions and in-store events. Hemp product promotions in retail stores will increase from 125 stores last year to over 400 stores this year, including most Whole Foods Market locations in the U.S.

A renewable resource offering a long list of health and nutritional benefits, hemp is one of the fastest-growing categories in the natural foods industry. Hemp is a rich source of omega-3 and omega-6 essential fatty acids

(EFAs), providing super omega stearidonic acid (SDA) and gamma-linolenic acid (GLA), highly-digestible protein and naturally-occurring vitamins and minerals, such as vitamin E and iron, while being a good source of dietary fiber. It is a complete protein, containing all 10 essential amino acids, with no enzyme inhibitors, making it more digestible by the human body. Hemp seeds are also gluten-free.

Hemp History Week is made possible by the support of leading natural product brands that are known for manufacturing the highest-quality hemp products. Hemp can be used in a wide variety of products, including food, cosmetics, clothing, building materials, auto parts and many more. Sponsors of **Hemp History Week** include Dr. Bronner's Magic Soaps, French Meadow Bakery, Living Harvest Foods, Manitoba Harvest, Merry Hempsters, Nature's Path Foods, Nutiva and Sequel Naturals. Sustainable hemp seed, fiber and oil are also used by major companies such as Ford Motors, Patagonia and The Body Shop.

Arran Stephens, founder of Nature's Path Foods, North America's top-selling independent organic cereal company, says "We believe our products exemplify all of the goodness that hemp has to offer as a nutritious, gluten-free, non-GMO superfood. Nature's Path is proud to have been part of the growth of the hemp industry since the beginning. This May, we look forward to celebrating America's rich history with hemp farming, while educating consumers about the benefits of hemp foods."

Other U.S. hemp manufacturers have been relentless in their struggle for the right to buy hemp from U.S. farmers. "For nearly ten years, the Bronner family has financially supported efforts to lift the ban on non-drug industrial hemp farming because it is an environmentally-sustainable crop," states David Bronner, President of Dr. Bronner's Magic Soaps, the top-selling brand of natural soap in the U.S. "Despite our efforts, we are forced to continue purchasing the twenty tons of hemp oil that we use annually from Canada. This is a lost opportunity for American farmers and businesses, which is becoming more absurd and outrageous with each growing season that passes."

The HIA estimates that U.S. retail sales of hemp products exceeded \$400 million in 2010, yet American companies making hemp products have no choice but to import their raw materials, due to the federal government's ban on hemp farming. While demand for hemp products continues to rise, it is becoming a challenge for Canadian growers and processors, the primary suppliers of hemp seed and oil to the U.S. market, to keep up and meet that demand.

"Nutiva's sales have grown at an annual rate of 41% since 2006. In 2009 and 2010, we were named by *Inc. Magazine* as one of the fastest-growing businesses in America," says John W. Roulac, founder and CEO of Nutiva. "By allowing U.S. farmers to grow and sell hemp seed, it will help the entire industry to meet the growing demand for hemp products."

To date, seventeen states have passed pro-hemp legislation, and six states (Maine, Montana, North Dakota, Oregon, Vermont and West Virginia) have already authorized the licensing of farmers to grow the crop. However, despite state authorization to grow hemp, farmers in these states risk raids by federal agents if they plant the crop, due to the failure of federal policy to distinguish oilseed and fiber varieties of *Cannabis* (i.e., industrial hemp) from psychoactive varieties. Meanwhile, the Canadian government recently funneled nearly \$1 million into their hemp industry, as they look to increase production capacity and make even greater inroads into the American market.

"My co-founders of Manitoba Harvest and I are proud to have successfully petitioned our government to legalize hemp in Canada over a decade ago. We are very appreciative of the Canadian government's support and hope that the U.S. government will see the opportunities with industrial hemp as well," says Mike Fata, co-founder and CEO of Manitoba Harvest. "With consumer demand for hemp products growing, why shouldn't American farmers also be allowed to benefit from this huge opportunity?"

For more information on **Hemp History Week 2011**, please see the completely re-designed campaign Web site at: www.HempHistoryWeek.com.

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