

Industrial Hemp FAQs

April 2019

Industrial Hemp is now legal in the U.S. – with restrictions

The 2018 Farm Bill removed many of the restrictions in growing, processing and selling industrial hemp (IH) products. However, the 2018 Farm Bill industrial hemp regulations will be published in the fall of 2019 for implementation in the 2020 hemp crop year. The 2019 crop year will be limited to the pilot program provisions under the 2014 Farm Bill. As outlined in the 2018 Farm Bill, to help ensure IH being grown is below 0.3 percent THC, each state must develop a monitoring program, which must be approved by the USDA. After the USDA publishes the new regulations, 1) the Oklahoma Legislature must modify the current law associated with IH, 2) the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry must then prepare a new set of rules and 3) the USDA must approve Oklahoma's IH monitoring program. For Oklahoma, the existing statutes and rules established in 2018 requiring growers to contract with a qualified higher education institution, i.e., an Oklahoma university or college with a plant science curriculum, will remain in effect until further notice.

It should also be noted that growing industrial hemp under the current Oklahoma Pilot Program may jeopardize eligibility for federal farm programs. Growers who participate in these programs should be advised to proceed with caution.

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Why is OSU not participating in the Industrial Hemp Pilot Program?

The Oklahoma Industrial Hemp Agricultural Pilot Program allows Oklahoma institutions of higher education with a plant science curriculum to apply for a license to grow industrial hemp. With recent budget cuts by the state, Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resource administrators have had to trim back investments in expertise in our traditional crops and livestock programs, which leaves OSU even fewer options to respond to new, unproven crops. We simply do not have faculty or resources to invest in a research program at this time. The stated purpose of the pilot program was to foster research in industrial hemp, and we took that literally. We do not have the capacity to conduct research on industrial hemp. To get a license – simply to assist others to grow a crop as subcontractors – would not be consistent with our research mission. As the regulatory landscape changes, and if funding becomes available, we would be open to developing a research program in the future.

Can I send hemp plant samples to OSU labs for analysis (for-age testing, plant disease, etc.)?

No. If the hemp is in violation of the industrial hemp threshold of THC content (greater than 0.3 percent), we would be handling a federally controlled substance on university property. OSU has no

way to determine whether these samples are below 0.3 percent THC. Plant samples received on campus will be turned over to the OSU Police Department. If a grower brings a plant sample to a county office, staff should make them aware they cannot submit the sample to OSU labs and ask the grower not to leave it. If it is left at the office, it should be turned over to local law enforcement.

Can I send soil samples to OSU from areas where I intend to grow industrial hemp?

Yes. OSU can analyze soil samples to determine nutrient levels. However, OSU does not have nutrient response data that would allow us to make fertilizer recommendations for industrial hemp.

Can OSU faculty or staff assist with industrial hemp on-farm trials or make farm visits to assist with industrial hemp production?

If the grower has a subcontract to grow industrial hemp from a licensee (per current ODAFF rules), OSU faculty and staff can assist with study design and data analysis and/or make farm visits. Faculty and staff must obtain copies of the subcontract for each site visited for their records. The direction on this may change once the USDA and the State of Oklahoma have established their guidelines for commercial production of industrial hemp in Oklahoma.

Is OSU offering educational programs related to industrial hemp?

Yes. We are providing educational programs on a limited basis as requested. A listing of these can be found on the calendar on the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service website at: <https://calendar.okstate.edu/oces/>. These programs will be based on research at other land grant universities. Since we have a lack of research data in Oklahoma and the southern Great Plains, specialists may offer an interpretation of how other research may apply to this region.

Is OSU conducting research on industrial hemp?

OSU is not currently conducting research on industrial hemp and does not have plans for research in the immediate future. That may change if funding becomes available, but it is unlikely research will be conducted in the 2019 growing season.

Can OSU faculty or staff assist with medical marijuana production questions, either on-farm, greenhouse or in growth chamber trials or visits?

OSU cannot be involved with medical marijuana in any way.

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