



Canada's Agriculture, Food and Beverage INDUSTRY

Canada's Hemp Industry

Hemp has a long history. The world's premier renewable resource, hemp has been a source of food and fibre for the past 10,000 years. Popular in Canada in the 18th and 19th centuries, the crop became illegal in 1938. Today, however, hemp is enjoying a renaissance and the 15-year-old global hemp market is a thriving commercial success.

Since its legalization for research and commercial purposes in 1998, hemp has sparked much interest among Canadian farmers. The Government of Canada has been supportive of Canada's re-emerging hemp industry through changes in legislation and regulations, and through market development funding.

According to Health Canada over 300 hemp cultivation licenses were issued in 2005. The area licensed for cultivation exceeded 9,725 hectares. Production is concentrated in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta where a vast market potential exists for hemp seed food products. The Canadian hemp industry is still small and relatively new, but is a pioneer in the sector of hemp foods. Food products derived from hemp seed include flour, nutritional bars, pasta, cookies and lactose-free milk.

Hemp oil, which is extracted from hemp seed is considered one of the most nutritious oils for humans as it contains the essential fatty acids Omega-3 and Omega-6, that the human body does not synthesize by itself as well as amino acids and antioxidants. It can be used as cooking oil, in salad dressings, spreads and dips. In addition to having a pleasant nutty flavor, hemp seed oil may have potential health benefits for diabetes, cancer, lupus, asthma, rheumatoid arthritis, depression and hypertension. The potential role of essential fatty acids in growth and development as well as diseases like

coronary heart disease is a fast growing area of research.

Automobile producers have successfully adopted hemp to help improve their image. In an effort to be perceived as "green", well-known European companies, such as Mercedes-Benz and BMW, now use hemp for interior components, including door panels and dashboards. The U.S. automobile industry suppliers are following the European example and have started to use hemp to make stronger, lighter and relatively less-expensive composite panels.



One of the fastest growing market sectors for hemp seed oil is the body care product market. The essential fatty acid (EFA) content of hemp oil makes it ideal as a topical ingredient in both leave-on and rinse-off body care products. The EFAs help soothe and restore skin in lotions and creams and acts as an emollient and provides a smooth after-feel to lotions, lip balms, conditioners, shampoos, soaps and shaving products.

With cosmetic companies taking advantage of the moisture-retention qualities of hemp oils, the functionality and marketability of industrial hemp oil has the potential to increase. Growing consumer awareness and product availability may also help expand the market.

Hemp is also being used as an ingredient in beer, and a number of Canadian breweries are producing hemp beer.

Additional Information

Hemp's remarkable attributes are hard to beat: it thrives without herbicides, it reinvigorates the soil, it requires less water than cotton, it matures in three to four months and it can yield four times as much paper per acre as trees. Hemp can be used to create building materials, textiles, clothing, inks, paints, and has potential use in other non-food products.

Hemp seed is second only to soybeans in complete protein. The whole hemp seed contains roughly 25 per cent protein, 30 per cent carbohydrates, 15 per cent insoluble fibre, carotene, phosphorous, potassium, magnesium, sulphur, calcium, iron and zinc, as well as vitamins E, C, B1, B2, B3 and B6.

Although hemp and marijuana belong to the same plant species, industrial hemp plants contain 0.3% THC or less in their leaves and flowering plants. Products made from industrial hemp grain contain very little THC and therefore have no psychoactive or intoxicating effect when consumed.

The bark of the hemp stalk contains long, strong bast fibres, which are also rich in cellulose; the cellulose and hemi-cellulose in its inner woody core are called hurds. Hemp fibre is longer, stronger, more absorbent and more insulative than cotton fibre.

For More Detailed Information

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Other Links:

Health Canada – Information on Industrial Hemp

www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mps/substancontrol/hemp-chanvre/index_e.html

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada – Special Crops Section – Canada's Industrial Hemp Industry

www.agr.gc.ca/misb/spec/index_e.php?s1=hemp-chanvre&page=intro

Canadian Hemp Trade Alliance

www.hemptrade.ca

North American International Hemp Council
http://naihc.org/NAIHC_overview/index.html

Further information on products, suppliers and investment opportunities in the Canadian agri-food industry is available on the Agri-Food Trade Service web site at: www.ats.agr.gc.ca

Canada's food and agricultural products reflect our dedication to excellence, and our deep commitment to safety, quality, environmental responsibility, innovation and service.

In every facet of our industry, we seek to earn the trust of our customers by answering their needs and exceeding their expectations. Those values along with our belief in building strong relationships, have given Canadian agriculture and food products an international reputation for excellence. Customers around the world know that they can trust the goodness of Canada.

