

**Therapeutic Products Programme
Report on Industrial Hemp Licences
June 1999 Questions and Answers**

How many licences were issued for cultivation of Industrial Hemp this year?

As of June 11, 1999, there were 674 licences issued for cultivation of 14,200 hectares of Industrial Hemp in Canada. In 1998 there were 259 licences in total issued for cultivation of 2500 hectares .

What are the major areas of increased activity as compared to last year?

Some of the highlights are:

- The number of applicants were almost double, with 335 in 1998 and 600 in 1999.
- The number of licences issued more than doubled with 269 in 1998 and 545 in 1999.
- Licences for *Cultivation* grew by more than 250 % from 251 to 674.
- The number of *hectares* licensed for cultivation increased almost sixfold from 2400 hectares to more than 14,200.
- Licences with *processing* activity more than tripled, growing from 14 to 47.
- Licences with *distribution* activity quadrupled, increasing from 14 to 60.
- *Research applications* increased moderately. There were 26 applicants in 1998 and 36 in 1999.

Farmers need their licences on a timely basis. Why are the licences issued so late in the growing season?

The *Industrial Hemp Regulations* came into effect in March, 1998. Applications were received almost immediately and the first licences were issued in May of 1998. In response to concerns expressed by the industry about the lateness of the licences, Health Canada arranged to accept applications as early as January 1, 1999. The first licence applications were received around mid-January, and the first licences were issued at the beginning of February. However, most farmers were not ready or able to take advantage of this service and did not submit their applications until mid-April and into May. This created a backlog due to volume. The majority of licences were issued by the end of May to those who qualified.

What is the average time between application date and the date that a licence is issued?

If the application is simple, complete and accurate, the licence is issued in about 10 working days. However, the majority of applications this year were initially incomplete and required further information from the applicant. Once issued, a copy of the licence is faxed to the applicant, usually within 24 hours, and the original is sent out by mail.

What were the main problems with the application submissions?

Global Positioning Coordinates, which identify the area(s) to be cultivated, were missing or incomplete; copies were sent instead of originals; and police criminal record checks were missing or incomplete. In more complex applications, documentation providing evidence that the applicant had prerequisite qualifications was missing or incomplete.

Are applications processed on a first-come, first-served basis? If not why not?

Insofar as possible the applications are processed in order of arrival. Those applications which are incomplete are either returned to the sender with an explanatory letter, or held until the application is complete. Applicants are notified several times by telephone, fax, or letter of missing information and are given every opportunity to provide supporting documents or data in order to complete the forms.

What did Health Canada do to help applicants understand the process?

Health Canada recognized that there was a need to help applicants to understand the requirements of the Regulations and took a number of steps to assist applicants:

- Application forms were reorganized to facilitate the application process and clarify some information requirements
- Overview and guideline documents were prepared for the general application form and 8 of the schedules.
- Guideline and overview documents were published on the Industrial Hemp website (<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hpb-dgps/therapeut/>)
- A telephone call-line was established to provide basic information and to respond to questions about the application process.
- A representative from the Industrial Hemp Section held, or attended information sessions at eight locations across Canada.
- Fax memos and letters were sent out to alert applicants to special issues that arose.