



VIEW*S* & VISIONS

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Hemp and Your Health

J. Morgan Leach, Esquire
Co-founder, West Virginia Hemp Farmers Cooperative, Inc.
Executive Director, West Virginia Hemp Industries Association

J. Morgan Leach is a recent graduate of the West Virginia University College of Law, receiving his JD with an Energy and Sustainable Development Law concentration. He is now a practicing attorney in the State of West Virginia.

Leach has taken a keen interest in the fields of industrial hemp and medical cannabis, as a result of his experience with local foods and sustainable agriculture. He is well versed in the legal and regulatory requirements for the new wave of cannabis entrepreneurs in West Virginia.

He is co-founder of the state's first hemp farming cooperative, WHFC Inc., and is the Executive Director of the West Virginia Hemp Industries Association (WVHIA), a trade association dedicated to the fair treatment of hemp farmers, researchers, processors and retailers.

West Virginia is gaining momentum in the American hemp revolution, which may have positive benefits for your health!

The West Virginia Farmers Cooperative is currently leading the way as the largest hemp producing company in the state. Our goal is to provide information on the health benefits of hemp and make locally sourced hemp products more available to consumers. We currently grow hemp for the seed, flower, stalk and root, employing a zero-waste process to achieve maximum sustainability in our farming operations. Our focus will be using these ingredients to produce oils and the extracts that are used in food, dietary supplements, body care and cosmetic products.

Humans have consumed hemp for centuries, beginning with the ancient Chinese, who first observed birds flocking to the crop to eat the seeds, and continuing with our founding fathers and their introduction of hemp to America.



In 1938, Popular Mechanics magazine published an article describing hemp as the new "Billion Dollar Crop," after the invention of the decorticator (a machine that processed hemp fibers and would have revolutionized the industry). The article was actually written in the spring of 1937, just before cannabis was criminalized. Only under the purview of 20th century prohibition have we forgotten about the health benefits that hemp can provide.

Hemp was originally outlawed by the Marijuana Tax Act of 1937, when it was grouped in with the definition of marijuana by competing lobby groups from the timber, plastics and pharmaceutical industries. All cannabis-based medicines (including hemp foods) were outlawed. Cannabis was erased from the United States Pharmacopeia and demonized by nonsensical "reefer madness" propaganda.

Prohibition of hemp is beginning to fade away since Congress passed the Agricultural Act of 2014, also known as the Farm Bill. States are now able to regulate and grow the crop for research, development and marketing purposes. Hemp is defined in the Farm Bill as varieties of *Cannabis Sativa L.* that contain 0.3 percent or less of THC, rendering it useless as a recreational drug.

Hemp is grown as an oilseed crop that produces fiber, nutrient-dense seed and flowers that are sticky with a resin that contain cannabinoids, terpenes and other beneficial constituents. Hemp seeds are rich in protein, polyunsaturated fatty acids, omegas and insoluble fiber. They are a good source of tocopherols, or Vitamin E antioxidants. They're packed with minerals such as potassium, magnesium, iron, zinc, calcium and phosphorus.



Hemp is high in essential fatty acids, omega-3 and omega-6, and can be used as a better tasting and more sustainable substitute for fish oil supplements. Hemp seed is a super food product that can be added to any meal – a scoop in cereal, yogurt or a smoothie – or taken as a supplement. Consuming hemp on a daily basis supports cardiovascular systems, joint health and brain function.

Due to legalization efforts of both cannabis and hemp, medical research is now able to explore the effect of hemp extracts on the human endocannabinoid system. While low in THC, the resin from the flower produces many other non-psychoactive cannabinoids, including cannabidiol, or CBD, that has been gaining popularity as a nutraceutical product. CBD is becoming a well-known, natural alternative to many pharmaceutical drugs that produce undesirable side effects. It is being researched for its ability to treat a wide range of ailments, including neurological

disorders, seizures, pain relief, anxiety and cancer. There are many ways to consume CBD, including tinctures, topicals, vape oils and infused food products.

Currently, the most common users of CBD are people who suffer from epilepsy, multiple sclerosis (MS), fibromyalgia, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), arthritis, anxiety and chronic pain. However, the Food and Drug Administration has not approved CBD for treating any of these conditions at this time. Many who are having success with CBD are pushing to preserve the status of the industry and to conduct more clinical trials to advance our understanding of this plant and its possibilities.

Hemp root also has become an ingredient of interest for various products and applications. It was originally prepared by ancient Chinese medicine makers, who ground the root for the powder and resulting juices. These ingredients were

used in pastes and compounds that helped speed the process of mending broken bones. The compounds helped to coat and protect sites of surgeries, speed healing, reduce possibility of infection, and to relieve pain. ♪

For more information about hemp, or to inquire about growing hemp in West Virginia, please visit the WV Farmers Cooperative at wvhemp.org.