

James R. Comer
Commissioner



Office of Agriculture Marketing
Industrial Hemp Program
111 Corporate Drive
Frankfort, KY 40601
Phone: (502) 564-4983
Fax: (502) 564-0303

Kentucky Department of Agriculture
A Consumer Protection and Service Agency

Industrial Hemp Program

February 17, 2014

The Kentucky Department of Agriculture Industrial Hemp Program is the result of the passage of two separate laws: Kentucky's Senate Bill 50, passed by the Kentucky General Assembly in 2013, and the 2014 Federal Farm Bill signed into law February 7, 2014. Senate Bill 50 exempted industrial hemp from the state controlled substances act but also mandated that Kentucky follow all federal rules and regulations with respect to industrial hemp. The Federal Farm Bill allows state departments of agriculture, in states where industrial hemp is legal, to administer industrial hemp pilot programs in conjunction with universities for the purposes of research and development.

Because the law remains unclear, the KDA will work with the Kentucky Office of the Attorney General (OAG) to pursue a blanket waiver that will allow Kentucky producers to grow industrial hemp for commercial purposes. Meanwhile, the KDA is moving forward with pilot programs and will initially administer five such programs in different areas of the state, each with a unique research focus and university affiliation. Producers interested in growing industrial hemp must execute an application with the KDA and affiliate with a pilot program.

The first pilot project, affiliated with Kentucky State University and our Homegrown by Heroes military veteran farmer program, will study the cultivation of Kentucky Heirloom hemp seed on a research plot in Eastern Kentucky.

The second project, located in Western Kentucky and affiliated with Murray State University, will cultivate European seed for the purposes of studying hemp fiber.

The third pilot project, located on an urban brownfield and affiliated with the University of Louisville, will study bio-remediation, or the detoxifying and environmental effects of industrial hemp.

The fourth pilot project, located in central Kentucky, will address many of the basic agricultural issues involved in the production of industrial hemp such as the machinery needed for proper planting, harvesting and transportation, the yield per acre and overall cost of production. This project is linked with the University of Kentucky for measuring agriculture production and Eastern Kentucky University, which will conduct a renewable energy research project with this crop in its ECU Craft Center.

The final pilot project, also affiliated with the University of Kentucky and located in Eastern Kentucky, will focus on cultivating cannabinoids for medical research purposes.

If you have an interest in growing industrial hemp, please execute the attached application and a KDA staffer will contact you with more information. The goal of these pilot programs is to move this new industry forward while working to achieve independence for farmers to pursue production of industrial hemp in a free and open market.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James R. Comer".

James R. Comer

