

Hemp: A Renewable Source

© March 9, 2014

By Shannon Phillips

Reprinted 2014

By *Aquosus Potentia*

www.aquopotent.net

OUTLINE

- I. Introduction
 - A. Hemp as a renewable resource
 - B. Preview of hemp
 - C. Thesis: The global market for hemp is on the rise, and it gives a tremendous environmental benefit on the economy.
- II. Body
 - A. Background
 - 1. What is hemp?
 - a. Definition
 - b. The differences between marijuana and hemp
 - 2. History
 - a. The controlled substances act
 - b. Colorado considers growing hemp
 - B. Crops- - How hemp is grown
 - 1. Parts of the plant
 - 2. What the different parts are used for
 - 3. Parts of the world that grow hemp
 - C. Hemp based products
 - 1. Why they are important
 - 2. Economy growth
 - D. Legal issues about medical marijuana
 - 1. Medical marijuana and hemp
 - 2. Banning and legalizing
- III. Conclusion
 - A. Review main points
 - B. Arguments

Hemp is becoming a great renewable resource for many products that are used today. Fossil fuels, paper, and fabrics are some examples of the large varieties of items produced with hemp. Hemp has been making a comeback for years, but with it being illegal in so many areas, it's hard to use a resource that isn't readily available. The global market for hemp is on the rise, and it gives a tremendous environmental benefit for the economy. As much as hemp is widely used, the Cannabis Sativa plant is illegal in many parts across the globe because of its association with marijuana. The legalization of hemp has been a huge controversy for years. All parts of the plant are useful and versatile. The primary use is mainly because of the fibers and oil seeds the plant produces and not the intoxicant chemicals. With so many resources, the frequently used hemp should be legal to harvest in all areas. It could easily be a way to help people earn a living by harvesting the crops. This way, it would make it more convenient to produce more renewable resources with a natural plant ("Hemp," pp. 827-828).

Hemp is a plant species formally named Cannabis Sativa and is of the same plant species as marijuana, but hemp is genetically different in its chemical makeup. Industrial hemp holds much lower levels of the psychoactive substance Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) than marijuana. The plant's family comes from Cannabaceae and first originated in Central Asia. Hemp is grown for its fiber, oil and seeds, which can be extremely valuable, whereas marijuana is grown for medical recreational and religious purposes ("Hemp," pp. 827-828). While hemp and marijuana are related, there are clear differences.

Hemp is one of the oldest industries on this planet, dating back more than 10,000 years ago. It was extensively grown in the United States back in the mid-1800s. Presidents, such as

George Washington and Thomas Jefferson both grew hemp crops. Benjamin Franklin owned a mill that produced paper made from hemp, and the paper Jefferson signed for the Declaration of Independence was hemp based (Mass, n.d.). By the 1890s, cotton gave hemp a run in competition. As cotton became more and more popular, the need for hemp slowly died down. By 1933, thirty-three states passed laws to restrict the use of cannabis to just industrial and medicinal purposes. In 1937, during World War II, Congress passed another law allowing farmers to grow hemp only for industrial resources while banning the use of marijuana. After the war was over, fewer crops of hemp were grown; therefore, none were grown after 1958. In 1970, Congress passed the Controlled Substances Act. This makes hemp illegal unless one obtains a Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) permit, which is almost impossible to get (Mass, n.d.). Recently in Colorado, officials considered new rules for growing hemp. Amendment 64, the ballot that initially legalized marijuana, also provides the licensing ability to start hemp farming. Colorado is now the state first to grow industrial hemp in over 56 years. Advocates hope this will spur economic growth and create a turning point in today's society. Even though it still remains illegal, a profit can be made for the state because of the new tax regulations (Muskal, 2013). Hemp has historically and could be in the future a viable industry.

There are many different varieties of hemp, each with its own set of characteristics. Hemp can undergo a vast amount of environmental conditions but grows best in 60-80° Fahrenheit temperatures. Hemp requires an abundant amount of moisture throughout the growing season. While the plant grows well in damp-soiled conditions, the excess water does need to drain. In addition to the soil, hemp needs nutrients to help produce an adequate

number of crops. It generally grows well around weeds and does not have a need for herbicides (Ehrensing, 1998). Hemp is very environmentally friendly and does not pollute the water, air or soil. Hemp is an extremely fast-growing crop; therefore, it produces more fiber than a lot of other sources, including cotton. It produces 250 more fiber than cotton, and 600% more fiber than flax (Mass, n.d). Growing hemp is an excellent idea.

Hemp is a very useful plant to mankind. The fibers from the plant are strong and durable. After undergoing a process by drying, crushing, and shaking the stalks, it can be used for many purposes, such as string, yarn and rope. The hemp seed oils can be used in beauty products, paint, soaps, and other large varieties of well-known items (“Hemp,” pp. 827-828). With a concern for the high price of oil, hemp can be used as an alternative fuel option. Just like the “go green” fueled cars we see today, the hemp could also be used as a renewable resource to fuel cars. It’s environmentally friendly and doesn’t pollute the atmosphere. Instead of cutting down trees, it can also be used to produce paper. It is acid free, stronger, and can be recycled many more times than regular tree-based paper. Large assortments of food have even been produced from hemp. The seeds are second to soybeans in being a good source of protein. Many organic foods and pet foods have been produced from hemp, which is natural and healthy (“Herb Resources,” 2014). It clearly is very versatile in its potential uses.

The industrial hemp status and market potential could become more popular in the United States. Hemp has been long used for the production of man everyday materials. Some have estimated that 25,000 products consist of hemp. Every part of the hemp plant can be used. The current industry reports that the U.S retail sales of hemp-based products can include

up to \$300 million per year. These products are used so often in the U.S.; the production of hemp could be what is needed to raise profits in the country. With personal care, pharmaceuticals, various constructions, and other materials, there is an endless industry. Many more necessities for hemp also have the potential for reaching the market. Not only is it environmentally friendly, unlike synthetic fibers, hemp is fully biodegradable (Johnson, 2011).

The Supreme Court debate from May of 2001 expresses how there are no scientific studies proving medical marijuana has important health benefits. In the last five years, however, there has been a push to legalize the use of medical marijuana for people with a true illness. Some states have decided to legalize it, but this runs into other federal laws, including the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FDCA) and Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA). Marijuana is a schedule 1 class drug that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has not yet approved. Only the FDCA can give the FDA the power to approve and regulate medicine. Medical marijuana cannot be certified; therefore, it can't be used on hand by the public. The Supreme Court debated on whether to be against medical marijuana or ease up on the Federal drug laws. The Supreme Court Debate on medical marijuana may be useful due to the fact laws on marijuana and hemp could have the potential to become more relaxed. This act may lead to further production in crops, yet there should still be restrictions on how it's controlled and who controls it. The different uses for Cannabis Sativa may possibly make an economic turn-around for the United States.

Hemp is an excellent eco-friendly alternative when it is compared to normal everyday synthetics and fibers. Hemp is produced in many countries all over the world including Canada,

China, and France (“Herb Resources,” 2014). Since the United States has such a big controversy over distinguishing the difference between marijuana and hemp, it’s only allowed to be transported to the U.S. Hemp is considered to be biodegradable and can be used to replace many items used today, such as water bottles. With it being weather and mold resistant, the cost is more effective and more durable than cotton or other sources that are used for many fabrics or papers. Most people are not educated about the difference in the uses and the effects of marijuana and hemp, so in many places, they both are illegal. Generally, if one is illegal somewhere, the other will be, too. However, if legalized, the industrial hemp has a variety of uses and could transform the economy in numerous ways. If hemp were able to be grown and harvested, this could provide many jobs for people and be extremely beneficial to the economy (Cook, 2014).

REFERENCES

- Clark, E.L. (Ed.) (2011). Industrial hemp in the United States: Status and market potential. [Abstract, chapter3]. *Cannabis Sativa for health and hemp*. Hauppauge, NY: Nova Science.
- Cook, L. (2014, January 26). No hemp high. *Sunday Star-Times*, p. A14.
- Ehrensing, D. (1998, May). Feasibility of industrial hemp production in the United States Pacific Northwest. *Oregon State University web*. Retrieved from <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/html/sb/sb681/#climaterequirements>
- Hemp. (2007). In *The new encyclopedia* (Vol.5, pp.827-828). Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica.
- Herb resources: The many uses of hemp. (2014). *Herbco*. Retrieved from <http://www.herbco.com/t-herb-resources.aspx>
- Johnson, R. (2011). Hemp as an agricultural commodity [Summary, chapter2]. In E.L. Clark (Ed.), *Cannibas Sativa for health and hemp*. Hauppauge,NY: Nova Science.
- Mass, E. (n.d.). The new, old fiber makes a comeback for clothes, fabrics, and more furnishings. *National Life Magazine*, 36. Retrieved from http://www.naturallifemagazine.com/0906/hemp_fiber_makes_a_comeback.htm
- Medical use of marijuana. (2001, May). *Supreme Court Debates* 4(5), 129.
- Muskal, M. (2013, November 7). Colorado officials consider new rules on growing hemp. *Los Angeles Times Web*. Retrieved March 10, 2014, from <http://articles.latimes.com/keyword/hemp>