

KDA Prepares to Oversee Industrial Hemp in Kansas

Today Governor Jeff Colyer, M.D. signed Senate Bill 263, which enacts the Alternative Crop Research Act allowing the Kansas Department of Agriculture to oversee the cultivation of industrial hemp in a research program. KDA has begun the process of developing rules and regulations to guide the Alternative Crop Research Act, which will include an open dialogue and information exchange at a public forum in May.

Individuals who are interested in participating in the industrial hemp research program are invited to attend a session at the public forum on May 11, 2018, at the KDA office at 1320 Research Park Dr. in Manhattan, Kansas. Three separate two-hour sessions will be held for public comment. Participation for each session is limited to 50. During the public input portion of the sessions, participants will be limited to three minutes of comments. All participants must preregister for one session at <https://fs22.formsite.com/KansasDeptAg/IndustrialHemp/index.html>.

The public forum sessions will provide an overview of the Alternative Crop Research Act, including the legal parameters set within the bill, and the procedures that will guide development of the rules and regulations. Guest speakers will include Brent Burchett, the director of the plant division from the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, and Mitch Yergert, retired director of the division of plant industry from the Colorado State Department of Agriculture. The sessions will include time for questions and feedback from attendees.

The legislation requires that the rules and regulations to acquire a license and otherwise carry out the provisions of the Alternative Crop Research Act will be complete on or before December 31, 2018. Research projects involving industrial hemp may vary, and applications for pilot projects and research proposals must be approved prior to licensure.

The opportunity to grow a new specialty oilseed crop in Kansas offers potential for diversification for Kansas farmers looking for an alternative crop, or for new farming enterprises interested in cultivating industrial hemp. The Kansas agriculture industry has developed a statewide strategic growth plan in recent years, and is committed to pursuing new and innovative opportunities to grow agriculture. The research generated by participants of this new industrial hemp program will be valuable data in identifying the growth potential offered in this sector.

The 2014 Farm Bill included a section to allow for universities and state departments of agriculture to begin cultivating industrial hemp for purposes of research, provided that the growing and cultivating of industrial hemp is allowed under state law. Industrial hemp is defined by SB 263 as all parts and varieties of the plant *Cannabis sativa* L. that contain a delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) concentration of no more than 0.3 percent on a dry weight basis.

Information about the recent legislation as well as the upcoming public forum can be found at agriculture.ks.gov/industrialhemp or by contacting the KDA plant protection and weed control program at 785-564-6700 or at kda.ppwk.ks.gov.