

Industrial Hemp Focus of Statewide Meeting Series

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. In a series of meetings across the state, Canadian farmer Rod Flaman will share how the Canadian hemp market has evolved and how he grows and markets his crop.

Flaman has raised commercial hemp on and off since it was legalized in 1998. "We've forgotten everything about hemp, the fibre, the pharmaceuticals, the food. So you've got to build this entire industry from square one and it's a slow process re-inventing an industry that has been non-existent for 80 years," Flaman said.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for farmers considering growing hemp in Kansas in the future to learn the basics and the challenges of growing and marketing industrial hemp directly from a large Canadian producer who has been doing it for years," says Kansas Farmers Union President Donn Teske. "Rod knows what it takes to grow hemp, this year he has 500 acres that he is harvesting. We all hear of the magic of hemp, but so far the basics of just what it takes on one's farm to grow and market it isn't really out there yet in Kansas. Rod can give a perspective of that."

In addition to Flaman's presentation, the Kansas Department of Agriculture will provide an update on what is in the industrial hemp law, rules and regulations and how to prepare to participate in this new adventure.

Josh Roe, Deputy Secretary, Kansas Department of Agriculture states, "The Kansas Department of Agriculture is committed to providing an environment that enhances and encourages growth in Kansas agriculture. We support opportunities to grow new alternative crop varieties in the state. Senate Bill 263 provides the opportunity for important research on the viability of growing, processing and manufacturing industrial hemp in Kansas."

The informational meeting schedule is as follows:

Manhattan

Monday, October 22

9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Kansas Department of Agriculture

1320 Research Park Dr

Manhattan, KS 66506

Salina

Monday, October 22

1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Kansas State University State Polytechnic

College Center Conference Room
2310 Centennial Rd
Salina, 67401

Colby

Tuesday, October 23
8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.
City Limits Convention Center
2227 South Range
Colby, KS 67701

Garden City

Tuesday, October 23
3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
KSU Southwest Area Research Center
4500 E Mary St
Garden City, KS 67846

There is no cost to register for the meetings. To RSVP, visit kansasfarmersunion.com/events/ to select a meeting location.

For more information, contact Donn Teske, 785.770.0336 or dteske@nfudc.org, or Mercedes Taylor-Puckett, kfu.mercedes@gmail.com.

Meetings are sponsored by the Kansas Farmers Union, the Kansas Department of Agriculture, and Kansas Center for Sustainable Agriculture and Alternative Crops. The Salina meeting is co-sponsored by K-State Polytechnic Civic Lecture series and the Central Kansas District, Kansas State University Extension. Thomas County Economic Development Alliance is the co-sponsor of the meeting in Colby.

Governor Jeff Colyer, M.D. signed Senate Bill 263 on April 20, 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. Additional information on the Industrial Hemp Research Program is located on the KDA website:
<http://agriculture.ks.gov/divisions-programs/plant-protect-weed-control/industrial-hemp>.