



For Immediate Release

Industrial Hemp Can Bring Jobs for U.S. Veterans and Family Farmers

Industrial Hemp Groups Celebrate Veterans Day: Kentucky Hemp Flag To Fly Over U.S. Capitol

Washington, DC, November 9, 2015 – An American flag made of industrial hemp grown in Kentucky by United States veterans will be flown over the U.S. Capitol in Washington, DC for the first time on Veterans Day (November 11, 2015). The Hemp American flag celebrates this versatile crop cultivated by our founding fathers and calls attention to how hemp can provide a significant source of jobs for veterans and rural farming families.

Industrial hemp industry groups and leaders will host a *Hemp for Vets* press conference on Wednesday, November 11, from 9:30 am – 10:30 am in the Murrow Room at the National Press Club, 529 14th St. NW, Washington DC 20045.

Participants include **Mike Lewis**, Director of [Growing Warriors](#); **Joe Schroeder**, CEO of Freedom Seed and Feed; **James Woosley**, former CIA Director and Under Secretary of the Navy; **Commissioner James Comer** of the Kentucky Department of Agriculture; veteran farmers and members of Congress.

Once considered America's most important cash crop, hemp seeds today cannot be transported across state lines and hemp farmers cannot obtain bank accounts or get crop insurance. Industrial hemp is legal in 30 countries around the world. In the U.S. industrial hemp is classified as a Schedule 1 controlled substance (along with narcotics such as heroin and LSD). Advocates hope to restore the industrial hemp industry through passage of the Industrial Hemp Farming Act of 2015 ([H.R. 525](#) and [S. 134](#)) which removes hemp from the Controlled Substances Act.

Industry leaders have seen a steady increase in the use of imported hemp products, between 20–25% per year. Experts estimate annual sales for hemp products was between \$500 and \$620 million in 2014. Consumer sales of hemp food, health and beauty products rose 21.2% in 2014 over the previous year (source: [SPINS data](#)). The *Hemp Business Journal* estimates the U.S. hemp industry will reach \$1.5 billion in consumer sales by 2020 (source: [www.HempBizJournal.com](#)).

“Hemp was a crop that built our nation,” said U.S. veteran and Kentucky hemp farmer **Mike Lewis**, Director of the Growing Warriors Project, the first federally authorized hemp farm in America farmed by disabled veterans. “Betsy Ross’ first American flag was made of hemp. We have flags made in China now. That’s almost sacrilegious,” said Lewis, who grew the Kentucky industrial hemp used to make the Hemp American Flag. Lewis served in the “Commander in Chiefs Guard” of the 3rd U.S. Infantry from 1992 to 1995.

“Growing Warriors is about strengthening the family farm and rural economies,” added **Lewis**. “More than half of our military comes from rural farming communities. After serving our country veterans return home to find their town centers vacant and in disrepair. The land they defended can no longer provide for their families. The Homegrown Flag project and the flag itself represents our nation’s individual strengths, unity, diversity, ingenuity, and resilience. People working together to make something meaningful that will last, this is how the first farmer–veterans forged and tamed this brave new land. This is how we must move forward: by putting our veterans and our farmers in the lead. We are bringing back the past to move us all forward.”

“Hemp played a pivotal role in the founding of our country,” said **James Woosley**, former Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, former Secretary of the Navy, and board member of the [North American Industrial Hemp Council](#). “The early hemp paper mills made possible both the colonial free press and the stock for our legal tender. Hemp canvas protected the conestoga wagons as our early pioneers braved their movement westward. In colonial America, a farmer could be jailed for NOT growing hemp. The hemp crop provided sails for our Navy ships; it gave us the first printed bible and Rembrandt shared his artistic brilliance with the world on hemp canvas. Today’s veterans are on the front lines of the battle to return this important crop back to America’s farms.”

“If a hemp industry is to thrive in America again, and provide the stability for so many communities that tobacco once did, it has to start with the stability of the small farmer,” said **Joe Schroeder**, CEO of [Freedom Seed and Feed](#), an agricultural enterprise production and processing company. “Freedom Seed and Feed now has a unique opportunity to play a major role in re–building Kentucky’s position as a world leader in industrial hemp production. Together we can create stability for small farmers all the way up the supply chain. This is an exciting opportunity to build an agricultural industry from the ground up that favors small family farmers in rural America.”

“We are proud to honor the great work by the Growing Warriors network,” said **Mike Bowman**, a fifth generation farmer from Colorado, and Board Chair of the [National Hemp Association](#), a non–profit trade association for the hemp industry. “After serving our country, these men and women have returned home to lead the effort of rebuilding our rural economies. Their leadership on the battlefield has transitioned to leadership at the local level. They are not only brave Americans, but genuine heroes. Today we are here to convey our debt of gratitude.”

“Today as we remember and thank veterans for keeping us free, we ask Congress and the President to restore their right to grow industrial hemp,” said **Eric Steenstra**, President of [Vote Hemp](#), the nation’s leading hemp grassroots advocacy organization working to revitalize industrial hemp production in the U.S. “This patriotic crop embodied in the hemp flag flying at the Capitol this Veterans Day is a powerful tool for economic development and restoring rural communities.”

Legalizing Industrial Hemp

Twenty-seven U.S. states have enacted or are considering laws to allow industrial hemp cultivation or are petitioning the federal government to declassify industrial hemp as a drug. A broad coalition of farmers, business owners, state and federal elected officials, policy makers, and citizens support the passage of the **Industrial Hemp Farming Act of 2015**.

The bill would remove hemp from the Controlled Substances Act and allow all parts of the plant to be fully legal. On February 7, 2014, President Obama signed the Agriculture Act of 2014 into law. Section 7606 of the Farm Bill, [Legitimacy of Industrial Hemp Research](#), defines industrial hemp as distinct from marijuana and authorizes institutions of higher education or state departments of agriculture in states where hemp is legal to grow hemp for research or agricultural pilot programs.

About Industrial Hemp

Hemp is one of the oldest cultivated plants on earth dating back 12,000 years and a crop that has played a significant part in American history. The Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution were drafted on hemp paper. U.S. Presidents George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and John Adams all grew hemp on their farms, along with most farmers during colonial times. During World War II, hemp played a pivotal role in supplying cordage for the U.S. Navy, including sturdy material for rope, rigging, anchor lines and sails.

Industrial hemp is a resilient crop that can be grown without pesticides and herbicides and is drought tolerant, requiring about 1/3 of the water needed to grow corn. The crop provides a versatile raw material that will support many U.S. industries including industrial textiles (e.g. rope, carpets, brake/clutch linings, automotive body parts and insulation for car doors), consumer textiles (e.g. apparel, shoes, fine fabrics, clothing accessories, linens and upholstery), paper (e.g. cardboard, printing paper, specialty paper), building material (e.g. fiberboard, cement, insulation for walls and ceilings), functional foods (e.g. hemp oil, hemp seeds, granola, protein powder, energy bars), industrial products (e.g. coatings, fuel, lubricants), and personal hygiene, beauty and body products (e.g. soap, shampoo, cosmetics and topical salves).

In 1937 New York Senator William Hearst, whose paper business was threatened by the sustainable hemp plant (yield from one acre of hemp equals four acres of trees), used Hearst newspapers to conduct a smear campaign to mislead the American people to believe the crop was a dangerous psychoactive drug – the first case of “yellow journalism.”

Resources

More about Mike Lewis and the Growing Warriors Project at:

[Heroic Endeavors: Growing Warriors and the American Hemp Flag](#)

[The Kentucky Cloth Project](#), a 5-minute video about Mike Lewis and the Kentucky hemp and natural fibers used to make the American Hemp Flag.

About the Growing Warriors Project

Growing Warriors trains, assists, and equips veteran families with the skills, tools, and supplies needed to grow high quality sustainably produced local produce for their families, their communities, and their country. Growing Warriors operates six local food operations in Kentucky.

About Freedom Seed and Feed, Inc.

Freedom Seed and Feed is an agricultural enterprise production and processing company. The team partners with existing manufactures to research and develop scale appropriate processing based on the regionally needs of regional small and mid scale farmers and collaborative farm enterprises to access key markets, such as post-tobacco agricultural community revitalization efforts in the Southeast.

About the National Hemp Association

The National Hemp Association is a leading 501(c)6 trade association that supports the growth and development of all aspects of the emerging industrial hemp industry. Based in Colorado, the association serves hemp farmers, processors, manufacturers, researchers, policy makers, elected and appointed officials, the investment community and citizens who are in favor of the re-birth of industrial hemp as a major U.S. crop. More information at: www.NationalHempAssociation.org.

About Vote Hemp

Vote Hemp is the nation's leading hemp grassroots advocacy organization working to revitalize industrial hemp production in the U.S. The 501(c)4 organization is a national, single-issue, non-profit advocacy group founded in 2000 by members of the hemp industry to remove barriers to industrial hemp farming in the U.S. through education, legislation and advocacy. More info at www.VoteHemp.com.

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