

■ HEMP CULTIVATION

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For many, growing marijuana was the new gold rush. The Applegate, with its ideal climate, ample farmland, and skilled agricultural workforce, was well positioned to ride this economic high. But the simultaneous convergence of multiple pot grows, long lead times in the dispensary licensing process, and a market glut of recreational cannabis left many growers rethinking their grow strategy. Maybe hemp would be a better crop.

Data from the *Hemp Business Journal* (2017) shows that industrial hemp in the US, which is used for multiple products, had annual sales of \$820 million. The prediction is for the market to continue to grow at double-digit rates to nearly \$2 billion by 2022 as discerning consumers continue to shift their shopping preferences to companies and products offering more environmentally sound and sustainable options. Continued education about hemp and its difference from marijuana further fuels the optimism surrounding the potential market growth.

Industrial hemp, grown primarily for cannabidiol (CBD) and its fiber, is managed by the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) under the "Right to Farm" law. Unlike its cannabis cousin,

which is produced for its high THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) content and regulated under the Oregon Liquor Control Commission, industrial hemp cannot have THC content exceeding 0.3 percent. Its target market is very different and much broader than the far more limited medicinal and recreational cannabis market.

Hemp has use in more than 25,000 commercial and industrial products and applications, including traditional uses like textiles, cloths, fiber, food, nutrition, oils, lotions, and rope as well as more recent applications in chemicals, biofuels, oil absorbents, soil amendments, weed control, building materials, water and soil purification and, of course, medicines for a wide range of ailments.

Hemp is increasingly being used as an attractive replacement material, offering a lower cost, higher yield, and more ecologically friendly option. As farmers continue to focus on sustainable agricultural practices and economically viable operations, and as consumers demand more environmentally conscious products, hemp grows are likely to increase.

Jackson County, Oregon's top industrial hemp producer with 124 registered industrial grows, and Josephine County, with 56, have over 600 acres of fields in hemp. ODA predicts

registrations are likely to double in the near future.

Kit Doyle, at the Murphy Hemp Company, in Murphy, Oregon, is happy to explain hemp and the numerous medical benefits believed to be derived from cannabinoids, without the side effects often associated with other more conventional drug therapies.

Although hemp sounds good as an Applegate crop, many residents have concerns about the proliferation of hemp grows. Existing marijuana growers, for instance, might have cause to worry about hemp contamination of their carefully cultivated unpollinated female cannabis.

These diverse opinions and farming objectives and concerns all encourage an ongoing exchange of points of view and a move toward education, understanding, collaboration, cooperation, consensus, guidelines, and regulations.

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Hemp fields along Highway 238 between Ruch and Applegate. Photo: Cathy Rodgers.

Luke Doyle plants new hemp starts using a water wheel planter at Murphy Hemp Company. Photo: Kit Doyle.



Real estate: Navigating 'For Sale by Owner' properties

BY JEANNE SCHATTLER

If you have been searching for property or a new home, you most likely have come across listings that are "For Sale by Owner" or FSBO. This is when a seller doesn't use a real estate professional. A buyer's concern should be whether this transaction will be handled correctly and legally.

Most people selling on their own are happy to work with a buyer's agent, who can help prepare an offer to the buyer's advantage and help negotiate without the emotions of dealing with the seller directly. Sellers usually don't understand true market value and oftentimes overvalue their homes.

A buyer's agent can educate buyers about current market values by providing comparables, which show the sold price and include real estate commissions for both sides (the buyer's agent and the listing agent). The FSBO seller doesn't have to pay commissions (typically five to six percent), so nets more. When we look at the sold properties in our market, we take real estate commission into consideration to help make sure that a buyer doesn't overpay.

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