



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

NYS releases revised regulations for industrial hemp pilot program ~ O'Mara, Lupardo sponsor legislation to encourage new industry

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Albany, N.Y. – New York’s first legal hemp seeds are closer to being sown next spring by universities and local farmers after revised regulations were issued by the State Department of Agriculture and Markets last week.

Research of industrial hemp by states was permitted as part of the 2014 US Farm Bill (§7606). Legislation ([S7047/A9140](#)) creating New York’s pilot program was sponsored Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats and Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo (D-Endwell) and [signed into law in December 2014](#).

“The initial public comment process allowed farmers, universities, businesses and legislators to suggest changes that we’re now pleased to see have been incorporated into the latest set of regulations. We’re now one step closer to finally moving New York State into an effective position to begin capturing these economic, job-creating and revenue-generating opportunities,” said O’Mara.

“I’m glad these revisions take into consideration the concerns and suggestions Senator O’Mara and I put forward, along with farmers and businesses across the state,” said Lupardo. “New York will begin conducting important research so that farmers can hit the ground running when full-scale production is permitted. This lucrative crop not only provides a new opportunity for famers, but also creates the potential for new manufacturing and niche markets across the state.”

Preliminary regulations were released last spring and were followed by a public comment period that resulted in several changes being made to the proposed guidelines for growing. Revisions include more lenient security, such as the elimination of a requirement to enclose crops with eight-foot fences, and the ability for the State and participating colleges and universities to contract with local farmers to grow hemp used for research.

“New York Farm Bureau is pleased to see the State of New York is moving forward with plans to allow for the research and development of industrial hemp. There may be valuable potential for our farmers looking to diversify their operations with the crop. Our organization appreciates Assemblywoman Lupardo’s and Senator O’Mara’s commitment to this issue that will likely offer new economic opportunities for farmers in her district and across the state,” said Dean Norton, New York Farm Bureau president.

"A lot of work has been done to move the hemp legislation along in New York. I'm excited that we're shifting on to the next phase, which is allowing universities to carry out research, development and growing of industrial hemp," said Susie Cody, President of New York Hemp Industries Association. "State-wide, ten permits will be granted and I hope to see all of them utilized throughout NY on varying projects. If this proves successful, we'll have incredible momentum to influence and change the law to allow for anyone to grow in the future. It's important to stress that all interested parties must act swiftly in order to be planting by 2016, as the process will be lengthy."

The latest regulations are subject to another 30-day public comment period after which they will be finalized. Research of the crop will help farmers gain a better understanding of how to grow industrial hemp, as well as explore the potential for processing and production of a wide array of hemp products. A number of colleges and universities around the state have already expressed interest in the industrial hemp pilot program, including Cornell University and Binghamton University.

“Industrial hemp has many possible uses in today’s emerging bio-economy, from the traditional textiles, fuel, animal feed ingredients, to consumer products. It’s clear that this is a plant variety that could do well in New York’s climate, and offer another good diversification option. I’m very pleased that the regulations have been revised, as it provides clarity to Cornell University’s stellar plant sciences faculty about the permit process, security, and reporting structure. Our faculty look forward to

answering the critical questions farmers will have in exploring this new crop, from varietal selection to disease and pest management,” said Kathryn Boor, the Ronald P. Lynch Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University.

"Binghamton University is supportive of advances in any area of research that aim to create medicines and products that improve the lives of New Yorkers,” said Dr. Gloria Meredith, founding Dean of the Binghamton University School of Pharmaceutical Sciences. “We are anxious to see the results of future research at universities and colleges across the state and commend Assemblywoman Lupardo and Senator O’Mara for working to create the boundaries within which this research will be conducted. Hemp-related research is certainly an area worth investigating and we look forward to learning more about the potential of this new field of study."

Both the stalk and seed from hemp can be used in the production of a variety of goods including textiles, building materials, paper, food, body products and environmental products such as biofuels. It also is rich in Omega 3 and Omega 6 fatty acids, which gives it numerous health benefits to both humans and animals. In 2012, retail sales from imported hemp products were estimated at \$500 million.