

Standing Committee on

Environment, Resources and Development –

Tasmania Hemp Industry Inquiry

Submission by

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Industrial Hemp Association)

My wife and I have a business importing, manufacturing and retailing hemp products in Australia. Combined we have over twenty years working in an industry, industrial hemp, that we still believe has the potential to be a sustainable source of food and industrial raw materials which is why we are sending this submission.

The first matter impacting on the production and value adding of industrial hemp in Tasmania is the current legislation prohibiting the sale of de-hulled industrial hemp seed as human food.

This legislation is counter to the view of Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) and indeed of most international food standard authorities in the World.

The value of Industrial hemp seed as a nutritional source of essential fatty acids (omega 3, 6 and 9), amino acids and protein is well documented and is referenced at length in the current FSANZ submission A1039 (2b). The industrial hemp seed has a variety of value adding options, the simplest and possibly the most effective is to produce a high value, high quality end-product with a growing market nationally and internationally (quote Canadas figures \$52 million) that being to de-hull and package the product in the form of seeds, milk, energy bars, butter, sauces and healthy ice creams, for the health food industry and, as awareness grows, the mainstream food market.

In many countries such as USA, Japan, England and Germany, de-hulled hemp seed is available on supermarket shelves and travellers to Australia are surprised that it's not commonplace here.

De-hulling and food packaging machinery infrastructure would be required, however these facilities would not require large investment (De-huller \$50,000.00 set up) and existing organic local food packaging facilities could be utilised.

Industrial hemp seed can be also pressed for oil resulting in a high quality nutritional oil which can be consumed instead of flaxseed and marine oil, neither of which have the nutritional or environmental advantages that hemp-seed has. The resulting meal, after oil pressing, can be sold as a nutritious bird, fish or stock food.

The other primary market is the cosmetics industry where hempseed oil is used as a moisturiser.

The stalk of industrial hemp has value adding options although the production of hemp for biomass, as compared to the planting for seed, requires different agricultural protocols and processing machinery.

If sufficient industrial hemp was grown in Tasmania, in close proximity to paper mills, it could be used as a sustainable substitute for wood pulp in the production of paper. Industrial hemp produces up to 4 times the volume of biomass (pulp) per hectare than timber grown for this purpose and produces a higher quality paper without the toxic waste of timber based paper production.

The development of building products such as cellulose cement, magnesium oxide cellulose board, and processes such as micro-grinding and nano-technology all require sustainable sources of cellulose bio-mass, indeed an associate in the industrial hemp industry stated that 100,000 hectares needed to be planted just to meet current demands in Queensland.

The shortage of a consistent supply is a major commercial impediment to the development of an industrial hemp industry in Tasmania and, in fact all across Australia. Large commercial investment requires a guaranteed consistent volume of raw material before committing to utilising a particular feedstock and at the moment these guarantees cannot be made.

The issue of broad acre, high volume production is an issue that impacts primarily on industrial hemp grown as a source of industrial raw material but not in the area of growing and value adding to seed where farms as small as 100 hectares can be commercially viable.

Other commercial impediments to the development of an industrial hemp industry in Tasmania are similar to those faced by any new industry based around agricultural - raw materials, supply of feedstock, as mentioned above, seed breeders and growers, infrastructure for value-adding, storage and dispatch R&D funding and a marketing and distribution chain although some of these elements already exist in embryo in Tasmania.

We are not sufficiently informed to comment on what regulatory impediments there are to the establishment, appropriate development and maintenance of a wider industrial hemp industry except for, as was mentioned earlier the current legislation regarding de-hulled industrial hempseed as human food.

The changing of current legislation is the single most important factor in the growth and development of the industrial hemp industry in Australia and again we urge the Tasmanian government to support the FSANZ submission A1039 applying to have de-hulled industrial hempseed classified as a legitimate human food.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely Ray and Beatrice Rankin
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The European Industrial Hemp association www.eiha.org has more information regarding many other products currently produced from industrial hemp.