Industrial Hemp: Legal, Political/Social and Economic Issues Raised over Time

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The literature review revealed extensive information regarding industrial hemp production for the US and by region (Figure 1). A total of 379 sources addressing the legal, political/social or economic considerations of industrial hemp were found. Sources spanned 100 years from 1916 through 2015. The legal citations (at 313) were by far the greatest in number, while the others each had 33 citations.

Discussion and Conclusion

Highlights include:

• Since 2010, the legal sources still support hemp as a viable crop. Economic sources are increasingly positive. However, the political/social literature since 2010 suggests greater resistance to the production of industrial hemp compared to earlier years.

• Economic – job generation and economic growth, 2) Legal – roadblocks from the Drug Enforcement Agency with legislation concerning industrial hemp as most other regions.

• Opportunities most often cited were: 1) Economic – job generation and economic growth, 2) Legal – regulations that promote hemp production, and 3) Social – interest group formation to support production opportunities

• The research suggests that the Southern region lacks extensive production conditions as roadblocks), but the research is also dated. The work summarized in Figure 1 clearly suggests that analyzing the economic feasibility, in light of lack of recent economic research updates, is needed for the Southeastern region of the United States. With 25,000 legal uses for industrial hemp, funding marketing and processing opportunities may well be found in this region.

Methods

A literature review was conducted to identify challenges and opportunities by state. Information was sorted first by the five USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) regions (Pacific West, Plains, Southeastern, Northeastern). The research described in this paper was confined to ARS regions because they provide the majority of the hemp production. A total of 379 sources addressing the legal, political/social or economic considerations of industrial hemp were found. Sources spanned 100 years from 1916 through 2015. The legal citations (at 313) were by far the greatest in number, while the others each had 33 citations.

Figure 1. Comparing Opportunities (top row) and Challenges (bottom row) Raised in Economic, Political/Social and Legal Categories, by ARS Region and by Time

Legend

Positive (shades of green) or negative (shades of red) viewpoints toward Industrial Hemp

# of citations with primarily positive (shades of black or green) or negative (shades of red) viewponts toward industrial hemp with marijuana

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