

HEMP INDUSTRY



Hemp farmers are frustrated with the seeds and clones they get (or can't get) and the skills they need to acquire for this new crop. Brokers, processors and distributors are frustrated because supplies and prices are always in flux. Retailers and consumers are confused and frustrated by almost everything about hemp.

Hemp needs to go to preschool to learn how to play with the other kids, where it can be socialized just like any other two-year-old. We don't need a standalone hemp marketplace – hemp needs to learn to fit into the existing global supply chain.

There will be arguments with shouting and crying. The FDA, USDA or even Congress might mandate a timeout. Law and logic may not sway opinions or change behavior – at least not at first. After all, it's all part of growing up.

Pushing boundaries is part of growing up, too. That's OK. Some in the hemp industry will try to bend the rules and regs, or even cheat. It's perfectly fair for regulators to scold or punish when done evenhandedly.

If there's one word that describes the Terrible Twos, it's frustration. A two-year-old is frustrated by their inability to communicate and navigate the world, while parents get frustrated with crying, hitting and tantrums. Hemp farmers are frustrated with the seeds and clones they get (or can't get) and the skills they need to acquire for this new crop. Brokers, processors and distributors are frustrated because supplies and prices are always in flux. Retailers and consumers are confused and frustrated by almost everything about hemp.

The best thing about two-year-olds? They grow up! The hemp industry is no different. We all need to be patient and supportive – positive parenting is what's called for. Let's support the hemp industry both by patronage and kudos. Hemp will mature from a tantrum-throwing toddler to an industry we can all be proud of. I for one can't wait!

WHY HEMP IS LIKE A PETULANT LITTLE CHILD, TEMPER TANTRUMS AND ALL...

IT'S BEEN TWO YEARS since the Farm Bill was passed. No matter what else he has done, we all owe Mitch McConnell a round of applause for making it happen.

As a father of three. I can speak about young children. When I look at hemp over the last two years, I see a two-year-old before me. Bear with me as I try to speak to today's immature hemp market as if it were a preschooler.

We've all know about the Terrible Twos. Two-year-olds ... they can talk, which means they can talk back. They don't know that much, but they think they know it all. They want to be grown up, but they have no idea how to get there. In short, two-year-olds are struggling to find their place in the world. They're often intelligent beyond their ability to express themselves or control their emotions. Sound familiar? The irony is that hemp isn't a new plant. In fact, it's an ancient one – as in thousands of years of cultivation and use by our ancestors. Hemp may be old, but the hemp industry is new. Infantile in fact. It simply needs time (and a little coaching) to grow up.

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After 83 years of federal prohibition, hemp has been thrust into the modern world. Farmers don't know how to grow it; standards are scarce and differ from state to state.

The federal government has yet to figure out if CBD is legal or not, and if so, how it fits into existing product categories like food.

Is the hemp industry ready to take its place in the grown-up world?