

# HEMP INDUSTRY



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## STOP GROWING HEMP

**Full disclosure: I'm a hemp farmer, but what I'm about to say has your best interests at heart. If you want to grow hemp for the CBD market this summer, please don't. Ask anyone who grew hemp for the CBD extraction market in 2020 if they're going to grow any hemp at all this year, and if they are, how little they'll plant compared to last year.**

It's not the farmer's fault – no matter how wonderful or plentiful their crop, the market is flooded with literally tons of unsold "biomass" all over the country. Bales, totes, bins, loose plants, trimmed flower – all of the above in abundance. Sellers, and not a buyer in sight.

When the Farm Bill passed in late 2018, states rushed to put rules and regulations in place for farmers to plant in the summer of 2019. Four and half times as many licenses were issued compared to 2018. Acres upon acres fueled by new farmers, betting they could match the high prices earned by farmers in Colorado and Oregon.

Hemp farmers focused on the CBD market and grew far too much in 2019. Prices dropped considerably (duh). Everyone thought the demand would catch up with the supply. It didn't. So what did farmers do? Plant more CBD-rich hemp in 2020. It's estimated that 85-90% of the hemp grown last year was for the CBD market. And of course, prices dropped yet again.

Not only will fewer farmers apply for hemp licenses in 2021 as prices continue to fall, seed companies have been sending me emails with sale prices for weeks. Seems no one's buying CBD seeds these days. Further evidence the CBD market is shrinking.

In the green rush to grow hemp, people have mistaken "hemp" as a synonym for "CBD." Before Sanjay Gupta and Charlotte Figi, the hemp movement was about food, fuel and fiber. But farmers aren't growing hemp for those markets.

### HEMP FARMERS, ARE YOU LISTENING?

If you drink hemp milk, eat hemp granola or enjoy a hemp burger, odds are that hemp grain was grown in Canada. So if Americans are migrating to plant foods, why aren't more American farmers growing hemp as a grain crop? Hemp farmers, are you listening?

And what about hempcrete? Seen any at Lowe's or Home Depot? Everyone's talking about it, ain't nobody got none.

There's a lot of groundwork to be done to make it mainstream. Things like building codes need to embrace it. Architects and builders need to become familiar with it.

When it does become a mainstream construction material, there needs to be enough to supply Lowe's. Hemp cultivation will have to scale up to huge volumes to supply this market. Hemp farmers, are you listening?

Want proof there's a market for hemp grown for fiber? This is my third year writing this monthly column. My February column on hemp packaging ([LeBlancCNE.com/NWLeaf/Pack-It-Up.pdf](https://LeBlancCNE.com/NWLeaf/Pack-It-Up.pdf)) got more feedback than all my other columns put together.

Hemp toilet paper isn't a high priority for you, my dear readers. Amazon boxes are. Amazon shipping containers need to be made out of hemp and Jeff Bezos is more than rich enough to subsidize the hemp industry to make it happen. It might go a long way to untarnishing his image. Trees are sacred and hemp is an Earth-friendly alternative. Hemp farmers, are you listening?

No, I'm not trying to scare hemp farmers away – but growing hemp for the saturated CBD market doesn't make sense.

While cultivating for the small, but growing, fiber market is speculative in the short term, consider this: There's no shelf-life for hemp fiber. Grow the right cultivars into tall plants with long fiber. Stored in a dry building, they'll last until the market catches up with you. And it will. Right now, the CBD market has supply greater than the demand.

Hemp fiber is the opposite – in the not too distant future, the demand for hemp fiber is going to outstrip the supply. Hemp farmers, are you listening?

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