

HEMP

Continued from Page 14

Wilder said she was intrigued by the prospect of growing hemp in part after she read about a variety — one that's patented, and thus not available to them — that was shown to help treat children with epilepsy.

(Like other hemp growers, Kahuna Hemp Farm has to hire an accredited firm to test its plants, before harvest, to ensure they contain less than 0.3% THC. If the THC level exceeded that threshold, Wilder said, they would have to pull up their plants.)

Hammar and Wilder said they're eager to take advantage of the hemp plant's other uses, which include turning its fibers into cloth and twine, and making a building material, known as "hempcrete," from the core of the stalks, a part known as "hurd."

Wilder said one of her goals is to construct a building from hempcrete.

But as for now, the growing demand for hemp is driven almost exclusively by the clamor for CBD oil. The product is being used in an array of items ranging from topical ointments to pet food.

But not all hemp suppliers use the same techniques.

Hammar said that although CBD oil can be extracted from whole hemp plants that are ground up, Karuna Hemp Farm sells only the flowers, which yield a higher-quality oil.

That process requires more labor, though.

After the plants have been harvested, they're hung to dry for about two weeks. Karuna Hemp Farm uses the 30-foot by 100-foot greenhouse that Hammar built on the 10-acre field in Eagle Valley, as well as two barns over the hill in Halfway.

The farm hires a crew to strip the flowers from the dried stalks.

They also employ a clever machine built by their friend, Marvin Brisk of Halfway, whom Wilder describes as a "genius."

The machine is a hemp shucker. It consists of a pair of rubber



S. John Collins / Baker City Herald

The bigger buds, or flowers, from a stalk are snipped off for use in smokable products.



S. John Collins / Baker City Herald

Veronica Garcia, right, along with Yesinia Barreto, left, leave smaller flowers on stalks that will be used to make products like oils, lotions, edibles and drinkables.

wheels that spin against each other and strip off the flower buds, leaving the bare stalks.

(Hammar said some people smoke larger buds to get the benefits of the CBD oil; again, because hemp contains almost no THC, smoking it doesn't produce the high that comes from ingesting marijuana.)

Wilder said Brisk assembled the machine for about a tenth of the cost of a commercial device.

Although the expanding market for CBD oil is in some ways beneficial for hemp growers, Hammar and Wilder have also experienced the downside typical of any new and

rapidly growing industry.

There's no shortage of buyers, they said, but the couple have learned that not all are trustworthy.

"It can be hard to find honorable people in this business," Wilder said. "We went through a handful who were just outright crooks."

Even dealing with a reputable buyer can be difficult, they said.

Wilder said they don't expect to be paid for their 2019 crop until the extractor has made — and sold — the CBD oil.

She gives a rueful chuckle at the situation, comparing it to a farmer "who doesn't get paid until the toma-

Hemp facts

Revenue

Industrial hemp can fetch anywhere from \$20,000 to \$80,000 per acre, according to Michael Bowman, founding board chairman of the National Hemp Association.

Definition

(Source: USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture)

Includes the plant *Cannabis sativa* L. and any part or derivative, including seeds, used exclusively for industrial purposes with a tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) concentration of not more than 0.3%.

Industries

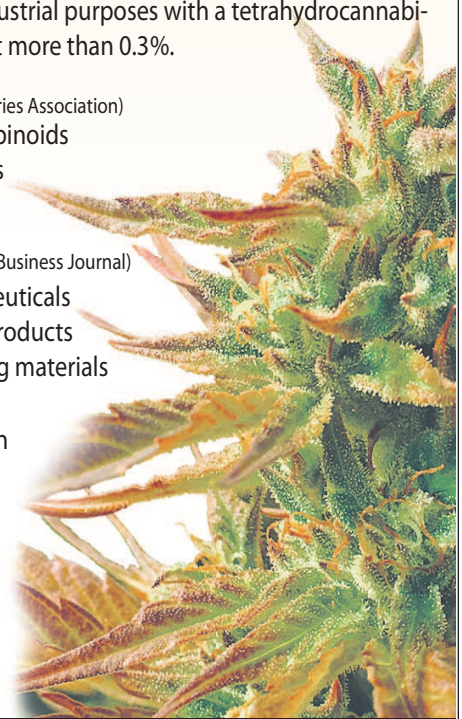
(Source: Hemp Industries Association)

- Foods/body care
- Cannabinoids
- Industrial fiber
- Textiles
- Building materials

Product range

(Source: Hemp Business Journal)

- Ethanol
- Nutraceuticals
- Clothing
- Food products
- Bioplastics
- Building materials
- Nutritional products
- Soil remediation, reclamation
- Animal bedding
- Sunglasses, ski goggles
- Paper products
- Automotive composites
- Nanomaterials
- 3-D printing filament and bioplastics

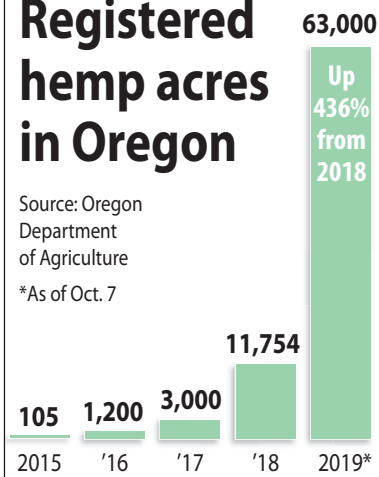


Capital Press graphic

Registered hemp acres in Oregon

Source: Oregon Department of Agriculture

*As of Oct. 7



toes are served in a restaurant."

Hammar said he's trying to be realistic about the market for hemp, or at least the current scenario where it's grown solely for the CBD oil supply.

With the acreage planted to hemp growing exponentially, he said it's all but inevitable that prices paid to growers will decline sharply. He

hopes that won't happen for at least two or three years, potentially giving him and Wilder a chance to find other profitable uses for this versatile crop.

"Nobody knows," Wilder said.

Much the same can be said, of course, for the weather.

And like any other farmers, Hammar and Wilder have to adjust to nature's proclivities.

Last year, with no hard frosts early, they were able to harvest in mid to late October. That's ideal, Hammar said, because so long as the plants are growing the flowers are getting bigger, increasing the potential CBD oil yield.

But this year, with chilly weather threatening in late September, they had to start harvesting at the start of October. To wait longer would risk losing the entire crop to frost, Wilder said.