

Hemp farmer hopeful for future

By JOHN TILLMAN
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PENDLETON — For a few years, hemp — non-psychoactive variants of the genus cannabis — looked as if it might offer Eastern Oregon farmers a profitable alternative crop.

Hemp is grown for seed, fiber and extracts, such as seed oil and cannabidiol, commonly called CBD. Fiber was the traditional use, espe-

cially in naval applications. Today, hemp clothing still is available.

When the 2018 federal Farm Bill removed hemp and its extracts from the Controlled Substances Act, many farmers joined the stampede to get in on the seemingly lucrative venture.

Rebecca McCormach is a Pendleton area farmer and hemp seed oil business owner. She said that was an exciting time with a lot of learning.

“And learn we did, one challenge at a time,”

she said. “2018 was a unicorn year boasting perfect weather for farming, with perfect summer temps and a mild fall. There was much ease and success in farming hemp in these conditions.”

But the next two seasons would bring something quite different.

While 2019 brought crop devastation from freezing temperatures and hail storms, 2020 saw record highs baking young seedlings to a crisp

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Rebecca McCormach of Pendleton in January 2019 feeds her horse, Apple, a treat laced with CBD, or cannabidiol, oil from hemp she and her partner grew on their farm north of Pendleton.

East Oregonian, File

