

Hemp:

Continued from Page 19

before they had a chance to flourish. The hemp market shifted. While some farms managed to survive the rollercoaster experience, many decided the risk was too great.

McCormmach joined the hemp industry in 2018.

“I’ve never been so tired in my life as I was planting nearly 20 acres by hand,” she said. “Some days were spent with mud to our elbows chasing water leaks and gophers, some hoeing weeds, some chasing flyaway plastic. ... and then there were the evenings we could just stroll through our fields enjoying the view. I loved every minute of it.”

Now her cold-pressed hemp seed oil has found favor with customers, especially as a feed additive for high performance horses.

Cannabidiol is a phytocannabinoid, discovered in 1940. “Phyto-” means derived from a plant. CBD is one of 113 identified cannabinoids in cannabis plants, along with psychoactive tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC, and accounts for up to 40% of the extract. Clinical research on CBD has included studies related to anxiety, cognition, movement disorders and pain.

Cannabidiol can be taken internally in multiple ways, including by inhaling cannabis smoke or vapor, by mouth and as an aerosol spray into the cheek. It may be supplied as oil containing only CBD as the active ingredient (excluding THC or terpenes), CBD-dominant hemp extract oil, capsules, dried cannabis, or prescription liquid solution.

CBD does not have the same psychoactive effects as THC, and may change the effects of THC on the body if both are present. Research into the mechanisms of action for its therapeutic biological effects has advanced in the past decade.

History of Hemp

During the Age of Sail in the 18th and 19th centuries, hemp made the best rope for ship cordage, so the material was vital for the fledgling U.S. Navy. But in 2020, the Navy banned hemp shampoo, lotions and other cannabidiol products.

In the 1760s, when the price of tobacco plummeted, George Washington considered growing hemp to diversify his Mount Vernon plantation. While he ultimately decided to focus on wheat, he did grow hemp for domestic use. He turned the plant fibers into



East Oregonian, File

Rebecca McCormmach of Pendleton demonstrates the viscosity of her CBD, or cannabidiol, oil.

HEMP IN LEGISLATIVE LIMBO

The Oregon Industrial Hemp Farmers Association hopes the regulatory “gray zone” to which hemp-derived extracts have been consigned at the federal level could be resolved this year. That assumes Congress decides to act. Like most non-coronavirus items before legislators, federal regulation of extracts derived from hemp stalled in 2021. However, a number of bills already introduced in Congress this year would regulate CBD use in dietary supplements and its inclusion in food and beverages. They are gaining support to be heard in relevant committees.

Change is far from certain, and in any case, CBD prices have for the present crashed. While CBD is on the ropes, McCormmach’s equine hemp seed oil business remains profitable. Hemp made a comeback once. It might do so again.

— John Tillman

rope and thread for sewing sacks, making canvas, repairing seine nets on his Potomac River fisheries and possibly clothing his slaves. Thomas Jefferson also took an interest in growing hemp as a cash crop.

After 12 years of research, Henry Ford in 1941 produced a prototype car fueled by hemp oil, other vegetable oils and ethanol. Its panels were made 70% from cellulose fiber and plastic composite. He hoped eventually to “grow automobiles from the soil.”

McCormmach lamented the association hemp has with its cousin, marijuana. Hemp, she said, has had a long road to being understood and appreciated.

Despite discovery of the highly beneficial CBD, it would be another 48 years, to 1988 and the discovery of the mammalian endocannabinoid system, a molecular signaling system within the body that is involved in regulating a broad range of biological functions, she explained.

“In layman’s terms, the ECS is built in at our time of creation,” she said. “Its purpose is to recognize, receive and employ endocannabinoids where the body needs them in an effort to create homeostasis.”

Fast forward another four years to 1992 when a study by Czech analytical chemist Lumir Hanus and American pharmacologist William Devane isolated the first endocannabinoid in the human brain. They named it “anandamide” from a Sanskrit word meaning “joy” or “bliss.”

See Hemp, Page 21