



KDA Approves More Than 42,000 Acres of Hemp for Planting in 2019 ***Growth In Acres Reflects Excitement Amid Farm Bill Passage***

FRANKFORT, Ky. — Agriculture Commissioner Ryan Quarles has announced the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA) approved 1,035 applications to cultivate up to 42,086 acres of industrial hemp in 2019. The KDA also approved 2.9 million square feet of greenhouse space for hemp cultivation.

“The numbers tell you what you need to know about the excitement about hemp in Kentucky,” Agriculture Commissioner Ryan Quarles said. “The growth in the number of approved acres from 16,000 last year to 42,000 this year shows that Kentucky is rapidly becoming the epicenter of the hemp industry in the United States. With the passage of the 2018 Farm Bill, we believe Kentucky is ready to lead as the nation begins the process of transitioning to commercialization of a crop that connects our past to our future.”

The KDA received a total of 1,115 applications – 1,074 grower applications and 41 processor/handler applications. Applicants were asked to identify which harvestable component of the plant would be the focus of their research (floral material, grain, or fiber); some applicants selected more than one component.

The KDA also approved 40 new applications from processors (in addition to 69 previously approved multi-year processor license holders who are renewing their licenses for 2019). Several universities will also carry out additional research projects in 2019.

“The success of this program would not be possible without the support and respect that my administration has built among three groups: growers, processors, and law enforcement,” Commissioner Quarles said. “I applaud KDA hemp program manager Doris Hamilton and her team for the countless hours of hard work they have put into creating a nationally-recognized regulatory framework in Kentucky.”

In 2018, 210 growers were licensed to plant up to 16,100 acres of industrial hemp and planted more than 6,700 acres. Program participants planted more than 3,200 acres in 2017, 2,350 in 2016, and 922 acres in 2015. Thirty-three acres were planted in 2014, the first growing year.

Individuals and businesses must be licensed by the KDA to grow or process industrial hemp in Kentucky. Under laws passed by the Kentucky General Assembly and the United States Congress, it is unlawful to possess any raw or unprocessed hemp, hemp plants, or hemp seed without a license from the KDA.

KDA hemp program license holders must pass background checks and consent to allow program staff and law enforcement officers to inspect any premises where hemp or hemp products are being grown, handled, stored, or processed. Under state law, KDA provides GPS coordinates of approved hemp planting sites to law enforcement agencies before any hemp is planted. GPS coordinates must be submitted on the application.

The 2018 Farm Bill removes industrial hemp from the federal Controlled Substances Act and gives hemp growers access to USDA programs such as crop insurance. It also assigns primary regulatory authority of industrial hemp to the states in those states where a regulatory framework is in place. The Farm Bill outlines minimum requirements a state regulatory framework must contain to win approval by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Commissioner Quarles submitted Kentucky’s hemp plan to U.S. Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue minutes after President Trump signed the farm bill on Dec. 20, making Kentucky the first state to file its plan.

In the future, KDA will conduct an analysis to reduce administrative regulations deemed no longer necessary due to the 2018 farm bill. However, there will be no program changes in 2019.

For more information and to view the hemp program regulations, visit kyagr.com/hemp.

To download Kentucky's hemp plan submitted to USDA, click [here](#).