

## Advocates plant hemp on DEA's own front lawn

Contributed by Chris Conrad  
Tuesday, 04 December 2007

By Ryan Fletcher, VoteHemp.com

In a bid to get the Obama administration's attention and halt DEA obstruction, a North Dakota farmer, Vermont farmer and other American entrepreneurs dedicated to developing and marketing healthy, environmentally friendly hemp products planted industrial hemp seed Oct. 13 at the DEA headquarters and museum.

This was one of the first times industrial hemp advocates have used public civil disobedience to protest the ban on hemp farming in the United States. While the US is the largest market for hemp products in the world, and industrial hemp is farmed throughout Europe, Asia and Canada, not a single American farmer can legally grow the versatile crop, which is used for food, clothing, body care, paper, building materials, auto paneling and more.

North Dakota farmer Wayne Hauge, Vermont's Cedar Circle Organic Farm founder Will Allen, Hemp Industries Assn. (HIA) President Steve Levine, Dr. Bronner's Magic Soaps President David Bronner, Vote Hemp Communications Director Adam Eiding, and Livity Outer-national Hemp Nicholson were arrested while digging on the DEA's lawn with ceremonial chrome shovels to plant industrial hemp seed from Canada. They were taken to Arlington County jail and released later that day.

Hauge is licensed by North Dakota to cultivate and process non-drug industrial hemp, just as Canadian farmers across the border have done profitably for over ten years, supplying the booming US market. But the DEA refuses to recognize non-drug industrial hemp cultivars that have been grown for millennia for seed and fiber, and has unconstitutionally blocked all state hemp programs such as North Dakota's. Hauge, along with ND State Rep. David Monson, sued the DEA in US District Court in 2007, and the case is before the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals.

"In recent years there has been strong growth in demand for hemp in the US, but the American farmer is left out while Canadian, European and Chinese farmers fill the void created by outdated federal policy," said Hauge. "When hemp is legalized, land grant universities across the nation will develop cultivars suitable to different growing regions to enhance yield and explore innovative uses, such as cellulosic ethanol."

Pictures and video of the action, with hemp farming footage and background information, are available online. HIA-produced video of the action is posted at [votehemp.com/DEAhempplanting.html](http://votehemp.com/DEAhempplanting.html).

With the backdrop of the DEA headquarters gardening action, dozens of hemp business owners attending the weekend's HIA convention fanned out across Capitol Hill to lobby lawmakers in support of the hemp legislation introduced by Representatives Ron Paul (R-TX) and Barney Frank (D-MA), which would permit the cultivation of industrial hemp in state programs. Bush-era DEA bureaucrats have blocked implementation in the nine states with such programs.

In a May 20 directive on federal pre-emption, President Obama instructed federal agencies to respect state laws: "Executive departments and agencies should be mindful that in our federal system, the citizens of the several States have distinctive circumstances and values, and that in many instances it is appropriate for them to apply to themselves rules and principles that reflect these circumstances and values."

Vote Hemp and the HIA are dedicated to a free market for low-THC industrial hemp and changes in the current policy against this agricultural crop.

Vote Hemp Director David Bronner stated, "Dr. Bronner's has grown into the leading natural soap brand in the U.S. since incorporating hemp oil in 1999, due in significant part to the unsurpassed smoothness it gives our soaps. As an American business, we want to give our money to American farmers and save on import and freight costs. In this difficult economy, we can no longer indulge the DEA's self-serving hemp hysteria."