



HEMP FEDERATION IRELAND

## *EU Commission Clarifies the Legality of THC in Hemp Food*

**Hemp Federation Ireland** is delighted to announce that all EU Member States, including Ireland, have voted with the European Commission to formally clarify the legality of THC in hemp foods in Europe. Europe's newest hemp law extends an already comprehensive framework of binding regulations governing the legal operation of the agricultural sector throughout the European Union since the 1970's.

The unanimous vote of the Member States underlines the growing significance of the hemp food crop in meeting Europe's agriculture, food security, and climate policy objectives, which now include the critical global ambitions of the EU Carbon Cycles Framework (CCF).

Both Bord Bia and the Climate Change Advisory Council have already advised the Irish government that the production of three specific agricultural foods is prioritised within the EU CCF, CAP, and Farm to Fork strategies, and that consumer demand for these foods will dominate global food supply chains over the next decade. All three of these foods are currently produced from industrial hemp in Ireland.

- Ireland's existing hemp industry is now uniquely positioned to meet all three of the world's most essential future food basket needs; the potential windfall for Irish farmers and rural communities is truly staggering.

However, on the day of the EU vote, while Ireland was confirming with the rest of Europe that the CAP regulated farm crop is not a controlled drug, the Oireachtas record shows Ireland's Minister for Agriculture was once again informing the Oireachtas that it is.

Irish hemp farmers have now been instructed by the Minister for Agriculture, with the full support of the Taoiseach, that they are to stop producing hemp foods on their farms because the crop is a controlled drug; in reality these markets have already been unlawfully transferred by the Irish State to pharmaceutical companies.

Clearly, the European Commission does not regulate consumer goods where they are narcotics and evidently the Irish government, at least when it's in Europe, is very well aware that the hemp crop is not a controlled drug.

Crucially, the prohibition on food production reduces the current annual income of Irish hemp farmers by 70% in advance of the roll out of the EU Carbon Cycles initiative; in effect, siphoning

€2,500 per acre off baseline farm incomes *before* what are supposed to be *additional* income streams are paid to Irish farmers under the terms of the CCF. These are enormous sums of money currently being removed from rural Ireland by the State and this is no small matter in the context of climate change.

The FSAI is also now removing hemp food products that are compliant with EU Commission requirements from the Irish market. These actions are being justified by misrepresenting the provisions of EU Novel food legislation; **Regulation EU 2015/2283**. Hemp foods are now both novel and not novel all at the same time in Ireland. This ludicrous situation, if it is permitted to continue, will ensure the total and complete isolation of Ireland's hemp industry from the rest of Europe and the Single Market. Products grown on Irish farms will not be marketable anywhere else in Europe.

Over the past four years, the Irish government has been at liberty to operate beyond scrutiny, suspending all observance of binding EU agricultural laws, while it systematically dismantled the Irish hemp industry. The state's relentless drugs narrative, endlessly repeated in the Irish media, has served very well to prevent any public understanding in Ireland of the unique environmental and economic context of the farming sector. More importantly, it has undermined important EU climate policies and prevented their appropriate application and uptake in Ireland.

The Commission's determination to clarify the legality of the hemp food crop, now ensures the unique environmental potentials of the European hemp industry are fully protected for the benefit of all European citizens and that the economic entitlements of Europe's hemp farmers and industry operators are respected, both in the context of highly monetised EU climate adaptation policies, and in the context of rapidly expanding global markets for hemp-derived foods.

Ireland's ongoing bid to remove two thirds of the annual incomes of Irish hemp farmers in advance of the launch of the EU Carbon Cycles initiative is dishonest and incredibly disrespectful, not only to Irish hemp farmers, operators, and rural communities, but to the combined efforts of other European nations to genuinely tackle climate change.

**Europe's new hemp law allows for 3 mg/Kg of THC in hemp seeds / 3 mg/Kg THC in dry seed-derived produce, and 7.5 mg/Kg of THC in hemp seed oil.**

Although European industry stakeholders had sought higher limits in line with those in force in Canada, New Zealand, and Switzerland, EU industry bodies, including Hemp Federation Ireland, supported the Commission's final recommendations which will be subject to an Uncertainty Measurement (UM) of between 40 and 50 percent.

**Hemp seed and dry seed products containing 4.2 to 4.5 mg/Kg THC and Hemp seed oil containing between 10.5 and 11.25 mg/Kg THC, will therefore be marketable in Europe.**

Under European law, hemp with a THC content not exceeding 0.2% is a fully legal, CAP regulated farm crop, protected by a raft of primary EU legislation and by EU trade law. These laws, all of

which are immediately applicable to Ireland, have also been additionally positively clarified by three separate rulings of the EU Court of Justice going back to 2003. As the law is abundant and clear, any further confusion on the matter in Ireland must be considered wilful confusion.

Hemp Federation Ireland calls again on Irish legislators to conclusively address the unlawful destruction of Ireland's existing hemp industry in the Dail. The environmental rights of Irish citizens and the *Just Transition* rights of Irish farmers and rural communities must surely now be defended and the EU Rule of Law be seen to be upheld in the houses of the Irish Oireachtas.

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