

# UF/IFAS Industrial Hemp Pilot Project Research Plan

## What is industrial hemp?

“**INDUSTRIAL HEMP**” is a *Cannabis sativa* plant, or parts thereof, which contains THC < 0.3% per dry weight. THC is the psychoactive chemical that at higher levels defines marijuana. Industrial hemp is NOT marijuana.

Industrial hemp has been cultivated for 10,000 years as a fiber and grain crop. More than 30 states presently have industrial hemp projects; however Florida has a comparative advantage in growing season and markets. Industrial hemp has been identified as a potentially valuable and impactful alternative crop for Florida, which could be used for fiber, building materials, forages and pain relief (CBD oil). To support the future viability and sustainability of an industrial hemp industry, preliminary assessment of the crop and cropping systems must be established prior to commercialization.

## What are our research plans?

A research proposal (\$1.3 million) was distributed to prospective industry partners to fund a collaborative research program conducted at four UF/IFAS research locations. The proposal outlines the following goals:

### Identify hemp varieties suitable for planting in Florida's various environments

- Identify productive hemp varieties robust to environmental, ecological, and economic threats

### Develop hemp management practices and cropping systems economically viable for Florida

- Design hemp cropping systems that will use available farming technology and infrastructure in Florida
- Assess the economic break-even point for farmers and commercialization opportunities for industry

### Assess hemp invasion risk in Florida's natural and built environments

- Improve best available information for UF/IFAS Assessment Invasion Risk, which is currently “high”
- Development a management plan to mitigate the risk of hemp invasion

With the enthusiastic response from multiple potential industry partners, we plan to expand the scope of our work with additional industry support to include additional objectives to improve the economic assessment related to the processing and commercialization of industrial hemp.

## What authorization do we have to conduct research?

**FEDERAL LEGISLATION:** Agricultural Act of 2014, 7 U.S.C. s. 5940, Legitimacy of industrial hemp research

**DEA:** Schedule 1 Permit, Forms 225 & 1301.18, Seed import and hemp cultivation

**STATE LEGISLATION:** Florida Statutes, 1004.4473, Industrial hemp pilot projects

**FDACS:** Proposed Rule, 5B-57.013, Industrial hemp planting permits

## Who are our project partners and what is level of support?

The UF Industrial Hemp Pilot Project team is committed to developing a research and extension program that is supported by a diverse group of industry groups and stakeholders. We have distributed the pilot project proposal draft to 12 potential sponsors. We have received a verbal offer to fund the proposal by 3 sponsors. Green Roads participated in the first industry partner workshop and committed to fund 100% of the proposal days after receiving the initial distribution of proposal. The proposal was approved by the UF Division of Sponsored Programs, which is developing a contract to formalize sponsorship by Green Roads. Several other groups continue to demonstrate interest in sponsoring UF Industrial Hemp. The opportunity is truly transdisciplinary: agriculture, engineering, medicine.

## Who is UF contact person and UF researchers?

**DR. ROBERT GILBERT**, Agronomy Department Chair, UF Main Campus, 352.392.1811, ragilber@ufl.edu

**DR. ZACHARY BRYM**, Project Coordinator, Tropical Research & Education Center, 786.217.9238, brymz@ufl.edu

**DR. JOHN ERICKSON**, Central Florida location

**DR. MICHAEL MULVANEY**, North Florida location

**DR. LUKE FLORY**, Invasion risk analysis

**DR. EDWARD EVANS**, Economic analysis

**JERRY FANKHAUSER**, UF/IFAS Research