

Vision for Industrial Hemp Seed Certification in Oregon

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Introduction

Industrial hemp is Oregon's newest field crop. This document addresses the process for the certification of agricultural or industrial hemp seed in Oregon. The Oregon Seed Certification Service (OSCS) handles the certification of many crops in Oregon. The OSCS is a unit under the direction of the Dean of the College of Agricultural Science, Oregon State University (OSU), who by statute oversees seed certification in Oregon. The process for certification of industrial hemp follows the provisions of the Oregon Seed Certification Handbook (OSCH), which flows from Oregon state law for agricultural seed certification. The Oregon seed certification standards for industrial hemp were adopted in early 2016.

Research Registration

Industrial hemp (IH) is grown in Oregon by growers who are registered with the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) (*grower registration*). OSU is currently involved in a pilot research program conducted under authority granted by the 2014 Federal Farm Bill and Oregon state law. OSU and ODA will set up a process to approve some registered growers to participate in the pilot research program; approved growers will be granted a *research registration*.

Growers with a research registration will be able to apply for approval as IH breeder and or certification of their IH seed. Shown in the exhibit below is the envisioned flow chart for certification of industrial hemp seed in Oregon. The flow chart illustrates the process beginning with the recognition of an Oregon IH breeder and their bred variety by the Industrial Hemp Variety Advisory Board. At the time of this writing, due to federal restrictions on IH, there is no national board that oversees the recognition of IH breeders nor IH varieties. Without such recognition, this initial step in the certification of IH seed in Oregon needs a substitute mechanism (until IH varieties are nationally recognized). Until such day, this substitute mechanism follows provisions in the OSCH for certification of research varieties. Oregon's substitute mechanism for initiating certification of IH begins with the formation of the Industrial Hemp Variety Advisory Board (IHVAB). The IHVAB consisting, at minimum, of representatives of IH growers and of researchers in the Oregon Pilot Research Program. The board must formally recognize (approve) who is an IH breeder. Once recognized, the IH plant breeder applies for approval of their new, unapproved IH variety by providing documentation in the same manner as a plant breeder would apply for federal plant variety protection (PVP).

Approved Research Lines

An approved IH variety is recognized as an Oregon IH research variety or "line." The initial lot of IH research line seed is tagged as "breeder" seed. This is the smallest lot in the chain of tagged seed, which follows labeling protocols established in the IH certification standards. Breeder seed is grown by the breeder or other grower to produce "foundation" seed. Foundation seed is grown to be certified as "registered" or "certified" seed. Registered seed may be planted to grow certified seed. Certified seed is grown for crop and its intended market.

OSCS Policies

Certification of industrial hemp seed in Oregon should abide by the Oregon Seed Certification Handbook for the planted year, and by the Oregon Standards for Certification of Industrial Hemp. OSU policy allows for OSU researchers, OSCS and other OSU employees to only enter a registered research grower's field¹ that is known by the ODA to be cropped exclusively to IH and to the exclusion of marijuana.

¹ "Field" is defined as open field or greenhouse in the Oregon IH certification standards

Industrial Hemp Certification Flow Chart

