

Industrial Hemp Finds a Home in Health & Wellness Programs

Cleveland Hunger Network Partners with New Omega-Fats Initiative for Mental Health Month

CLEVELAND, OH, USA, November 17, 2014 /EINPresswire.com/ -- With interest in food, farming, wellness, and all-things-Cannabis are on the rise, Industrial Hemp is attracting a fan base broader than "hipsters" and vegetarians that may first come to mind. Major health institutions are now on board, giving the nod to the nutritional quality of Hemp's protein-rich seeds, and assuring people eating them will not cause failed drug tests. The productivity of Canadian hemp producers has gone up in recent years, bringing more affordable Hempseed



foods to grocery stores and vitamin websites. Politically, Hemp is a rare bi-partisan issue, as evidenced by the twenty states that have legalized the crop by wide margins, defining it as a distinct variety of Cannabis Sativa, having .03 percent THC or less (no drug/narcotic value).

This is welcome reform for Plant Kingdom Bakery owner, Jeremy Koosed, who claims to have discussed the subject of [Hemp for nutrition](#) with hundreds of thousands of people. For the past 5 years, the Lyndhurst-based "snackery", has been on-hand with Hemp seed foods and information at community festivals and farmers markets. Coffee shop baristas have also helped clarify the subject for customers, as Phoenix Coffee locations in Cleveland and Nervous Dog in Akron have made Plant Kingdom snacks available since 2009.

"Omega Fats Action Network" is a new initiative Koosed began recently, using social media to promote greater reliance on plant sources of Omega-3s like hemp, flax, and chia seeds. With several strategic partnerships, it's beginning to take on the facets of a serious public health and environmental campaign. Plant Kingdom has been distributing recipe fliers for over a year on how to use hemp seeds and oil. "But the sheets aren't cutting it", Koosed says "so OFAN is a broader service to address [fat-intake imbalances](#) and increase awareness of brain-supportive food options." With fish oil as one of the largest vitamin sectors, Koosed thinks [promotion of seed foods](#) can play a larger role in ocean conservation. Taking a pragmatic approach, he encourages relying on plants "to a greater extent" because, he says, "with all the threats to marine life, choosing more plant sources is a natural response that will afford cleaner fats for our bodies in the long-run anyway. It's a win-win!"

Hemp In Health Services

The Hunger Network of Greater Cleveland is promoting all sources of Omega-3 fats, including hemp seeds, through their Stay Well Program, which does nutrition education at 11 hot meal and pantry sites. November is Stay Well's Mental Health Awareness Month. At participating locations community can access health checkups with medical students, and gain nutrition and lifestyle information to promote mental and emotional wellness. Free samples of toasted hemp seeds and recipes sheets are given out as attendees learn about the importance of healthy fat sources, and how Omegas function as building blocks of our brain cell membranes.

Sara Continenza, coordinator of Stay Well, remarks "with omega fat-intake, it could boost wellness in several manners when people switch to healthier fats and elevate intake of Omega-3s, which many people are deficient in. Our pantry clients are learning how easy it can be to incorporate healthier lifestyle choices into their daily routine."

At Cleveland Clinic's celebration for National Food Day, nutritional luminaries presented mounting evidence on the benefits of plant-strong eating. Mark Hyman MD, head of the Clinic's new Functional Medicine dept. presented to a packed auditorium on the many ways food can be medicine. Jane Esselsyn, wife of renown vegan Dr. Caldwell Esselstyn, presented on the utility of a plant-based diet to avert heart disease. And Plant Kingdom was there, sharing with lines of Clinic nurses and staff. Increased access to nutrient dense, wholesome plant foods is growing priority for many health care providers, providing an opening for companies like Plant Kingdom, whose snacks are stocked at the Clinic's Wellness Shop and natural vending machines at Louis Stokes VA Medical Center in University Circle.

At John Carroll University's wellness fair last week, hemp and omega-fats issue was of interest to many students. JCU Environmental Club Organizer Monica Angelotti pledged to share the nutritional information saying "By growing and using the hemp plant, we can conserve resources as well as reduce the need for mass meat production which undoubtedly has detrimental effects on our air, water and our own health." she said.

Rising Demand and Resumed Growth of Hemp in US This Season, a Sign of Hope to Foodies and Farmers

This seasons' Canadian hemp harvest was 25% larger than in 2013, and that growth is a primary reason many American farm organizations now endorse tapping into Hemp's development potential for the countryside. US policy now reflects this interest in diversifying with Hemp. The Farm Bill was renewed with a rider allowing states with Hemp farming permitting laws to plant hemp for research purposes. While Ohio has no state policy on Hemp farming, Ohio U.S. House Reps. Democrat Tim Ryan and Republican Steve Stivers are co-sponsors of the Industrial Hemp Farming Act which would define it a a non-drug crop, distinct from drug marijuana under the Controlled Substances Act. Rumors are that House Speaker John Boehner may get the legalization bill before Committee soon if it attracts more co-sponsors. Mr. Koosed from Plant Kingdom has met with Rep. Marcia Fudge's office to explore the potential for more robust education around plant foods and healthier fat sources. The positive feedback from the Hunger Network's Stay Well Program is a good indication that seed sources of Omega-3s will continue to play a growing role in the development of wellness and mental health programming.

For more information about the Hunger Network's Stay well program
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