

U.S. Hemp Roundtable

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It seemed like 2018 – the year that ended hemp’s federal prohibition – would be a hard act to follow. But in the aftermath of passage of the 2018 U.S. Farm Bill, 2019 proved to be a year of incredible growth for the hemp industry. And the Roaring Twenties hold even greater promise.

Here’s the US Hemp Roundtable’s annual Year in Review...with a sneak preview of 2020:

2019: USDA ISSUES REGULATIONS FOR HEMP GROWTH: On Halloween Day, the US Department of Agriculture issued its long-awaited [Interim Final Rule](#) for the US Domestic Hemp Program. There were a number of treats (it told banks that hemp is open for business; confirmed the legality of interstate transportation), but plenty of scary tricks as well (lab limitations could lead to testing bottlenecks; arbitrary THC levels to prove negligence). We [asked](#) for your input, and [shared](#) our preliminary [comments](#) at an in-person meeting with USDA Under Secretary Greg Ibach and his senior staff.

---> **2020: COMMENT AND IMPROVE THE PROGRAM:** The USDA recently extended its public comment period to January 29. We encourage all Hemp Supporters to submit their ideas for improvement to the USDA [here](#).

2019: FDA SEEKS PUBLIC INPUT ON CBD...THEN DRAGS ITS FEET: The year opened with great optimism about the FDA’s development of a path for the full regulation of hemp-derived CBD. In May, our General Counsel, Jonathan Miller, [testified](#) at the FDA’s first public hearing (check out coverage in the [New York Times](#), [NPR](#) and [CNN](#)), and the Roundtable met with the FDA’s CBD Working Group and submitted formal [comments](#) attesting to CBD’s safety. Unfortunately, agency promises to lay out a timetable for action in 2020 went unfulfilled, and the FDA closed the year with new [guidance](#) that overstates the safety risks of CBD products.

---> **2020: PRESSURE THE FDA INTO ACTION:** Priority #1 for our Roundtable lobbyists in the new year is working with our partners in the dietary supplement and retail industries to encourage Congress to force the FDA to take expeditious action on CBD regulation. Stay tuned: Hemp Supporters will be enlisted in January in efforts to pressure the FDA into action.

2019: STATE PROHIBITIONS FALL LIKE DOMINOS: With the passage of the 2018 Farm Bill at the federal level, dozens of states reformed their laws to permit hemp growth and/or the sale of hemp products such as CBD. With notably [Texas](#) and [Ohio](#) joining the hemp party, now 47 states have authorized hemp growing programs. Meanwhile, states such as [Florida](#) and [New York](#) provided explicit protections for the retail sale of CBD and other hemp products.

---> **2020: MORE STATES TO COME:** All eyes will be on Idaho, Mississippi and South Dakota to bring hemp cultivation to all 50 states. And the US Hemp Roundtable will be leading lobbying efforts in more than a

dozen states to expand access to hemp products – states like [California](#), [Massachusetts](#) and [North Carolina](#). We can't win without your help: Please go to our [State Action Center](#) to contact your state legislators today.

2019: US HEMP AUTHORITY STARTS WITH A BANG: The [US Hemp Authority](#) -- the industry's effort to promote high standards, best practices and self-regulation for hemp growers, processors and brand owners -- launched with tremendous success, certifying more than [60 businesses](#) with a seal that attests to the safety and legality of their hemp and hemp products. After extensive public input, the Authority strengthened its [standards](#), requiring full compliance with FDA regulations and banning GMO hemp. The Authority also achieved national recognition from *Prevention* magazine which [selected](#) the organization for one of its [2019 Health Breakthrough Awards](#), billed as ten major medical innovations of the past year.

---> **2020: GET CERTIFIED! BUY CERTIFIED PRODUCTS!:** As the Authority builds on its success, Hemp Supporters are encouraged to get their own hemp and hemp products certified by the Authority's independent auditors (find out more [here](#)) and buy products that carry the Authority seal (check them out [here](#).)

2019: U.S. BANKS TOLD HEMP IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS: Despite passage of the 2018 Farm Bill, many US banks and credit card companies were still hesitant to engage in commerce with hemp and CBD companies. Thanks to bipartisan pressure from our Congressional supporters (led by Senators Mitch McConnell and Ron Wyden), the four leading federal financial regulatory agencies issued [guidance](#) to financial institutions that attested to the legality of hemp banking.

---> **2020: PASS THE SAFE BANKING ACT:** The guidance does NOT require banks or financial services companies to engage with hemp businesses, nor is there any specific mention of hemp-derived CBD or businesses that engage in that commerce. Full passage of the pending [SAFE Banking Act](#) is still critical to further open up hemp and CBD commerce to financial institutions and credit card companies. Please use [our online portal](#) to encourage your US Senators to support in 2020 the important bill that passed the US House overwhelmingly in 2019.

2019: CROP INSURANCE EFFORTS COME TO FRUITION: Early in the year, we [put out a call](#) for your help to gather data for the development of a federal multi-peril crop insurance program for hemp, providing affordable crop insurance options for U.S farmers. The initiative was a [partnership](#) between our sister organization, the US Hemp Farming Alliance, and [AgriLogic](#), a leading consulting firm in the space. By year's end, USDA [announced](#) that a pilot multi-peril [crop insurance program](#) will be available to hemp farmers in 21 states in time for the 2020 growing season.

---> **2020: NEW ORGANIZATION FOR HEMP FARMERS:** Hot off the success of the crop insurance accomplishment, the US Hemp Farming Alliance merged into a new organization, the US Hemp Growers Association, dedicated to being a united voice for American hemp farmers. Find out more about the new venture [here](#).

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2019: MANY MORE SEATS AT THE ROUNDTABLE: The organization that started in a basement meeting among four companies, with \$20,000 to spend, has grown in a few short years to a major advocacy powerhouse -- in Washington and state capitols across the country -- with more than 90 member-companies and a \$2 million budget. With essential partners such as the Hemp Industries Association, the Roundtable is ensuring that the hemp industry's voice is heard and, more importantly, listened to.

---> **2020: A SEAT FOR YOU?** Please consider joining us in the new year. Details [here](#). And be sure to [sign up](#) all of your friends – for free – as a Hemp Supporter, to stay updated on industry developments, and participate in our critical advocacy efforts.

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