

HEMP CROP HAS MANY USES, BUT SMOKING ISN'T ONE OF THEM

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Those tall plants waving in the breeze in fields north of Stayner may cause you to do a double-take - but the pink signs lining Highway 26 should leave no doubt as to what's growing.

"I was glad to see Mark show up with signs," joked Brian Dunlop.

The Dunlop family's Dunlogon Farms is growing 400 acres of hemp for CBD Acres, a company launched in 2016 by Peace Naturals founder Mark Gobuty.

The signs denote the fields as growing industrial hemp - along with a symbol indicating the plants have no THC.

"Trying to smoke this would be a real headache," Gobuty said with a laugh.

Hemp production in Canada is regulated under the country's cannabis rules, as the plant is classified as cannabis sativa. Producers and manufacturers who want to work with hemp must obtain licences from Health Canada, and producers are only allowed to plant certified seed.

In the field, plants (flowering head and leaves) must register less than 0.3 per



Mark Gobuty (left) of CBD Acres and Brian Dunlop of Dunlogon Farms look over the seed head of a hemp plant in a test plot project on Dunlop's farm in Clearview Township.

cent THC, the principal psychoactive constituent of the cannabis plant.

As a comparison, the average marijuana strain carries about 12 per cent THC.

What hemp does share with its cannabis cousin is CBD, a non-psychoactive compound; both THC and

CBD are touted to have medical benefits for pain management, anxiety, and seizures.

"Health Canada has done an amazing job establishing a framework on a national scale that is best in class on a global basis. For them to take a cautious approach to making CBD

from industrial hemp a natural health product is warranted," Gobuty said.

Hemp seed is processed into oil and protein powder for food and cosmetic production, while the fibre has industrial applications such as textiles and as an alternative to Fiberglas.

Gobuty's focus is on

wellness; he has created a brand, Receptor, with products - cosmeceuticals, meal replacement bars and cereals - that should be available in mid-December through licensed retail stores and the Ontario Cannabis Store.

Specialized harvesting equipment will be used to

take the crop out in late September. Gobuty has modified tobacco kilns for drying, and is in the process of obtaining a licence for his facility in Barrie that will extract CBD.

Gobuty also has 1,500 acres in the Norwich area under production.

"I went and saw many farmers, and people have to trust that you're not growing weed," Gobuty said. "You need to develop a relationship and trust when you do something like this, because you don't want it to wear poorly on (Dunlop's) family."

"There is a really strong opportunity to be part of something with a positive upside," Dunlop added.

There have been other hemp growers in Simcoe County, but not to this extent.

"You talk to others who were growing in the past, and anything more than a five-acre plot was on the large side," Dunlop said.

"The novelty will wear off. I think we have outstanding conditions here, an excellent partnership and we'll expand our presence in Simcoe County next year with Brian's help," Gobuty said. "I think we've socialized this to the community."



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