

Expanding to Hemp/CBD

Pahl's Market in Apple Valley, Minnesota, explains why they became a licensed hemp grower — and what other IGCs should think about when considering expanding to this market.

By Teresa McPherson

Hemp growing at Pahl's.

Something new is growing at Pahl's Market in Apple Valley, Minnesota. After the 2018 Farm Bill passed, Jack Pahl says they saw a new market open up for their family business and, at the beginning of 2020, announced that they had added hemp as a year-round product offering.

"We started hemp for several reasons," he says, "but the main reason was to add an extra layer of diversity to our company. We thought there was great potential for this new crop, and we felt it could add to

our cash flow.

"The other main reason was the added benefits that CBD/hemp can offer. Although there hasn't been extensive research, we felt there was enough to show the added benefits that CBD can offer and help people in a positive way instead of resorting to other medicines and drugs."

Benefits Galore

"Pahl's Market is a licensed hemp grower, and we have taken all of the necessary steps to make sure that this new transition is in fact legal," he wrote in a blog



A bundle of CBD products offered on the Northern Naturals website.



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CBD hemp flower sold by Northern Naturals.

post on Pahl's website. "The company name for our hemp license is Hemp Solutions of Minnesota. Our goal as farmers has always been to feed as many people as we can. We take great pride in the fact that we are lucky enough to provide healthy vegetables for families and now have added the hemp plant to our repertoire. Long hours, no days off, and quality is what we know, and we promise that we are taking those same attributes and applying them to growing hemp."

He goes on to explain that hemp has myriad uses — as fiber for clothing, paper, netting and shoes; fuel; protein powder; and CBD.

"There are many more uses of hemp than listed above and we urge you all to do your own research too, because what this plant is possibly capable of (given set markets) has a potential of becoming the best thing since sliced bread," he writes.

Getting Customer Buy-in

Pahl says their greatest challenge is awareness/building a market for the new product category. "CBD/hemp is still brand new, and I feel like if people were aware of the benefits, then it would open up a larger market," he says.

As for customers, he says once they try the products, they're

likely to purchase again. "I would say the hardest part is getting the consumer to try it," Pahl says. "A lot of people are still skeptical on what CBD/hemp is all about, but for the people who have tried it, the majority of them love the products — whether that be a topical product or a tincture. People take it/apply it for various reasons, and the overall response has been that it helps, and they are returning customers."

Challenges and Opportunities

"Growing-wise, it was a learning curve year by year," he says. "Outdoor versus indoor grows and how the plant is affected by diseases and insects, different strains and how they flower differently, their growth habits, what kind of potency did each plant have and making sure they were able to stay under the 0.3% THC levels [the threshold that legally differentiates hemp from marijuana] ... all of these were challenges and we are still learning day to day."

Pahl says he would highly recommend that other garden centers offer hemp/CBD products.

"Are you going to be able to retire on it? No, but it definitely adds an extra little something for the bottom line and doesn't even take up that much of our retail area so it's a no-brainer." 🌿



About Northern Naturals

According to the company, Northern Naturals was started in spring 2020 after realizing products on the CBD market were misleading and misinforming the consumer.

A sister company to Pahl's Market and Pahl Farms (a six-generation family owned and operated farm and garden center) Northern Naturals' CBD products have all been grown, processed, and manufactured in our hands, ensuring that our quality and quantity is what we say it is.