Over the last few years, the agricultural sector has been buzzing with excitement about the potential of a new crop—industrial hemp. For years, hemp was increasingly regulated across the country because it was legally classified the same as marijuana, another type of cannabis. In 1970, the Controlled Substances Act completely illegalized hemp production. This criminalized approach to hemp changed with the 2018 Farm Bill, however, which removed hemp from the definition of “marijuana” and gave states a chance to create their own hemp regulation programs. Many states seized the opportunity. As of May 5, 2020, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) had approved hemp plans from 16 states: Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Washington, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

In this white paper, we examine the requirements for state hemp programs prescribed by the 2018 Farm Bill. Even within these “requirements,” there is room for states to innovate. We’ll take a look at how they’ve done so as we summarize the unique aspects of state hemp programs that go beyond the USDA’s minimum requirements. There are many creative approaches that states are taking in regulating hemp production. We will touch on some of these notable approaches and highlight the similarities and differences among the approved state hemp regulatory programs.
Federal regulation of hemp production

The 2018 Farm Bill detailed the two situations under which a producer can legally grow hemp. First, the states may take charge of the regulation of hemp production within their boundaries by legalizing hemp and establishing a state regulatory program, pending approval by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). If a state or tribe does not submit a hemp plan to USDA, the USDA may establish its own plan “to monitor and regulate” hemp production within that state, as long as the state has not limited the regulation or production of hemp under state law. Currently, New Hampshire is the only state where hemp is directly regulated by USDA.

For states that choose to regulate hemp at the state level, the state department of agriculture must first have its regulatory program approved by the USDA. To do so, the state must submit for approval a program that includes, at a minimum, the following requirements listed in 7 U.S.C. §1639p:

- **Plans to maintain relevant producer and land information.** A state must collect, maintain and provide USDA with contact and location information for each licensed hemp producer, including personal information about the individual or business and location information about the land where hemp is produced.

- **Plans for accurate and effective sampling and testing.** A plan must include procedures for collecting hemp flower samples; conducting sampling and testing of plants 15 days prior to any harvest; ensuring that sampling methods are reliable and represent a homogeneous composition of the sampling area; preventing commingling of plants from different sampling areas; requiring that producers are present during sampling; and allowing samplers to

Federal and state laws have historically treated hemp and marijuana as “controlled substances” for purposes of criminal laws. While both are species of the plant cannabis, marijuana contains higher levels of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), which causes a psychoactive effect. Hemp plants generally do not contain enough THC to produce a “high,” and instead produce oils, seeds and fiber useful for commercial purposes. Federal treatment of hemp changed slightly when the 2014 Farm Bill allowed states to research hemp as a potential commercial crop by establishing pilot programs for cultivating, marketing, and studying hemp. The law authorized states to certify and register producers that could grow hemp for the pilot programs, but did not broadly legalize hemp.

The 2018 Farm Bill made a significant change by clearly removing hemp from the federal definition of “marijuana” and redefining it as “the plant Cannabis sativa L. and any part of that plant, including the seeds thereof and all derivatives, extracts, cannabinoids, isomers, acids, salts, and salts of isomers, whether growing or not with a delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol concentration of not more than 0.3 percent on a dry weight basis.” Hemp must contain less than 0.3 percent THC to fall under the new legal definition of hemp; anything over that amount would be “marijuana” under federal law. The 2018 Farm Bill also included provisions for state and federal hemp regulatory programs, violations of hemp regulations, crop insurance for hemp, and interstate commerce of hemp.
have unrestricted access to hemp plants and all land and facilities used for cultivating or handling hemp.

- **Procedures to accurately test THC levels in samples.** The rule lays out suggested reliable testing methods but does not establish a single, national testing procedure for determining whether a hemp plant falls beneath the 0.3 threshold for THC, the psychoactive ingredient that distinguishes hemp from marijuana. However, a state must use a testing lab that is registered with the Drug Enforcement Agency and must require the lab to follow testing performance standards. The standards must include evaluation of “measurement of uncertainty,” a concept similar to determining the margin of error, and must account for the uncertainty in THC test results.

- **Procedures for disposal of non-compliant plants.** A state plan must prohibit any handling, processing, or entering the stream of commerce of any hemp grown in an area that exceeds the acceptable THC level and must have procedures for disposing of the plants, verifying disposal, and notifying USDA of non-compliant plants, including provision of test results to USDA.

- **Inspection procedures.** A plan must include procedures for annual inspections of random samples of licensed producers.

- **Reporting procedures.** A plan must explain how a state will submit all of the information and reports required by the rule, which includes monthly producer reports, monthly hemp disposal reports, and annual reports of total planted, harvested, and disposed acreage. The plan must also require producers to report crop acreage to the Farm Service Agency.

- **Enforcement of negligent and culpable violations, addressing felonies and false statements.** State plans must have provisions relating to negligent producer violations. Negligent violations must include failure to provide a legal description of the land, failure to obtain a license or other required authorization, and production of cannabis with a delta-9 THC concentration above the acceptable level. In addition, a state plan must contain rules for corrective actions of negligent violations. If a hemp producer violates the state plan with a culpable mental state greater than negligence, the state must report the producer to the U.S. Attorney General, as well as the chief law enforcement officer of the state.

  State plans must also have provisions addressing felonies. Any convicted felons must be deemed ineligible of producing hemp for 10 years after their conviction. The only exception to this is if the convicted felon was already lawfully growing hemp under the 2014 Farm Bill.

  In the case of false statements, states must deem any person who materially falsifies information on a hemp application ineligible to participate in the state hemp program.

- **Resources and personnel.** A state must certify that it has the resources and personnel to carry out its hemp plan to USDA standards.
Implementing and going beyond the federal requirements

We examined how states interpreted the eight federal requirements and created their state plans for regulating hemp. As we would expect, there are varying interpretations of the USDA prerequisites. However, where the real differences between state plans arise is outside of the federal requirement rubric. The strongest distinctions between states seem to fit broadly into seven categories, which will be discussed in turn:

- Restrictions and requirements for applications and licenses
- Fees
- Restrictions on plant varieties and pesticides used
- Land requirements and restrictions when cultivating hemp
- Sampling and testing
- Requirements for transporting hemp
- Licenses required to participate in other areas of the hemp industry outside of cultivation

1. Restrictions and requirements for applications and licenses

Every approved state requires would-be hemp cultivators to apply to become licensed. It is on the license that the state obtains the information on producers and land that the USDA requires. Interestingly, some states have additional requirements for applications and licenses that go beyond the scope of the USDA’s mandates.

In order to apply to become a hemp cultivator, a handful of states spell out that the person applying must be 18 years of age or older. South Carolina and Texas are examples of states that specifically require someone to be 18 in order to apply. Similarly, some states do not allow people to apply for a license if they grow other types of cannabis, like medical marijuana. Georgia’s rules state that a licensee cannot legally “cultivate or handle any cannabis that is not hemp.” Texas and Wyoming have similar rules. Montana has the same type of rule with a slight variation: the state does not allow a cultivator to grow hemp and medical marijuana at the same location. However, cultivators can get around this rule either by growing one type of cannabis inside and one outside at the same location, or by growing both in their own buildings on the same location. New Jersey does not allow hemp and other varieties of cannabis to be grown in the same building or greenhouse.

What about the state pilot programs that were authorized under the 2014 Farm Bill, are they still valid under the new law? The 2018 Farm Bill tasked the Secretary of Agriculture with reviewing the 2014 pilot programs and submitting a report on its findings to Congress within a year. The 2018 Farm Bill also repealed the state hemp pilot programs, but not until one year after USDA publishes final regulations on hemp production under the new Farm Bill. As a result, some states opted to continue operating under their 2014 pilot programs in 2020. As of May 2020, eighteen states are continuing with their 2014 pilot programs.
Montana’s method for applying for a hemp cultivation license looks very different than any other state. First, would-be cultivators must apply for a planting license, which allows them to purchase and plant hemp seed or purchase and propagate live hemp plants. Then, within four weeks’ time, the cultivator must turn in their Planting Report to the state. If the state accepts the report, the cultivator is given a production license, which means they are able to legally produce and harvest the hemp they planted. If a cultivator does not receive a production license for the state, their hemp must be destroyed.

USDA’s requirements say nothing about cultivators being limited in the number of acres or amount of plants they plant, or anything about a minimum plant or acreage threshold. There are states, however, which have regulations that set out those types of parameters. Ohio notably does not allow cultivators to plant less than 1/4 of an acre of hemp. If hemp is grown indoors, the state requires the facility to be at least 1,000 square feet. Both indoors and outdoors, Ohio cultivators must plant at least 1,000 plants. All of these requirements must be met in order to maintain a license. Neighboring Pennsylvania has similar requirements; outdoors, at least 1/4 acre and 300 plants must be cultivated, and indoor facilities must be at least 2,000 square feet and contain at least 200 plants.

Licensed cultivators in some states may have to meet additional requirements after they become licensed. In West Virginia, a cultivator has to send a report to the state that includes the contact information for the person or business that bought or received the hemp, the type of hemp product sold, and the amount of hemp sold. The state also requires cultivators to have a copy of their license at every different location used to grow and harvest hemp. Additionally, West Virginia cultivators must give a copy of their license to their county sheriff’s department and to the West Virginia State Police office in their area. New Jersey requires cultivators to show the state documentation of a purchase agreement with a licensed hemp processor, or, if there is no purchase agreement, the cultivator must explain how the hemp will otherwise be used.

2. Fees

Depending on which state you live in, it can become very expensive to produce hemp. In Georgia, it costs $50/acre to grow hemp (with a maximum payment of $5,000), which can get costly fast. Every approved state hemp program costs something to participate in, whether that fee is applied to background checks, applications, licensing, land registration, making changes to an application, inspections, or testing, or all of the above. Of all the approved states it appears as though Florida is the only state that does not charge an application or licensing fee, although fees are still required for things like testing and background checks.

To illustrate state variations, the cost for a cultivator to grow hemp in Texas with one growing location and one site modification would be $1,100. For a cultivator to grow hemp in Ohio with one growing location, one site modification, a secondary pre-harvest sample and retest, it would cost $1,600. The chart below lists the types and amounts of fees for each state.
3. **Requirements for seeds, restrictions on plant varieties**

While some state laws and regulations don’t contain much instruction on which hemp seeds and varieties are allowed, others are unequivocal about what is allowed and what is not. Ohio’s regulations, for example, point cultivators to the Ohio Department of Agriculture’s website, where a list of prohibited hemp varieties will be kept. This year, however, that list is blank, although cultivators are pointed toward lists from the surrounding states in order to help their decision making. Below are some examples of states dictating where hemp seed must come from and what varieties of hemp may be used within state borders.

Several states require that cultivators use certified hemp seed, or that the seeds and plants must be approved by the state before planting. Florida law states that cultivators “may only use hemp seeds and cultivars certified by a certifying agency or a university conducting an industrial hemp pilot project.” Kansas also requires certified seed. Although the state itself does not have any kinds of hemp seeds certified yet, cultivators are currently permitted to use certified seed from other states and Canada.

Turning to restrictions on the use of certain varieties of hemp, we will examine New Jersey, West Virginia, and Montana. In the Garden State, cultivators may not obtain hemp plants, seeds, propagules or plantlets without the state department of agriculture signing off on the variety. West Virginia asks that before cultivators plant hemp, they send in documentation “showing that the seeds [to be] planted are of a type and variety certified to contain no more than” 0.3% THC. Much like the other two states, Montana requires cultivators to apprise the state department of agriculture of which hemp varieties they plan to plant, and the location of each variety.

4. **Land requirements and restrictions when cultivating hemp**

Is it legal to plant hemp on any old plot of land? Some state hemp plans are pretty quiet when it comes to the topic of where hemp can be planted. Others contain a very thorough set of rules. A number of states have restrictions on where hemp can be grown. In Kansas, hemp cannot be grown in a residential building, within 50 feet of a residence, or within 1/4 of a mile from a school or park. Louisiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina all have similar language restricting hemp on certain pieces of land, although the exact setback distances vary. Additionally, states like Ohio and Pennsylvania also require that any hemp plants be separated from facilities growing or processing medical marijuana, mostly for fear

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<td>• Application fee: $100</td>
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<td>• License renewal fee: $100</td>
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<td>• Collection and testing fee: $300</td>
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of cross-pollination. Under the New Jersey hemp plan, it is illegal to allow the public to have access to hemp, or to create any kind of recreational opportunity like “hemp mazes,” etc. This rule is meant to keep the public from obtaining hemp plants or seeds.

Quite a few of the states with USDA-approved hemp plans mandate that cultivators post signs on any land used to grow hemp, some going as far as to dictate how large the signage should be. Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Washington all have signage requirements for areas where hemp is cultivated. To illustrate, the requirements for signage in Louisiana are as follows:

Licensed seed producers and growers shall post a sign at each field, greenhouse, or indoor growing structure. The sign shall comply with the following requirements and remain posted during the entire crop cycle:

- The designation, “Louisiana Industrial Hemp Program”;
- Industrial Hemp license number;
- LDAF (Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry) industrial hemp program’s telephone number;
- Minimum sign size shall be 18” x 24” for a field and 8.5” x 11” for a greenhouse or indoor growing structure;
- The sign shall be posted at the main entrance of each field, greenhouse, or indoor growing structure; and
- The sign shall be printed and conform to the design template provided to each licensee by LDAF.

5. Sampling and testing

Turning to other USDA requirements, to have “accurate and effective sampling and testing,” states must decide who will do the sampling. In South Carolina, sample collectors can either be state employees or law enforcement. Wyoming is similar in that it allows law enforcement officers to take samples, but it also includes a provision that people who are USDA-certified to take samples may do so. Samples in Ohio are taken by the state department of agriculture. Pennsylvania takes a somewhat different approach; the state has the licensed cultivator hire a “sampling agent” certified by the department of agriculture. The cultivator must make an appointment with a sampler within 15 days before harvest. Texas also uses private samplers. The samplers must take a state sampling and collection training course. West Virginia uses state department of agriculture representatives to collect sampling, and the cultivator must pay $70 per hour for “driving and sampling time.”

6. Requirements for transporting hemp

The 2018 Farm Bill explicitly allowed for the interstate commerce of legally produced hemp and hemp products. Section 10114 of the bill says that a State or Indian Tribe cannot prevent the transportation or shipment of legally produced hemp through its state or territory. While a state may not be able to prevent hemp from being transported through its jurisdiction, states still have the freedom to create strict rules that must be observed when transporting hemp within state lines. In fact, a smattering of states with
USDA-approved hemp programs have done just that, with various levels of strictness.

Pennsylvania is an example of a state that has very thorough transportation requirements in its hemp plan. First, the state requires very specific packaging for any hemp being transported. Every package of hemp must have clearly marked identification. Furthermore, the packaging must identify that “the material is hemp, set forth the manner of packaging,” and state the “variety(s) and quantity and variety of material in each package” in case the shipment is stopped by law enforcement. Information about “each variety of hemp plant, hemp part and hemp product in the shipment” must also be included. Finally, the packaging must contain information showing that the hemp is under 0.3% THC. On top of the packaging requirements for transportation of hemp, the hemp must be transported in a way to avoid the release of plant material, and also in a way that ensures the producer’s information, permit number, and lot information is remains clear.

Pennsylvania also requires shipments to contain “shipping documents” from the cultivator. The shipping documents must contain:

- Shipping date
- Origin of the shipment
- Permit holder’s name, address, phone number,
- Growing location address (if different),
- Permit number,
- Variety information,
- Copy of the certificate(s) of THC analysis covering all material in the shipment, (not required for seedlings)
- Number of packages included in the shipment by variety,
- Description of the plant or plant parts in the packaging (Ex. Seedlings, mature whole plants, buds, leaf, retted stems)
- Destination of the shipment.
- Attached copy of the Department’s Letter of Clearance (not required for seedlings)
- For seedlings and clones, each tray shall be marked with the variety information and producers permit number and accompanying documentation shall also include permit number of the person receiving the shipment.
- For harvested material in packaging of any weight, each container shall be individually identified by a label secured to the package with the following information: Permit holder’s name, address, phone number, growing location address (if different), permit number, and variety information.
- For harvested material shipped in bulk, including bales, in addition to the accompanying documentation listed above, the shipping documents shall include the approximate weight of the shipment and if baled the number of bales and a description of the plant material included in the shipment.

Much like Pennsylvania, Georgia, Kansas, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, Texas, Washington, and New Jersey
require information about the shipment and the cultivator to accompany any hemp transported across state lines. A few states allow this information to be in the form of a bill of lading. Texas, like Pennsylvania, also has very detailed requirements for hemp transportation. In Texas, hemp cannot be transported with any other type of cargo. In addition, law enforcement in Texas “may inspect and collect a reasonably sized sample of any material from the plant Cannabis sativa L. found in a vehicle to determine the delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol concentration of the plant material.” However, law enforcement cannot seize the shipment or arrest the transporter without probable cause leading them to believe that the shipment contains marijuana or another controlled substance.

7. Licenses required to participate in other areas of the hemp industry outside of cultivation

The hemp requirements set forth by the 2018 Farm Bill are for states to follow when it comes to licensing hemp growers or cultivators. In fact, the Farm Bill remained silent on how to govern different actors in the hemp industry, including hemp processors and handlers. Thus, some states have created licenses and rules for such actors.

If a state requires licenses for participation in parts of the hemp industry besides growing, that state is most likely to at least have a hemp processor license. Processing involves taking the raw hemp materials grown by a licensed cultivator and turning them into a product for consumption. Much like a license for cultivating hemp, a state processing license application may require a background check, name and contact information, as well as information on the location of the business. (Interestingly, in Montana, if a person is licensed as a hemp cultivator, they can process their own hemp without an additional processor license.) Processors are also subject to inspections and land use restrictions. In Ohio, for example, processors may not:

- Process or store any cannabis that is not hemp.
- Process or store hemp or hemp products on any site not approved by the department.
- Process, handle, or store hemp or hemp products in a building used as a personal residence or on land that is zoned for residential use.
- Process, handle or store hemp or hemp products in or adjacent to any structure that is used or zoned for residential purposes.
- Process hemp in any location, unless prior approval is received in writing from the department, that is located within five hundred feet of the boundaries of a parcel of real estate, measured from the closest point of the property lines, having situated on it a school or public park. Except that this does not apply to research being conducted by a university that is approved by the director.

Like obtaining and keeping a cultivation license, fees for these additional licenses may be costly, as well. In Montana, it costs $2,500 a year to process hemp floral and root extracts, and $1,000 a year to process hemp grain, seed, seed oil, and fiber.

Furthermore, the state may require processors to use certain methods when processing hemp. Much like
hemp cultivators, hemp processors may also be required to undergo laboratory testing. In addition to THC content, a state may require hemp products to be tested for contaminants and potency. Labeling regulations for hemp products may also apply to processors.

States may also require licenses for hemp handling. Handling may include storing hemp. Sometimes the processing and handling licenses are combined into one, like in Nebraska, where a person can apply for a processor-handler license. This makes sense, since anybody processing hemp is likely storing and handling it as well. South Carolina’s handling license is more complex than Nebraska’s; it does not include processing, but it is broken down into several categories of handling, including warehouse/storage/drying facilities, transporters, laboratories, seed dealer/supplier, and other (brokers, research and development, sales representatives).

Licenses to participate in other parts of the hemp trade besides handling and processing are also required in some states. Louisiana, for instance, requires seed producers and contract carriers to obtain a special license. Thus, Louisianans who wish to produce hemp seed to sell to cultivators, or want to contract to transport hemp across the state, must go through a separate licensing processes.

**Will we see changes in state hemp plans in the future?**

Legally cultivating, processing, handling, and transporting industrial hemp is a new experience in many states this year. Approved state hemp plans that oversee these activities are very diverse; both in their interpretation of the USDA’s requirements, and in their forays beyond the Farm Bill’s language. Since this is the first year of implementing a hemp program for many states, it’s essentially a practice run—states may observe what does and doesn’t work well, realize that there are be gaps and strengths in their plans, or recognize parts of their plans that are far too costly or complicated. As states assess this first year, there is much knowledge to gain by comparing and contrasting approaches across the states. Tweaks and changes to the regulatory plans will likely occur, and the next few years will be critical to honing in on the best practices for regulating hemp production.

**Referenced Materials**

**USDA Agricultural Marketing Service**
- List of tribal, territorial, and state hemp plans, with links to each plan: https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/hemp/state-and-tribal-plan-review

**United States Code**
- 7 U.S.C. §§ 1639o—1639s

**Delaware**
- Delaware Code Title 3 Chapter 28
- 23 Delaware Register of Regulations 494 (01/01/20), https://regulations.delaware.gov/register/january2020/emergency/23%20DE%20Reg%20494%202001-01-20.htm (not yet codified)

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Florida
- Florida Statutes § 581.217 (2019)
- Florida Administrative Code Rule 5B-57.014
- Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Cultivation License Application Frequently Asked Questions: https://www.fdacs.gov/content/download/91830/file/hemp-cultivation-application-faq.pdf

Georgia
- Georgia Code §§ 2-23-1 to 2-23-12
- Georgia Regulations Rule 40-32-1-.01 to 40-32-1-.06

Iowa
- Iowa Statutes §§ 204.1—204.17
- Iowa Administrative Code §§ 21.96.1—21.96.13

Kansas
- Kansas Statutes §§ 2-3901—2-3909
- Kansas Administrative Regulations §§ 4-34-1—4-34-21

Louisiana
- Louisiana Revised Statutes §§ 3:1461—3:1484
- Louisiana Administrative Code §§ 1301—1343

Montana
- Montana Administrative Rules 4.19

Nebraska
- Nebraska Revised Statutes §§ 2-501—2-519
- 25 Nebraska Administrative Code §§ 8-001—8-008

New Jersey
- New Jersey Revised Statutes §§ 4:28-6—4:28-13
- New Jersey Administrative Code §§ 2:25-1.1—2:25-6.4

Ohio
- Ohio Revised Statutes §§ 928.01—928.99
- Ohio Administrative Code Chapters 901:14-1, 901:14-2
- Ohio Department of Agriculture Prohibited Hemp Varieties: https://agri.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/oda/divisions/hemp-program/resources/prohibited-hemp-varieties

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Pennsylvania
- 3 Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes §§ 701-710
- Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Industrial Hemp: https://www.agriculture.pa.gov/Plants_Land_Water/industrial_hemp/Pages/default.aspx

South Carolina
- South Carolina Code Annotated, §§ 46-55-1—46-55-60
- South Carolina Department of Agriculture, Hemp Handler Application and information: https://agriculture.sc.gov/divisions/consumer-protection/hemp/hemp-handler-guidelines/

Texas
- 86th Texas Legislative Session, Texas House Bill 1325
- Texas Administrative Code Title 4 §§ 24.1—24.50

Washington
- Washington Revised Code §§ 15.140.040—15.140.900

West Virginia
- West Virginia Code §§ 19-12-E-1—19-12-E-11
- West Virginia Code of Regulations §§ 61-29-1—61-29-6

Wyoming
- Wyoming Statutes Annotated §§ 11-51-101—11-51-107
- Wyoming Administrative Code

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