

Yorkshire Hemp Supply Chain Project Overview – 2020/01

Introduction

The Supply Chain Network in conjunction with Grow Yorkshire wished to gain an insight into the supply chain opportunities to develop the processing of hemp in the region. The fundamental purpose of the project was to highlight the opportunity for a regional based supply chain to produce farm to finished product.

1. Yorkshire Hemp Supply Chain – Background and Context

The aim of the project was to map the end-to-end supply chain associated with the growing and production of hemp and hemp products in the Yorkshire region, bringing together relevant organisations and identifying gaps. Supply chain expertise was sort to deliver this project, providing specialist insight to inform decisions regarding opportunities to develop the processing of hemp in the Yorkshire region.

Yorkshire already hosts suppliers, growers, producers and academics associated with the Hemp Supply Chain – arguably, the most sophisticated in the country. Therefore, the key opportunity was the coordination of a Yorkshire based supply chain, ready to produce farm to finished product 'Made In Yorkshire'.

2a. Importance of Hemp Production in Yorkshire

It is believed that an unrestricted and thriving hemp supply chain delivers several key goals relevant to both agricultural and emerging environmental policies across the Yorkshire region.

Hemp can be used for a range of environmentally sustainable and carbon negative products, whilst actively contributing to mitigating climate change. A thriving Yorkshire hemp supply chain can kick-start, boost local economies, and help to develop a 'Greener Fairer Stronger' future in a post-Brexit landscape. Since the passing of the US Hemp Farm Bill in 2018, there has been a global resurgence in hemp production and processing and it is believed that Yorkshire has a golden opportunity to be part of the worldwide hemp renaissance.

2b. Economic Opportunities for the Yorkshire Region

A Yorkshire based hemp supply chain can provide many economic benefits for the region, as well as Yorkshire farmers, by fuelling technological, manufacturing, and design innovations that are essential to create new market opportunities and boost the local, bio and circular economies.

The region is a world leader in research and design, however due to the removal of the processing subsidy as part of the EU CAP in 2013, and the above political barriers to growth, hemp has received little to no industrial interest or funding. In the UK, it is estimated that the maximum area of hemp cultivation is around 810 hectares. By comparison, Europe cultivates over 33,000 hectares of industrial hemp and is increasing year on year.