



Sustainable Development: Building a Case for Hemp

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ABSTRACT

Objectives of this paper are to discuss hemp within the context of sustainable development and examine the economic impact of establishing a hemp sector in rural U.S. locations. This study focuses on the textile industry and examines the interlinking industry impacts from hemp production, fiber processing, and apparel manufacturing. First this paper discusses hemp cultivation in terms of sustainable development, secondly we identify its performance attributes, thirdly we talk about the market for hemp products, fourthly we describe the manufacturing and processing of hemp, and then we describe our input-output model, its analysis of a hemp sector, and research findings. Establishing one hemp apparel manufacturing firm and processing plant appears to be comparable to establishing one cotton apparel manufacturing firm and processing plant in terms of total industry output and employment based on the assumptions of the study.

Keywords: hemp sector, textile industry, economic impact, sustainable development

Introduction

U.S. demand for hemp made products grow rapidly during the 1990s with consumption of imported hemp fiber increasing 415.8% between 1995 and 1996 (Gross, 1997). Hemp products are substitutes for wood fibers, such as rayon, as well as being eco-sensitive (PR Newswire, 1997). Hemp improves soil fertility and is a durable rotation crop that is adaptable to most climates (Clark, 1999). Hems

cultivation requires little or no pesticides and herbicides, particularly when grown on smaller plots (Kane, 2000). It has the same appearance, growth and processing requirements ecological cousin as another best fiber, linen (Gross, 1997). Yet considerable debate continues regarding the viability of industrial hemp as a fiber alternative in the U.S.

Many assume that both the economic (lack of sustained profitability)