

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 22, 2010



CONTACT: Tom Murphy 207-542-4998

tom@votehemp.com

Adam Eiding 202-744-2671

adam@votehemp.com

National Farmers Union Adopts New Policy on Industrial Hemp

Majority of Leading Farming Organizations Now Support Hemp Farming in the U.S.

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The national, single-issue, non-profit advocacy group Vote Hemp applauds the new policy supporting industrial hemp adopted by delegates of the National Farmers Union (NFU) at its 108th annual convention in Rapid City, South Dakota last week. The policy urges the Obama administration and Congress to direct the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to differentiate between non-drug industrial hemp and marijuana and allow states to regulate hemp farming without requiring DEA permits.

At the conclusion of the convention, the NFU issued the following statement on its new policy: “We urge the President, Attorney General, and Congress to direct the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency [sic] (DEA) to differentiate between industrial hemp and marijuana and adopt policy to allow American farmers to grow industrial hemp under state law without requiring DEA licenses.” The 2010 NFU Policy may be found at: <http://nfu.org/about/policy>.

For the last four growing seasons, farmers in North Dakota have received licenses from the North Dakota Department of Agriculture to grow industrial hemp. Despite the state’s authorization to grow hemp, these farmers risk raids by federal agents, jail time and possible forfeiture of their farms and assets if they try to grow the crop, due to the failure of the DEA to distinguish non-drug industrial hemp from drug varieties of *Cannabis*.

Vote Hemp applauds the new policy adopted by the NFU and strongly encourages the Obama administration to heed their request. “American farmers, as well as the American economy, will benefit greatly from the right to grow industrial hemp as a rotational crop,” says Vote Hemp President Eric Steenstra.

There is widespread support among national farming organizations for a change in the federal government’s position on hemp. The National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) “supports revisions to the federal rules and regulations authorizing commercial production of industrial hemp.” The National Grange voted to support hemp in 2009, stating that it “supports research, production, processing and marketing of industrial hemp as a viable agricultural activity.” The North Dakota Farmers Union 2010 Program of Policy & Action and the Rocky Mountain Farmers Union 2010 Policy both also ask that the Obama administration direct the DEA to “differentiate between industrial hemp and marijuana.” These organizations passed the resolutions in 2009, leading up to the NFU 2010 convention.

Grown commercially in Canada since 1998, hemp has become one of the most profitable crops for farmers north of the U.S. border. While American farmers often net less than \$50 per acre for soy and corn, Canadian hemp farmers just across the border net an average of \$250 per acre.

Currently, Vote Hemp and the Hemp Industries Association (HIA) are organizing *Hemp History Week*, a national campaign sponsoring local educational and retailer events in all 50 states from May 17-23, 2010. The effort is an unprecedented industry-wide project involving hundreds of hemp manufacturers, retailers and volunteers. While 16 states have passed pro-hemp farming legislation to date, *Hemp History Week* organizers want to influence significant policy changes on the federal level as well, and they expect to deliver 50,000 hand-signed postcards to the Department of Justice in support of hemp farming. For more information, visit: <http://www.HempHistoryWeek.com>.

#

Vote Hemp is a national, single-issue, non-profit organization dedicated to the acceptance of and a free market for low-THC industrial hemp and to changes in current law to allow U.S. farmers to once again grow this agricultural crop. More information about hemp legislation and the crop’s many uses may be found at www.VoteHemp.com or www.TheHIA.org. BETA SP or DVD Video News Releases featuring footage of hemp farming in other countries are available upon request from Adam Eiding at 202-744-2671.