

Wisconsin Farm Bureau: Industrial hemp bill signed by Gov. Walker

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Madison, Wisconsin — A Wisconsin Farm Bureau supported bill legalizing industrial hemp production in the state was signed into law by Governor Walker as WI Act 100.

Senate Bill 119, authored by Sen. Patrick Testin (R-Stevens Point) and Rep. Jesse Kremer (R-Kewaskum), creates a hemp pilot program that will permit farmers to grow industrial hemp through a licensing system from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. The bill garnered bipartisan support in both houses of the legislature and was passed unanimously in each.

“Wisconsin Farm Bureau would like to thank Governor Walker for supporting this bill,” said WFBF President Jim Holte. “The establishment of an industrial hemp pilot program will open new market opportunities for our state’s farmers and create jobs in processing and marketing.”

Wisconsin has joined 33 other states in passing some form of legislation legalizing industrial hemp production and research. Additionally, more than thirty industrialized countries allow their farmers to grow hemp as a crop. Industrial hemp has not been legally grown in Wisconsin since 1957. Provisions in the 2014 Farm Bill allow states to set up pilot programs to permit the growing, cultivating and marketing of industrial hemp.

“From the 1930s to 1957, Wisconsin dominated hemp production,” Holte said. “As a farmer myself, I am excited about the opportunities this creates to capitalize on

existing markets, capture emerging markets and once again establish our position as an industry leader.”

The Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation is the state’s largest general farm organization, made up of 61 county Farm Bureaus and representing agriculturists and farms of every size, commodity and management style.