

**From:** colin sagar [sagarcolin@yahoo.com.au]  
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**To:** standards management  
**Subject:** FSANZ Application A1039

**Categories:** Blue Category

## FSANZ Application A1039

### Hemp Foods for Australia

**Dear Sir,**

**Please accept this formal submission to consideration of the above application. My numbered responses correspond to questions posed in the application process.**

1. Hemp foods are being consumed around the world in many countries, including Canada, the United States, United Kingdom and the European Community. The unique and exceptional nutritional profile present in the hemp seed is the main selling point.
2. Hemp foods are widely sold in the United Kingdom and the European Community, Canada and the United States. No instance of false or misleading advertising can be seen in any of the products that have been examined.
3. Although formal studies are lacking, around the world many elite athletes consume hemp health foods, often in generous quantities, to assist in the management of their gruelling physical schedules. As a group they are subject to close chemical monitoring. No incidence of false positive testing has arisen as far as can be ascertained.
4. No. I have no knowledge of this but in principal and practise I am not in favour of pharmacological surveillance for THC in any person.

5. The cost of testing for THC in humans will not be increased following an approval of hemp foods, simply because no false positives are likely to be encountered. In the USA, where mandatory drug testing is much more widespread than in Australia, this has not surfaced as an issue.

6. There is NO risk of high THC cannabis entering the food supply. Hemp food is exclusively derived from hemp seed which are produced from industrial hemp plantations, which are subject to regulatory testing to ensure low levels of THC. The majority of high THC cannabis is now grown by vegetative propagation from females of known potency and growth characteristics. There is an international market in high THC cannabis seeds, produced by specialist breeders principally in Holland and Canada. These seeds are bought by prospective growers who use them to establish their stock female plants. It is inconceivable that these seeds would be used as food due to their scarcity and expense. Additionally, even in the case of large scale outdoor drug plantations only seedless plants are grown, because the male plants are removed to prevent pollination and seed formation. Additionally, even if the seeds of a high THC producing plant were to be used as food, those seeds have no THC themselves, only the potential to produce THC in the flower of the mature plant.

7. The advertising standards in Australia are rather stringent and quite adequate to prevent any false or misleading claims being made. Those interested in marketing hemp seed products intend to use the ample nutritional benefits as the selling point, not some juvenile reference to “getting high”.

8. Hemp crops may be grown for the production of long and short fibre, for seed production or co-cultured to yield both seed and fibre. Currently in Australia there is a paucity of fibre processing capacity and that is limiting the growth of the hemp industry. The essential problem for the growth of the fibre hemp industry is achieving a sufficient size to justify the establishment of expensive industrial capacity, such as a paper pulp mill. The minimum scale of such a plant would be around 100,000 tons annually, necessitating up to 10,000 hectares under cultivation. For the production of medium density particle board at least 1000 hectares would be required.

On the other hand an area as small as 100 hectares could form the basis of a hemp seed industry and provide commercial justification for the more modest costs of the processing machinery needed to convert the seed into a saleable commodity.

9. Amending the current inappropriate restrictions on the food uses of hemp seed in Australia would expand the range of products able to be manufactured. When added to existing foods such as soy milk in place of canola oil, hemp seed would add considerably to the nutritional benefit of the product. . For those suffering allergies to soy or dairy products this would provide a valuable alternative source of these types of foods. Using Australia's environmental credentials and the excellent environmental credentials of hemp would open a potentially very large export market.

10. Hemp seed can be produced economically, especially when economies of scale and dual fibre/seed plantations are operating. The seed requires only minimal processing before being used in most food preparation. It is stable and can be kept for months without special storage needs. Over many years of food use overseas no significant problem with allergies have arisen, so existing food processing machinery can be used with no expensive decontamination procedures. Therefore, no additional costs would be anticipated.

11. No additional costs could be reasonably anticipated. Hemp seed, especially hulled hemp seed contains negligible quantities of THC. If testing is considered necessary it would only be necessary to batch test at the first stage of production i.e. the seed producer, with all downstream producers covered by the certainty that their products would be compliant.

12. There need be minimal changes to existing legislation. Australia is currently the only country to restrict the food uses of hemp and no legislative or enforcement issues, to my knowledge, have arisen in other countries. Although locally produced hemp foods are preferred minor modifications to the Customs regulations would need to be made to facilitate any import of food grade hemp seeds. The changes would be of a similar nature to the industrial hemp laws, where exemptions to existing restrictions were introduced without difficulty or problems.

13. Hemp seed is currently a legal item of commerce in Australia, currently being used in the manufacture of cosmetics and other topical products, as well as a pet food supplement. No additional controls could conceivably be required, especially when dealing with processed items incapable of germination, such as hulled seeds.

14. As stated above the current situation in Australia is that any person can receive and process seed and fibre without restriction, providing it has been produced by a licensed grower. This has been confirmed in NSW by the Department of Primary Industry. There is no conceivable need to add additional regulation to a system that is currently working adequately.

15. With the expansion of the current hemp industry by the addition of food production there would be an increase in the number of farmers receiving licenses. However, no additional costs would be incurred because the system as it is currently operates is based on cost recovery, by fees paid.

16. There is no actual risk associated with changing the regulation so no risk management options need be considered. Joining the world community and legalising hemp foods for consumption in Australia and New Zealand poses no risk, but a win-win scenario for farmers, producers and consumers.

17. Any costs associated with adding hemp food to the approved schedule would be nil or minimal. Risks are non-existent whilst the benefits to farmers, processors and consumers would be great.

18. My preferred regulatory option is that of minimal intervention, leading to a rapid normalisation of the hemp food industry. The stated aim of the food regulations is to protect the health and well-being of the Australian population. This is best done by expediting the introduction of hemp foods, whose ample nutritional profile will greatly benefit the population. What we are seeking is not radical or ground breaking change, but simply to join the world community in adopting a safe and beneficial food.

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