

Coopid



Industrial hemp for organic crop rotation and landscape diversification

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The problem

Many agricultural landscapes have specialized for e.g. grain production for pigs or grass/maize for dairy farming resulting in rather **monotonous and narrow crop rotations**.

This can impose negative effects on the environment (in terms of pesticide use or excess fertilizer use), and consequently threatened the biodiversity and wildlife of the landscape.

The solution

Hemp varieties for seed or for fibres is a crop with low input requirements and therefore **suitable for organic agriculture**.

The crop needs rather high temperature before sowing, leaving open fields until May. Hemp is fast growing with deep roots, and yet good for undersowing of e.g. clover species for grazing or seed crop the following year. After harvest, the stubble is very attractive for wildlife for coverage and foraging on lost seeds etc.

Benefits

Hemp fits well into the annual rhythm of the farmer: late sowing, late harvest, few operations, little fertilizer, rarely pesticides, no specialized equipment needed for seed harvest. Specialized equipment needed for fibre harvest.



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Recommendations

- 1.** Get a **contract for the seeds/fibres produced**. Possibly a group of farmers is needed for larger contracts.
- 2.** Check local, regional and national **regulation for hemp**. In Denmark, you will need to apply for annual permission to cultivate industrial hemp.
- 3.** Use **certified seeds** (low in THC content) and cultivate a minimum of **0,3 hectares**.
- 4.** Exchange experience and seek advice from experienced farmers on the field operations, timing etc. Soils should not be too clayey, not too sandy, and not exposed to late frost. Prepare the field well, fertilize with manure/slurry.
- 5.** Select the optimal seed variety and plant around **20 kg seeds/ha**.



About COOPID and this practice abstract

This practice abstract was elaborated in the COOPID project, based on the EIP AGRI practice abstract format. © 2023

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Goal: foster knowledge transfer among primary producers and the uptake of biobased business models in the EU primary sector.

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