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First License for Hemp Cultivation Granted in USVI

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A hemp farm at Main Street Farms in Cortland, N.Y. By. HEATHER AINSWORTH FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Crucian Hemp Farms, LLLP on Wednesday became the first hemp cultivation company to be granted a license to grow hemp in the territory. Industrial hemp is a variety of the cannabis plant species that is grown specifically for industrial use. It can be used to make a wide range of products and is one of the fastest growing plants on earth along with bamboo.

Between late May and early June, the U.S. Department of Agriculture [approved](#) the Virgin Islands Hemp Plan, which outlines the procedures and requirements for cultivating and producing hemp products in the territory. The plan includes provisions for maintaining information on the land where hemp is produced, testing the level of delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), disposing of plants that do not meet the necessary licensing and other requirements and ensuring compliance

with all USDA and other federal guidelines.

According to a release issued by Government House, the V.I. Hemp Commission on Wednesday received and reviewed the applications from Crucian Hemp Farms to be licensed and registered as a Commercial Hemp Grower, Hemp Seed Distributer and Hemp Transporter. Crucian Hemp Farms is also the territory's first Opportunity Zone business and the primary operators include five Virgin Islanders.

"This begins a new economic era in the U.S. Virgin Islands that will not only benefit the government through new revenue streams, but also will provide economic and growth opportunities for the Territory's farmers and local business entrepreneurs," said Governor Albert Bryan. "I applaud the efforts of the Hemp Commission and note that they accomplished this in three months after streamlining the application process by using an online database that the commission opened to the public in September."

According to Gov't House, the Hemp Commission used a new software platform, managed by the Office of the Governor and the Bureau of Information Technology, called [MyGov](#), which also has been used by the Virgin Islands Energy Office to process applications for consumer energy programs. "The new digital licensing portal is part of Governor Bryan's commitment to digitize the Government of the Virgin Islands and streamline and expedite interactions between residents and government agencies," said Gov't House.

Crucian Hemp Farms says it intends to cultivate and harvest 125 acres of compliant CBD-rich hemp and harvesting up to 3 times a year with potential yields of up to 4000 pounds of dry weight per acre.

In its applications, the company said it will use an environmentally sustainable approach by applying agro-ecological principles to build and maintain healthy soil, use responsible water management practices that promote biodiversity, according to Gov't House. Crucian Hemp Farms also said it will ensure that all plants are grown in compliance according to guidelines set forth by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture and the Virgin Islands Hemp Commission.

At Wednesday's meeting, the six members of the Hemp Commission considered Crucian Hemp Farms' applications, as well as multiple forms of paperwork and documentation that showed the company's compliance with USDA federal rules and the territory's locally approved Hemp Plan created by the Office of the Governor before voting unanimously to approve the licenses and registrations.

The Hemp Commission members who participated in Wednesday's vote are Dr. David Hall, president of the University of the Virgin Islands; V.I. Police Commissioner Trevor Velinor; Senator Allison DeGazon; Agriculture Commissioner Positive T.A. Nelson; Carol Jacobs of the Virgin Islands Department of Justice; and Laurent Alfred, a member of the Hemp Retailers Association.

To submit an application to the Virgin Islands Hemp Commission, see the link above.

