

2024 North Central Farmer/Rancher Grant:  
Optimal Planting Density Per Acre of Dual-Purpose  
Industrial Hemp with Cover Crop  
Letter of Support – ID: 1015427



December 6, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

As a certified crop adjuster by trade, I also serve as an appointed member of the Industrial Hemp Advisory Board under the Kansas Department of Agriculture. Since our state's hemp program began in 2019, I have had the honor and unique opportunity of not only participating in the license approval process of AST Genetics, but due to proximity I have also witnessed their impressive development and potential. Having previously been connected with High Plains Nutrition, who brought in Tiger Fiber, the evidence-based trajectory set forth by this collective initiative carries an exponentially vital contribution to farmers, local & domestic economies and most importantly – environmental revitalization.

Anticipated changes<sup>1</sup> to the next Farm Bill are expected to help expand domestic hemp markets, and once the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO<sup>2</sup>) approves hemp seed as a feed additive further adoption is projected. Kansas is one of eleven<sup>3</sup> states to re-evaluate hemp as an approved ingredient for animal and human food, and we are looking at other measures to empower fiber and textile sectors of the industry.

Despite a turbulent five years of Kansas regulatory restrictions along with intense drought, AST has established itself as a strong leader. Having personally monitored and kept in contact with others in this space since 2014, I can confidently say this group's dedication to quality from best practices in cultivation and breeding to documentation of data, deserves serious attention from those contemplating support. This is from a basic perspective of return on investment in addition to secondary outcomes for goals such as net zero or positive carbon capture and value-add to producers while improving soil health.

With the increasing interest and adoption of industrial hemp for its wide ranges of end uses,<sup>4</sup> AST is well positioned within the Great Plains and Animal Health Corridor where over 56%<sup>5</sup> of the world's animal health and product research is based. Given hemp's current and predicted contribution to the common good, the goals set out by AST align with state, regional, national and international consensus towards healing nature's abilities while maximizing potential.

Please feel free to reach out, and thank you for considering this vital vision for helping regenerate America's Heartland, and beyond.

- Kelly Rippel

Vice President, Kansans for Hemp

Founding President, Planted Association of Kansas

kellyrippel@ymail.com

References:

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2. <https://www.aafco.org/news/hemp-as-a-feed-ingredient-a-national-discussion/>
3. <https://hempfeedcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/State-by-State-Legislation-as-of-June-2023.pdf>
4. <https://unctad.org/news/hemp-versatility-and-sustainability-offer-huge-opportunities-developing-countries>
5. <https://www.gotopeka.com/animal-health-corridor/>