

FARM WORKER FARMS

A California Agriculture Social Business Owned & Operated by Farmworkers



The Farm Worker Farms (FWF) project is creating a social business enterprise and cooperative hemp farm owned and operated by farmworkers.

Farm Worker Farms' mission is to empower farmworkers as owners and operators of successful farms that use organic, regenerative, and sustainable agriculture.

Farm Worker Farms is using a unique business strategy to break out of the box that has limited the empowerment and opportunities of farmworkers in the past. It is designed to harness the best practices of the sustainable / regenerative agricultural movement and the social business / cooperative / organized labor movement.

The FWF project goal is to establish an industrial hemp farming and processing operation in in central California that is sustainable and can be replicated in other regions and states.

Farm Worker Farms will be operated as a unionized “social business”, and legally structured as a California LLC. FWF LLC will be a worker cooperative enterprise that is controlled by its worker-owners.

A social business is a relatively new economic model. A social business generates profits to reinvest them into the company to further its social impact, instead of distributing dividends. The most well-known social business in the United States is Newman’s Own food company.

FWF will operate as a social business and a union cooperative with a union contract that benefits the interests of its workers. Union cooperatives are worker owned co-ops where the worker-owners are union members with a union contract. Recology, the garbage company in San Francisco, is an example of an employee-owned business with a Teamster union contract.

California Hemp

The new and legal California hemp agriculture industry has created a great opportunity to establish Farm Worker Farms. Because it is the largest state by population, the largest agricultural state, and has no snow or frost in its prime growing areas - California is positioned grow into the USA’s largest hemp growing, production and consumption market.

California Farm Workers

California is well known for the birth of the United Farm Workers union and the farmworker movement.

Farm workers should be at the center of California hemp agriculture as growers, owners, and managers. Farm workers have always been at the center of agriculture. What they have always lacked is ownership and the empowering opportunity it creates.

Farm Workers Farms is designed is seize the historic opportunity of the re-birth of California hemp agriculture and leverage it into a new model of economic opportunity for farm workers. This will create a model that eventually can be replicated in any area and with any crop to benefit farm workers anywhere.

Project Network

Farm Worker Farms is being developed by a network of experienced hemp businesspeople, farmers and labor leaders. Collectively we have decades of experience developing hemp businesses, hemp farms, and organizing with - the United Farm Workers Union, the United Food & Commercial Workers Union, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, CA-Hemp.com, the Hemp Investment Group, CaliforniaForJobs.org and the Hemp Farm Guild. Better World Advisors is facilitating the project.

The key elements defining Farm Worker Farms are:

- **Social Business**

Social business is a relatively new economic model developed by economics professor and Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus. A social business's profits are reinvested into the company to further its social impact, instead of distributing them as dividends to owners. A social business competes in the marketplace on service, price, quality, and branding. It pays taxes like a regular business. All revenues above operating cost are directed to growing the enterprise and advancing the mission of the social business. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_business)

There is now a global social business movement that has hundreds of successful enterprises, most started in the past ten years. The Yunus Centre (yunuscentre.org) and Yunus Social Business (yunusssb.com) promotes social businesses around the world with a large network of entrepreneurs and supporters. This includes the Ankole Coffee Producers Cooperative Union Ltd. in Uganda and Pomario, a social business securing higher incomes for rural farmers in Colombia. The most well-known social business in the United States is Newman's Own food company.

- **Worker Cooperative / Co-op**

Broadly speaking a co-operative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise. Co-operatives are businesses owned and run by and for their members. Whether the members are the customers, employees, or residents - they have an equal say in what the business does and a share in the profits. As businesses driven by values not just profit, co-operatives share internationally agreed principles and act together to build a better world through co-operation.

A worker cooperative is an enterprise that produces goods and is owned and controlled by its worker-owners. Ownership of a worker cooperative is vested solely with the worker-owners on an equal basis. Moreover, worker-owners control the resources of the cooperative and the work process. Each worker-owner has equal decision-making power and ultimate authority rests with the worker-owners as a whole. Worker control can be exercised directly or indirectly by worker-owners. If exercised indirectly, members of representative decision-making bodies (e.g. a Board of Directors) are elected by the worker-owners and subject to removal by the worker-owners.

Farm Worker Farms will operate as a worker cooperative. It will collaborate with other worker owner farms and use the best practices developed by groups such as the Network of Bay Area Worker Cooperatives (BAWC) and the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) to guide its development and contribute to the cooperative movement.

- **Unionized Cooperative**

Farm Worker Farms will be a social business and worker cooperative with a union contract that benefits the interests of its workers.

Union cooperatives are worker owned co-ops where the worker-owners are union members with a union contract. Union cooperatives have collective bargaining agreements that cover wages, benefits and working conditions. Worker-owners are able to look out for their common interests as both workers and owners. At the same time there are united with organized labor and the labor movement.

This is based on the successful model of Recology Inc. in San Francisco, an employee-owned business with a Teamster union contract. US based Union co-ops include - Homeland Stores, an employee-owned, 80-store unionized grocery chain (UFCW 1000) in Oklahoma and Texas, New Era Windows in Chicago, and New York City's Cooperative Home Care Associates (SEIU) the largest worker cooperative in the United States, among others.

The labor contract negotiated becomes the baseline of benefits due to the membership and guarantees to the community that the working conditions are not unfavorable. Union membership for worker cooperatives gives the enterprise a legitimate standard of operations. Union membership positions Farm Worker Farms inside the organized labor movement and provides it with powerful allies.

- **Industrial Hemp**

The 2018 Federal Farm Bill made hemp a completely legal crop in the USA. Under the law, hemp is managed by Department of Agriculture as a crop rather than as an illegal substance. Hemp is under the prevue of the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

There are two distinct forms of hemp grown in the US today, CBD hemp and Industrial hemp. CBD hemp is grown for Cannabidiol, a naturally occurring element that is a highly sought-after compound in the medical and natural products industry. CBD Hemp plants are planted outdoors with 3 square feet of separation.

Farm Worker Farms will only grow and sell organic industrial hemp.

Industrial Hemp is grown for grown for fiber, seed, and seed oil. It is planted in large fields like wheat, hay, and alfalfa. It grows very fast and tall like bamboo. There are thousands of different products that are made from industrial hemp including textiles, paper, hempcrete building materials, particle board, fiberglass, bioplastic, as well as hemp flour, cooking oil and edible seeds.

Industrial hemp requires processing before it is ready to be manufactured into products or food. The single biggest factor affecting the industrial hemp market is the lack of processing capacity. Hemp farms that combine growing and processing operations are best positioned for sustainability and market success.

Hemp is legal to grow in California. Industrial hemp in California has no special taxes. Farmers can grow as many acres as they wish on land zoned for agricultural purposes.

California is positioned grow into the USA's largest hemp growing, production and consumption market. It is the largest state by population, the third largest state by area, the largest agricultural state, and has no snow or frost in its prime growing areas.

As with the national trend, 95% of the hemp now being grow in California is CBD hemp rather than industrial hemp. This is due to the US market valuing CBD hemp more than industrial hemp. Over the next five years the percentage of hemp grown and processed in California will switch from mostly CBD hemp to mostly industrial hemp, grown for seed and fiber.

- **The Future of Industrial Hemp**

Industrial Hemp in America and worldwide will grow into a multi-hundred billion dollar agricultural and products market - like the corn and soy market.

In the future, companies like Levi Straus will be selling 100% hemp jeans and 50% hemp jeans. Chain stores like Starbucks will be using hemp paper coffee cups with hemp bioplastic lids. Building materials and hundreds on other products will be made from California industrial hemp. Just like all industry, the hemp market will be affected by both automation and the forces of supply and demand. Hemp is a uniquely strong, versatile and value creating plant. A green, sustainable, and profitable hemp industry will grow and thrive in California with no end in sight.

Summary

The Farm Worker Farms is designed to be a social business enterprise and cooperative hemp farm owned and operated by farm workers. Its mission is to empower farm workers as owners and operators of successful farms that use organic, regenerative, and sustainable agriculture.

The vision is to establish a large industrial hemp farm and processing facility in central California that is sustainable and that can be replicated in other regions and states.

Farm Worker Farms uses a unique strategy that has proven examples of success to break out of the box that has limited the empowerment and opportunities of farmworkers in the past.

The project is designed is seize the historic opportunity of the re-birth of California hemp agriculture and leverage it into a new model of economic opportunity for farm workers. This will create a model that eventually can be replicated in any area and with any crop to benefit farm workers anywhere.

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