



# Hemp Related Crimes

## ▶ Moore hemp farmer shot, killed in S.C.

Nancy McCleary, The Sanford Herald, N.C.  
March 2, 2021

Mar. 2—An arrest was made late Monday in South Carolina in the weekend murder of a Carthage hemp farmer.

Christopher Benton McLeod, 29, of 2260 Farm Life School Road, was shot about 7:30 p.m. near Hartsville, Darlington County Sheriff James Hudson.

Hartsville is about 25 miles northwest of Florence.

Hudson said the case is still under investigation and he declined to provide additional information.

WBTW, a Myrtle Beach TV station, reported that the shooting happened near the Hartsville airport.

McLeod was one of the owners of Farm Life Hemp LLC on land that the McLeod family has farmed for five generations, according to the operation's website.

# Second man held in hemp farmer's slaying

Posted on Sunday, May 23, 2021

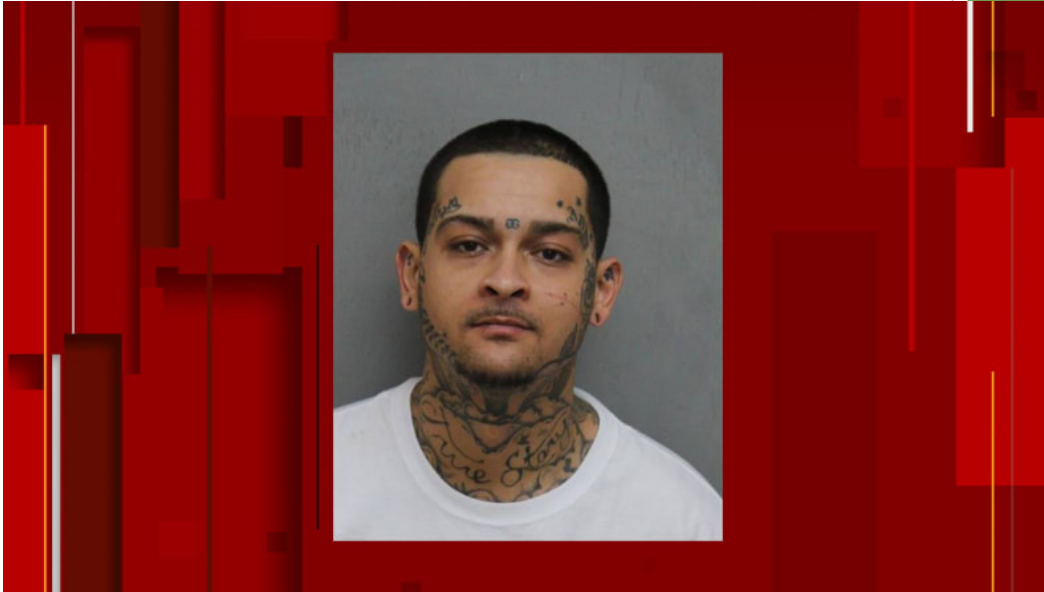


Ronnie James McDougal Jr. PHOTO COURTESY OF DCDC

- ▶ A second man has been charged in the February slaying of a North Carolina hemp farmer at the Hartsville airport, officials said. Ronnie James McDougal Jr. was charged with murder May 13 after turning himself in at the Darlington County Sheriff's Office. In March, another man, Deangelo Marquell McFarland, also was charged with murder in the case. Both are accused in the death of Christopher Benton McLeod, 29, of Carthage, N.C. McLeod helped operate a family-run hemp-growing farm in Carthage. He flew into Darlington County with his father to sell hemp and flowers, the elder McLeod told officials.

# Man arrested in connection to attempted burglary at Montgomery County hemp farm

Authorities said he was seen on a UTV before he ran away



*Authorities say Justin Murphy has been arrested in connection to an attempted burglary at a Montgomery County hemp farm (Montgomery County Sheriff's Office)*

## ► UPDATE

- A man has been arrested in connection to an attempted burglary at a hemp farm in Montgomery County.
- Justin Murphy, 29, was arrested at 3 a.m. on Thursday in Radford, according to the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office.
- Authorities said Murphy has been charged with breaking and entering, three counts of grand larceny and possession of a firearm by a felon. He is being held without bail in the Montgomery County Jail.
- Deputies responded to a burglar alarm at Tru Harvest Farms in Christiansburg just after 1 a.m. Wednesday, according to the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office. This is the same farm that had \$250,000 worth of hemp stolen last month.
- According to the Sheriff's Office, authorities believe Murphy is linked to larcenies at TruHarvest in the past but the investigation is ongoing.

# Robbers nab more than 140 kilograms of hemp biomass from South Carolina farm

*Hemp grown in South Carolina must contain less than 0.3 per cent tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and doesn't get consumers 'high.'*

Author of the article:

**The GrowthOp**

Publishing date:

Sep 30, 2021 • September 30, 2021



It's not clear if the robbers knew they were robbing a hemp farm, or if they mistook the plants for cannabis. PHOTO BY / PHOTO: JESSICAHYDE / ISTOCK / GETTY IMAGES PLUS

- ▶ A hemp farm in South Carolina was robbed of 315 pounds (143 kilograms) of packaged hemp valued at US\$157,500 (\$199,500) earlier this week, reports the [\*Times and Democrat\*](#) .
- ▶ The hemp was allegedly stolen from an outside storage freezer at the McCords Ferry Road farm and an additional 100 plants were damaged during the robbery.
- ▶ Hemp grown in South Carolina must contain less than 0.3 per cent tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and cannot get consumers 'high.'
- ▶ Cannabis remains illegal in the state, though it has a long history of hemp cultivation.
- ▶ It's not clear if the robbers knew they were robbing a hemp farm, or if they mistook the plants for cannabis. They wouldn't be the first to confuse the two.

# MULTIPLE SUSPECTS ARRESTED IN BURGLARY OF A HEMP DRYING FACILITY

The Grants Pass Department of Public Safety stated on Sunday that they have arrested two suspects that have been linked to the burglary of a hemp drying facility.

Posted: Apr 25, 2021 5:06 PM

Posted By: Brett Taylor



- ▶ GRANTS PASS, Ore-- The Grants Pass Department of Public Safety stated on Sunday that they have arrested two suspects that have been linked to the burglary of a hemp drying facility.
- ▶ According to police, around 9:30 Sunday morning, officers from the Grants Pass Department of Public Safety responded to 2152 NE Spalding Avenue for a reported burglary in progress.
- ▶ Police say that the victims reported two males had entered the hemp drying facility and were taking items, valued at over \$20,000.
- ▶ The victims say that when confronted the suspects, the pair drove their vehicle at the victim in an effort to escape with the stolen property. Police say that the suspects then exited the vehicle and fled on foot. The passenger of the vehicle was able to escape the building while the driver of the vehicle ran to the other side of the facility and concealed himself under hemp trimmings.
- ▶ GPDPS says that when officers arrived at the scene that they locked down the facility. Additional units continued to search the area with the assistance of the Josephine County Sheriff's Department.
- ▶ Police say that officers at the facility gave numerous commands into the area of the building the suspect was last seen, ordering him to surrender, but he refused to comply.
- ▶ Because the suspect remained concealed and police not knowing if he possessed a weapon or was lying in wait for officers, a K-9 unit was called to the scene.
- ▶ Police say after a brief search, the suspect was located and apprehended by K-9 Brock. The suspect is now custody and has been identified as 59-year-old Jeffrey Charles Waegner. Waegner was provided medical treatment prior to being lodged at the Josephine County Jail on the following charges: Aggravated Theft, burglary, robbery, reckless driving, interfering with police and resisting arrest.
- ▶ According to GPDPS, while Officers were searching for the second suspect, GPDPS received a call from alert citizens at Edgewater Christian Fellowship indicating a subject matching the description of the outstanding male had entered their facility. Officers contacted the subject at the church who was determined to not be involved.
- ▶ Police say that the second suspect was soon located walking on Foothill Blvd near Lawless Lane and taken into custody. He has been identified as 41-year-old Michael James Ellis.
- ▶ Ellis has been transported to the Josephine County Jail where he was lodged on a parole violation. Additional charges are being referred to the Josephine County District Attorney's Office against Ellis.

# \$50 MILLION WORTH OF MARIJUANA SEIZED IN ILLEGAL GROW IN DOUGLAS COUNTY

The warrant stemmed from an investigation into a large-scale black-market marijuana grow. Law enforcement became aware of the operation on tips from concerned citizens.

Posted: Sep 3, 2021 8:09 PM

Updated: Sep 3, 2021 8:11 PM

Posted By: Karly Tinsley



- ▶ **YONCALLA, Ore. - Thousands of marijuana plants were destroyed after law enforcement uncovered a large-scale marijuana grow that was operating under the guise of a legal hemp operation.**
- ▶ The Douglas County Sheriff's Office and Douglas Interagency Narcotics Team (DINT) executed a search warrant in the 1000-block of Scotts Valley Road Wednesday, September 1, 2021.
- ▶ The warrant stemmed from an investigation into a large-scale black-market marijuana grow. Law enforcement became aware of the operation on tips from concerned citizens.
- ▶ When law enforcement arrived approximately 30-50 workers began fleeing the location on foot. An individual identified as "the manager" of the operation, 44-year-old Jose Francisco Figueroa-Aguilar of Modesto, California, was ultimately arrested and lodged at the Douglas County Jail on charges of Unlawful Possession and Unlawful Manufacture of Marijuana.
- ▶ Deputies located multiple vehicles, tents, and two RVs concealed under greenhouses and in the timber. The property was also found to be littered with garbage, fertilizer, containers, and human waste; all of which were adjacent to Elk Creek.
- ▶ Two large swimming pools were being utilized as water holding tanks being fed by water pumps from Elk Creek. The water pumps are required to be metered but were not.
- ▶ Approximately 150 greenhouses containing 49,152 marijuana plants were located on the property. Testing conducted on the marijuana throughout the grow revealed high levels of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). There were no hemp plants located anywhere on the property. The street value of the marijuana located is estimated to be \$50,000,000.
- ▶ Harvesting of the marijuana plants had begun, however, it did not appear that any of it had been released into the community before the execution of the search warrant.
- ▶ Due to the sheer size of the illegal operation, law enforcement spent two days conducting eradication and destruction of the marijuana plants. The investigation is ongoing and additional charges may be pending.
- ▶ Douglas County, as well as multiple other Oregon counties, are seeing a large number of black-market marijuana grows which have been disguised as sanctioned hemp grows are popping up in local communities.

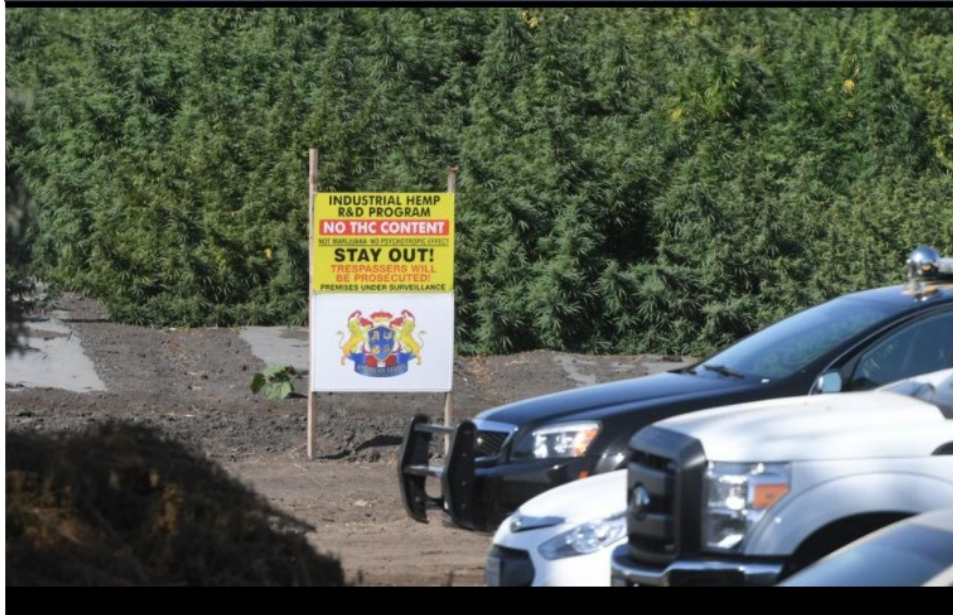
## California

# Bodies of 17-year-old, man were found in pot grow, officials say

By [Joe Goldeen](#)

Record Staff Writer

Posted Oct 4, 2017 at 3:45 PM



[BUY PHOTO](#)

[HIDE CAPTION](#)

A sign beside a field of hemp near a cornfield where two bodies were discovered on Lower Jones Tract near Holt this week. [CALIXTRO ROMIAS/THE RECORD]

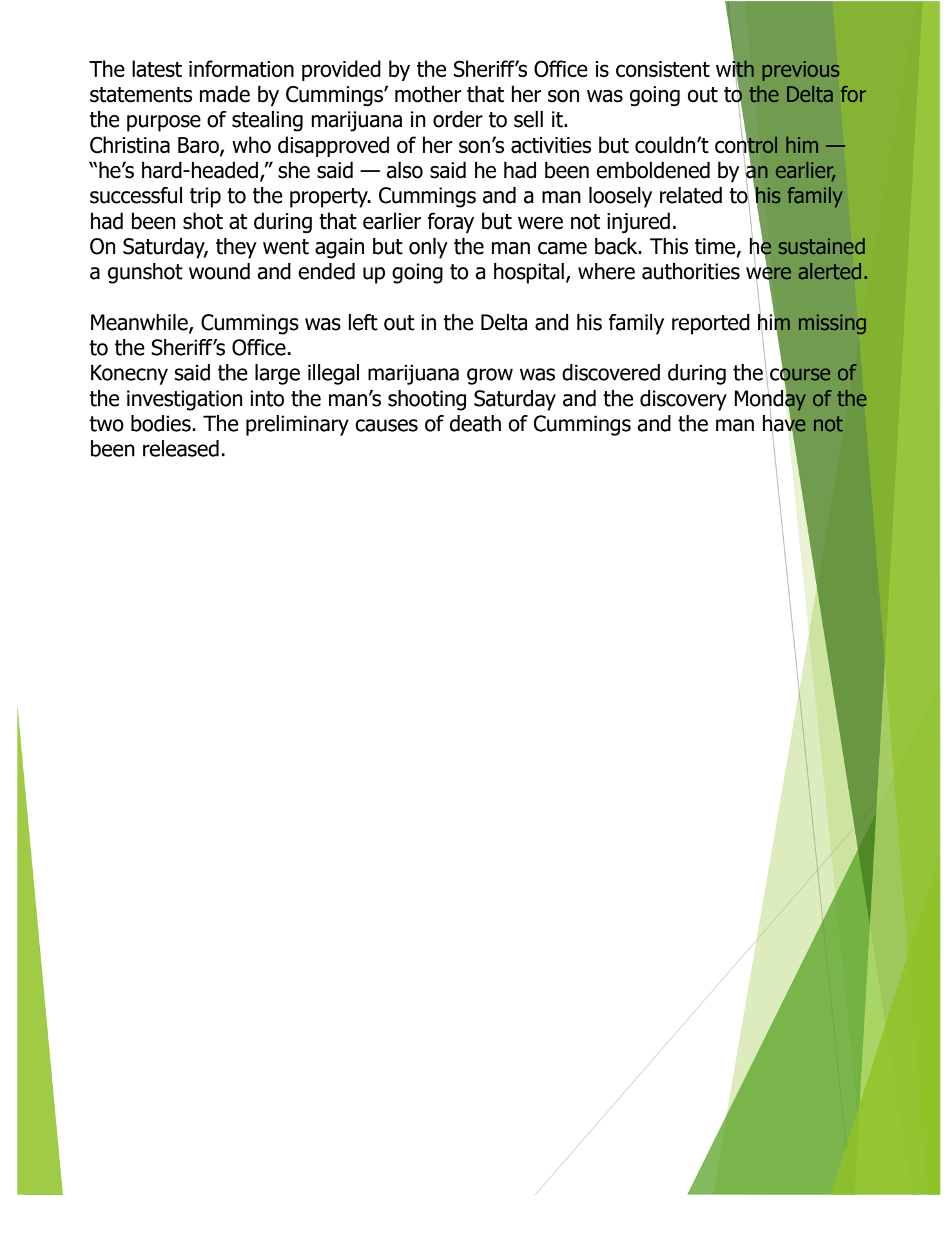
**HOLT** — The bodies of 17-year-old Felix Cummings and an unidentified man were found this week within the confines of a large illegal marijuana grow amid an even larger Delta cornfield, according to information released Wednesday by the San Joaquin County Sheriff's Office.

Previously, the Sheriff's Office was not saying where the two homicide victims who were discovered Monday had been found. All that was known was that it was somewhere in rural Delta farm country north of Highway 4 along Lower Jones Tract Road a few miles northwest of Holt.

Also on Wednesday, Deputy Dave Konecny released information that the Metro Narcotics Task Force had been on the scene eradicating 2,800 illegal marijuana plants. Those plants had an estimated street value of \$2.2 million, Konecny said.

To access the illegal grow from the public levee road, authorities had to drive onto property that is home to a hemp farm. Signs near the entrance to the property announce it as "Industrial Hemp R & D Program — No THC Content — Not Marijuana — No Psychotropic Effect — STAY OUT! Trespassers Will Be Prosecuted — Premises Under Surveillance."





The latest information provided by the Sheriff's Office is consistent with previous statements made by Cummings' mother that her son was going out to the Delta for the purpose of stealing marijuana in order to sell it.

Christina Baro, who disapproved of her son's activities but couldn't control him — "he's hard-headed," she said — also said he had been emboldened by an earlier, successful trip to the property. Cummings and a man loosely related to his family had been shot at during that earlier foray but were not injured.

On Saturday, they went again but only the man came back. This time, he sustained a gunshot wound and ended up going to a hospital, where authorities were alerted.

Meanwhile, Cummings was left out in the Delta and his family reported him missing to the Sheriff's Office.

Konecny said the large illegal marijuana grow was discovered during the course of the investigation into the man's shooting Saturday and the discovery Monday of the two bodies. The preliminary causes of death of Cummings and the man have not been released.



## MEDIA RELATIONS

### Hemp Farms are on the Rise in Fresno County and Crooks are Mistaking Plants for Marijuana



Adult Hemp Plants



Hemp Farm Signage

A new trend in Fresno County has farmers using land to grow legal industrial hemp. However, would-be thieves are targeting these plants, thinking it is marijuana. Three such cases have been reported in the last two weeks.

To the naked eye, it is difficult to distinguish a hemp plant from a marijuana plant. Not only do they look the same in both the juvenile and adult stages, they smell the same and have flowering buds. It's likely these are the reasons the Fresno County Sheriff's Office has been recently been receiving an increased number of reports for hemp thefts. It is proving to be dangerous too because thieves are not only looking to steal what they believe to be drugs, they are often arming themselves with guns.

Two such cases happened at a hemp farm located near the intersection of E. American and S. Leonard Avenues in Del Rey. Around 7:30 pm on September 27th, deputies were dispatched to a call where the property owner approached a couple of people who were loading hemp into their vehicle. **One of the suspects pointed a gun at the victim**

and then drove away. Deputies searched the area, but could not find them. Around 7:00 pm on October 4th, a group of 15 to 20 people went to the property to steal plants. The property owner saw one of the suspects possessing a gun. They fled the area by the time deputies arrived.

Around 7:00 am on October 7th, deputies detained two men trying to steal hemp plants from a field on S. Willow Ave., just south of E. Mountain View Ave. in Selma. They were found to be in possession of approximately 25 plants, valued at \$5,000. Frank Carrillo, 39, of Fresno was booked into the Fresno County Jail on a felony charge of grand theft. Abraham Garza, 51, of Fresno was booked into the Fresno County Jail on a felony charge of grand theft. Garza also faces a misdemeanor charge for possession of methamphetamine.

The Department of Agriculture is the agency in charge of regulating hemp farms. It keeps a record of all licensed industrial hemp facilities. Along with a license, growers are required to have proper signage posted on the property. Many growers elect to post “No Trespassing” signs. Additionally, the sign informs the public that the field contains hemp plants, not marijuana, which do not contain a significant amount of Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). Hemp only contains approximately 0.3% THC, meaning it will not get you high.



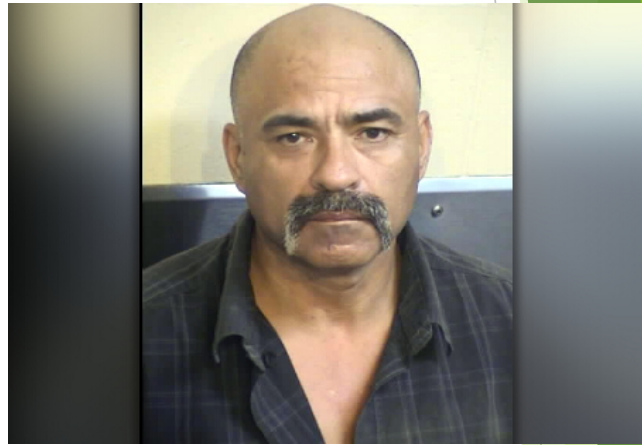
Juvenile Hemp Plant



Adult Hemp Plants



Frank Carillo



Abraham Garza



Plants Recovered from Carillo & Garza

## **\$1 Billion Worth of Cannabis Seized in California Hemp Field Bust**

Authorities say the product's THC content was too high under state law.

BY **CAITLIN DONOHUE**

NOVEMBER 4, 2019



**A Southern California sheriff's department made a bust on what its owners had previously presented as a hemp field, uncovering 10 million marijuana plants with "an estimated value of over \$1 billion."** On October 25, law enforcement descended on the fields whose growers had claimed to be growing non-psychoactive hemp. They were, in fact, raising marijuana plants that clocked in at over the .3 percent THC content allowed under California law.

The investigation was catalyzed by a tip sent to the Kern County Sheriff's Office about 11 fields **sprawling out over 459 acres in the small town of Arvin.** An investigation was launched in collaboration with the FBI and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife that resulted in the October 25 search warrants.

"Preliminary testing showed the levels of THC in these fields were well over the legal limit for industrial hemp production and were in fact cannabis," The investigation is ongoing."

## Kern County

# One arrested, two at large in connection with theft of hemp plants

Posted: Nov 5, 2020 / 12:26 PM PST / Updated: Nov 5, 2020 / 12:36 PM PST

BAKERSFIELD, Calif. (KET) — One person was in custody and two others at large in connection with the theft of hemp plants from a local field, according to sheriff's officials.

**A farmer saw three people chopping down the plants Thursday morning and called 911, officials said. Deputies began a search and found a car in the area reported stolen out of Bakersfield, and arrested one person.**

The thieves chopped down about \$6,000 worth of hemp, according to sheriff's officials.



# Kings County

## Officials arrest 3 men for theft of 33 industrial hemp plants

[Lauren Wagner](#) Oct 30, 2019 Updated Dec 12, 2019



LEMOORE — Officials arrested three men involved in the **theft of 33 hemp plants after a high-speed police chase** Tuesday.

Kings County Sheriff's deputies were dispatched to a rural area south of Lemoore around 1:30 a.m. on reports of several individuals who stole hemp plants from an industrial hemp field, according to a media release.

The suspects fled the scene at a high speeds in a red Chevrolet pickup truck after being confronted by the field's caretaker. Officers then located the pickup traveling north on 17th Avenue near Kansas Avenue.

Deputies attempted to stop the pickup, but the driver sped away, officials said. **Deputies continued to pursue the pickup at speeds in excess of 100 miles per hour.**

The pickup finally came to a stop near an orchard in the 13000 block of Kent Ave., where three male suspects exited the pickup and fled on foot.

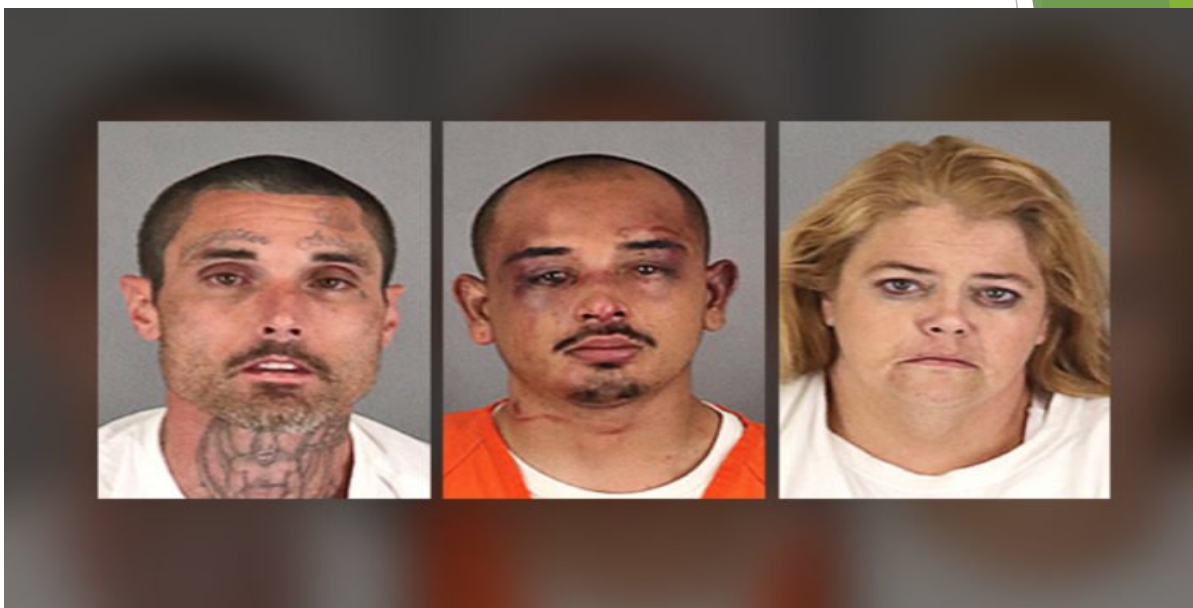
A perimeter was established around the orchard and a California Highway Patrol helicopter was requested to help locate the trio, officials said. A K-9 from Kings County and the Hanford Police Department were also utilized to help locate each suspect.

Officials eventually found all three suspects, who were later identified as 37-year-old Jesus Alvarado, 36-year-old Jose Torres and 27-year-old Javier Martinez.

# Riverside County

## Four arrested in alleged robbery at Winchester hemp farm

By [City News Service](#) -October 28, 2019



WINCHESTER (CNS) - **Three men and a woman were arrested for allegedly stealing plants from a lawful hemp farm in Winchester at gunpoint**, authorities said Monday. It happened about 11:40 p.m. Saturday at a farm in an unincorporated area near Winchester, Riverside County sheriff's Sgt. Chad Thompson said. "Witnesses described four suspects cutting down and stealing non-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) hemp plants," Thompson said. "During this robbery, one suspect produced a firearm towards employees." The suspects fled the scene as deputies arrived but were located in Hemet and arrested, he said. A firearm was



## San Luis Obispo County

# Two acres worth of plants vandalized at Templeton hemp farm

The crop was two weeks away from harvest



By: [Allys Becerra](#)

Posted at 6:57 PM, Sep 13, 2019

The owners of a legal Templeton hemp farm are reeling after someone vandalized their crop Sunday night.

Officials say **they believe someone drove an ATV through the field** damaged at around 11:30 p.m. that night, **damaging approximately 60% of the crop.**

It was planted in June and was about two weeks away from harvest.

Ryder Nesbitt, founder of Temple Farms, believes the damage will cost his family more than a quarter-million dollars.

"This is a plant that helps people, this is not a narcotic, this is a medicine. We're within our federal and our state rights to grow this crop. We've done everything right, we've done our registration, taken all the testing that's required by the state," Nesbitt said.

The crop covered two acres on the property with each plant weighing about 10 pounds and each being at head-height.

Temple Farms was the first of 16 farms to officially pass the test for legally growing hemp at the appropriate THC levels.

"To have someone just come in here and destroy all of our hard work, all of our money and the future for our farm is devastating," Nesbitt added.

The San Luis Obispo County Sheriff's Office says the person responsible for the crime could face felony vandalism charges.

"We've been in contact with the owners, we've been in contact with neighbors, we've been in contact with potential witnesses, so hopefully we'll be able to catch the culprit or culprits responsible," said Tony Cipolla, SLO County Sheriff's Office Public Information Officer.

## Santa Barbara County

# Santa Maria men accused of stealing hemp worth \$350 in Orcutt; crashing stolen car

[Santa Maria Times Staff Report](#) Dec 2, 2019



Two Santa Maria men were arrested Sunday [on suspicion of felony theft](#) after allegedly stealing from a hemp grow in Orcutt and [crashing their vehicle](#) a short time later, said Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office spokeswoman Raquel Zick.

Police responded to a [report of a theft from a hemp grow](#) near Clark Avenue and Dominion Road at 2:49 p.m. on Sunday, Zick said.

The vehicle allegedly involved in the theft fled the scene but crashed almost immediately, Zick said.

When deputies arrived, Zick said, they discovered 21-year-old Tyeshai Evans and 18-year-old Johnny Dewitt, both from Santa Maria, inside the vehicle — a 1996 Toyota 4-door sedan that was reported stolen.

The hemp taken is reported to be worth approximately \$350, Zick said.

Dewitt and Evans were booked into Santa Barbara County Jail on felonies that include grand theft, vehicle theft and possession of a stolen vehicle. Both are out on bail, Zick said.

## Solano County

# Hemp growers want Solano to temper 'get out' reaction; work toward solution

Hemp farmer Danny Lay stands next to a crop growing in rural Dixon, Thursday, Nov. 7, 2019. The Solano County Board of Supervisors recently issued a moratorium on hemp cultivation and processing. (Robinson Kuntz/Daily Republic)

By **Todd R. Hansen**

DIXON — Danny Lay is married and has three children.

He quit his job in Los Angeles to run a state- and county-permitted industrial hemp farm in remote, rural Dixon, what was expected to be at least a three-year commitment, and believing the future was looking brighter for his family.

Now he doesn't know what will happen to him or any of his 10 employees, many of them also with families. Dec. 31 is the deadline for all hemp operations in the county to complete the harvest and processing of the crops.

The Solano County Board of Supervisors this week approved a 45-day moratorium on hemp cultivation and processing in the county, and it appeared as though some board members support a complete ban on industrial hemp operations in the county.



Hemp grows at a rural Dixon farm, Thursday, Nov. 7, 2019. (Robinson Kuntz/Daily Republic)

"I want banning it to be one of the options," Supervisor Jim Spring said, instructing staff about choices the board can look at when it has to decide Dec. 10 whether to extend the moratorium and possibly task its staff to develop new regulations, or as other board members equally suggested, end hemp operations in Solano.

There were concerns about whether a complete ban would put the county in a difficult legal position, a court fight Spring said he was willing to wage if it came to that.

Supervisor Monica Brown expressed her concerns about what that decision would mean for current growers, and the possible loss of their investment.

**The board's decision was a reaction to reports of criminal activity around some of the nine farming sites, including reports of gunfire, burglary and dangerous high-speed chases.** It was described at Tuesday's board meeting as the "wild, wild west."

**"It's a health and safety issue and I don't want to see someone killed,"** Jason Coleman said.

Supervisors Skip Thomson and John Vasquez also had attended a couple of community meetings prior to the issues coming to the full board.

"At those meetings I became aware of the problems that needed to be addressed," Thomson said at the Tuesday board meeting.

However, Agriculture Commissioner Ed King and Bill Emlen, director of the Department of Resource Management, each said no one anticipated the kind and severity of criminal activity that has taken place.

King said in a phone interview that other counties are experiencing similar issues, but he thinks – and he told the board the same thing – Solano's location between large urban Bay Area cities and Sacramento may have left it more vulnerable.

Larry Nixon went so far as to suggest that by letting the hemp farmers into the county, the Board of Supervisors would be putting the welcome mat out to organized crime.

"If you continue to allow hemp (farming), organized crime will have a toe-hold in Solano County," Nixon told the supervisors. "For your sake and ours, don't let the cartels get started in Solano County."

The comparison did not sit well with Lay, but it was enough to keep him from speaking before the board because he is of Asian decent and said he was concerned for his safety in the emotionally charged room.

But the hemp growers argue they are not the criminals, and they and their employees should not be punished for those activities.

"This is an honest living," Lay said. "I work for a company and have 10 employees. So what is going to happen to them?"

Lay and the New Boy Farms operation in rural Dixon did not have any of the problems that some of the other eight sites had, including **reports of gunfire, burglary and dangerous high-speed chases.**

**The Sheriff's Office recorded more than 50 calls for service since Sept. 20, and Sheriff Tom Ferrara told the supervisors his biggest fear is that one of his deputies would be ambushed while responding on a call.**

"That is my biggest worry," Ferrara said. "We've been very fortunate that nobody's been injured in the last couple of months."

The imagery brought an immediate comparison to **El Dorado County Deputy Brian Ishmael**, whose funeral was held the same day as the board meeting. He was fatally shot while responding to a dispute at an illegal marijuana farming operation in his county.

Lay and other growers, including Matthew Schwartz, a partner in the AAI group out of Chico, said the focus of the county should be on finding regulatory solutions.

At the very least, Schwartz said in a phone interview, the county should lay the groundwork for allowing the growers to transition from the hemp operations designed to produce CBD oils, to different hemp varieties that produce fiber and seeds.

That way, Schwartz said, the growers will not lose their investments.

Vasquez compared the risk of losing the crop by the county's regulatory hammer to that of any farmer who could lose a crop due to adverse weather.

While Schwartz and his partner, Shawn Welborn, were not willing to say what their start-up costs were for the 9-acre, 12,000-plant farm, they did describe it as significant and said the Dec. 31 deadline could be fatal to the bottom line.

If they had to, Welborn said they would consider legal action.

"It is absolutely an item of discussion, and with our network with other farmers in the county, but the last thing I would want to be involved in is a class action lawsuit," Welborn said.

Schwartz said educating the public would be a better first step than a complete ban.

Lay said he is not sure what his company would do next, or whether legal action is even a consideration.

However, he provided a ballpark investment of close to \$460,000, which includes a \$300,000 deposit on a purchase option, \$7,500 for each of the seven pop-up greenhouses that have been built, and 13 more that would have to be paid for whether they are built or not.

Each seed costs \$1, Lay said, equalling about \$9,000.

Additionally, the company is leasing the 156 acres for \$700 per acre on a three-year commitment.

The greenhouses are being used because the operation started too late for the normal summer growing season, and is essentially a kind of break-even place holder for the company to get to the next season.

Outdoor operations, he said, are better for crop yield.

Like Schwartz, Lay said he believes the county needs to focus on finding solutions rather than bringing the ax down on hemp farming.

He said that could start with stronger penalties for those committing the crimes, rather than penalizing the farmers.

As for land-use regulations, he suggested greater minimum distances from any neighboring residences, fencing and other security requirements.

Additionally, AAI and New Boy Farms representatives said their companies were at least considering opening their own processing plants in Solano County, which would mean more jobs and tax revenues.

AAI has a seed operation in Butte County.

While both operations dry the plants on-site, New Boy then uses a Colorado firm to do the oil extraction.

Welborn said patience is needed rather than rash action.

"It's a big learning curve for everybody," he said.

## **Alleged thieves caught with car full of stolen hemp plants in Solano County**

**DIXON, Calif.** — Updated: 12:44 PM PDT Oct 6, 2019



Solano County deputies nabbed three alleged thieves after they were found with several stolen hemp plants stuffed inside a car, authorities said.

Deputies made a traffic stop early Friday after the person behind the wheel of a Honda was seen driving erratically away from a farm in the unincorporated area of Dixon, according to the Solano County Sheriff's Office.

The three people inside the car were surrounded by several large hemp plants that were stolen from a legal hemp farm.

The trio was taken into custody on several drug and burglary charges, the sheriff's office said.

According to the sheriff's office, there have been multiple reports recently of thieves sneaking onto rural properties and farms in Solano County to pilfer from legal and illegal marijuana grow operations.

# Ventura County

## Alleged hemp theft in Piru leads to arrest of 70-year-old man

Gretchen Wenner

Ventura 11/8/19

Authorities arrested a 70-year-old man allegedly caught trying to steal bags of hemp from a legal growing operation in Piru early Friday.

The incident was reported around 2 a.m. in the 4000 block East Telegraph Avenue, as Highway 126 is called in the area, the Ventura County Sheriff's Office reported. The site is near the intersection with Torrey Road.

**A security guard monitoring an industrial hemp farm saw a man holding a large bag and ordered him to stop, but he fled on foot, authorities said. The guard checked the area for any accomplices and reportedly found a second man "lying in the field among marijuana plants,"** authorities said. The man was identified as Timothy Fulp, 70, from the Sun Valley neighborhood of Los Angeles.

Deputies found multiple trash bags filled with recently cut hemp plants, authorities said, along with hedge clippers apparently used to cut the crop. Authorities also reportedly found methamphetamine on the ground and found drug paraphernalia on Fulp.



Industrial hemp provides cannabidiol, or CBD, oil used to make health-related products but has negligible intoxicant properties. Fulp reportedly told deputies that "he believed the hemp he was stealing was marijuana that contained THC," the component that makes people high, according to authorities' account.

The suspect who fled on foot was not caught.

Fulp was arrested on suspicion of felony grand theft and conspiracy violations as well as several drug violations, officials said. He remained in Ventura County jail Friday night with bail set at \$50,000.



# Other States Countries

# Hemp Thefts Skyrocket In The USA

By [Steven Gothrinet](#) - October 21, 2019



It looks as though many hemp farmers in the USA have been facing an uphill battle in protecting their crops from pests – the two-legged kind.

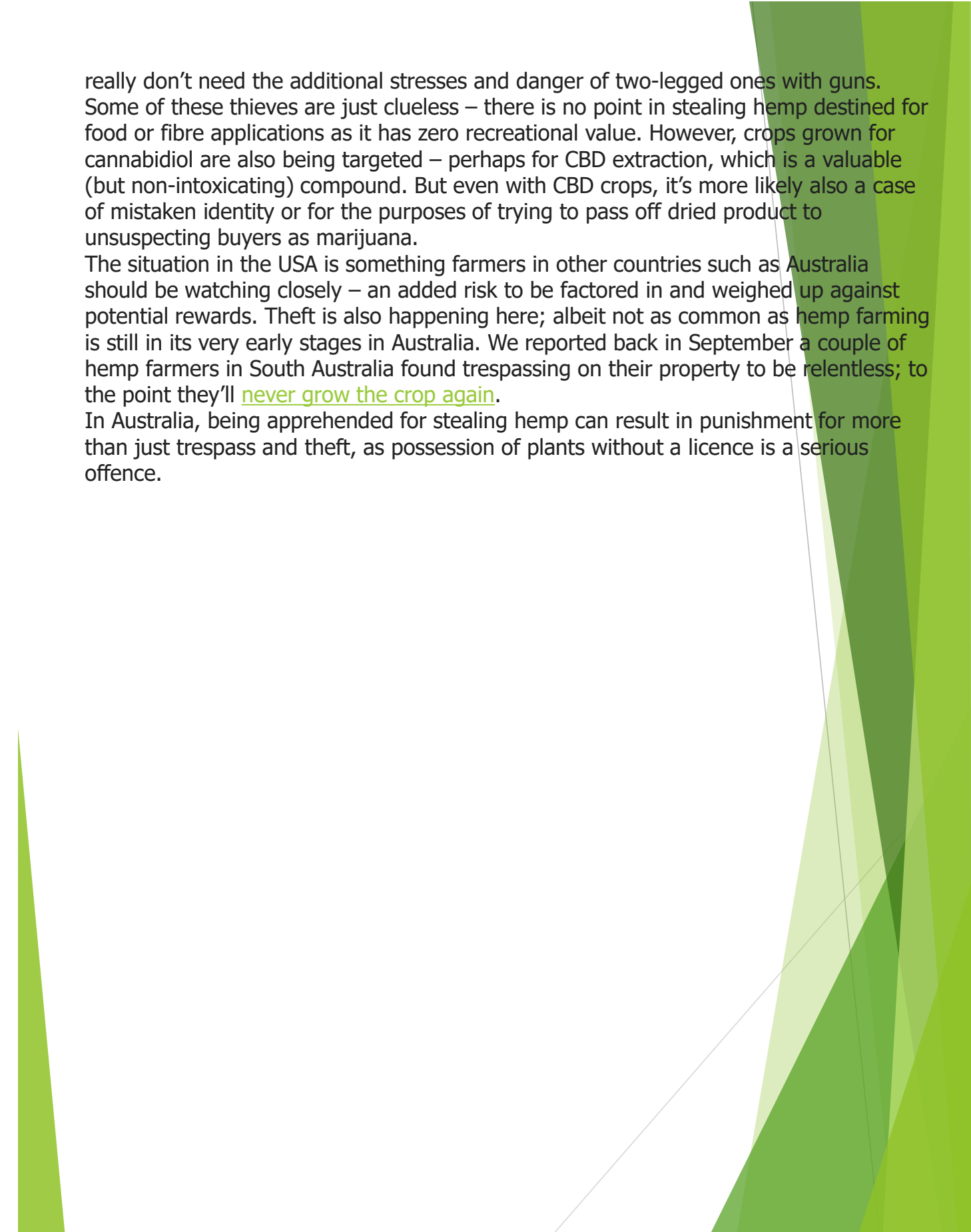
It wasn't that long ago news of hemp theft wasn't all that common, but with so many states now permitting cultivating the crop and harvest season in play, incidents are being reported daily.

Among the instances of plants being stolen reported across the country over the last few weeks:

- In Fresno County, California, [three incidents](#) occurred within two weeks. In one incident, a suspect pointed a firearm at the owner of the property before making an escape. The same property was then raided again around a week later by a group of 15-20 people, one of them armed.
  - In Williamson County, Texas, one juvenile was arrested for [theft of hemp](#) – with investigations continuing in identifying other suspects.
  - In Plainfield, Illinois, [three thieves were arrested](#). The farmer was also charged with reckless discharge of a firearm and reckless conduct as he held the thieves at gunpoint.
  - In [Napanee](#), Indiana, a man was arrested for stealing \$3,500 worth of hemp.
  - In Montgomery County, Maryland, [four people](#) have been arrested for stealing hemp from a farm.
  - In St. Joseph County, Michigan, [six were arrested](#) following an attempted theft.
  - In Savannah, New York, a farmer says his plants are being [stolen every night](#).
- ... and the list goes on.

**Aside from the thefts themselves being upsetting and costly, the involvement of firearms and violence is becoming more commonplace.**

Farmers have to battle [various pests](#) that seek to destroy their livelihood – they



really don't need the additional stresses and danger of two-legged ones with guns. Some of these thieves are just clueless – there is no point in stealing hemp destined for food or fibre applications as it has zero recreational value. However, crops grown for cannabidiol are also being targeted – perhaps for CBD extraction, which is a valuable (but non-intoxicating) compound. But even with CBD crops, it's more likely also a case of mistaken identity or for the purposes of trying to pass off dried product to unsuspecting buyers as marijuana.

The situation in the USA is something farmers in other countries such as Australia should be watching closely – an added risk to be factored in and weighed up against potential rewards. Theft is also happening here; albeit not as common as hemp farming is still in its very early stages in Australia. We reported back in September a couple of hemp farmers in South Australia found trespassing on their property to be relentless; to the point they'll never grow the crop again.

In Australia, being apprehended for stealing hemp can result in punishment for more than just trespass and theft, as possession of plants without a licence is a serious offence.

## INDUSTRIAL HEMP THEFTS: IS THERE A BLACK MARKET FOR CBD?

The legalization of industrial hemp has led to a rise in hemp farms across the United States. It has also, however, led to a growing number of thefts from such farms. This has been puzzling farmers and police ever since because of the extremely low levels of THC contained in the plants, they do not have the psychoactive effects associated with cannabis. While marijuana and hemp are the same species and look similar, the varieties are bred for different purposes.

Industrial hemp has many uses. The seeds can be pressed for oil or just eaten; the stalks can be made into textiles or rope; it even has some potential as a biofuel. Perhaps the most lucrative use is in producing cannabidiol, or CBD, a newly trendy extract from industrial hemp.

So why are people stealing hemp? The prevailing theory is that the thieves are mistaking hemp for marijuana, and smoking it themselves or selling it on the black market to people who want to get high. Yet a Pennsylvania farmer reports that putting up signs that say "Industrial Hemp - NO THC" has not had any effect on deterring thefts. Coupled with the fact that these thefts have become so prevalent, one has to wonder if so many people really are that ignorant, or if there's something else going on.

It's easy to fall into the marijuana-prohibition era narrative that "dumb druggies will steal anything if they think it will get them high." One Kentucky police department went so far as to post on their social media page that they will "make fun of" any hemp thieves they catch. Certainly, thieves mistaking hemp for marijuana can account for some of the thefts. But what if some of the others were by people who knew exactly what they were stealing?

There are a couple of theories as to why thieves would steal hemp plants, knowing full well that they don't contain THC. One is that they are mixing it with marijuana to sell on the black market, to make their own crop go farther. Another is that they are after the CBD. As anyone who has been in a legal dispensary can attest, CBD tinctures, CBD baked goods, and other CBD products have a higher price point than those that contain THC alone.

Police have ruled out the latter possibly due to the fact that the extraction of CBD requires expensive and specialized equipment. CO2 extraction is a commonly used method, and these kinds of machines can cost upwards of \$100,000 dollars. However, extraction with alcohol, butane, or olive oil can be done much more cheaply, with equipment that is easy to find online.

People could be making [CBD cookies](#) or a [CBD tincture 1000mg](#) concoction and then selling it illegally. The resulting oils will be less pure and have a lower quality than those extracted by CO2, but if someone is buying CBD on the black market, how concerned can they be with quality? Is it possible that the hemp thieves are extracting the CBD themselves, or selling the hemp to someone who is? Could it be that there is indeed a black market for CBD that law enforcement is unaware of? Many questions still stand unanswered.

## Australia

# “Relentless” Hemp Thefts Discourage South Australian Growers

By [Terry Lassitenaz](#) - April 16, 2019



It's tragic and frustrating that Australia's hemp industry is threatened by idiots – it's not as though farmers don't have enough in the way of challenges.

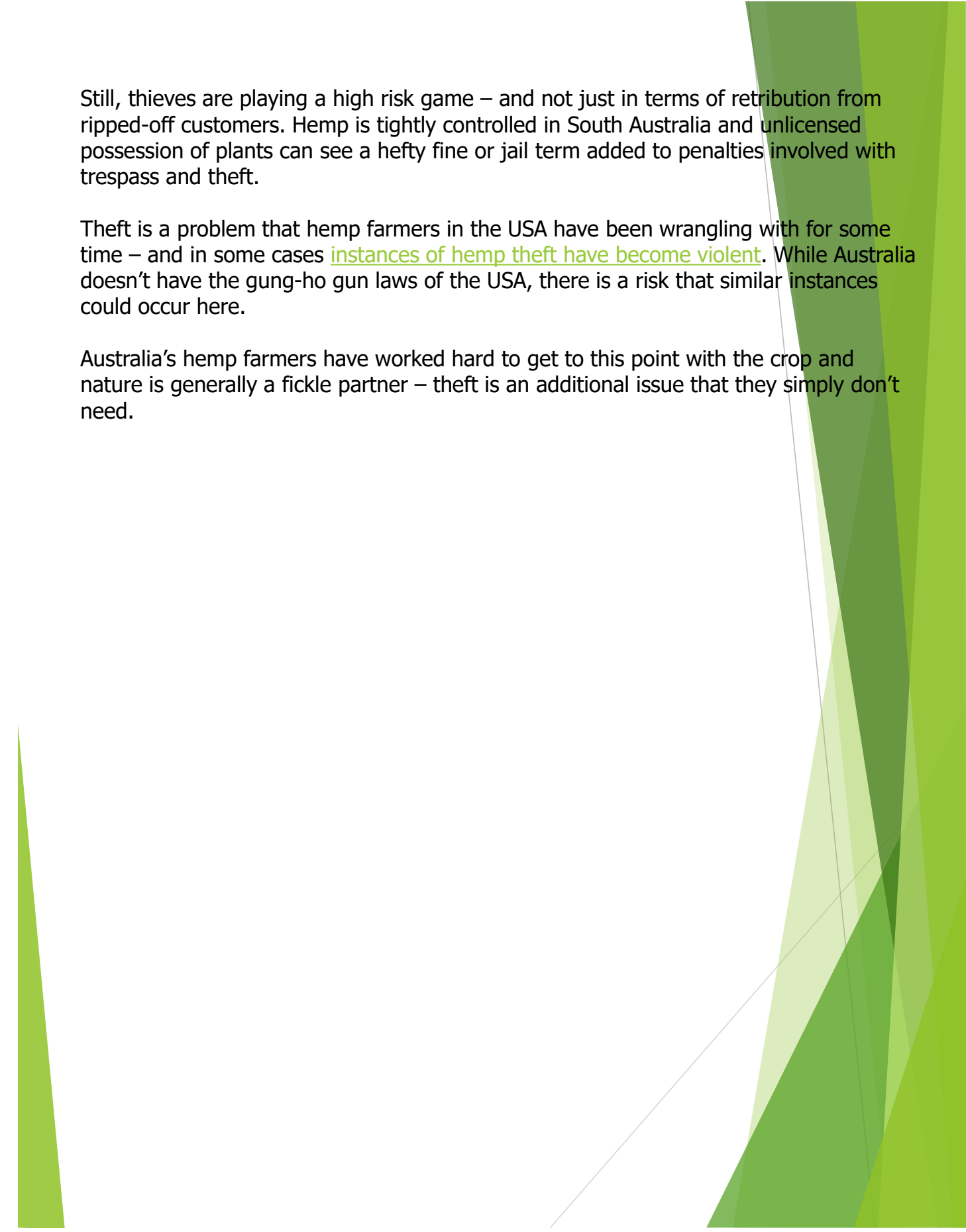
[An article](#) in the Victor Harbor Times (South Australia) details the plight of a couple of hemp farmers who have spent a big chunk of change on security, but have still been thwarted by thieves.

“We expected some interference from the public, but not to this degree – it is relentless, 24 hours a day,” said Fleurieu Peninsula farmer Robert Mignanelli. “We're losing hundreds of plants and thousands of dollars from theft.”

As a result, industrial hemp won't be grown on the Mignanelli's property again. Mr. Mignanelli says the State Government needs to be doing more to help support the nascent industry in this regard.

Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA) has previously [issued a warning](#) to the public about hemp theft, clarifying that industrial hemp is not medicinal cannabis or marijuana. In South Australia, it is grown for food and fibre applications and as such has no recreational value as it has very low THC levels and probably little in the way of cannabidiol (CBD), a non-intoxicating compound being pursued for its medicinal potential.

Some of the theft can be attributed to the clueless given the crop looks and is grown very differently to marijuana. But industrial hemp does look and smell the same as marijuana when dried, so it could also be a case of parties stealing it with the intent to sell it to others as marijuana.



Still, thieves are playing a high risk game – and not just in terms of retribution from ripped-off customers. Hemp is tightly controlled in South Australia and unlicensed possession of plants can see a hefty fine or jail term added to penalties involved with trespass and theft.

Theft is a problem that hemp farmers in the USA have been wrangling with for some time – and in some cases [instances of hemp theft have become violent](#). While Australia doesn't have the gung-ho gun laws of the USA, there is a risk that similar instances could occur here.

Australia's hemp farmers have worked hard to get to this point with the crop and nature is generally a fickle partner – theft is an additional issue that they simply don't need.

Canada

## Alberta hemp farmers experience an increase in thefts

Published Aug 31, 2020 01:00 p.m. ET

[Christal Chatterly](#)

We're inching towards the end of the growing season, and as crops begin to reach their peaks, farmers everywhere are on the lookout for invaders. It's a constant struggle from now until the end of the year to keep thieves both large and small scale to a minimum on any farm, but for most, only a small amount of crops are taken, whereas those who are progressing in hemp farming are losing several pounds in each sneaky endeavor, and they just can't protect themselves enough from it.

### Theft of hemp plants has always been a problem

Stealing hemp has always been an issue, and it's something that these farmers dread every single year, but now that the products that are made from these plants are in such high demand, we're planting more crops than ever before full of hemp plants. So, while at first, they were a seemingly elusive crop, because scattering a minimal number in unpopulated areas around the country was relatively easy to do, now they're everywhere.

It is no longer uncommon to see a massive field of growing hemp just outside of a city's limits, and a view like that is sure to draw some attention, but not only because it looks different. You see, [these thefts](#), at least, for the most part, aren't happening because hemp itself is such a hot commodity, it's mostly due to the fact that those who are passing by have no idea what they're risking themselves and their neighboring farmers for.

That's right, most of the people who are stealing hemp plants are in for a huge surprise once they get it home and try to smoke or sell it because they think that they're making away with thousands of dollars' worth of cannabis. Though hemp's close relative cannabis can be cultivated in fields like corn or any other crop, in Canada, it is mainly grown indoors for security and quality reasons.

### Theft hurts hemp farmers everywhere

Theft of any kind of crop is harmful to the farmers, but it is especially challenging for those who are growing a brand-new undervalued plant such as hemp. For them, every penny counts as they race to pay off debts and investors, quite often with little to no guarantee for the future, and it's not just what they walk away with that adds up.

Generally, those who steal hemp plants are trying their best to move quickly before being noticed, so instead of carefully harvesting one or two plants, they're ripping down entire bunches of plants while only taking the most prized branches. This can damage up to 5 times more than what the thieves take home, and at this time of year, that adds up really quickly to an additional expense that these farmers aren't financially equipped to handle.

### **How to tell the difference between cannabis and hemp plants**

Some of our interested readers might read this and wonder how people could be so naive, but the truth is that these two plant species look nearly identical to the untrained eye. The biggest difference between the two is that industrial hemp is typically much taller and stockier, whereas cannabis plants will flourish with a shorter, bushier stature.

Only one of the two will get you high, and that is cannabis, because of federal regulations that heavily limit the allowable amount of THC to 0.3%, so there is no point in stealing it, trying to *smoke it*, or attempting to sell it to unsuspecting customers. Hemp farmers everywhere want the public to know that it's a waste of everyone's time when they chose to make such a terrible decision.



## Spain

# Armed assault on hemp farm on the Costa Blanca

By [Dilip Kuner](#) - 26 October 2019 @ 15:00



*FOILED: Police at the legal hemp farm after raiders fled. Credit: Policia Local de Elche.*

LOCAL POLICE foiled an attempted armed robbery at a legal hemp plantation in Elche.

The hemp – a form of cannabis – was being grown at a farm in Peña de las Aguilas for the textile industry. Its fibres are used to make thread or the soles of shoes.

About 12 people burst into the premises on Monday, October 21, wielding a shotgun and an axe but they were thwarted when a security guard called police.

They arrived minutes later to find plants already stacked and waiting to be loaded. Police were able to stop a van and make one arrest, while the other assailants made a getaway.

Evidence found in the van and another vehicle abandoned by the gang led officers to several alleged members of the criminal group although investigations continue in order to gather more evidence.

It has since emerged that the owners of the farm had already notified police when they saw suspicious people apparently watching the site. For this reason police had stepped up patrols and were able to reach the scene quickly. Police believe the gang intended to sell the plants on as cannabis. The active agent in cannabis is THC and for drug use it is usually present at a level of between 2-5 per

Police believe the gang intended to sell the plants on as cannabis. The active agent in cannabis is THC and for drugs use it is usually present at a level of between 3.5 per cent and 15 per cent. The concentration in hemp grown for the textile industry – which growers must have a licence for – is under 0.2 per cent.

## Switzerland

### Swiss police arrest hemp grower with 3,700 illegal cannabis plants amid legal hemp crop

The cantonal police of Thurgau raided a hemp grow site in Rothenhausen in late February, in which hemp was licensed to be grown. Amongst the hemp they also found 3,700 cannabis plants. A 42-year-old Dutchman was arrested.

*Specialists from the criminal police then checked the system, which was registered as a cultivation of CBD hemp, in the presence of the operator. After initial investigations revealed that it was drug hemp, the public prosecutor ordered a house search. In addition to harvested and processed CBD hemp, the investigators found around 3,700 cannabis perennials in cultivation and 12 kilograms of finished and packaged marijuana. The plants and marijuana violate the Narcotics Act due to their THC content.*

*The 42-year-old Dutchman was arrested. Pre-trial detention was ordered for him. The narcotic, the marijuana perennials and the professional rearing facility were ensured. The Kreuzlingen public prosecutor is conducting a criminal investigation.*



*Instead of CBD hemp, drug hemp was grown in the indoor facility (pictures: Kantonspolizei Thurgau).*

## Alabama

### Four arrested in hemp theft



Kenneth James Wambles

•Special to The Sun Nov 13, 2019

Coffee County investigators working with the Opp Police Department arrested four men in connection with the theft of industrial hemp on Nov. 13, according to a Coffee County Sheriff's Office press release. Zachary Douglas, Jacob Blue, Kenneth James Wambles and David Wayne Hutchison were all arrested and charged with first-degree theft of property, according to the release.

The industrial hemp was allegedly taken from a rural area of Coffee County, according to the release.

The four were taken to the Coffee County Jail after their arrest on \$7,500 bond, according to the release.

The CCSO said additional investigations into industrial hemp thefts are ongoing at this time and future arrests are expected.

## Colorado

### Likely by mistake, thieves steal \$300,000 worth of cannabis 'look-alike' in Colorado



File photo. Photo Credit: chriss\_ns (iStock).

•[Breanna Sneeringer](#) Dec 16, 2020

The Bayfield Marshal's Office is investigating the theft of hundreds of hemp plants valued at \$300,000 from an industrial greenhouse in Colorado, now offering a reward of up to \$8,000 for information that may help find those responsible.

Officials [confirmed](#) that 170 hemp plants, likely mistaken for marijuana, were stolen from an industrial hemp company called Evergrow Harvest in Bayfield. The \$300,000 theft is believed to have occurred last week, either late Thursday evening or early Friday morning.

"The way they went after the plants that were hanging makes me believe they thought they were marijuana plants and not industrial hemp plants," Zephaniah Lee, owner of Evergrow Harvest, told the [Durango Herald](#). While the two plants share a similar smell and appearance, hemp plants contain less tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC, the psychoactive substance found in recreational marijuana. Hemp is high in cannabidiol, also known as CBD, a non-intoxicating compound traditionally used for medicinal purposes.

## Colorado

# Hundreds of Shots Fired During Gunfight with Burglars, “But Nobody Needs More Than 10 Rounds”

A 59-year old farmer was involved in a firefight with a gang of armed criminals who mistook his hemp farm for an illegal marijuana plantation in El Paso County, Colorado. Many such incidents have taken place where armed criminals invade illegal marijuana farmers, hoping to steal bags of money or marijuana gathered from the unlawful activity. Unfortunately for the thugs, the law-abiding couple was armed and not involved in the illegal farming of cannabis.

The couple, Charlie and Zoraya San Martin, were shaken by some noises of people trying to break into their house shortly before bed in their rural home. The husband reached for his gun and ordered the invaders to identify themselves before firing through the door after receiving no response.

Other criminals broke through the backdoor and bedroom window. One burglar hid in the attic space after seeing Charlie holding a firearm. The homeowner shot into the ceiling to scare the burglars away.

Charlie recounted hearing firing all around the house. The sheriff deputies found hundreds of casings outside the house. However, nobody was hurt in the incident. Investigations are still ongoing.

Gun control groups relentlessly work to limit the number of rounds a law-abiding firearm owner can load into their gun. God forbid Charlie had to face the criminals armed with only 10 rounds under circumstances where he is outnumbered and outgunned.

Amy Swearer, a Legal Fellow at the Heritage Foundation, pointed out this fact regarding the case on [Twitter](#).

“Last week, a couple got into a firefight with four armed morons who mistook their legal hemp farm for a marijuana operation. Hundreds of rounds were reportedly fired,” Swearer wrote. “I was told that no law-abiding citizen ever needs more than 10-rounds for self-defense.”

Obviously, criminals won’t load only 10 rounds in their guns because the law only targets law-abiding citizens. Criminals have a reputation of ignoring such measures, something anti-gun activists should know about.

## Connecticut

# Thefts of hemp plants from local growers under investigation

•WFSB STAFF POSTED SEP 24, 2019



SIMSBURY, CT (WFSB) -- There is a warning from the state Department of Agriculture after people have been stealing hemp plants. Authorities say there have been three reported incidents where people have stolen hemp plants from licensed growers in Simsbury, North Stonington and Redding.

Investigators believe nearly 200 plants were up-rooted. On Sunday, police arrested three adults from Massachusetts and a minor. They were charged with stealing plants from a Simsbury hemp farm.

There are 86 licensed hemp growers with 318 licensed acres in Connecticut.

"The agency reminds the public that while hemp plants look like marijuana, hemp is not an intoxicant. The 2018 Farm Bill redefines hemp as a raw agricultural commodity provided the THC (delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol) content is not more than 0.3% on a dry matter basis. THC is the psychoactive compound found in cannabis plants," a press release said.

## Connecticut

# Two arrested in Easton hemp theft attempt

[Amanda Cuda](#)

Oct. 7, 2019



Easton police arrested Jacob Castro, 19, of Hamden, on Oct. 7, 2019, for his role in an alleged theft of hemp plants from a farm on Sport Hill Road.

EASTON — Police arrested two men for allegedly trying to steal hemp plants from an area farm early Sunday.

According to a post on the [Easton Police Department Facebook page](#), at 1:15 a.m. Sunday, officers received a call from a farm on Sport Hill Road reporting that suspicious persons were on the property and were attempting to steal legally regulated hemp plants which are used to produce CBD oil.

[CBD oil is a non-intoxicating substance](#) made from the hemp that is purported to be a remedy for a variety of ailments, including inflammation and anxiety.

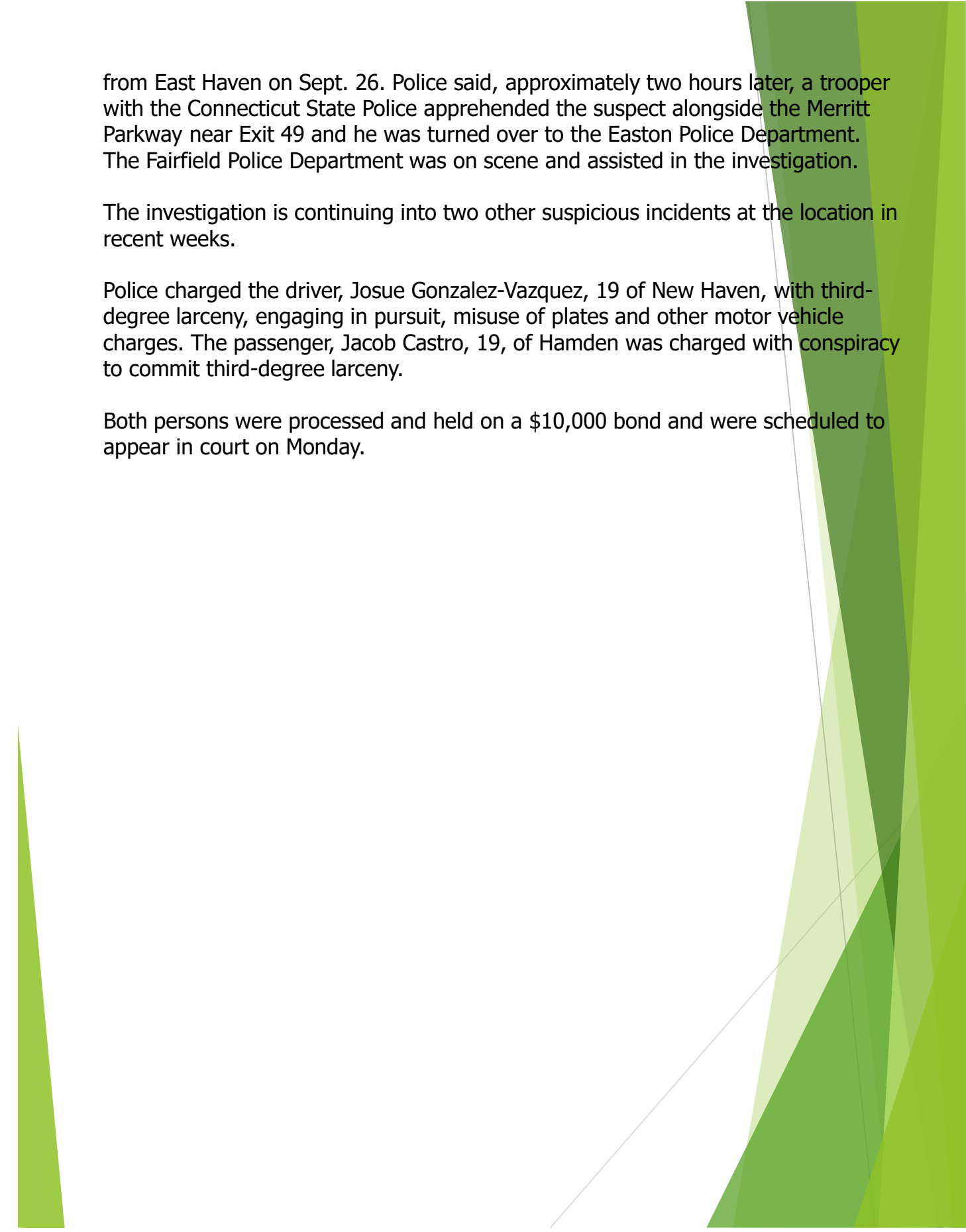
Police said, shortly after the call was received, an officer responding to the Sport Hill Road farm observed a dark-colored Honda with New York registration parked near the scene.

The officer went to investigate the vehicle and it then fled the scene, police said. The officer pursued the vehicle south on Route 59. The vehicle then was involved in a one-car crash near the exit 46 entrance/exit ramp to the Merritt Parkway, police said.

The passenger was apprehended at the scene and was transported to St. Vincent's Medical Center in Bridgeport for treatment of minor injuries. The operator was able to flee on foot, police said.

The Westport Police Department K-9 unit responded to the scene and conducted a search with negative results. Further investigation showed that the vehicle was stolen from East Haven on Sept. 26. Police said, approximately two hours later, a trooper





from East Haven on Sept. 26. Police said, approximately two hours later, a trooper with the Connecticut State Police apprehended the suspect alongside the Merritt Parkway near Exit 49 and he was turned over to the Easton Police Department. The Fairfield Police Department was on scene and assisted in the investigation.

The investigation is continuing into two other suspicious incidents at the location in recent weeks.

Police charged the driver, Josue Gonzalez-Vazquez, 19 of New Haven, with third-degree larceny, engaging in pursuit, misuse of plates and other motor vehicle charges. The passenger, Jacob Castro, 19, of Hamden was charged with conspiracy to commit third-degree larceny.

Both persons were processed and held on a \$10,000 bond and were scheduled to appear in court on Monday.

## Georgia

### Beaver Dam pair accused of stealing hemp from Columbia County farm

•DAILY REGISTER STAFF  
• Sep 18, 2020

A Beaver Dam couple was arrested Thursday after attempting to steal industrial hemp plants from a Columbia County farm that police believe they mistook for marijuana, police said.

According to a press release from the Columbia County Sheriff's Office, a landowner in the town of Springvale called to report interrupting two people taking hemp plants from a field where they were being legally grown. The landowner was able to obtain a license plate from the vehicle the suspects were driving.

The landowner reported there was a previous theft and about a dozen plants had been taken. Beaver Dam Police Department assisted a Columbia County Sheriff's Office Detective in contacting the two suspects. According to the release, the suspects admitted to stealing the hemp on two occasions, believing the plants were illegal marijuana plants. The suspects allowed investigators to recover approximately 10 pounds of stolen hemp valued at approximately \$1,000.

Barbara Vant Hoff, 59, and Gregory Vant Hoff, 64, were taken into custody by the Columbia County Sheriff's Office with the assistance of the Beaver Dam Police Department. They are currently at the Columbia County Jail awaiting a court appearance.

They are being referred to the Columbia County District Attorney's Office for two counts of misdemeanor theft, two felony counts of criminal damage to property and two counts of trespassing. In 2017, the federal government allowed states to create a pilot research program permitting people to cultivate industrial hemp. The substance remained banned in Wisconsin until the state Department of Justice ruled in May 2018 that farmers could grow industrial hemp under the pilot program and that stores could sell CBD produced in compliance with regulations set by the state Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. Hemp plants also commonly are used for grain and fiber.

This is not the first time someone attempted to steal hemp from a Columbia County farm. Last fall a Madison man was arrested after his vehicle became stuck in a hemp field in the town of Columbus.



## Idaho

# Men accused of \$40,000 'hemp product' theft plead not guilty, released from custody

•By [Jackson Wilde](#) staff writer Jan 26, 2021

Two men accused of stealing \$40,000 worth of "hemp product" from a storage unit in Smithfield pleaded not guilty and were granted release from the Cache County Jail while awaiting further proceedings.

Jermey Shan Breeding, 34, and Matthew Ryan Littler, 33, waived their right to a preliminary hearing during their appearances in 1st District Court on Monday. In exchange for waiving their hearings, Cache County prosecutors agreed to the release of both men with an ankle monitor and various pretrial release conditions.

Judge Brandon Maynard bound Breeding and Littler over for a trial and the men pleaded not guilty to the charges. Maynard ordered both men to be employed while released — Breeding was instructed to have employment in two weeks or be remanded to the jail. Both men were set to appear for a pretrial conference on March 15.

Breeding and Littler were charged earlier this month with second-degree theft, third-degree theft, third-degree burglary and two additional misdemeanors. They were arrested and booked into jail on Dec. 31 after over a month of investigation by law enforcement.

According to an affidavit filed with the court, eight 55-gallon drums of "hemp product" valued at \$40,000 and a flatbed trailer were stolen from a Smithfield storage unit in November. Documents allege at least two suspects, identified as Breeding and Littler, stole the property utilizing a distinctively marked Jeep.

Documents filed with the court state deputies sought a search warrant for electronic monitoring after the alleged theft to install a mobile tracking or GPS device on the Jeep as part of the investigation. Deputies wrote the Jeep was associated with another storage unit theft in Idaho.

Deputies wrote stolen items from the Idaho theft as well as two duffel bags containing "several buds of hemp flower" were found during a search of a Richmond home associated with the men. Deputies also found barrels and the trailer in a remote location north of Richmond.

The owner of the house, Wayne Van Breeding, 40, was also arrested but was charged with lesser misdemeanors. He was released from jail on Jan. 20 with an ankle monitor after asking the court for the opportunity to go back to work and save his home.

# Indiana      Indy hemp farm becomes target for thieves following legalization of hemp as a crop

by: [Jesse Wells](#)

Posted: Oct 23, 2019 / 04:31 PM EDT

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. — An Indianapolis hemp farmer falls victim to what some are calling uninformed crooks. Police say a half-dozen people tried to steal hemp plants from the northwest side farm Tuesday night.

**Police reports show thieves hit the same farm 3 times in the last two and a half weeks.**

According to court records, officers found 6 people stealing hemp plants Tuesday night. Police arrested 21-year-old Dayshawn Mumford and 19-year-old Alyssia Clark, but the other four suspects got away.

**The crime comes after thieves stole over a thousand hemp plants from the same farm earlier this month.**

Experts in the hemp industry say a little education could prevent those crimes.

“It stems from the misalignment at the federal level of putting hemp in there was marijuana or other psychoactive controlled substances,” said Justin Swanson with the Midwest Hemp Council.

Swanson says even though a federal Farm Bill in 2018 removed industrial hemp from the controlled substances act and the Indiana statehouse passed a law to regulate hemp as a legal crop, many people remain uneducated about what hemp is and what it isn't.

“You've got to keep in mind this is a plant that was misaligned at the federal level for 75 plus years. It was treated from a legal point just like heroin or LSD,” said Swanson. There are lots of legitimate uses for hemp, including manufacturing CBD oil, but the hemp grown on farms across the state cannot be used for recreational drug use due to the low levels of THC.

“A lot of these farmers know the crop they have is valuable, but not for psychoactive reasons,” said Swanson. “If you don't have an outlet for that biomass, it's no different than going in and taking corn off a corn cob.”

Swanson hopes as people learn they can't get high from industrial hemp, thefts like the one this month in Indianapolis will come to an end.

“People that are exploring other people's properties are uneducated about what's growing and they're going to be sorely disappointed if they're in there for the wrong reasons,” said Swanson.

The farm's owner says they removed all the hemp crops from the property.

Police booked both suspects arrested Tuesday night into the Marion County jail. Both are due in court on Thursday.

## Illinois

# Police investigate incidents at hemp farms in Will County

By [Felix Sarver](#)

November 13, 2019 at 5:16 pm CST



Ryan J. Kokosz, 19, Homer Glen (Photo provided)

The Will County Sheriff's Office investigated two recent incidents at local hemp farms, police said.

On Oct. 29, Ryan J. Kokosz, 19, of the 16000 block of South Donna Marie Drive in Homer Glen, was arrested on a charge of criminal trespassing at a hemp farm at West Taylor Road and South Budler Road in Plainfield Township, police said. Kokosz was identified as the person who scaled the 6-foot fence at the farm and entered the property, police said.

Police said that Kokosz told them that he accidentally dropped his cellphone over the fence and was trying to retrieve it, but he "could not give deputies a reason as to why his cellphone was on the property," sheriff's office spokeswoman Kathy Hoffmeyer said.

Video surveillance captured Kokosz scaling the fence, she said.

A second person was also detained in the incident, but was released without charge, she said.

On Nov. 4, the property owner of M&D Farms and Garden Center at 14946 S. Bell Road in Homer Glen told police that when one of his employees arrived at work, they realized that someone had unlawfully entered the property and stolen hemp plants from his four greenhouses, police said.

About 275 hemp plants were stolen, police said.

Police said it appears several thieves fled in a vehicle from the greenhouses and headed north to Founders Crossing and Bell Road.

Hoffmeyer said the case remains under investigation.

## Illinois

# Williamson County Sheriff warns of farm thefts in rural Marion



Williamson County Sheriff warns of farm thefts in rural Marion

By [Ashley Smith](#) | October 16, 2019 at 5:12 PM CDT

MARION, IL. (KFVS) - Williamson County Sheriff, Bennie Vick, warns the public of thefts that are occurring in a rural Marion area.

The thefts occurred at a local industrial hemp farm in the past few weeks.

One juvenile suspect has been caught and arrested.

Investigators are currently working to identify suspects in a second incident. Sheriff Vick explained that, while an industrial hemp plant may look and smell like a marijuana plant, there are some significant differences.

Hemp is grown to harvest plant fibers for fabrics or to extract oil from the plants.

The oil from hemp plants contains cannabidiol (CBD), which is used to make consumable CBD oil.

In Illinois, industrial hemp does not contain significant amounts of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). THC is the chemical in marijuana that causes the "high" after consumption.

Another difference between hemp and marijuana plants is that hemp plants may be grown in an open field. Legal or medicinal marijuana farms are required to have significant security arrangements.

## Illinois

### Union Co., Ill. sheriff's office investigating hemp theft with an estimated loss of \$2M

By [Amber Ruch](#) | November 15, 2019 at 11:52 AM CST - Updated November 15 at 6:10 PM

UNION COUNTY, Ill. (KFVS) - The sheriff's office is investigating the theft of 42 acres of hemp.

Deputies say the hemp crop was in a remote area of Union County, east of Dongola. The grower stated that the entire field of hemp had the tops removed. Deputies say the loss of the crop is estimated to be about \$2 million.

The owner of the farm Joshua Lofton spoke out about the incident. "It's very detrimental to our business," he said.

He said it was quite a few acres stolen. "We had 300 acres total hemp production this year this was the last field that we were going to get the seed out of," he said. Lofton described how the criminals got in and out without being detected. "They used four wheelers and they did all of this at night. We did have a camera on this field, and had it hid but someone spotted that camera, and slid in behind it. They stole our camera," he said.

He said the thieves won't get too far with stolen hemp. "It didn't have flowers and big buds where it's worth a lot of money," he said.

Lofton's offering a reward for information on the crime, and will be increasing security .

"We've hired a armed guard the facility. He will be here 24/7. We're putting in a lot of new security systems.." he said.

He has no plans to make his first season of growing hemp his last. "No this is just a learning curve that we're going to have to suck it up and get past," Lofton said.

According to the Union County Sheriff's Office, the theft happened between November 1 and November 14 when it was discovered.

In addition to the theft from the field in rural Dongola, deputies say a theft of hemp from a warehouse facility in the western part of Union County also happened within the last few days.

In October, [the Williamson County Sheriff's Office reported thefts at an industrial hemp farm](#) in the rural Marion area.

One juvenile suspect was caught and taken into custody in connection to that case..

## Illinois

# Galesburg farmer says about half of his hemp crop has been stolen

The farmer says he lost tens-of-thousands of dollars.

Author: **Ryan Jenkins**

Published: **10:35 PM CDT October 30, 2019**

GALESBURG, Illinois - Galesburg farmer Demarkius Medley, who is the President and CEO of Greenlords Inc., says about half of his hemp crop has been stolen this year.

He says the theft has cost him tens-of-thousands of dollars.

Medley says in the past few weeks, he and his business partner, Steve, noticed entire plants missing from their farm on Monmouth Boulevard.

"Whole plants were missing but, they were the smaller ones and then the top of the buds were missing on the big plants," said Medley.

Initially, he and Steve were concerned that deer were eating the crop. So, they decided to electrify a fence that surrounded the crop.

Medley said the electric fence didn't solve anything. So, they set up a secret camera to try and find out why the hemp was disappearing.

"He decided to park his truck in front of the hemp plants and he had a dash cam running," said Medley.

"I'm out of tens of thousands of dollars. I'm not going to get that money back, but if we can arrest these people maybe we can prevent more things like that."

Soon, dark and grainy video showed evidence that deer were not an issue at the farm. Suspected thieves were sneaking onto the property in the middle of the night and stealing some of the hemp.

Medley said he and his business partner filed a police report and immediately decided to harvest the remaining crop.

After seeing things on social media, Medley told Galesburg Police that he believes the hemp is being sold.



"They`re taking it and they`re trying to sell it as homegrown marijuana," said Medley.

Police are unable to confirm or deny whether they have reason to believe the hemp is being sold in that manner, but they do confirm that there is an ongoing investigation into Medley's concerns.

Hemp looks and smells the same as marijuana, however it does not contain the THC that produces a high when consumed.

"I'm out of tens of thousands of dollars," Medley said. "I'm not going to get that money back, but if we can arrest these people who did it and help teach kids a lesson maybe we can prevent more things like that."

No arrests have been made. Galesburg Police say there is an ongoing investigation. Hemp is often used to produce CBD oils and for other medicinal purposes.

Hemp is legal to grow, sell and consume in Illinois.

## Illinois

# Farmers Lose Out As Thieves Mistake Hemp For Marijuana

by Dana Cronin, Harvest Public Media



Demarkius Medley stands in front of where his hemp crop grew last year. (Photo by Dana Cronin, Harvest Public Media)

February 17, 2020 - 5:45am

For many farmers, 2019 was the first year of growing hemp, since it became legal under the 2018 Farm Bill. In addition to the normal challenges of farming, hemp growers have had to deal with a different kind of problem: theft.

At his small, boutique-style farm in Galesburg, Illinois, Demarkius Medley grows mostly leafy greens and lettuces using aquaponics, a system where fish provide the nutrients to grow food. But, this year for the first time, he grew [hemp](#).

As the crop got closer to harvesting, Medley and his farmhand started to notice some of the hemp plants were disappearing.

"We thought it was a deer at first, because they were just taking tops," said Medley.

They were losing so much crop that they finally decided to install a camera. The footage showed people -- not deer -- sneaking onto the property in the middle of the night and stealing the plants.

Medley's best guess is that the thieves thought they were stealing marijuana, [hemp's cousin plant](#).

"Even if it is hemp, whoever took it probably thought that they could get high or make some money off it," he said.

Medley had to call an emergency harvest. In the course of 24 hours, he and a team of volunteers did what normally would've taken days.

"It was just kind of like, we got to get it done, or somebody's going to steal it," he said.

"Because they were definitely going to come back to get some more." According to the police report, they lost about \$25,000 worth of hemp.

“There’s not a whole lot we can do about it”

Illinois isn’t the only state facing this problem. Similar cases have popped up all over the country, from [New York](#) to [Indiana](#) to [Washington](#).

In Colorado last year, [one farmer](#) had \$2 million worth of hemp stolen. The Illinois Department of Agriculture didn’t track how much hemp was stolen in the state this year.

“It’s unfortunate. I hate to see it. And the saddest part, or the most ridiculous part maybe, is that people are typically stealing this because they think it’s marijuana, and it’s not,” he said.

He said he’s working on a few different strategies to tackle hemp theft, including improving signage to let the public know it’s industrial hemp growing, not marijuana.

### **Help from local law enforcement**

According to Cox, the Illinois Department of Agriculture is working on getting local law enforcement involved.

In Demarkius Medley’s case, that would’ve been Galesburg’s Chief of Police [Russ Idle](#). Medley’s case is technically still open, but Idle said after investigating a few suspects, they weren’t able to find any concrete evidence.

“At this point our best guess is, most likely since the product really is unusable as a drug, once they figured it out, they just got rid of it,” he said.

According to Idle, this is the first case of hemp theft the Galesburg Police Department has had to deal with.

Regardless, he said they’re beginning to ramp up patrols.

“We’re aware of where the different hemp farms are, and we’ll be wanting to keep an eye on them and be on the lookout for people that don’t look like they belong,” he said. He said that’s not something they do for most local farms.

“I think that this particular crop has a potential for theft or damage that maybe others don’t.”

Medley said he appreciates these efforts but that it should be up to hemp farmers to protect their own crop.

“You’re going to have to secure it. And you’re gonna probably have to accept loss if you don’t,” he said.

Medley does plan to grow hemp again this year but with added security, including motion-sensor lights, fences, and cameras.

And if that’s not enough, he said his two rottweilers should do the trick.

## Illinois

### Plainfield Hemp Farmer Arrested After Detaining Hemp Thieves

Ashraf Hasan detained thieves stealing from his hemp farm, but he was charged with reckless discharge of a firearm, police said.

[Joe Ward, Patch Staff](#)

Posted Wed, Oct 16, 2019 at 7:17 pm CT



Moises Luna (left) was arrested and charged in the hemp farm theft, while Ashraf Hasan (right) was arrested for reckless discharge of a firearm. Two juveniles were also arrested and charged with theft. (Courtesy: Will County Sheriff)

Ashraf Hasan (bottom) detained thieves stealing from his hemp farm, but he was charged with reckless discharge of a firearm, Plainfield Police said. (Shutterstock/Will County Sheriff) PLAINFIELD, IL — A local hemp farmer and three alleged thieves were arrested in Plainfield Monday after the farmer caught the group stealing from his hemp farm and chased the thieves, shooting his gun and detaining them at gunpoint in the process, police said. The alleged thieves — two of whom are juveniles — thought they had been stealing marijuana plants, according to the Will County Sheriff's Office.

Around midnight Monday, officers responded to a call of an armed man holding three accused thieves on the roadway in the 14000 block of South Napa Circle in Plainfield Township, according to sheriff's office. Officers found Ashraf Hasan, who told them that he had detained three people he accused of repeatedly stealing from his hemp farm on West Taylor Road.

Earlier that night, Hasan saw three people on his farm cutting down hemp plants, a spokesperson for the sheriff's department said. Hasan ran into the field and fired his handgun several times in the air to scare off the thieves. The group fled into the nearby neighborhood, and Hasan got into his car to chase them, authorities said.

Hasan found the alleged thieves in a car, and the group drove in reverse to flee from the man, but their car struck a tree. The group got out of the car and Hasan drew his gun and forced them to the ground, holding them at gunpoint, police said.

Police said they searched the car of the alleged thieves and found metal shears and a hemp plant. A search of the hemp farm turned up a pair of metal shears and a machete, according to the department.

The group told police they were on the farm to steal what they believed to be "cannabis" plants, a police spokesperson said. Hemp is technically a strain of the cannabis plant, but it is [grown for industrial use](#) and does not produce a high when ingested.

Moises Luna, 18, of Plainfield, was arrested for theft under \$500 dollars, criminal trespass to property, criminal damage to property and contributing to the delinquency of minors. Luna was released from jail with an I-bond, meaning he didn't have to pay to be released, according to court records.

A 15-year-old Plainfield boy and a 16-year-old Romeoville boy were also arrested and charged with theft, criminal trespass and criminal damage to property. The boys were released to their parents, the sheriff's office said.

Hasan, 43, was arrested for reckless discharge of a firearm and reckless conduct. He was released from county jail Monday afternoon, records show.

Hasan allegedly told police that his farm was having a problem with thieves stealing his plants. On Oct. 4, Hasan filed a report with the Will County Sheriff's Office regarding the theft of 30 hemp plants from his farm, according to Plainfield Police. That incident happened Sept. 8, and Hasan submitted surveillance video to authorities, police said.

## Indiana

# Indy hemp farm becomes target for thieves following legalization of hemp as a crop

by: [Jesse Wells](#)

Posted: Oct 23, 2019 / 04:31 PM EDT

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. — An Indianapolis hemp farmer falls victim to what some are calling uninformed crooks. Police say a half-dozen people tried to steal hemp plants from the northwest side farm Tuesday night.

Police reports show thieves hit the same farm 3 times in the last two and a half weeks.

According to court records, officers found 6 people stealing hemp plants Tuesday night.

Police arrested 21-year-old Dayshawn Mumford and 19-year-old Alyssia Clark, but the other four suspects got away.

The crime comes after thieves stole over a thousand hemp plants from the same farm earlier this month.

Experts in the hemp industry say a little education could prevent those crimes.

"It stems from the misalignment at the federal level of putting hemp in there was marijuana or other psychoactive controlled substances," said Justin Swanson with the Midwest Hemp Council.

Swanson says even though a federal Farm Bill in 2018 removed industrial hemp from the controlled substances act and the Indiana statehouse passed a law to regulate hemp as a legal crop, many people remain uneducated about what hemp is and what it isn't.

"You've got to keep in mind this is a plant that was misaligned at the federal level for 75 plus years. It was treated from a legal point just like heroin or LSD," said Swanson.

There are lots of legitimate uses for hemp, including manufacturing CBD oil, but the hemp grown on farms across the state cannot be used for recreational drug use due to the low levels of THC.

"A lot of these farmers know the crop they have is valuable, but not for psychoactive reasons," said Swanson. "If you don't have an outlet for that biomass, it's no different than going in and taking corn off a corn cob."

Swanson hopes as people learn they can't get high from industrial hemp, thefts like the one this month in Indianapolis will come to an end.

"People that are exploring other people's properties are uneducated about what's growing and they're going to be sorely disappointed if they're in there for the wrong reasons," said Swanson.

The farm's owner says they removed all the hemp crops from the property. Police booked both suspects arrested Tuesday night into the Marion County jail. Both are due in court on Thursday.

## Kentucky

# Three arrested for alleged hemp theft Police: Suspects found with bags full of plants

•The News-Enterprise  
• Sep 12, 2019



POTTS, REED, WHITLOCK

Three Louisville residents, including two teenagers, were arrested Tuesday night after they were caught by Elizabethtown police with industrial hemp from Highland Sod Farms on Hutcherson Lane in Elizabethtown.

Hemp is a classification of the cannabis sativa plant and closely is associated with marijuana, another cannabis classification. Hemp has a low Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) content, a psychoactive chemical.

Highland Sod Farm owner James Jenkins recently attracted media attention when he discussed how people had been stealing hemp from his 500-plus acre farm.

Do Not Trespass signs clearly are marked on the property, according to an arrest citation.

Davion Potts, 20, Mahailey Reed, 18, and Bryson Whitlock, 19, are charged with taking 12 hemp plants valued at \$240. They were arrested at 9:17 p.m., the citation said.

The three were found with two black garbage bags full of hemp plants, according to the citation.

Each is charged with misdemeanor counts of possession of industrial hemp and theft by unlawful taking less than \$500, punishable by up to one year in prison, if convicted, and third-degree criminal trespassing, a violation.

All three were released Tuesday night from the Hardin County Detention Center. No court dates had been scheduled, according to jail records.

## Kentucky

# Four arrested in connection with hemp theft in Daviess County



**Posted:** Sep 25, 2019

DAVIESS COUNTY, Ky. (WEHT) – Four people are accused of stealing industrialized hemp from a farm in Daviess County.

21-year-old Quashawn Kennedy, 19-year-old Raven Lockett, 37-year-old Christopher Hoggard, and James Kyle are all facing charges in connection with the hemp theft.

Daviess County Sheriff's deputies responded to a call about hemp theft just before 1:30 a.m. Wednesday.

Deputies say the caller said she and her husband thought someone was stealing their hemp from their farm. And said they put surveillance cameras in to keep an on the farm.

The owners received an alarm about someone trespassing.

The farm owner was able to run the suspects off their property after firing a warning shot.

The owner saw a vehicle leaving the area and chased them into Henderson County.

Deputies were able to apprehend the suspects using surveillance video from the farm.

Hoggard is charged with criminal trespassing, theft, possession of industrial hemp, and tampering with physical evidence.



Kyle is charged with criminal trespassing, theft, possession of industrial hemp, tampering with physical evidence, possession of marijuana, and possession of drug paraphernalia. These charges were enhanced due to a gun found in his possession. He was also cited for a failure to appear warrant out of Henderson County.

Kennedy is charged with criminal trespass, theft, possession of industrial hemp, tampering with physical evidence, possession of a handgun by convicted felon. All of his charges have been enhanced due to the firearm possession.



Luckett is charged with failure to improper signal, no operator's license, criminal trespass, theft, possession of industrial hemp, and tampering with physical evidence.



All four suspects are scheduled to be in court on Friday, September 27th.

## Kentucky

# HEMP FARMER HOLDS WOULD-BE THIEF AT GUNPOINT. HOURS LATER 3 MORE MEN TRY TO STEAL FARMER'S CROP.

SEPTEMBER 25, 2019 [STATE NEWS](#)



Four men have been arrested after trying to steal hemp from a Pulaski County farmer.

The Pulaski County Sheriff's Office said deputies responded to Parkers Mill Road, about five miles south of Somerset, Sunday morning at approximately 5:30 on the report that a hemp farmer was holding a would-be thief at gunpoint.

Upon arriving at the scene, deputies found 37-year-old Matthew Bell, of Burnside, being held at gunpoint by the landowner in a field. Bell had a set of bolt cutters and a bag full of hemp.

He was arrested and charged with third-degree burglary, theft by unlawful taking and possession of burglary tools.

Then, just before midnight Sunday night, deputies received a report of two men walking near the farm covered in dirt. Upon police arriving, authorities discovered 45-year-old Christopher Walker, of Somerset, and 27-years-old Christopher Decker, of Taylorsville, walking on the side of the road covered in dirt and hemp residue.

After the two men were detained, police found 40-year-old Jimmy Cook, of Somerset, hiding in a nearby wooded area. Cook was armed with a hunting knife and had marijuana in his possession. Making matters worse for Cook, he spit on one of the deputies and resisted arrest.

Walker and Decker were charged with possession of industrial hemp, criminal trespassing and criminal mischief. Cook was charged with assault of a police officer, resisting arrest, criminal trespassing, criminal mischief, possession of burglary tools, and possession of marijuana.

All four suspects were lodged in the Pulaski County Detention Center. Walker and Decker are no longer listed as inmates.

## Maryland

# Attempted crop theft in Mercersburg leads to charges

**By Andrea Rose / [arose@therecordherald.com](mailto:arose@therecordherald.com)** Posted  
Oct 17, 2019 at 5:00 PM

MERCERSBURG — A Hagerstown, Maryland, man has been charged with agricultural vandalism, agricultural crop destruction, agricultural trespassing on posted land and theft by unlawful taking after he allegedly cut down hemp crops and attempted to remove them from a Peters Township field.

According to Pennsylvania State Police, officers were called to a farm on Fort Loudon Road around 12:55 p.m. Sunday, for a report of four individuals trespassing on agricultural field crops.

The caller reported that four individuals had cut down hemp crops and removed them from the field towards a gray Hyundai Elantra that was waiting for them.

The Hyundai was stopped by the Mercersburg Police Department.

Upon PSP arrival, officers discovered a "strong odor of suspected hemp crops emanating from the four individuals," according to an affidavit of probable cause.

Jonathon M. Calloway, 18, of Hagerstown, was identified. He allegedly told police he and the other individuals entered the hemp crop field, cut crops and departed the field with the crops, claiming he threw them onto the ground when he saw the farmer coming towards his direction.

Apparently it wasn't the first time someone threatened local crops.

Peters Township farmer Stuart Hollenshead turned to social media over the weekend seeking help.

"Due to the CBD hemp being in right stage of maturity we have had an influx in people wanting to trespass and steal product from the field behind soccer field at athletic complex at high school," Hollenshead wrote in his post. "We need immediately people willing to patrol and guard field ... each night til the crop is harvested in next few weeks."

Growing industrial hemp is permitted in Pennsylvania, but farmers must acquire a permit from the state Department of Agriculture.

This year, the department issued more than 300 permits to farmers, according to the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau.

"Pennsylvania Farm Bureau does have members who are growing industrial hemp," said Mark O'Neill, PFB spokesman. "Typically, those farmers have set aside a certain amount of acres to grow hemp, but are still making the majority of their income from other farming practices. A variety of farmers from dairy farmers, crop farmers, vegetable growers and others are testing the waters on hemp production."

But while the crops may be attractive to those who are willing to trespass onto private property in an attempt to get high, not only is that act illegal, it's virtually fruitless.

"Although hemp and marijuana come from the same species of plant, hemp is not marijuana. Federal and state law requires that the concentration of THC must be less than 0.3 percent in industrial hemp," O'Neill explained. "You cannot get high smoking industrial hemp."

Calloway was released on \$25,000 bail while he awaits an Oct. 22 preliminary hearing before Magisterial District Judge Jody Eyer.

## Massachusetts

# 3 Hubbardston men charged in hemp theft in New Braintree

By [Kim Ring](#)  
Telegram & Gazette Staff

Posted Sep 30, 2019 at 5:41 PM Updated Oct 1, 2019 at 2:32 PM

EAST BROOKFIELD

**Three Hubbardston** men who apparently confused marijuana and hemp have been charged with stealing more than \$3,000 worth of hemp from a New Braintree farm, said police, who caught them Saturday night with a dozen plants they told police they planned to smoke.

While the alleged heist might have reaped a high for weeks if the plants were marijuana, what the men apparently didn't realize is that hemp contains so little tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) that they could have smoked all the plants, police said, with essentially no effect.

"What we were told is that they'd have to smoke an acre of hemp to feel anything," Hardwick/New Braintree Police Lt. Kevin Landine said. "Hemp contains about 3% THC and has no drug benefits, while medical grade marijuana contains about 20% THC."

Police were called just before 10:30 p.m. Saturday by Joshua Howard, who had seen two men on security cameras as they went into in his hemp field, court documents show. Police Cpl. Robert Toupin was close by and spotted red taillights from a van that was stopped on Thompson Road, near the hemp field where the security cameras were in use, he wrote in his report.

The van driver pulled away as the officer approached but eventually stopped on Route 67, police said, noting that brothers Matthew and Neil Mulhern were in the front seats. Neil was sweating, both men seemed nervous and there was a smell of raw marijuana, common to hemp plants, coming from the vehicle, Toupin wrote.

The pair allegedly admitted going into the field and told Toupin the plants were in the back of the van, along with third man, whom Neil Mulhern said was the mastermind of the plan, court records show. Underneath the stolen plants, police found 42-year-old Michael Fowler, and all three men were arrested, police said.

The men told Toupin they'd concocted the plan while at work and later worked out the details at Fowler's home, the police report states. They had no plans to sell the plants but instead planned to smoke them, referring to the hemp as free weed, Toupin wrote.

## Massachusetts

### 3 arrested for allegedly stealing thousands of dollars worth of hemp from Deerfield farm



by: [Nancy Asiamah](#)

Posted: Oct 24, 2020 / 01:07 AM EDT / Updated: Oct 28, 2020 / 05:05 PM EDT

DEERFIELD, Mass. (WWLP) – Police arrested three people for allegedly stealing hemp believed to be worth several thousand dollars from a farm in Deerfield last Friday.

The Deerfield Police Department said in early October, the Bar-Way Farm in town reported that their hemp was being stolen from the farm.

#### [Hadley Police investigating recent hemp thefts](#)

On October 16, an officer patrolling North Main Street conducted a traffic stop with three occupants inside the motor vehicle. According to the department, the officer arrested the operator of the vehicle after noticing he was under the influence of marijuana.

This resulted in a search of the vehicle which turned up a large amount of hemp, which the officer determined was stolen from the Bar-Way Farm. The officer was even able to match sneaker prints from the suspects to the area the hemp was stolen earlier that night, the department said.

#### [Hadley police warning farmers after recent hemp thefts](#)

The two passengers inside the vehicle were also arrested.

All three suspects who have not been identified are scheduled

## Massachusetts

# Police investigating Hadley hemp thefts



By [MICHAEL CONNORS](#)

Staff Writer

Published: 9/28/2019 5:18:05 PM

HADLEY — Two people have been arrested following numerous complaints of the theft of hemp plants in the area, police said.

According to a [post](#) on the department's Facebook page by Lt. Mitchell Kuc, the hemp, which has been stolen from an unspecified part of town, has been licensed by the state Cannabis Control Commission for commercial purposes. It has almost no THC, the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana, Kuc wrote.

An investigation last week resulted in two arrests and two people summoned to court, police said.

Due to the thefts, cameras have now been installed around the fields. Kuc said police had obtained two license plates from the cameras, as well as one person who looked directly into the cameras.

The case is under investigation and charges are pending in the latest theft, police said. *Michael Connors can be reached at [mconnors@gazettenet.com](mailto:mconnors@gazettenet.com).*

Hemp is generally grown for its fibers and is used to make clothing, rope and to extract cannabidiol (CBD), which has medicinal uses but is not intoxicating, police explained.

In Western Worcester District Court in East Brookfield on Monday, the brothers, Neil Mulhern, 43, and Matthew Mulhern, 45, both of 14 Adams Road, Hubbardston, and Fowler, of 10 Mt. Jefferson Rd., Hubbardston, were released on personal recognizance after an appearance before Judge Timothy Bibaud.

Neil Mulhern and Fowler were charged with larceny of property valued at more than \$1,200, trespassing, vandalizing property and conspiracy. Matthew Mulhern was charged with larceny of property valued at more than \$1,200, possession of a class B drug (a pill found in his wallet) and failing to stop for police.

The trio is due back in court Dec. 10.

Police said there had been vandalism and theft problems at hemp fields previously.



On Saturday September 28, 2019 at approximately 1030pm Ofc. Gentile and Cpl. Toupin were dispatched to a suspicious activity call involving possible theft of Hemp plants. As Officers began arriving in the area a white van took off from the hemp field entrance. The vehicle was stopped and a large amount of hemp plants were located in the van. (3) male suspects in their 40's from Hubbardston were arrested for Larceny/Receiving stolen property over 1200, trespassing, Vandalism. Although Hemp plants look and smell similar to marijuana plants, they contain almost no THC. These plants were grown by a licensed farmer.

Michigan

## Six arrested in theft at Michigan hemp farm, farmer hit by suspect's car

Updated Oct 15, 2019; Posted Oct 15, 2019



CBD, or cannabidiol, comes from hemp, often called the cannabis plant's cousin. It only has less than 0.3% THC, the psychoactive compound that gets you high. (Micah Castelo | Syracuse.com)

By [Ryan Boldrey | rboldrey@mlive.com](mailto:rboldrey@mlive.com)

ST. JOSEPH COUNTY, MI — Multiple people were arrested following an attempted theft at a hemp farm in St. Joseph County on Monday night.

According to a news release from the St. Joseph County Sheriff's Office, farmers working in the field noticed a suspicious vehicle parked in the field. **As the farmers approached the vehicle, attempting to make contact with the occupants, the driver of the vehicle tried to flee the scene, and ran into one of the farmers in the process.**

"The farmers were subsequently able to get the vehicle stopped, and upon arrival of deputies on scene had four subjects detained with a large amount of stolen hemp in their possession," Sheriff Bradley Balk stated in the release.

Deputies responded to the scene, near the intersection of Clark Road and Haas Road in Mendon Township, at approximately 9:30 p.m. Oct. 14.

At that time, **more suspicious vehicles were located and deputies took additional people attempting to leave the field into custody**, the release states.

Six subjects from the Battle Creek area were lodged at the St. Joseph County Jail on several felony charges, according to police. Those charges include larceny over \$1,000, felonious assault and providing false information to police investigating a felony.

Balk stated that additional charges are being requested through the prosecutor's office for two other people.

Deputies were assisted on the scene by the Mendon Police Department.



## Michigan

# Victim in Algonac drug-related shooting describes near-death experience in court Monday

[Laura Fitzgerald](#) Port Huron Times Herald  
June 23, 2020



The victim of a drug-related shooting in Algonac in November described his near-death experience in court Monday, saying Ricardo Galan II lured him to an Algonac home, then shot and robbed him.

Galan, 34, of Westland, was bound over to St. Clair County Circuit Court Monday on armed robbery, assault with intent to do great bodily harm less than murder, second-degree home invasion and a felony firearms charge following the examination hearing.

Matthew Farmer, who took the witness stand during the hearing, said Galan planned to facilitate an exchange of hemp and marijuana for cash between Farmer and Galan's customer.

Farmer said Galan gave him the address of a home in the 900 block of Smith Street in Algonac. Farmer met Galan at the home between 6 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Nov. 18 with a duffel bag full of marijuana and hemp.

Galan led Farmer into a first-floor bedroom inside the home.

Farmer said Galan stood in the doorway, while Farmer sat on a bed facing Galan. Suddenly, Galan yelled "get him!" or "get him boys!" according to testimony.

Farmer said four or five men came out of the closet and began attacking him. He said he noticed several weapons, including a golf club, a piece of metal, a wooden dowel and two guns.

"The look on (Galan's) face is like one of those guys on 'Die Hard' right before Bruce Willis gets to them, like 'oh shit this is actually happening,'" Farmer said.

He said he then heard two loud bangs in rapid succession and saw a flash. Farmer felt a knot in his side and stomach and realized later he had been shot.

Farmer said he didn't see Galan specifically fire a gun. But, he said judging from the positions from which he and Galan were standing in the room and the location of his wounds, it's extremely likely Galan was the one who fired the weapon.

"Absolutely, in my head, there is no way that a bullet did not come directly from where (Galan) was," Farmer said. "I cannot say that without an inkling of a doubt, because I did not see either gun or weapon fire on me."

Then, the men and Galan fled through the back door of the house with the marijuana and hemp. Farmer said he fled the home. His friend who had driven him there noticed Farmer was hurt and drove him to the Algonac Fire Department for treatment.

James Amberg, Galan's attorney, argued against the bind-over on the home invasion charge, stating someone who had permission to enter the home - which includes three people besides the homeowner and his wife - could have given permission for Galan to enter.

St. Clair County Senior Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Jennifer Deegan argued Galan committed a home invasion because he was not given permission from the homeowner.

Arguing against the assault charge, Amberg pointed out inconsistencies in the statements Farmer gave to police regarding the events of the night.

"I did impeach (Farmer) on the fact that he did say that he had tried to grab a gun. I guess he's saying now that's not when he got shot. The question is, was there specific intent to shoot him?" Amberg said. "Or was this just something that happened in a struggle and a scuffle, and who did it? And that is a serious question in this case, and I think that because of that, the people do not have enough burden for that charge."

Amberg questioned Farmer's decision to erase some of the contents on his phone, including correspondence between him and Galan.

"He made a conscious decision to take his phone and take away all those text messages and all those call logs that would have shown, in my opinion, that what he was saying was not true," Amberg said.

Farmer said he had erased content on his phone immediately after the incident because of the nature of his business.

"I had concerns it could be interpreted as criminal in the gray area of my business that is legal in a lot of different ways in Michigan," Farmer said.

St. Clair County District Court Judge Michael Hulewicz said a bindover of all four counts is appropriate because the prosecution had sufficient evidence to meet a probable cause standard.

## New Mexico

# Alleged marijuana traffickers arrested, may be tied to Shiprock hemp farms

by: [KRQE Staff](#)

Posted: Oct 14, 2020

[FARMINGTON, N.M.](#) (KRQE) – Seventeen people are in custody after police believe they were trafficking marijuana in New Mexico. The suspects were found staying at a Farmington motel where they occupied 19 rooms.

Police found around 2,000 pounds of marijuana plants and substances in multiple rooms. Authorities believe the suspects could be tied to the hemp farm operations around Shiprock.

### [Judge orders halt to hemp growing operation on Navajo land](#)

However, investigators say the investigation is taking extra time because of language barriers. Officials say the marijuana seized from the motel is the largest amount in the country's recent history.

### **Related Coverage:**

[Navajo Nation farmers fight back on alleged illegal hemp farms](#)  
[Navajo Police Department investigates illegal marijuana growing complaints](#)

**New Mexico**

## **New Mexico man arrested for stealing truckload of hemp**



**by: KRQE Media**

**Posted:** Oct 14, 2019 / 03:19 PM MDT

ROSWELL, N.M. (KRQE) – Chaves County deputies arrested a crook with a truckload of what he thought were marijuana plants. Instead, they say the suspect stole a huge pile of hemp plants, which you can't smoke. Deputies were called out by the farmer who noticed the truck stopped near their fields over the weekend. The driver was charged with theft. Marijuana plants and hemp plants do look very similar, and there is a lot of hemp being planted in the area. Authorities say most farmers have hired security to protect their crops, and they hope this arrest discourages others.

## North Carolina

# Trio charged in theft of \$1.6 million worth of hemp plants

November 1, 2019 Richmond County Daily Journal



Lemons



Beal



Beal

ROCKINGHAM — Three individuals have been charged in the August theft of more than \$1.6 million worth of industrial hemp plants.

Christopher Lee Watson Lemons, 29, and Tyler Brooke Morgan Beal, 20, are charged with two felony counts of larceny of ungathered crops and one misdemeanor count of larceny, while Aaron Dean Ladd, 24, is charged with one felony count each of larceny of ungathered crops.

Lemons is additionally charged with one misdemeanor count of possession of up to a half ounce of marijuana. Ladd is also charged with one felony count of possession of marijuana on jail premises. The three are listed as living in two separate residences on McArthur Drive in Rockingham.

Warrants alleged that on Aug. 8, the trio stole 1,500 industrial hemp plants that were in the ground being grown for market and were worth an estimated \$375,000. Then on Aug. 10, warrants allege that Lemons and Beal returned and stole an additional 5,000 industrial hemp plants worth an estimated \$1,250,000 from the

same farm, and stole a trail camera used to monitor the area which was worth \$100. A search warrant for Beal's phone states that the owner of the plants reported the theft on Aug. 10, and the sheriff's office received a tip on Oct. 22 that hemp crops were seen at the home of Ladd and Beal. Detectives received video of Ladd and

Lemons with the stolen hemp inside the home as well as text screenshots relating to those involved, according to the warrant.

This week, charges against Victor Brian Evans and Tryon Campbell Evans of two felony counts each of larceny of ungathered crops, and one misdemeanor count of

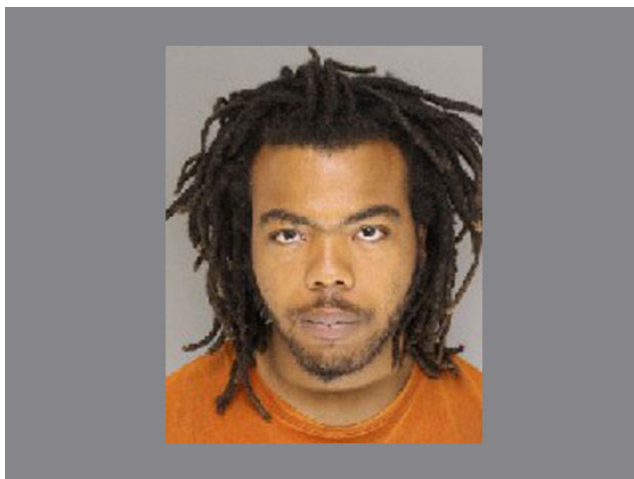
larceny were dismissed. These dismissed charges were for the Aug. 8 and Aug. 10 hemp plant thefts, and the theft of the trail camera. Both Victor and Tryon Evans still have one pending felony count of larceny of ungathered crops which occurred on Aug. 3, according to court records.

Lemons is held at the Richmond County Jail under a \$25,000 secure bond. Ladd is held under a \$5,000 secure bond. Beal was released after posting a \$25,000 secure bond on Oct. 25. All three are scheduled to appear in court on Nov. 7.

Records with the North Carolina Department of Public Safety show that Ladd was convicted in August 2013 of one misdemeanor count of assault on a child and in September 2019 of one misdemeanor count of breaking and entering.

Beal was convicted of one misdemeanor count of damage to property in October 2015. Lemons has no prior convictions.

## North Carolina Local man charged in hemp plant theft



August 30, 2019

A local man was arrested Saturday after police say they found a stolen hemp plant from a nearby farm in his car.

Whispering Pines Police Department arrested Terrell Cornelius Hart, 24, from Pinebluff, and charged him with misdemeanor possession of stolen goods, possession with intent to sell, manufacture and deliver marijuana, maintaining a vehicle for controlled substance, and possession of drug paraphernalia.

Hart was pulled over by Master Officer Holt for speeding on Niagara-Carthage Road, according to a news release from Whispering Pines Police Department.

During the traffic stop, Master Officer Holt smelled marijuana smoke inside Hart's vehicle.

"Upon further investigation, a recently stolen hemp plant from a nearby farm was found to be in the front passenger floorboard area, covered with an article of clothing," said the release.

Officer Cirillo assisted in the traffic stop, and 14 grams of marijuana, drug paraphernalia, and the hemp plant were seized during the investigation.

"The Moore County Sheriff's Office was notified and located the owner of the plant and determined that it was in fact stolen. The MCSO is currently handling the larceny investigation to cover the theft of the plant," said the Whispering Pines Police Department.

The suspect was placed in the Moore County Detention Center under a \$5,000 secured bond and is presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.



## Sheriffs step up patrols of hemp farms after N.C. robberies

Published September 21, 2017

Hemp fields are getting extra protection from law enforcement in one eastern North Carolina county where the new crop has been [targeted by thieves](#), a sign that growers of the plant face more threats than the usual pests and poor weather.

The extra sheriffs' patrols in rural Edgecombe County, N.C., come after five men were accused this week of trying to steal hemp. They were charged with trespassing, the Rocky Mount Telegram reported.

The first case happened Monday, when three men were charged with second-degree trespassing after a sheriff's deputy responded to a report of a suspicious vehicle near a hemp field.

Then, on Tuesday, two other men were arrested and charged with felony larceny and trespassing after being found with hemp plants that had already been stolen from the field. County authorities didn't put a market value on those plants. "The sheriff's office will continue to monitor the hemp fields in the county and arrest anyone trespassing at these sites," Edgecombe County Sheriff Cleo Atkinson told the Telegram.

Atkinson didn't say the men believed the hemp was marijuana, but he added in a statement that people shouldn't confuse hemp with marijuana.

This is [North Carolina's first year](#) allowing farmers to grow industrial hemp. The state has 97 licensed hemp growers on 1,930 acres this year.

## Oregon

# Sisters man arrested in hemp theft Unclear whether the suspect thought it was marijuana

- Bulletin staff report
- Oct 7, 2019



## Sisters man arrested in hemp theft

A Sisters man was arrested after allegedly stealing hemp from a Sisters-area farm. On Tuesday, the Deschutes County Sheriff's Office received a report that industrial hemp from a farm had been stolen in the 66000 block of Gist Road. The farmer reported finding a substantial amount of industrial hemp cut down and missing from his field.

The sheriff's office conducted an investigation and found the stolen hemp in the home of 20-year-old Noah Gabriel Kirshner, of Sisters.

It is unclear to police whether Kirshner believed the industrial hemp was marijuana or if he intended on selling the product fraudulently as marijuana. Kirshner did not have the equipment to extract the cannabinoids needed to make CBD oil or other hemp products.

The hemp has been returned to the farmer. Kirshner is charged with first-degree theft, first-degree trespass and with violating his probation.

## Oregon

# Arrests made in separate suspected hemp thefts



JACKSON COUNTY, Ore. – Two people believed to be involved in stealing hemp were arrested in separate incidents Wednesday.

The Jackson County Sheriff's Office said the first incident started at 3:53 a.m. when a suspicious vehicle was found near a hemp field close to Griffin Creek Road southwest of Medford.

October 30, 2019

A deputy approached the person sleeping inside the grey Dodge Durango, but the suspect drove off, leading deputies on a chase through several gated rural properties.

Eventually, the suspect stopped the Durango in a driveway and ran away. He was found after being tracked for about 90 minutes.

The man initially lied about his name. However, investigators say they were able to identify him as 45-year-old Jon Allen Firehammer from Grants Pass. He was arrested for multiple charges and outstanding warrants.

Investigators believe another person who was with the man was left behind in the area.

The second incident started at about 9:40 a.m. after a patrol deputy in his patrol vehicle and two hemp farm employees were almost hit by a Toyota Tacoma that was speeding in reverse from a driveway in the 5200 block of Upton Road.

Deputies said the driver sped off after a short confrontation with one of the employees. They told the deputy the driver of the vehicle was caught stealing hemp and was fleeing when the deputy arrived.

Deputies and an Oregon State Police trooper followed the direction of the vehicle and eventually found it crashed at the end of the road.

The driver, 27-year-old Tanner Charles McNew from Medford, was reportedly uncooperative and deputies had forcibly remove him from the Tacoma. Police said he was found with marijuana, methamphetamine and hemp that's believed to have been stolen from the Upton Road address.

McNew was lodged in the Jackson County Jail on numerous charges including theft, eluding police, reckless driving, and drug possession.

Oregon

## Dumb Thieves Attempt To Rob Industrial Hemp Farm

By [Terry Lassitenaz](#) -  
December 27, 2018




It appears these would-be marijuana thieves weren't the sharpest tools in the shed. Not only were they busted, but the plants they were attempting to rip off were in fact industrial hemp.

As industrial hemp increasingly appears in fields across the USA, so too are instances of theft; even though it looks quite different to marijuana. Industrial hemp (pictured above) is usually cultivated in very high densities and grown up, not out as is the case with marijuana. It is also far lower in the psychoactive compound THC, giving it zero recreational value.

You would think in a state such as Oregon, where it's legal for adults 21 and older to possess and use recreational marijuana, anyone with any association with it (recreational or medicinal) would be able to tell the difference between the two plants. Not so in the case of a 31 year-old Redmond man and his female accomplice reports [The Bulletin](#).

Earlier this week, police were called by a hemp farmer who stated he was holding two trespassers at gunpoint after finding them on his farm. The pair had apparently mistaken the hemp for marijuana and the man had threatened the farmer with an unspecified weapon when confronted. The two took flight before police arrived, but the man was apprehended shortly afterwards; however, not before he had crashed into the property owners' vehicles. The woman remained at large at the time the article was published.



While it's easy to laugh at this ill-informed pair's antics and the fate that awaits them, the frightening thing is this could have turned out much worse – someone could have been killed. Also, pity the poor farmer who is engaged in a legal activity – this is likely something he wouldn't face working with another crop.

Unfortunately, this isn't an isolated case. We reported in October industrial [hemp theft has been getting violent](#) – and all over a plant that would have no value to the thieves. Farmers have enough to contend with as it is without having to worry about such things.

Hopefully as a result of recent signing of the 2018 Farm Bill into law, which [legalizes industrial hemp](#), the crop will become an even more common sight in the USA – with potential thieves finally learning how to identify it and realizing stealing it just isn't worth the hassle, or the potential consequences.

## Oregon

# In brief: Redmond man charged in attempted hemp farm robbery

•Dec 26, 2018 Updated Feb 13, 2020



**Redmond** man charged in attempted hemp farm robbery: A Redmond man faces several charges related to an alleged Christmas day attempted robbery of an industrial hemp farm, which he mistakenly thought contained marijuana, according to a Deschutes County Sheriff's Office news release. Mitchell Bruce Ballard, Jr., 31, of Redmond, and a woman whose identity has not been released, led Oregon State Police in a pursuit just after noon after attempting to steal what they believed was marijuana from a licensed industrial hemp farm on NE O'Neil Way, officials said. The farm owners found the pair trespassing on the property and called police while holding Ballard and the woman at gunpoint after Ballard threatened them with a weapon, officials said. Ballard and the woman then attempted to flee in their pickup truck, officials said. The truck became stuck on rocks and Ballard crashed into the owners' vehicles, causing significant damage, officials said. An Oregon State Police trooper saw the truck leaving the area and began pursuing the pair, but stopped the pursuit in the interest of public safety. Deschutes County Sheriff's deputies and detectives then searched the area and found Ballard and the woman on the public lands near Negus Landfill Transfer Station and pursued them on foot. Ballard was arrested and charged with robbery, felony attempt to elude police, reckless endangering, criminal mischief, criminal trespass and failure to perform the duties of a driver, officials said. Police have identified the woman and are continuing to search for her, but are not releasing her name at this time.

**Oregon**

## **DEPUTIES ARREST MAN FOLLOWING SHOOTING AT HEMP FARM NEAR WIMER**



Deputies from the Jackson County Sheriff's Office responded to reports of a shooting north of Rogue River on Friday.

Posted: Sep 27, 2019 3:27 PM  
Posted By: Jamie Parfitt

ROGUE RIVER, Ore. — Deputies from the Jackson County Sheriff's Office are investigating a shooting that happened on a hemp farm in the Wimer area on Friday. One man has been arrested and another is reportedly recovering from a single gunshot wound to the arm.

Dispatch received a 911 call just before noon, reporting a shooting in the 1200-block of Pine Grove Road, north of Rogue River.

"The caller reported that two people had been shot and were already on their way to the hospital in a private vehicle," JCSO said. The caller said that the suspect, 34-year-old Jeremy Odell O'Patchen, had run back toward his house in the 500-block of Minthorne Road.

Deputies later confirmed that the one victim, 55-year-old Russell Anthony Clark of Talent, had a gunshot wound to his arm that did not seem to be life-threatening. With the help of Rogue River Police and Oregon State Police, deputies began looking for O'Patchen.

"Rogue River High School, located approximately five miles from the scene, was used as a resource staging area, but had no further involvement in the incident," JCSO clarified.

While officers were still searching, O'Patchen drove himself to the Sheriff's Office in Central Point, arriving there around 12:40 p.m. and turned himself in. According to the JCSO investigation, O'Patchen had been in an "ongoing property easement dispute" with the owners of the Pine Grove hemp farm.

"Friday's incident apparently began when O'Patchen walked onto the property without permission and engaged in a verbal altercation with people working at a hemp grow there. During the altercation, O'Patchen shot Clark in the arm," the Sheriff's Office said. JCSO said that O'Patchen will be jailed for attempted murder, and additional charges could be added. An investigation into the incident remains ongoing.

## Oregon

# Sheriff's office: 4 men caught with stolen hemp plants while walking along Hwy 211 in Molalla

•[FOX 12 STAFF](#)  
•POSTED OCT 1, 2020



(Courtesy: Clackamas County Sheriff's Office)  
Elizabeth Gehrke

CLACKAMAS COUNTY, OR (KPTV) - Four men were arrested early Tuesday morning after they were caught with stolen hemp plants that they believed were recreational marijuana, according to the Clackamas County Sheriff's Office.

At 3:22 a.m., Clackamas County deputies, along with Molalla police officers, responded to a report of multiple people walking on South Highway 211 near South Palmer Road, just outside of Molalla.

Authorities located the four men, who were seen wearing dark clothing and carrying large bags containing green leafy plants. The sheriff's office said green leaves were seen poking out of the men's pockets.

When a deputy activated his lights, the sheriff's office said one of the men threw his large duffel bag down an embankment.

Authorities made contact with the men and quickly determined they had large quantities of cannabis plants - about 60 to 80 pounds in total, according to the sheriff's office.

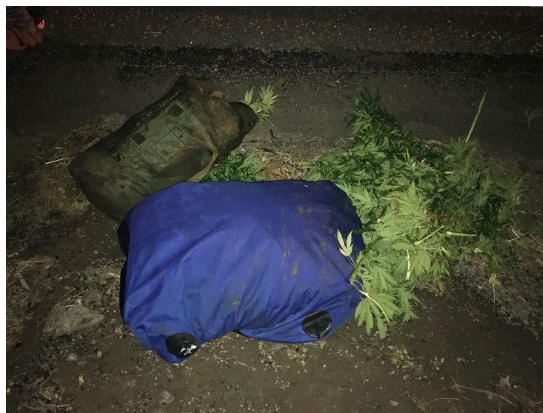
An investigation revealed that the men stole the plants from a nearby legal grow operation off of Highway 211. The sheriff's office said the men reported hearing about the farm from a friend, so they took a bus from Portland to Molalla to steal the plants thinking the plants were recreational marijuana.

The owner of the farm arrived and identified the plants as hemp, according to the sheriff's office. The plants were returned to the owner.



The suspects, identified as Sebastian Wade Roby, 19, of Oregon City, Jason Patrick Troyer, 21, of Portland, Tanner Leslie Giles, 20, of Portland, and Donovan Allan Hall, 22, of Portland, were arrested and booked into the Clackamas County Jail for charges of first-degree theft and second-degree criminal trespass.

The sheriff's office said Roby also had two warrants out of Florence Municipal Court for first-degree theft and second-degree criminal trespass.



PHOTOS: 4 men caught carrying stolen hemp plants while walking along Hwy 211 in Molalla

## Pennsylvania

# Suspect sought in \$80,000 theft at hemp farm

[Michael Moser](#) Aug 17, 2020

Cumberland County sheriff's deputies are investigating a **report that someone stole hemp plants valued at \$80,000 from a hemp farm** Aug. 9, according to an incident report.

Deputies were called to the 300 block of E. Main St. in Pleasant Hill shortly before 1 p.m. and met with the victim, according to Deputy Anthony Justice's report.

The victim stated that someone had come onto the hemp farm during the dark hours of the night before and stole around 80 plants.

Justice was in the process of taking a report when when Crossville Police Sgt. Jared Scott notified him that he had stopped a Linger Lake Rd. motorist who had hemp plants in the the bed of his pickup truck. The motorist said he was given the plants by an acquaintance as payment for gas that he delivered to the acquaintance.

According to the report, the motorist said there were many more plants where he had gotten those plants.

Scott seized the plants and they were taken to the victim to see if they could be identified as the stolen plants. Police then placed the plants in an evidence locker as the investigation continues.

## Pennsylvania

AUGUST 24, 2019

BY [ADAM HERMANN](#)

*PhillyVoice Staff*

# Amish farmers in Chester County: Please stop stealing our hemp, thinking it's marijuana



Hemp, often conflated with marijuana, contains substantially less of the psychoactive ingredients which lead to marijuana's high.

Some Amish farmers in Chester County are dealing with a nightmare situation: uninformed thieves in search of a free high.

Two farmers in Honey Brook, Pennsylvania, told the Reading Eagle this week that they're [dealing with a rash of hemp plants gone missing](#). The farmers, who suspect thieves believe hemp will give them the same high as marijuana, have installed an electrified fence, to no avail.

"We just had 20 plants stolen," one farmer told the Eagle. "They are taking them in the middle of the day."

Each plant stolen costs the farmers somewhere between \$5 and \$6, according to the Eagle. Hemp, which was legalized for growing in Pennsylvania and across the country last December, is often conflated with marijuana, which is not legal to grow in Pennsylvania. Both products contain cannabidiol (CBD) and tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the ingredients which lead to the psychoactive high that comes with smoking marijuana, but in vastly different amounts: [marijuana can reach nearly 30% THC by dry weight; hemp, on the other hand, never eclipses 0.3%](#).

Hemp is instead used for a variety of products, like rope, clothing, paper, bioplastics, and insulation, according to the Eagle. The farmers dealing with these thefts were planning to harvest all their plants this month. Now, they're dealing with lessened yields.

The farmers installed signs, which explain the difference between hemp and marijuana, and low-voltage electric fences in attempts to dissuade thefts. But the farmers told the Eagle the thieves haven't stopped coming.

## South Carolina

# Police make more arrests in Conway area hemp theft

By [WMBF News Staff](#) | October 24, 2019



Gregory Joseph Ashe (Source: JRLDC)

HORRY COUNTY, S.C. (WMBF) – More arrests have been made in connection to the theft of hemp from a field in the Conway area, according to Horry County police spokesperson Mikayla Moskov.

Moskov said Gregory Joseph Ashe, 20, of Gallivants Ferry, was arrested and charged with grand larceny, value \$5,000 or more.

On Oct. 12, police responded to a field off Highway 65 and spoke to a hemp farmer, who said he had about 165 hemp plants stolen, according to a police report.

The hemp farmer said people have been trespassing on his property for the past few weeks and taking hemp plants out of the field, the report states.

[Previously, a 17-year-old was arrested in the connection to the case.](#)

Two others – Don Erick Stanley and another juvenile – have also been charged with trespassing, Moskov said.



Stanley, 20, remains behind bars at the J. Reuben Long Detention Center.

Ashe was released Wednesday from JRLDC on \$5,000 bond, online records show.

Don Erick Stanley (Source: JRLDC)

## South Carolina

# 11 arrested after Marion Co. Combined Drug Unit serves search warrants, investigates reported hemp theft

**Posted:** Oct 8, 2019 / 01:42 PM EDT

MARION COUNTY, SC (WBTW) – Eleven people have been arrested after the Marion County Combined Drug Unit served several search warrants and conducted an investigation into reported hemp theft.

On Tuesday, the unit executed a search warrant on Lake Street in Mullins after an investigation and complaints from residents, the Marion County Sheriff's Office said. Shaheed Hamilton, 37, of Mullins, was arrested and charged.

A search warrant was executed by the unit on Valentine Street in Mullins on September 19, according to the MCSO. Harold Young, 35, of Mullins, and Sharita Swinton, 35, of Maryland were arrested and charged. The following items were seized during this search:

- cocaine
- heroin
- prescription drugs
- marijuana
- firearms
- currency
- drug paraphernalia



Shaheed Hamilton (Marion County Sheriff's Office)

On September 18, a search warrant was conducted at a home on Leroy Bethea Road in Mullins. Cocaine, methamphetamine, marijuana and prescription drugs were seized. Three people were arrested and charged:

- Jeffrey McFarland, 36, of Mullins
- Jonathan Jenkins, 25, of Mullins
- Kathy McFarland, 53, of Mullins



Jeffrey McFarland (left), Jonathan Jenkins (middle), Kathy McFarland (right). Courtesy: Marion County Sheriff's Office.

Quadri Kirton, 32, of Sellers, was arrested and charged on September 12 "following an investigation and many complaints from a local business."



"After receiving complaints, Marion County Combined Drug Unit recently conducted an investigation into the theft of Hemp," the MCSO said. Four people were arrested and charged:

- Omar Tucker, 23, of Mullins
- Matthew Woodberry, 28, of Mullins
- Christopher Royal, 21, of Marion
- Donnie Roberts, 61, of Galivants Ferry



Omar Tucker (left) and Matthew Woodberry (right). Courtesy: Marion County Sheriff's Office.



Christopher Royal (left) and Donnie Roberts (right). Courtesy: Marion County Sheriff's Office.

"Also from the videos, Marion County Drug Unit is actively attempting to identify other subjects that committed trespassing and damage of a farm product," the MCSO also said.

The Marion County Sheriff's Office, Marion Police Department, Mullins Police Department, and South Carolina Department of Natural Resources helped the Marion County Combined Drug Unit.

The MCSO released the following statement from Sheriff Brian Wallace:

*"We have been very busy lately. This summer and especially in the past few weeks we have worked tirelessly to rid our community of nuisance drug dealers. We have had the pleasure of reacquainting ourselves with some of our past offenders as we had the opportunity to execute a search warrant on a residence for the third time in the past few years. If they won't stop, we won't stop. These repeat offenders have not learned from their prior experiences so I find it our duty to keep educating them on the perils of drug dealing until they either learn or decide to move out of our county. We will not rest until we remove the drugs and drug dealers from Marion County. On a lighter note, my drug agents and deputies have made several arrests lately on criminals who are trespassing on our farmers' properties and stealing Hemp. I am not saying stealing is a lighter situation. I am saying it is foolish for these individuals to believe they can steal an agriculture product and smoke it to get high. Hemp may look and smell like the marijuana that they covet but unfortunately for them it does not contain enough of the active chemical (THC) to achieve a high. I recommend to these folks that feel trespassing and stealing are a good idea to avoid any chance of arrest and stay in their own back yard and smoke some dandelions because you achieve the same high. Farmers are the backbone of our economic community and will we continue to protect them and their crops."*



## Tennessee

# Stewart County hemp farmer in second chase with people trying to steal plants

[Stephanie Ingersoll](#) Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle

The same day an Indian Mound farmer chased a group of heavily armed men after he caught them stealing hemp plants — even as they opened fire on his truck — he was involved in a second chase after someone else tried to plunder his plants.

Tracy Lehman said he was on high alert Monday night when he caught someone on his farm. Earlier that day, he had [spotted a group of at least four men](#) armed with assault-style rifles and pistols loading a truck with industrial hemp plants at the far end of his field.

He gave chase in his pickup, and someone in one of the two vehicles he was chasing fired at him numerous times. He lost sight of them near Woodlawn on Dover Road. So, when he noticed a red pickup shortly before 10 p.m. on his farm, he tried to confront the man.

"We were prepared and ready," Lehman said. "We were watching."

He said he fired a warning shot, and the man fled in the red pickup. Lehman got in his own black pickup and gave chase, sometimes reaching speeds of 85 mph on dark, twisty country roads.

He also alerted the Stewart County Sheriff's Office, who caught the suspect on Highway 79

According to arrest warrants, Coty H. Dawson, 28, of Erin had hemp on his person and in plain view inside the vehicle.

### **Hemp, not marijuana**

Lehman grows industrial hemp, which is used for CBD oil and does not contain the THC marijuana plants have that induces a high. He is licensed, and his crop is strictly regulated by the state.

Dawson admitted to police he went to the farm and took hemp, according to the arrest warrant.



He was charged with criminal trespassing, theft of property and driving on a revoked license and booked into the Stewart County Jail.

Although both thefts occurred the same day, Lehman said he does not believe the cases are connected. Dawson was not armed and was not one of the four men picked up on surveillance footage in the Monday morning heist. He said Dawson also took buds, not whole plants like the men trying to harvest his crop while carrying weapons, who looked like a well-organized group with a leader, lookout and two vehicles.

But Lehman wonders if someone put out word that they would buy plants stolen from his farm. He said another suspicious vehicle drove by his home eight times in 10 minutes Monday night, and two men were spotted walking on the road around the same time but hid in the woods when a neighbor saw them.

Lehman said he has noticed plants missing from his farm for a while, but after 19 plants were taken in one night, he installed the surveillance cameras ahead of Monday's daylight heist. Now, he and his family are being vigilant.

"We're armed, loaded and ready," he said, adding that deputies are doing extra patrols in the area. He lives in a remote part of Indian Mound, but for the safety of his family does not want the exact location named.

He doesn't know what the thieves still on the loose plan to do with the plants they took. They are not marijuana plants, although they look and smell like them. Trying to sell them for their legal purpose requires a license.



## Tennessee

# Thieves target hemp farmers in TN, take \$50k of crop from warehouse

## TN Hemp Association believes crop being sold on black market

By: [Kyle Horan](#)

Posted at 5:01 PM, Nov 06, 2019

WHITE COUNTY, Tenn. (WTVF) — A White County hemp farmer is out \$50,000 worth of hemp that was ready to be sold when someone broken into a warehouse and stole the crop.

Joe Kirkpatrick, of Tennessee Hemp Industries Association says he believes people are stealing the crop to sell on the black market as marijuana.

According to Jody Wilson, owner of Wilson's H&H Farm, his crop was taken sometime Sunday. A couple hundred pounds of hemp flower and some hemp processing equipment was stolen from Wilson's warehouse.

Wilson said he thinks someone squeezed under a warehouse door they leave cracked to allow air circulation moving in the warehouse. The company dries its hemp plant in the warehouse to later be sold to create oil. "They got about 10-15 totes. A lot of the totes are 40 gallons plume full of hemp flower. So, about 200 pounds," Wilson said.

Wilson said he estimated the total value of what is stolen at \$50,000.

Thieves have targeted Tennessee hemp farms in the past year. In October of 2018, armed men were caught on camera walking through a hemp farm in Indian Mound, TN. Just last week, a farmer reported 85 whole trees were taken from a farm in Hartsville.

Wilson's company is also out of luck for reimbursement; Wilson didn't have insurance. "The industry is still new. I think the insurance companies are still skeptical," he said.

He's since set up a new security system.

Kirkpatrick says the best way to keep thieves from targeting hemp crops is to invest in security cameras and keep harvested hemp crop locked up.

## Tennessee

# Rural hemp farm allegedly covering for marijuana grow operation

By [Laurin Stroud](#) | October 7, 2020

A legal hemp farm operating on Caraway Hills Road between Trenton and Milan became the target of a Drug Task Force raid last week after a shipping company discovered a box that appeared to contain marijuana plants.

to West Tennessee Drug Task Force Director Johnie Carter, the company contacted agents when one of several boxes intended for a residential address in Milan had broken open during shipping. Agents obtained a search warrant to search the boxes, where they discovered what appeared to be 1,200 marijuana plants.

Carter stated that the plants were destined for Hemp 2 Go, and preliminary field tests indicated that the plants were marijuana and not hemp.

"The plants contained approximately 1.6% THC, while the maximum allowed under Tennessee law is 0.3%," Carter said. "As the plant grows from a juvenile into an adult, the THC levels increase."

While serving a search warrant at the property, DTF agents and representatives of the Tennessee Department of Agriculture discovered evidence that suggested Hemp 2 Go was setting up warehouses to conduct indoor growing operations, including seedling plants and a burn pile which was still warm.

Agents were able to salvage approximately 50 plants, which also tested positive for marijuana, in various stages of growth from the burn pile.

Agents also recovered several pounds of butane honey oil, a concentrated form of THC. Further investigation found a number of different strains of marijuana being cultivated on the property.

Carter stated that Hemp 2 Go is licensed to have two outdoor hemp grows but is not licensed to conduct any indoor growing.

Carter said that the hemp plants on the two licensed plots were poorly maintained.

"Based on the investigation, the hemp plots were being used as a front for what was to be a large-scale indoor marijuana grow operation," said Carter. "I'm glad we were able to disrupt it before these illegal plants made it to the schools and streets of Tennessee."

Carter stated that Hemp 2 Go's three owners are from Nashville and California.

Charges are pending, and the West Tennessee DTF has submitted a letter to the Department of Agriculture requesting the suspension of Hemp 2 Go's license pending the outcome of the ongoing investigation.

## Utah Three men arrested in connection to \$40,000 'hemp product' theft

•By Jackson Wilde staff writer Jan 1, 2021

Deputies arrested three men on New Year's Eve for alleged theft of "hemp product" valued at approximately \$40,000.

Wayne Van Breeding, 40, Jermei Shan Breeding, 34, and Matthew Ryan Littler, 33, were booked into the Cache County Jail on Thursday following a monthlong investigation of a storage unit theft in Smithfield.

Eight blue 55-gallon drums of "hemp product" valued at \$40,000, in addition to a flatbed trailer, were stolen from the unit in November, Cache County Sheriff's deputies allege. According to a probable cause affidavit, video surveillance footage showed at least two suspects — believed to be Jeremy and Matthew — stealing the hemp and trailer with a Jeep Grand Cherokee.

According to documents filed with the courts, a search warrant for electronic monitoring was approved the day after the Smithfield theft allegedly occurred. The court authorized officers to install a mobile tracking or GPS device on the distinctively marked Jeep as part of the investigation.

"Officers may enter any property to install, maintain or remove the device at any time, day or night and without notice of authority or purpose," the warrant states.

On Thursday, according to the affidavit, law enforcement conducted a traffic stop of the Jeep and Jeremy was detained for questioning.

During the investigation, deputies wrote the Jeep had also been associated with a storage unit theft in Idaho and stolen items may be at Wayne's residence in Richmond.

"Video footage shows Jeremy and another person, later identified as Matt Littler, unloading suspected stolen items from the Jeep and carrying them onto the property in Richmond," deputies wrote.

The affidavit does not specify where the video footage originated.

A search of Wayne's home, according to deputies, yielded stolen items from the Idaho theft. Two medium-sized duffel bags containing "several buds of hemp flower" were located on the property. The barrels and trailer were located in a remote location north of Richmond, deputies wrote, and controlled substances were also located in the home and in the Jeep.

Matthew and Jeremy were booked into jail on suspicion of felony theft and burglary charges and additional controlled substance misdemeanors; both men were ordered to be held without bail. Wayne was booked on suspicion of misdemeanor theft by receiving stolen property and controlled substance charges; he was ordered to be held on \$500 bondable bail and to comply with various release conditions.

Formal charges have not been filed.

## Vermont

# Thieves make off with Moretown hemp farmer's entire crop

By [Mark Johnson](#)  
[Sep 9 2020](#)



Vermont State Police say thieves stole 50 hemp plants in Moretown by shearing them off. VSP photo.

Vermont State Police are investigating the theft of a company's entire hemp crop earlier this week from a cultivation site in Moretown. Authorities said 50 plants were stolen. They said the theft appeared premeditated and that two or more thieves apparently used shearing tools and large vehicles to remove an estimated 500 pounds of hemp from a field on Pony Farm Road.

The plants were being cultivated by Fancy Plants, a business registered with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets to legally grow hemp. The field was marked with signs that hemp/CBD was being grown.

The stolen plants were valued at approximately \$6,000, according to police. The theft is believed to have occurred overnight Sunday or early Monday morning. Anyone with information is asked to call the Middlesex barracks at 802-229-9191.

Agriculture Agency officials said hemp farmers have seen thefts around fall harvest time in the past and urge farmers to install security equipment, including fencing and motion-activated lights and video surveillance cameras. They also recommend enlisting neighbors to help keep an eye out for intruders.

"Registrants whose crop land is adjacent to public rights-of-way may find it difficult to protect their crops privacy due to high public visibility, so the aforementioned protective measures are highly recommended," according to a statement from the Agriculture Agency.

Fancy Plants owner Jenna Rossbach told WCAX she had installed a camera but that it hadn't picked up the thieves. She also said the plants were harvested too early to be of value.

The agency also said it does not give out the locations of registered hemp growers, even under requests under the Public Records Act.

## Vermont

# The Cannabis Catch-Up: Growers Report Several Weed and Hemp Thefts

By [SASHA GOLDSTEIN](#)

We're headed toward harvest for Vermont's outdoor growing season, and thieves have victimized several cannabis and hemp farmers.

Over the past week, the list has grown longer by the day. On Monday, [Heady Vermont published a story with the headline](#) "Thefts Put Damper on Vermont Hemp Harvest." The article recounted two growers who separately reported thefts, including Humble Roots Horticulture in Colchester, which lost 400 plants in about a month.

On Tuesday, a New Haven man told *Seven Days* he lost [his two legal recreational cannabis plants to a thief](#).

"We put a lot of care and energy into the plants," Mark Krawczyk said. "It's a bummer. We were excited it was legal."

On Wednesday, several more thefts were reported. Cops said hemp plants were stolen from Gaylord Farm in Waitsfield. That same day, a Barton farmer reported that "210 drying hemp plants were taken, along with various power tools," a loss worth an estimated \$15,000.

Cops on Thursday released images of suspects stealing from farms in the Georgia and Fairfax area. "One of the males appears to be armed with a handgun during the Georgia theft," Vermont State Police said.

Meanwhile, Noah Fishman, one of the owners of Zen Barn in Waterbury, reported the theft of 10 hemp plants from his Guptil Road property. He found the plants missing Thursday morning and "feels the perpetrators most likely mistakenly thought these were marijuana plants," state police said in a press release.

So what's one to do? Heady Vermont asked Vermont Security owner Jesse Harper.

"It is important to note that the state mandates that your garden is secured," he told the outlet. "There is no language that describes how this should be accomplished but common sense and some technology can go a long way."

## Vermont

# Hemp Theft, Assault With A Vehicle Lead To Charges Aaron Horner III Facing Up To Life As Habitual Offender If Convicted

•Robin Smith Nov 16, 2019



Aaron Horner III (VSP Mug Shot)

DERBY — Prosecutors say a Derby man was caught on camera stealing hemp and then used his pickup truck to assault the owners when he came back a second time.

Aaron Horner III, 41, could face up to life in prison if convicted, according to court records. He is being treated as a habitual offender because he has three or more felonies on his record, including burglary, aiding in the commission of a felony, and eluding an officer. Horner pleaded not guilty in Orleans Superior Court Oct. 28 to five felony charges of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, and misdemeanor charges of unlawful mischief and leaving the scene of an accident involving property damages.

Judge Robert Bent released Horner on conditions that he obey a curfew between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. at his home, not go within 1,000 feet of the Kelley View Farm in Derby, stay away from the Derby Village Store and not go within 300 feet of Caleb and Peggy Kelley, records show.

Vermont State Police Trooper Calvin Burns said in his affidavit that state police received a call Oct. 11 about a black pickup truck involved in a theft of hemp from the farm the night before.

Burns and another trooper went to the farm on Hinman Settler Road where they learned from Robert and Peggy Kelley that a surveillance video camera had caught two men who got out of a black pickup at the drying barn and took 10 plants.

Peggy Kelley told police she decided to try and catch the thieves in the act so she, Robert and another person staged their 2017 GMC pickup truck and 2018 GMC Terrain on the property on Oct. 11 to see if someone would return a second night, Burns stated.



At 9:20 p.m., a black pickup pulled into what's called the "hoop" barn, a large tented area open on one side, Burns said.

The Kelleys pulled their vehicles up to block the exit, and approached the two men inside the black pickup, Burns said. Peggy Kelley yelled at him, saying "What the f... do you think you're doing?" Burns stated.

The operator of the black pickup yelled at them to get out of the way so he could leave.

The operator's pickup struck both of the Kelley vehicles during the escape from the hoop barn, Burns said. No one was injured. Burns said the video camera caught the interaction and the damages done.

The operator was missing some fingers, Burns said. Peggy Kelley later identified him as Aaron Horner III, Burns said, who has a criminally suspended license. An arrest warrant was issued for Horner after police were unable to locate him, but it was rendered moot when Horner appeared in court, records show. The black truck had not been found when Burns filed his affidavit supporting the charges.

## Virginia

## 2 arrested in hemp theft, other suspects wanted



Jonathan Christopher Queen and Kwame Cooper. (Source: Greenville County Sheriff's Office)

By [NBC12 Newsroom](#) | September 25, 2019 at 4:18 PM EDT - Updated September 25 at 4:18 PM

GREENSVILLE, Va. (WWBT) - Two Petersburg men were arrested and charged with stealing agricultural hemp in Greenville County, and three suspects in a different hemp theft are wanted.

The Greenville County Sheriff's Office said Jonathan Christopher Queen and Kwame Cooper were charged with grand larceny, possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, felony eluding and possession of burglary tools after they were seen attempting to steal the hemp Sept. 24 and then led police on a chase. The men crashed on Commonwealth Boulevard and fled on foot before being apprehended.

A few days prior to the arrest, the sheriff's office said it had received several complaints of agricultural hemp theft by farmers in the area which led to four people being arrested.

The sheriff's office said farmers saw three suspects in a field attempting to steal hemp plants Sept. 19. The owners of the farm confronted the suspects and told them the sheriff's office had been called. The suspects then opened fire on the farmers and fled in a red or burgundy SUV.

The sheriff's office said hemp plants contain a low concentration of THC, which will not deliver the same effect as it will in marijuana.

## Hefty reward offered in hemp theft

•Monday, February 01, 2021

By MELINDA WILLIAMS  
[melinda@southwesttimes.com](mailto:melinda@southwesttimes.com)

CHRISTIANSBURG — After **burglars made off with enough hemp over the past week to result in a six-figure loss**, a Christiansburg producer decided it was time to offer up a reward.

John Straw, manager of True Harvest Farms in Christiansburg, said the business is offering a \$50,000 reward to anyone who can provide information leading to the conviction of the person or persons who made off with over 100 pounds of one variety of hemp flowers.

Straw said the business was first hit around Monday, Jan. 11, and again early this past Monday. He feels sure the culprits in both burglaries are the same because their method of making entry to the building, the product stolen, and other evidence in the thefts are identical.

He believes multiple suspects may be involved, but only one person entered the building each time. In both instances the suspect forced entry through the back door to the business and then multiple other doors to reach the species of hemp flower that was stolen.

In the first burglary, they made off with 60 pounds of one particular variety of hemp flowers and in the second instance they made off with the remaining 50 pounds of that same variety.

The variety stolen is legal to smoke in Virginia, just like there are other varieties and forms of CBD (cannabidiol) hemp that are legally available. The product is often used medicinally and does not get one high like THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) in marijuana. "We had about 10 different kinds in there, but they cleaned us out on that variety," he said. The suspect may not have initially been aware there is no high produced from the product, but, Straw said, they certainly should have realized it by the time the second burglary occurred if they were using it.

The value of the missing product is in excess of \$200,000, according to Straw. When the business first opened in the spring of 2019, it experienced some problems with people stealing hemp from its fields, but there had been no other thefts until recently. This is the first time the building has been burglarized.

The product in storage, including what was stolen, was grown last season.

## Virginia

### **\$250,000 worth of hemp stolen from Christiansburg farm**

TrueHarvest Farms offering cash reward after 'devastating' theft

**CHRISTIANSBURG, Va.** – A brazen break-in was reported not once, but twice at TruHarvest Farms in Christiansburg.

"I was just devastated. I walked into the room that morning and I just couldn't believe my eyes," said John Straw, the farm's general manager. He said a thief stole dozens of pounds of smokable hemp, a CBD product, that unlike THC in marijuana, will not get you high.

All in all, it's about a \$250,000 loss.

"When we came into work that morning and saw the carnage left behind and our missing product, we immediately called the police," said Straw.

The first break-in was caught on surveillance footage at the farm. It happened around 1 a.m. on January 4. The second break-in happened just before 2 a.m. on January 18. Both times, Straw said that the suspect used a private driveway and walked across a 4-acre cornfield to sneak in and out of a back entrance.

"It's definitely somebody who has inside information," said Straw. Once inside the facility, **security footage shows the suspect stealing a crowbar from Straw's toolbox and using it to break open doors to where the hemp was stored.** Straw said the suspect then stole 111 bags of hemp in total, each weighing one pound.

"They didn't look around. They didn't wander around. They knew exactly what they wanted, where it was, where to go and how to get it," said Straw. Man or woman, former or current employee, Straw isn't ruling anyone out. TruHarvest is working with the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office to find the suspect. The farm is offering a \$50,000 dollar reward for any information that leads to an arrest and a conviction.

"That's our livelihood. That's what we depend on," said Straw. "And to have people just break in and steal what we've been working all year for is very disheartening, very devastating."

## Virginia

# Virginia hemp growers face rash of crop thefts

by [Jonathan Cribbs](#) | Oct 18, 2019



*Kenny Powell, 52, inspects a hemp plant on his farm in Emporia, Va., on Oct. 11. **Powell and his sons have been patrolling their farm with guns since a group of hemp thieves fired at Powell's 24-year-old son Quinton last month.** (Photo by Jonathan Cribbs)*

EMPORIA, Va. — Quinton Powell and a friend were **patrolling his family's industrial hemp farm in a pickup one night last month when they discovered a group of men ripping plants from the ground and placing them into the back of a truck. When he confronted the group, one of the men raised a handgun and started firing. Several bullets struck Quinton's truck, narrowly missing his head, and the man continued to shoot as 24-year-old Quinton and his friend fled.**

Miraculously, no one was injured.

His father, who raced to the field, was stunned. It's their first year raising hemp.

"I had no idea that they were willing to take somebody's life over a d— few little plants," said Kenny Powell, 52.

The Sept. 19 incident was the most serious in a recent rash of hemp thefts that have shocked farmers and law enforcement officials in southern Virginia. In March, the state legislature legalized the commercial production of industrial hemp, and more than 1,000 farmers quickly registered to grow it. More than 2,000 acres were planted statewide, according to the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

But the crop's arrival has been a boon for thieves and marijuana dealers who have targeted farms in Greensville, Brunswick and Dinwiddie counties, law enforcement officials said. While some have mistaken the pungent, flowery plants for marijuana, police said drug dealers are stealing hemp to mix it with illegal cannabis and boost their profits.

"I'm not surprised a lot of this has happened," said Maj. William B. Knott of the Dinwiddie County Sheriff's Office. "It's been an ongoing problem."

Since this season's crop began to mature a month and a half ago, police in Greensville and Dinwiddie have arrested more than 20 people in connection with hemp thefts.

Following the shooting on the Powells' farm, the Greenville County Sheriff's Office staked out their fields, hoping to catch someone in the act.

It worked. Five days later, deputies caught two men from Petersburg, a city about 40 miles north of the Powells. The confrontation led to a high-speed chase through downtown Emporia, which sits about 10 miles north of the Carolina border. The men crashed their vehicle in a Walmart parking lot and fled on foot. They were quickly caught, and police recovered a handgun.

Many of those arrested are from across the region — Petersburg, Norfolk, even Charlotte, N.C. When police checked the cell phone messages of one man charged, they discovered he had sent the location of the Powells' farm to friends across the state. He'd spotted the roadside field while driving.

"It's going to keep happening," said Detective Chris Rook of the Greenville County Sheriff's Office. "It's too tempting for them."

Twelve people were arrested in connection with thefts from a single Dinwiddie farm.

"I guess the word is out," Knott said.

After a series of thefts in Brunswick County, Sheriff Brian Roberts stationed deputies at a hemp field for several nights before making an arrest. Some farmers in the region have resorted to installing wildlife cameras in their fields to record any criminal activity, he said.

"I think all of this is new, and I think everybody is trying to learn what are the pros and cons, and what are the precautions" of raising hemp," he said.

Hemp theft has been reported in other parts of Virginia this year, but several state officials expressed surprise last week at the size of the problem in the southern part of the state. The agriculture department is eager to help farmers protect their hemp, but the thefts are mostly a law enforcement issue, said Erin Williams, a senior policy analyst coordinating the state's hemp program.

"I know it's frustrating for these growers to have to battle this component connected to this industry," she said. "We encourage applicants to be mindful of where they plant their crop."

For decades, hemp cultivation was illegal in the United States, but for the last several years, states have been permitted to raise it for research purposes. The market opened, however, when the federal government removed hemp from its list of controlled substances and legalized its production in the 2018 Farm Bill.

In response, the Virginia legislature also legalized production. Hemp is a form of cannabis sativa, along with marijuana, but growers are required to limit its THC level

to 0.3 percent. THC, short for tetrahydrocannabinol, is the primary psychoactive compound in marijuana that can make users high. Regulators will force farmers to destroy a hemp crop whose THC level exceeds that limit. The crop can be processed into many products, including rope, building materials, auto parts, animal feed, cosmetics, oil and food additives.

Though there's no national data yet, theft across the country appears to be common. Some incidents have also led to threats and violence. In Fresno County, Calif., where hemp theft has reportedly been a growing problem this year, a man threatened a farmer with a gun before driving away with stolen hemp on Sept. 27. Days later, police said, a group of more than 15 people invaded his farm to steal again. No arrests were reported.

In Pulaski County, Ky., a farmer reportedly captured at gunpoint a thief with a trash bag of stolen hemp on Sept. 22. Police arrested that man. Later that night, police returned to the farm for another burglary call and arrested two others. Erica Stark, executive director at the National Hemp Association, said she's surprised at the rash of recent crimes.

"This is the first I'm hearing about it on a bigger scale," she said. Hemp production nationwide is growing quickly. About 32,000 acres of industrial hemp were planted nationwide in 2018, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This year, more than 144,000 acres have been recorded as of Oct. 1. Up to 47 states now permit some form of cultivation.

"We've seen expansion everywhere," Stark said. That growth is likely driving the increase in crime, she said. Thieves could also be stealing the plants for the hemp flowers, which, alone, can fetch hundreds of dollars per pound.

"It's a shame this is a conversation that we even need to be having, but it is happening," she said. "What the ultimate solution is, I don't know."

The Virginia thefts were a concern last week for Maryland agricultural officials who oversee the state's hemp research program. More than 60 farmers, partnered with local universities, registered to grow about 1,400 acres of hemp in Maryland this year, said Jim Drews, program manager for the agriculture department's turf and seed section. The state is waiting for final federal guidelines on hemp production before allowing farmers to grow independently.

Drews said he hadn't heard of any farmers dealing with serious theft issues. But that could change soon, said Andrew Ristvey, a University of Maryland Extension agent working with the program.

"This is exactly what (we) were very worried about," he said. "If that's happening, then our local farmers are going to feel this too."

It's one reason the state agriculture department advised hemp farmers to plant in secluded areas, he said.

Hemp theft in southern Virginia has died down since law enforcement officials made their arrests. Prosecutions in those cases have not started, Knott said, but he hopes they send a message to potential thieves looking to target vulnerable fields. He's also looking forward to the end of hemp season.

"We're doing some proactive patrols (around fields), which we did, are doing and will continue to do until we harvest the crop, which I hope will be very soon," he said.

In Emporia, the Powells have chosen to take security into their own hands. Every night since the shooting, Quinton, his 26-year-old brother, Kaleb Powell, or Kenny sit in the fields, armed, monitoring the darkness.

The crop has been a savior. Due to the trade war between the United States and China, the Powells lost long-held, overseas tobacco contracts in the spring, placing their multi-generational farm at risk. He partnered with a friend to grow hemp, which they're processing into CBD oil for the retail market. He grew 200 acres this year and expects he'll raise more in the future.

"If it hadn't been for this hemp, they would have sold every d— thing I ever worked for in my life," Kenny said.

He was standing watch over his field in the dark with an assault rifle strapped to his chest. When he imagines the shooting, it still shocks him.

"I'm a red-blooded, American farmer, and my daddy taught to me shoot, and I taught my boys to shoot, but I never thought we'd have to tote a gun here and worry about getting killed," he said.



<https://youtu.be/jnhwrgFqyXg>

Virginia hemp farmer carries gun to protect crop, kids: 'They shot at my flesh and blood'

Washington

## Hemp farmer loses \$70,000 in plants to thieves who think it's marijuana

by Megan Magensky | KEPR-TV News  
Tuesday, October 29th 2019

FRANKLIN COUNTY, Wash. — A Franklin County hemp farmer is losing tens of thousands of dollars in plants to thieves that are taking the hemp thinking it's marijuana.

"They think it's something that it isn't, and that's why they're doing what they're doing," said Matthew Morrell, the owner of MM Hay Services, LLC. One of his fields is just off of Highway 395 in Franklin County.

It's now time to harvest, but thieves are stealing Morrell's crop.

**"We started off with a few plants here and there getting pulled, and it's gradually just ramped up kind of out of control to where last night (Sunday) we had people that were armed getting out of vehicles to come steal plants," Morrell said.**

The plants look and smell like marijuana, but hemp can't get you high. Hemp plants have less than .3 percent THC, which is the chemical that creates psychological effects. Marijuana plants can have up to 30 percent.

### *KEPR-TV News Video*

"People are going to be stupid and go out and try to steal it and get high with it and it's not going to happen," said Franklin County Sheriff Jim Raymond. He said they've arrested several people in connection to theft and trespassing in the hemp field.

Growing hemp in the U.S. just became legal in February. Morrell's hemp plants make CBD oil which he said Walgreens and CVS buy to put in medication. Morrell said people need to get used to seeing the plant and educate themselves on what it is.

"It's just a standard crop like corn or wheat or alfalfa or anything else now," Morrell said.

Morrell said the thieves have stolen around \$70,000 worth of hemp plants. "I've had to hire people to come out here and patrol to try to keep people from stealing the crop from us," Morrell said.

## Wisconsin

# Men allegedly tried to steal hemp from Columbia County farm field

TOWN OF COLUMBUS — A Madison man was arrested after he and three other men allegedly got a car stuck while trying to steal industrial hemp from a Columbia County farm. Noah Verma Oct 10, 2019

Lorrell Anthony McCray, 31, faces up to 4 1/2 months in prison and \$5,000 in fines after prosecutors say he and the others tried to steal industrial hemp from a licensed hemp farm in the town of Columbus.

According to the criminal complaint, a sheriff's sergeant discovered McCray and three other men inside a vehicle stuck in the mud alongside the railroad tracks near an industrial hemp field. Inside the vehicle, he found several large garbage bags and steak knives and observed a beaten-down path leading from the vehicle toward the hemp field. The next day, one of the hemp farm owners reported finding a large garbage bag filled with hemp on the property.

One of the other men, Naaman Dorenzo, 34, of Sun Prairie, is charged with operating a vehicle without a valid license in the same incident, per online court records.

"We want people to know there are licensed hemp farms registered properly throughout the state and here in Columbia County," said Jason Kocovsky, sheriff's captain. "Going onto their property and removing (hemp plants) is, of course, illegal, just as it would be stealing items from other farmers."

Though the motive for stealing from the hemp farm near Columbus remains unclear, Kocovsky said hemp often shares similar physical characteristics to marijuana. He said it is possible someone might attempt to sell the hemp thinking it is marijuana.

Plant confusion?

Department of Agricultural Trade and Consumer Protection spokeswoman Donna Gilson said she was surprised to learn of the incident in Columbia County and wondered if any alleged perpetrators might assume a hemp crop is marijuana.

"But if it's growing right in plain view, it's probably not marijuana," she said.

It's not the first such incident that's occurred locally this fall, Kocovsky said, though nobody else has been arrested for it. "We're starting to see this more often and we're confused, at this point, as to their purpose."

"We want people to realize there is this pilot program for hemp, and if somebody sees what they believe is marijuana, we encourage them to call the sheriff's office," Kocovsky said of the department's education efforts. "We can run that location or address through our records to see if they're licensed."

"We also want people to be mindful that these are farmers trying to earn a living, and when people are stealing their product, at the end of the day, they have nothing to sell and they're the ones losing out."

In 2017, the federal government allowed states to create a pilot research program permitting people to cultivate industrial hemp. The substance remained banned in Wisconsin until the state Department of Justice ruled in May 2018 that farmers could grow industrial hemp under the pilot program and that stores could sell CBD produced in compliance with regulations set by the state Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection.

Hemp plants also commonly are used for grain and fiber. There are currently 52 registered hemp farm locations (fields or greenhouses) in Columbia County and 1,240 growers registered in the state, Gilson said.

"We really want people to educate themselves before they pay for a license or buy seed — to be aware, first, of what you'll do with that crop," Gilson said and reported 10 to 12 percent of the samples her department tests for THC exceed the legal limit, which is 0.3 percent or less in all parts of the plant when dried.

"Everybody is still learning about it and so we want people to get into it with eyes wide open. We want them to succeed, but it is high risk" because it's difficult to farm correctly and lawfully. "Maybe five years from now it will be less risky."

## Wisconsin

### Two suspects arrested for stealing hemp plants from Columbia County grower's field



September 18, 2020

SPRINGVALE (WKOW) -- The Columbia County Sheriff's Office says deputies arrested two people accused of stealing legally grown and licensed industrial hemp plants. The suspects are Barbara Vant Hoff, age 59, and Gregory Vant Hoff, age 64, of Beaver Dam.

On Sept. 12 a landowner in Springvale called the Columbia County Sheriff's Office after interrupting the theft of his plants. As the suspects drove off, the landowner was able to get the license plate number of their vehicle.

The landowner told the authorities he believed these same suspects had stolen hemp from the land before.

Officers from the Beaver Dam Police Department helped a Columbia County detective make contact with the suspects Sept. 17 in Beaver Dam.

According to authorities, the suspects admitted to stealing the hemp flower on two occasions, believing the plants were illegal marijuana plants.

Investigators **recovered approximately 10 pounds of stolen hemp flower, with an approximate value of \$1,000.**

The Vant Hoffs were taken into custody by the Columbia County Sheriff's Office with the assistance of the Beaver Dam Police Department and are now in the Columbia County Jail awaiting a court appearance.

The following charges are being referred to the Columbia County District Attorney's Office:

Misdemeanor- Theft, 2 counts

Felony- Criminal damage to property, 2 counts

Trespass to land, 2 counts

The Columbia County Sheriff's Office is reminding everyone that industrial hemp plants are grown legally throughout Columbia County. The Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection administers the industrial hemp program in the State of Wisconsin. Industrial hemp plants have many uses and are commonly grown to make CBD products.