

12/24/14

McDonald Conditional Use
CU-14-00005

I am commenting on this conditional use application as both a veterinarian and concerned county resident. The allowed and conditional use "marijuana production and processing" in the land use zones Commercial Agricultural 20 and Agricultural 20 has been proven to be ill-advised as evidenced by the BOCC's recent retraction and removal of these uses from these two agricultural zones. This allowed use has been appropriately placed in the Industrial zone, which reflects the stringent requirements necessary for the production and processing of a pharmaceutical drug, and demonstrates marijuana production and processing are incompatible with local agriculture and with the rural character of the county.

This application is not vested because it is a conditional use and should be denied based on the reasoning used by the BOCC to change the zoning code to remove marijuana production and processing from Comm AG 20 and AG20 as an allowed and conditional use. Current county code should prevail. The BOCC determined by their decision that marijuana production and processing is incompatible on any parcel size in these two agricultural zones. Denial would be consistent with the finding of facts for that decision.

The immediate area surrounding the proposal is characterized by rural residential homes on varying acreage where the raising of livestock and ownership of pets are predominant and is consistent with rural character.

Marijuana is known to be toxic to domestic animals. There are many reported cases of dogs being poisoned by marijuana, mostly due to ingestion of edible products. Cats to a lesser extent have been poisoned also. While most cases recover, veterinary intervention is necessary in severe cases resulting in veterinary costs and in a few cases, death of the pet. In fact I treated a dog for accidental ingestion of a large marijuana brownie this last summer and my colleagues have had other similar cases.

Cattle and horses are also susceptible to marijuana poisoning. Because of the past illegal status of marijuana, potential exposure has been limited to illegal grows on public and private rangelands (but also heavily guarded), and on croplands where the illegal grows are hidden. The dynamics have now changed due to the legalization in the state and potential contacts with escaped plants or concentration of plants by accidental access will increase and are real concerns. Production of livestock and performance and pleasure horses are significant benefits to the economy of Kittitas County along with the value of export agricultural crops such as timothy hay. Marijuana production in rural and agricultural lands threatens the real agricultural economy of Kittitas County.

As a former resource land manager for the USFS I have witnessed high cattle death loss and decreased production of surviving cattle from ingestion of poisonous plants and it is devastating to a herd and creates economic hardship on the cattle producer. By approving this proposal potential exposure to a known poisonous plant has been increased.

The following information on marijuana concerning cattle and horse is excerpted from *Poisonous Vascular Plants* published by North Carolina State University, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/plantbiology/ncsc/Poisonplants/Vascular_plants.htm)

...*Cannabaceae - Hemp Family*

Cannabis sativa L. - Marijuana, Hemp, Indian Hemp

Description: (Fig. 6) A coarse, rough-stemmed annual to 12 ft. tall; palmately divided leaves with 3-7 leaflets which are narrow and coarsely toothed; leaves opposite below and alternate in the upper portion of the plant; flowers small and green, the sexes separate.

Habitat: Escaped cultivation in waste places or old fields.

Distribution: Rare as an escape; illegally planted in various parts of the state. Native of Asia.

Group number: 3. (Dangerous but uncommon)

Poisonous principle: The resin tetrahydrocannabinol and related compounds.

Parts of plant: Leaves but highest concentration in flower stalks.

Periodicity: Most dangerous in summer during hot weather.

Animals poisoned: Cattle and horses.

Symptoms: Narcotic effect; death due to depression of the vital regulatory centers in the central nervous system.

Treatment: Remove from source. Respiratory and cardiac stimulants with supportive therapy.

Necropsy: Congestion and ecchymotic hemorrhages of various organs...

In summary, the BOCC has the legal standing to deny this application because it is inconsistent with county zoning code and rural character.

Paula J Thompson DVM
551 Goodwin Road
Thorp, WA 98946

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www.cals.ncsu.edu/plantbiology/fncsc/Poisonplants/Vascular_plants.htm cattle

[sedatives](#); oil type [cathartic](#) to reduce absorption of toxic compounds.

Cannabaceae - Hemp Family

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