

Frequently Asked Questions

About the CalCannabis Appellations Project

► What is an appellation of origin?

An appellation of origin is a certified designation that identifies the geographical origin of a product and sometimes how that product was produced. For example, established political boundaries, such as country, state, or county, are accepted as basic appellations of origin for wine in the United States.

► How will the appellations system for cannabis differ from the United States' appellations system for wine?

The American Viticultural Areas (AVA) is the name of the appellation system currently used to designate the geographical indication (GI) protections for wine. The AVA model focuses on geographical characteristics of wine-growing regions and the designation of wine varietals, but does not regulate production standards and practices. Since the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) is tasked with including “standards, practices, and varietals” for cannabis, we would like to hear from you on how an appellations system for cannabis may compare to the AVA or other existing models for wine.

► How will the California Department of Food and Agriculture establish a statewide cannabis appellations system?

California law requires the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) to create a process by which state-licensed cannabis cultivators may establish appellations. Cultivators may petition CDFA to establish a cannabis appellation.

► What are the current county-of-origin requirements?

California Business and Professions Code section 26063 states: No later than January 1, 2018, the California Department of Food and Agriculture shall establish standards by which a licensed cultivator may designate a county of origin for cannabis. To be eligible for the designation, 100 percent of the cannabis shall be produced within the designated county, as defined by finite political boundaries. *(continued)*

(1) Cannabis shall not be advertised, marketed, labeled, or sold as grown in a California county when the cannabis was not grown in that county.

(2) The name of a California county, including any similar name that is likely to mislead consumers as to the origin of the product, shall not be used in the advertising, labeling, marketing, or packaging of cannabis products unless the cannabis contained in the product was grown in that county.

The California Department of Food and Agriculture would like your input on how the county-of-origin standards can be expanded upon; for example, consider whether there should be regulations for implementation, compliance, and labeling.

► **What is the difference between county-of-origin standards and an appellations system?**

County-of-origin standards apply to all cannabis products, regardless of cultivation method. In contrast, appellations allow licensed cultivators to recognize cannabis-growing areas within and beyond county boundaries, and to create specific requirements for how cannabis is grown in those appellations.

The appellations system is not intended to replace or override county-of-origin standards.

► **What is the purpose of an appellations system and establishing standards for a county of origin?**

Both promote regional products and local businesses, prevent the misrepresentation of the origin of a product, and support consumer confidence about the origin and certain characteristics of a product.

► **When can I apply for the establishment of a cannabis appellation in California?**

The California Department of Food and Agriculture is required to establish the process for cannabis appellations by January 1, 2021.

► **What are the requirements for establishing cannabis appellations?**

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) will use input from these workshops to develop requirements for establishing cannabis appellations in California through the rulemaking process. For updates, please visit CDFA's CalCannabis Cultivation Licensing's website at calcannabis.cdfa.ca.gov.