



INTERVIEW REGARDING

## Amazon's Hemp Market

This interview was conducted by CBD Oracle via email on January 18, 2024, and is provided here for full transparency. Learn more about [CBD Oracle's Editorial Policy](#).

## Kelly Lombard

Founder

Forge Hemp Company

Kelly founded Forge Hemp Company in 2019 with a line of small-batch THC-Free CBD products made from Colorado-grown industrial hemp.

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**CBD Oracle:** How would you describe the quality of hemp products available on Amazon? Can customers be sure they're getting what is advertised?

**Kelly:** I'm very concerned about the quality and content of hemp products offered by brands that don't physically exist outside of Amazon. There's no quality control by Amazon and no accountability to any state hemp regulations or U.S. manufacturing standards. Amazon's superpower has always been to connect U.S. consumers with overseas manufacturers. That works for hard goods, but I believe there should be higher standards for products coming into the country that are intended for human consumption.

My advice is to do a web search for the brand name of any type of consumable or topical product you're considering ordering through Amazon -- whether or not it contains hemp. If they don't have their own



website with physical location and contact information, or their products are only available through Amazon and sketchy 3rd party distribution sites, don't buy them.

**CBD Oracle:** What has your experience selling hemp on Amazon been like? Would you recommend it to other hemp brands?

**Kelly:** Our brief experience reaching a national audience through Amazon was incredible, and the customer feedback on our products was excellent. If a hemp company is able to thread the needle by complying with Amazon's requirements and also serving consumers with high-quality products and transparent information, then I recommend selling qualifying products on Amazon.

**CBD Oracle:** Many products on Amazon don't pass a basic sense-check (e.g. 2,600,000 mg, i.e. 2.6 kg, of hemp extract supposedly in a product weighing less than 250 g) and make unapproved medical claims. Do you think that products like this erode trust in genuine hemp products?

**Kelly:** Amazon has demonstrated that they don't understand the difference between hemp seed oil and hemp extract that contains cannabinoids. As long as sellers are vague about a product's contents, Amazon doesn't seem to care. This is problematic because U.S. consumers need more information about hemp and CBD, not less. Amazon's convenience and return policy may entice more consumers to try hemp products, but if their experience is negative, that hurts the industry.

Sellers advertising "high potency" hemp products with millions of milligrams are taking advantage of Americans' lack of knowledge about the metric system. Amazon's own guidelines prohibit products from making false or misleading claims, and these products are an easy example of such.

**CBD Oracle:** Have you had any interactions or issues with Amazon's enforcement team? Have your products ever been taken off the storefront?

**Kelly:** In our experience, Amazon flags and restricts products and brands via automation, then it's on the seller to contact a human to sort out why and get back into compliance. Our primary complaint about selling with Amazon is the inconsistency with which they flag and enforce guidelines. Elements they identified as unacceptable for our listings were displayed on many other brands' products. We felt they employed selective enforcement that benefitted high-volume, cheap overseas products, and negatively targeted our small domestic company.

**CBD Oracle:** Did you have to change your packaging, marketing, or branding in order to list your product on Amazon?

**Kelly:** Our company took the opportunity to redesign our packaging with an updated look to appeal to a national audience.

**CBD Oracle:** What would you recommend that Amazon does to improve the quality of hemp products on their site?



**Kelly:** I would love it if Amazon would bring in representatives from the hemp industry to evaluate the products currently available on their site and make recommendations to strengthen enforcement of their stated policies, or perhaps identify a pathway to expand hemp offerings. I don't think Amazon will choose to do this because they're making plenty of money on the current system and aren't burdened by additional accountabilities. ■