



STARTUPS

By NATALIE BROPHY

Four more WNY farmers licensed to grow recreational pot

Four more Western New York hemp farmers will be among the first in the state to grow recreational cannabis.

Hop-n-Hemp Tea, PC Development Corp. and Donald Spoth Farms, all in Erie County, and Hydro Grow NY, in Orleans County, were granted the licenses from the state Thursday. The conditional cultivator licenses allow them to grow marijuana and sell it to processors or dispensaries that will then sell to the public for recreational use.

The four growers join The Releaf Market in Jamestown, Yager Farms in Eden and Wheatfield Gardens in Wheatfield, which got their licenses in April.

There are now 88 growers across the state licensed to farm recreational cannabis.

The state Office of Cannabis Management will continue to review new license applications until June 30.

It's been a little over a year since former Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed the state's adult-use cannabis legalization bill into law. Regulators have spent months preparing for implementa-



Derek Gee/News file photo

A worker inspects marijuana plants at Tweed Farms in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont. Four Western New York farmers have been given conditional licences to grow and sell marijuana to processors or dispensaries for recreational use.

tion, and Gov. Kathy Hochul in February signed legislation to grant the conditional licenses in an effort to fast track the opening of the state's adult-use cannabis market.

The state still has not granted licenses for

retailers, but plans to give those first retail licenses to people affected by marijuana-related criminal convictions. Residents will be able to purchase recreational cannabis in New York later this year.