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Aphria's Recent Approval, Open Registration, And Product Availability

David Brown — November 29, 2014

Aphria has become the newest licensed producer added to the “Sell” list on Health Canada’s website, the 14th currently listed. Aphria is a Leamington, Ontario based producer with approximately 20,000 sq. ft. of grow space set within 15 acres of greenhouses that also house production space for hanging flowers and vegetables.

The company has been testing out dozens of possible strains over the past 6 months with hopes of focusing on a handful that will meet both patient demand and perform well in their greenhouse facilities. Health Canada’s new ‘phasing’ process has allowed the company to build up supply so that they can begin taking on patients in the coming days and shipping product in the coming weeks.

With 7-8 strains currently in storage, and several more expected after the next harvest in the coming weeks, Aphria hopes to offer 10-15 different strains over time. As with other producers like MedReleaf and Tweed, Aphria has opted to re-brand their strains with new names while still giving reference to the common or ‘street’ names. Their own strains will be named after Canadian lakes with the intention of slowly moving away from the colloquial terminology and focusing more on specific thc/cbd percentages and ratios. While they are still experimenting with over 40 different strains, over the next year they intend to zero in on 10-12 consistent genetic profiles that can represent points across the cannabinoid spectrum. They will be selling their medical marijuana in 10-gram increments.



Inside one of Aphria's greenhouses

“At this point today, we have about 70-80 lbs of dried marijuana, in our vault, representing 7 or 8 different strains, and over the next 2 crops, we will have another 11 strains, some supplementing the current 7 or 8” said the company’s CEO, Vic Nuefeld, in a recent interview with Lift. “At the end of this next harvest, which is this week, we will be in excess of 100 lbs, in our vault, ready for shipping, with new crops coming in every two weeks with proper crop rotations.”

Aphria – Celtic for “agreeable” – grow entirely in greenhouses as opposed to the full-enclosed indoor bunkers used by the majority of currently-approved Producers. Tweed Farms is the only other Greenhouse growing medical cannabis under natural lighting at the moment, although several other large-scale producers who are growing ‘under glass’ are currently in the approval process.

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Greenhouse production, Neufeld hopes, will allow them to have a far lower energy footprint than most fully-enclosed mmpr bunkers that rely entirely on artificial lighting. While the greenhouses still supplement with lights in the morning and evening in the fall, winter and spring, making advantage of the full-spectrum of free-flowing sunlight can help producers lower production costs enormously.

The company’s two lead growers John Cervini, the company’s VP and Founder and COO Cole Cacciavillani both have extensive agricultural experience, growing ornamental flowers and organic vegetables on their own for several decades. This experience, while not cannabis-related, has given the company extensive experience when it comes to managing plants in greenhouses. We’re excited to see how greenhouse-raised cannabis compares to what consumers have become used to from the MMPR.