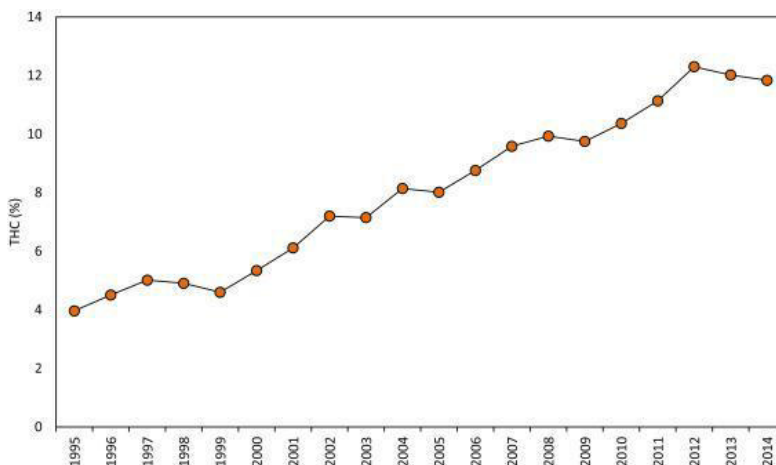


THC content

Status Quo

- The THC content of illicit cannabis products has steadily increased over the past 30 years (EISOhly et al. 2016)
- The most popular cannabis strains usually have more than 20% THC content (Royal Queen Seeds, 2022)
- Enormous increase in yields is achieved through:
 - Breeding for higher potency
 - Optimizing environmental conditions through protected cultivation (exposure, irrigation, temperature, fertilization, plant protection)
 - Use of sinsemilla plants (unpollinated female cannabis plants)



Cannabis flower today



Cannabis Flower from High Times Top Strains 1977

THC content of confiscated cannabis flowers in recent decades (EISOhly et al., 2016)

Arguments for a THC cap

- With higher THC content, the potential of side effects and addiction increases (Stuyt, 2018; Petrilli et al., 2022)
- Ease of entry for new users with products containing low levels of THC

Arguments against a THC cap

- Illicit market would continue to thrive with high-THC products
- Frequent users often prefer high THC levels (tolerance, habituation) and would not switch from the illegal to the legal market in case of a THC cap.
- Products in the illicit market may be laced with lethal, synthetic cannabinoids to achieve high potency

THC content

International examples of THC ceilings in recreational cannabis

State / Country	Regulation	Status of legislation	Source
Vermont	Flowers max. 30 % THC Extracts max. 60 % THC	Enforced	Mjbizdaily, 2021
Florida	Flowers max. 10 % THC Extracts max. 60 % THC	Not enforced	HB 1455
Massachusetts	Flowers and Vapes max. 10 % THC	Not enforced	HD 2841
Colorado	Max. 15 % THC in all cannabis products		HB21-1317
Montana	Max. 15 % THC in all cannabis products	Not enforced	SB 341
Washington	Extracts max. 30 % THC	Not enforced	HB 1463
Canada	Edibles max. 10mg THC/package Extracts max. 10mg THC/unit or max. 1000mg THC/package Topicals max. 1000mg THC/package flowers without THC additives	Enforced	Cannabis Act
Uruguay	Max 9% THC of commercially grown varieties; No regulation for home cultivation	Enforced	Weedmaps, 2021

Recommendation for possible regulation

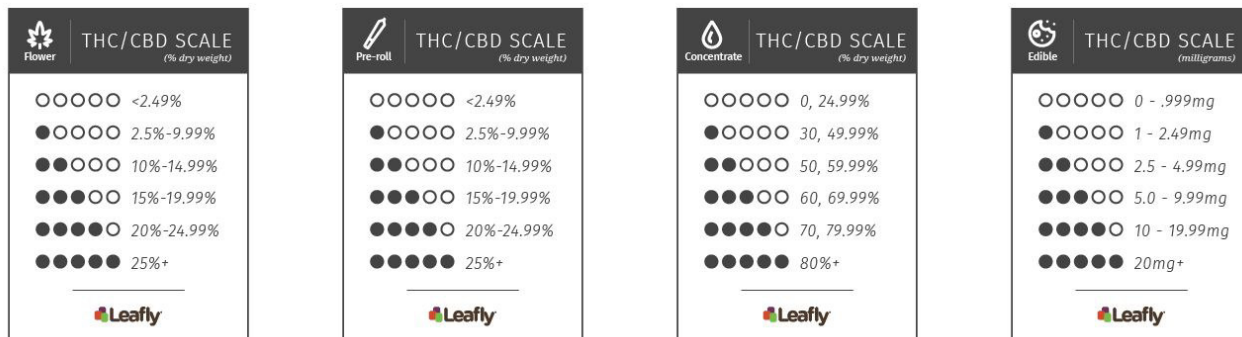
- No THC cap on cannabis flowers and extracts.
- THC upper limit on edibles conceivable (5-20 mg THC per unit of consumption) to avoid unintentional overdoses
- Offer wide range of products with different THC levels so that individual can choose preferred potency
- Tax the THC content to steer consumers towards cheaper products with lower THC content.
- Information on the THC content on the product packaging
- Educate consumers about the potential harm of high THC levels.
- Traffic light system with colors conceivable (red=high, orange=medium, green=low THC content)

Factsheet: Cannabis legalization

THC content

Possible marking of the potency

Example point system (Leafly 2017)



THC/CBD scales for different cannabis product categories

Example "traffic light system" for flowers

Type	THC-content	CBD-content	Traffic light color
Balanced THC/CBD ratio	6-12%	6-12%	green
Low THC content	<12%	<1%	green
Medium THC content	12-18%	<1%	yellow
High THC content	18-25%	<1%	red

Sources

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