



BRING GRASS TO LIFE™

U.S. SOD INDUSTRY CHECKOFF

WHAT IS A CHECKOFF?

Checkoff programs are industry-funded initiatives that improve the market position of a commodity by...

- Expanding markets
- Increasing demand
- Conducting market and scientific research
- Promoting industry initiatives and activities

HOW WOULD THE CHECKOFF WORK?

A board of producers, nominated by fellow producers, will invest checkoff dollars in national and consumer marketing collateral, agronomic and consumer research, promotional kits that can be customized by growers, and customer and regulator education and outreach, to increase the value of every square foot of sod for the US Sod Industry. The proposed assessment rate is 1/10th of one penny for every square foot of sod sold.



WHAT ARE SOME BENEFITS OF THE CHECKOFF?

The sod checkoff will benefit every producer and farm by increasing visibility and value of sod. That includes driving preference for natural sod with both consumers and customers. And by uniting the U.S. sod industry to protect and even grow market share in the face of competitors like artificial turf.

HOW DO WE GET TO A CHECKOFF?



ORDER

Industry leaders are working with USDA to submit a draft order that outlines the key points needed for an efficient, successful checkoff program has been written and submitted to USDA for review.



COMMENT

Once the Draft Order is approved, it will be published in the U.S. Federal Register for public viewing and commentary prior to a vote.



REGISTER

Every U.S. sod producer will be eligible to vote and can have a say on the future of a sod industry checkoff.



APPROVE + IMPLEMENT

Once passed, the program will be implemented and governed by sod producers, for sod producers to help increase value and profitability per square foot.

The U.S. sod industry can accomplish more together than any of us can do alone.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT THE U.S. SOD CHECKOFF WEBSITE – WWW.SODCHECKOFF.ORG



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HOW DID WE GET HERE?

Sod producers in US have been discussing the benefits of the checkoff since at least 1996, but in recent years, there has been more thoughtful discussions around how the industry can bring grass to life:

- 2017** — Discussions and thorough considerations began within the industry
- 2018** — Discussions began with the USDA Ag Marketing Service to explore the idea of a Sod Industry Checkoff
- 2019** — Discussions with American Farm Bureau around establishing a Sod Industry Checkoff
- EARLY 2020** — First stakeholder meeting to discuss potential interest in a Sod Industry Checkoff
- LATE 2020** — A formation committee of 14 U.S. Sod Producers began work on the draft order
- 2021** — First stakeholder meeting to discuss how a Sod Industry Checkoff program would work



PROTECT AND GROW MARKETS

The U.S. Sod Checkoff can help fight against regulations like grass bans, fertilizer bans, invasive species lists, building codes, etc.

Cease-sale initiatives, (Missouri, 2020)
Lawn Removal Incentives, (CA, TX ongoing)
Legislative Fertilizer Bans, (Florida, in-effect)
Legislative Lawn Bans, (Maine, 2014)
Legislative Lawn Equipment Bans, (New York, 2020)
Legislative Grass Bans, (Maryland, 2021)

Marketing can help combat competitive products in the marketplace, not just synthetic turf.

Research can help gain insights into generational attitudes towards lawns, which are currently shifting in the wrong direction.

CHANGE THE NARRATIVE

Consumer messaging research can help to educate consumers on the benefits of sod, helping them make more informed decisions.

Scientific research on ecosystem services can change the narrative around lawns in terms of smart irrigation, drought tolerance, low-input grasses, etc.

A U.S. Sod Checkoff could create a network for monitoring headlines for negative media and responding to them swiftly, effectively, and in unison with one voice.

LOCAL MARKETING SUPPORT

Nationally recognized marketing firms with experience in not only checkoffs, but also the turfgrass industry, will help to build tools for marketing & communication.

National recognized brands and influencers can be tapped into to expand our reach.

Marketing tools for farms to access and promote their products locally, to achieve a consistent message across the industry.

U.S. SOD CHECKOFF PROGRAM



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