

BRING GRASS TO LIFE™

U.S. SOD INDUSTRY CHECKOFF

SOD CHECKOFF INVOICING

By Casey Reynolds, PhD

One of the more common questions I get while out on the road speaking to sod producers and sod associations about the potential sod checkoff program is, of course, “What does it cost?” One of the perspectives that is now emerging from many producers is that it shouldn’t cost anything. How? By invoicing customers for the checkoff assessment, sod producers become a pass-through.

The Commodity Promotion Research and Information Act of 1996 even lays out the language for this under Subtitle B—Issuance of Orders for Promotion, Research, and Information Activities Regarding Agricultural Commodities. It states under section (5); Generic promotion, research, and information activities for agricultural commodities, paid by the producers and others in the industry who reap the benefits of such activities, provide a unique opportunity for producers to inform consumers about a particular agricultural commodity.

There is no doubt that landscapers, athletic field managers, golf course superintendents, and others in the green industry will benefit by having a checkoff program promoting natural grass. Many of the associations who represent these industries have even gone on

Here is the first of two sample invoices for potential ways to handle the proposed checkoff:



Sod Farm Co.
Real Grass, Real Fast

12345 Grass Hwy - Anytown - USA
Phone: (888) 555-1234 Fax: (888) 555-4321
Email: SodFarmCo@email.com
www.SodFarmCo.com

Fax #

Invoice

Invoice #: 00056031

Bill To: ABC Landscape
789 Yard Way
Metropolis, US 12345

Ship To: ABC Landscape
456 City Ct
Happy Town, US 12345

SALESPERSON		PO #	SHIP VIA	TERMS	DATE	
Andrea			Roger	C.O.D.	5/12/2022	
Qty	Item No	Description		Price	Unit	Extended Tx
6,300	6060	KBG Sod, P/U, W, Tier 1		\$0.235	Sq Ft	\$1,480.50 X
9	5090	Pallet Deposit		\$15.00	Each	\$135.00
1	7020	Base Delivery, W		\$350.00		\$350.00 X
6,300	1500	Sod Checkoff		\$0.001	sq ft	\$6.30

** If payment is not made by due date, a 2% service charge will be added to the unpaid balance - retroactive to the date of invoice. Carrier assumes all liabilities during transport and delivery. Not responsible for accidents to sidewalks, driveways, etc. Purchaser acknowledges sod is perishable even under the best of conditions and particularly perishable in hot weather or when the purchaser does not immediately install and water sod. If the sod is defective, purchaser agrees to immediately contact Sod Farm Co. to notify of the defect. If purchaser makes a payment with a check that is dishonored for any reason, purchaser acknowledges they shall reimburse Sod Farm Co.'s attorney fees, including litigation, administrative costs and expenses, related to Sod Farm Co.'s efforts to collect on the check.


SOD IS PERISHABLE - MUST BE INSTALLED SAME DAY

Thank you!	Sale Amount \$1,971.80 Sales Tax \$109.83 Total Amount \$2,081.63 Paid Today \$0.00
Returned checks will be subject to a \$30.00 service charge.	BALANCE DUE \$2,081.63

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U.S. SOD INDUSTRY CHECKOFF

Here is the second of two sample invoices for potential ways to handle the proposed checkoff:



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Qty	Item No	Description		Price	Unit	Extended Tx
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SOD IS PERISHABLE - MUST BE INSTALLED SAME DAY

Thank you!	Sale Amount \$1,965.50 Sales Tax \$109.83 Checkoff \$6.30 Total Amount \$2,081.63 Paid Today \$0.00
Returned checks will be subject to a \$30.00 service charge.	BALANCE DUE \$2,081.63

record saying they support the sod checkoff initiative.

The National Association of Landscape Professionals (NALP), the Sports Field Management Association (SFMA), the U.S. Golf Association (UGA) Green Section, the American Farm Bureau, and others have stated that they understand the need for national and local research and promotion efforts to protect and promote green space.

In almost a year of travel now, talking about the checkoff with sod producers, there are varying opinions about the impact of a one-tenth of one penny assessment to a producer’s bottom line. Some producers see it as a small amount of money, while other producers see it as significant.

I have even had some producers jokingly say that if a customer complains about one-tenth of one penny per square foot that they would just have them call the checkoff and complain to them, not the producer. The checkoff staff could then tell them that the 50 cents per pallet assessment they just paid is going to ensure that they continue to have lawns and other green spaces to manage for many years to come. As stated above, they certainly would reap the benefits of research and promotion activities on natural grass. We are all in this industry together.

Casey Reynolds, PhD, is executive director of Turfgrass Producers International.

