

BRING GRASS TO LIFE™

U.S. SOD INDUSTRY CHECKOFF

BRINGING GRASS TO LIFE THROUGH A U.S. SOD INDUSTRY CHECKOFF

By Erin Heidecker

The Sod Checkoff's #1 goal will be to increase the value per square foot of sod, and in turn, increase profit opportunities for all sod producers across the U.S. This will include programs to increase preference for sod with consumers, educate customers like field managers and landscapers on the benefits of natural grass, and promote nationally to combat competitors.

Can you imagine the endless opportunities that could come from a group of sod producers just like you working to ensure there is a market and demand for your product for years and even decades to come? How would you feel about not only creating the largest single recurring source of annual natural grass research funding in the world, but having sod producers in charge of it? These are the many realities of a U.S. Sod Industry Checkoff.

Customer Education is Key

Customers are inundated with messaging and research, featuring both pros and cons for natural grass. Combining resources and putting checkoff dollars to work through national messaging campaigns and customer outreach can help us tell the story of natural grass.

Recent studies were conducted to understand how local community leaders perceive turfgrass — its benefits, weaknesses and how they are comparing turfgrass to synthetic. A key finding from that research shows consumers confuse natural grass with the words turf, turfgrass, and natural turfgrass. They also often confuse the positive and negative attributes, blurring the line between the many benefits of natural grass over artificial turf.

Educating decision-makers about natural grass is imperative, as learning more about the surface increases the likelihood they will consider it in the future. After they

THEMES

Mixture of Artificial and Natural Grass

Feels/ Looks Like Natural Grass

High Quality and High Initial Cost

Environmentally-friendly

Athletic Fields

Rough Texture

Durable

WHEN YOU READ THE WORD "NATURAL TURFGRASS," WHAT COMES TO MIND?

A synthetic blend of natural and artificial grass.

A product that is all natural looking with the benefits of synthetic turfgrass.

Artificial grass made with natural materials.

Very easy to be kept up and not die on you. Keep it together and it will stay easily.

Specific blend of grasses that are used to enhance playing fields.

Turfgrass designed well to look natural and perform well.

"NATURAL TURFGRASS" IS A CONFUSING TERM, MAKING DECISION-MAKERS THINK OF BOTH ARTIFICIAL AND NATURAL GRASS.

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were given a better description, decision-makers were **80 percent more likely to consider this over artificial sources because of the environmental and aesthetic qualities.**

There's endless research to be done around natural grass, and the checkoff is the strongest way to build communications that can directly reach our customers. With an industry-wide checkoff, we can build a unified voice and change the narrative around the benefits of natural grass through insightful research and impactful promotions for many years to come.

Straight Facts About the Sod Checkoff

Every checkoff was started for the same reason—to increase demand for a product through marketing, research and/or promotion.



Checkoffs are not government programs. They are created by producers of the product, voted on by producers and run by producers. USDA will not have direct access to you or your records, and they do not show up on your farm. Checkoff dollars do not go to the government either — they flow straight into the U.S. Sod Checkoff Board to fund demand-driving programs.

Return on Investment through Research

Wondering what other industry checkoffs have done for their products? Return on investment (ROI) is an important factor to consider when determining if a checkoff is working for the industry.

Checkoffs are required to conduct regular ROI studies to determine if checkoff investments are benefiting producers. Following is a sampling of recent checkoff ROI studies looking at the return back to producers for every dollar invested.

If you are interested in learning more about the benefits of the proposed U.S. Sod Checkoff, please visit www.sodcheckoff.org.



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