

Green Certification Program for Lawn and Landscape Care Professionals



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63,244 mi² (\pm 13,842 mi²) of land are cultivated with turf grasses in the continental United States (KY + WV = 64k mi²)

(1.6-1.7% of land area in turfgrass)

Milesi, C., Running, S.W., Elvidge, C.D. et al.
Environmental Management (2005) 36: 426.
doi:10.1007/s00267-004-0316-2



604,000 acres of turfgrass
(2.34% of land area in turfgrass)

5,985,300 acres of harvested acres (corn, soybeans, wheat, tobacco, hay) NASS 2016

9.2% of “cropped” area in turfgrass

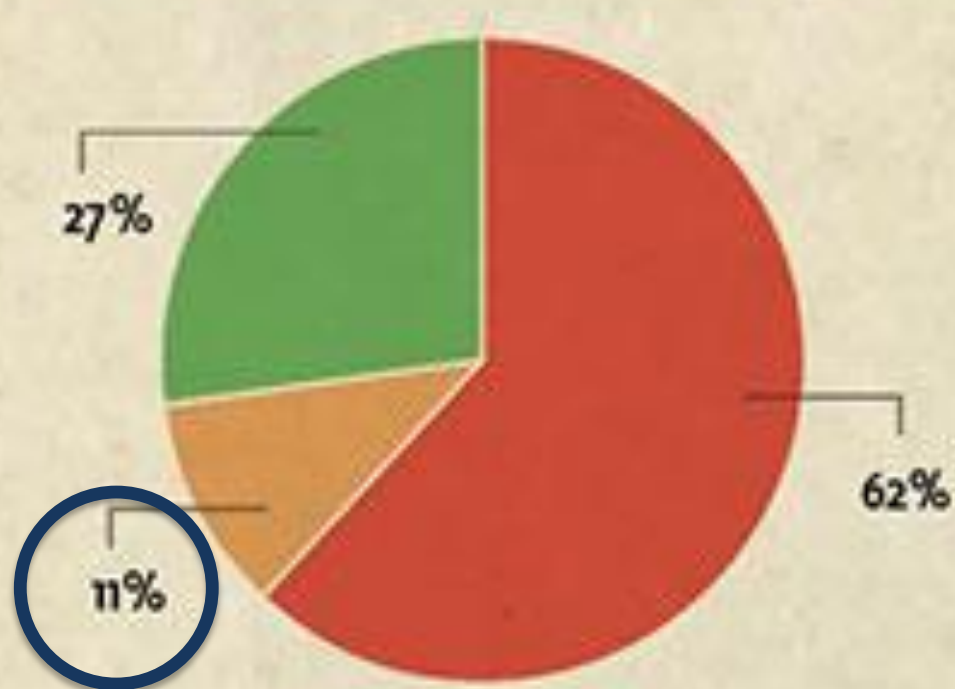
Who chemically treats lawns?

Do you treat your lawn, shrubs or trees with fertilizer, weed killer or insect control products?

Yes, I do it myself

Yes, I have a contractor do it

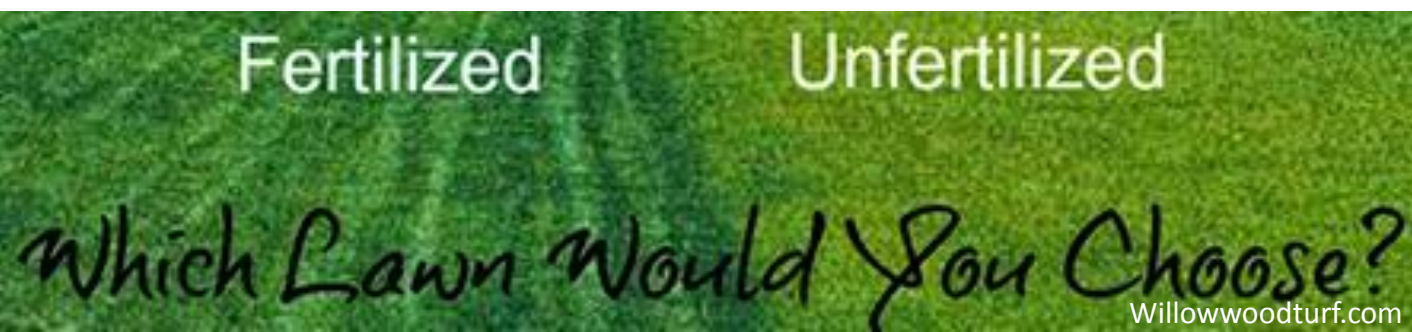
No



What is missing?



Education & Regulation



MS4 Permit Requests from EPA

– *Education/Outreach for Commercial Activities*

- The number of educational materials that were distributed to **business owners and operators**
- The number of **certified businesses** that participated in a training for a “green certification” program
- The number of **businesses** trained under a training program

MS4 Permit Requests from EPA

– *Lawn and Garden Activities*

- The number of **partnerships** established with local lawn care **businesses**
- The number of **partnerships** established with **lawn care suppliers/retail stores**
- The number of requests for soil testing
- The number of municipal employees trained in proper lawn care practices

Green Certification Program (tentative)

½ to ¾ day class

- MS4 goals
- Impacts to water quality
- BMPs
- Sustainable strategies for green lawns
- Business model revision
 - Less chemicals
 - More service (soil tests)



Part of the established Kentucky Certified Professional Turf Managers program conducted cooperatively with the Kentucky Department of Agriculture

Business model changes (example)

- More services: Soil tests every 3 years (*diagnostics*)
- Instead of a complete fertilizer (N-P-K), only N needs to be applied unless soil test reveals the need for P and/or K (*precision application*)
- Each lawn is evaluated independently based on its fertility needs (*personalized service*)

Upselling works...

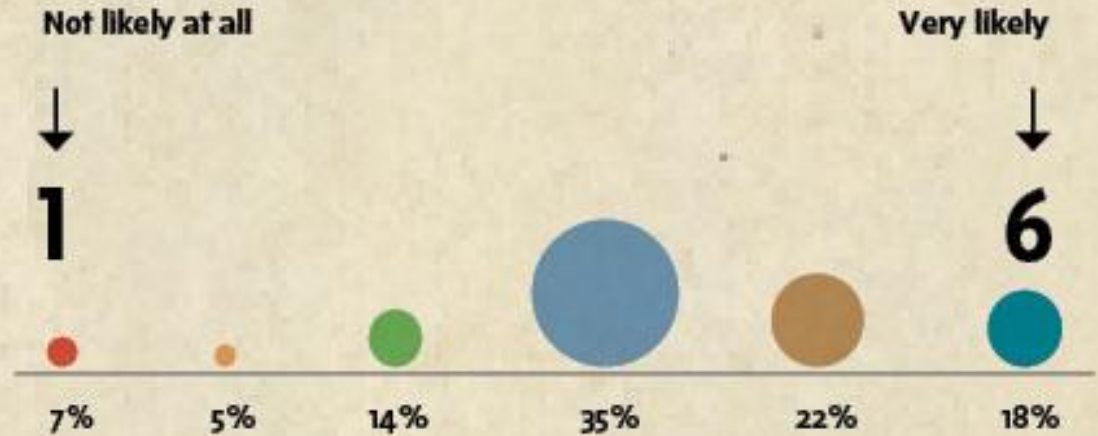
Program will improve MS4

Lawn & Landscape
MARKET LEADERSHIP

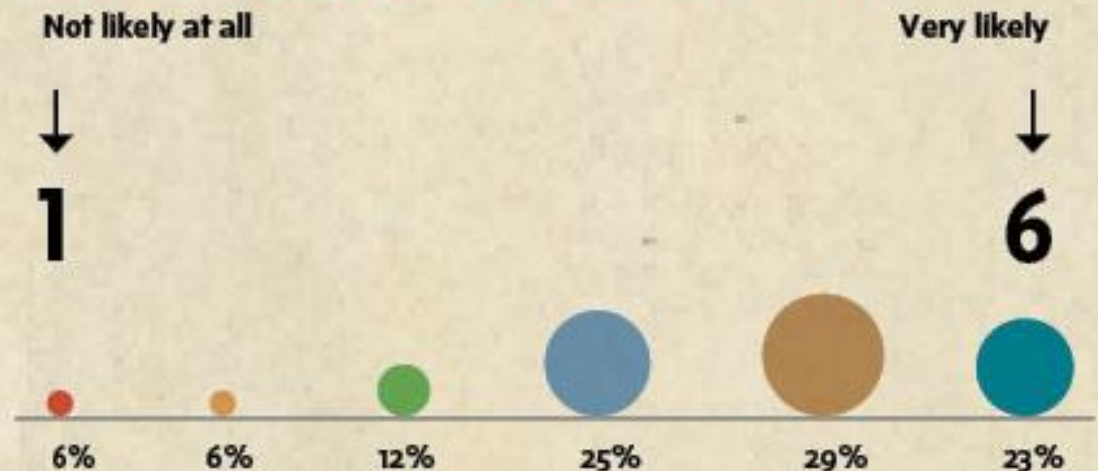
2013 Survey of 675 lawn owners across US

On a scale of 1 to 6, how likely are you to buy more than the basic treatments to make your lawn and plants healthier or more attractive when the treatments are recommended by your contractor?

Homeowners

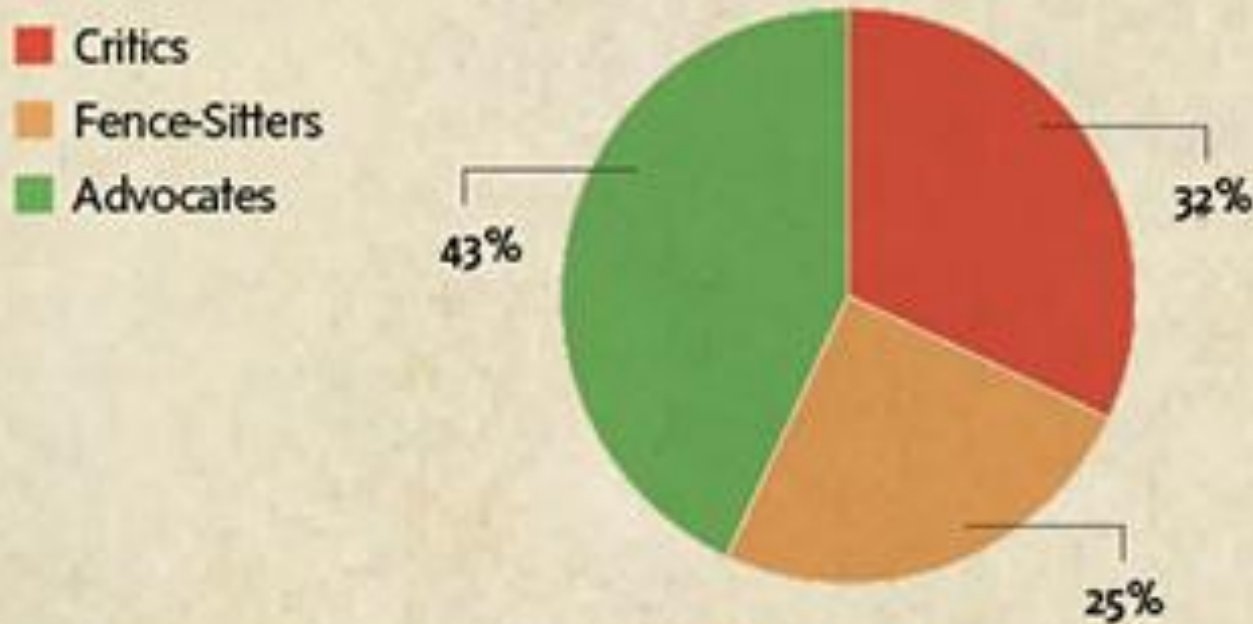


Homeowners who contract some or all services

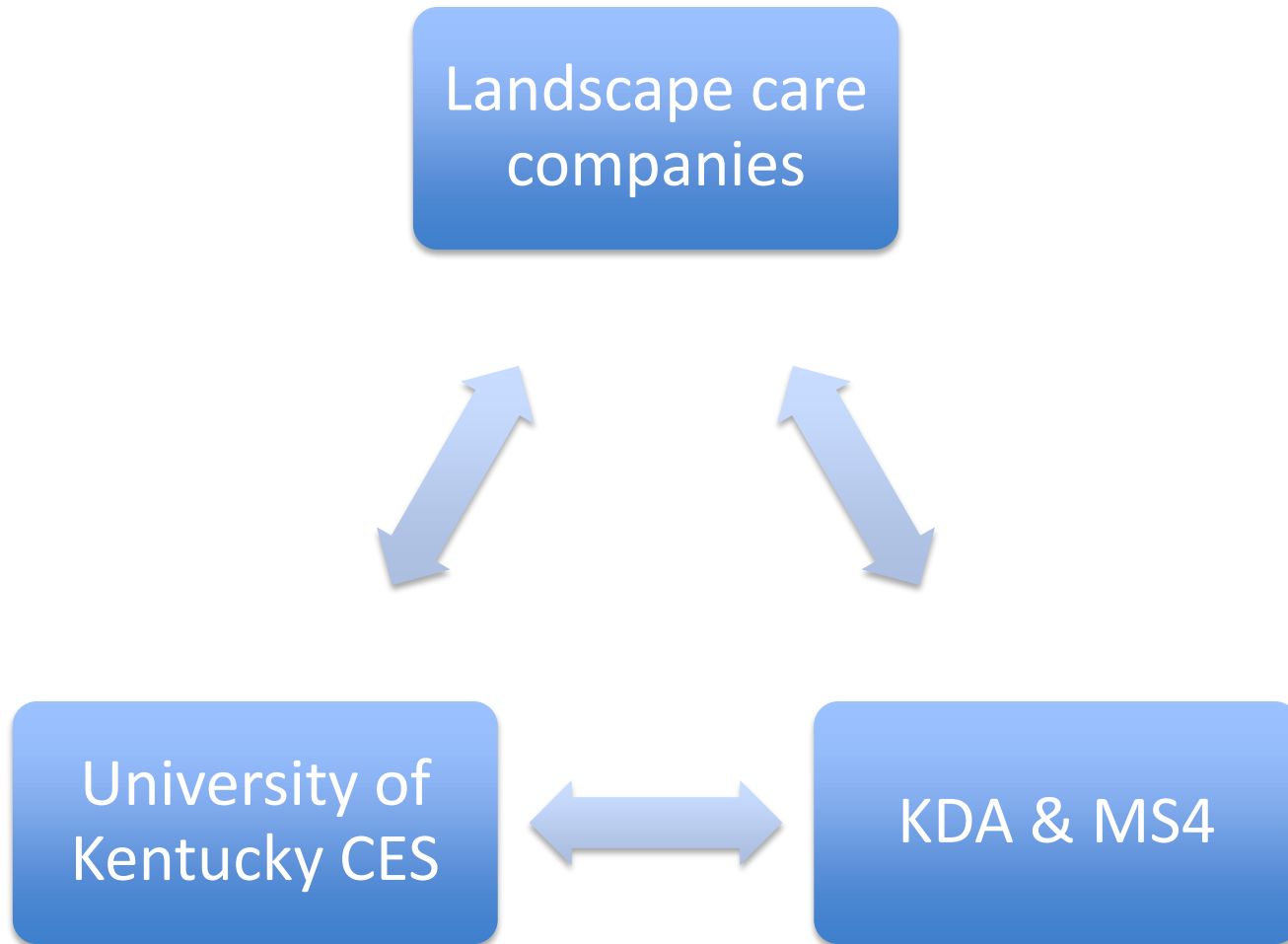


Improvements outside of existing contracted lawns

How likely are you to recommend the contractor currently applying fertilizer, weed killer and/or insect control products in your yard to family and friends?



Partnership



Target Audience

- Interested lawn and landscape care professionals with a nimble and flexible business model (local)
- Local companies that do not have a one-size-fits-all prescription for every lawn

Education

- University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service
 - Over 100 years experience
 - Public outreach and education
 - Public involvement
 - Established relationship with lawn and landscape care industry and Kentucky Department of Agriculture
 - Offices and staff in all 120 Kentucky counties

Regulation

- What do MS4s need from Industry participants?
 - Certification test (Kentucky Department of Agriculture) - 70% = passing
 - Company provides details about how they will change business practices to improve water quality

Participation from MS4s

Are you willing to _____ lawn and landscape professionals to take the Green Certification course?

1. Solicit
2. Strongly encourage
3. Require (e.g. must be certified to bid on contracts)
4. None of the above because the Mayor / Judge Executive won't let me

Participation from MS4s

Do you want to require *Green Certification* renewal or CEUs?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Yes, however I need to talk to the Mayor / Judge Executive and get back to you next week

Participation from MS4s

Do you want to split the recognition of the Lawn/Landscape Care Company into 2 levels?

- *Green Certified* (passed the test)
- Established *Partnership* (Business model submitted and on file at the MS4)

1. Yes
2. No, keep them together
3. Yes, however I need to talk to the Mayor / Judge Executive and get back to you next week

Participation from MS4s - *Documentation*

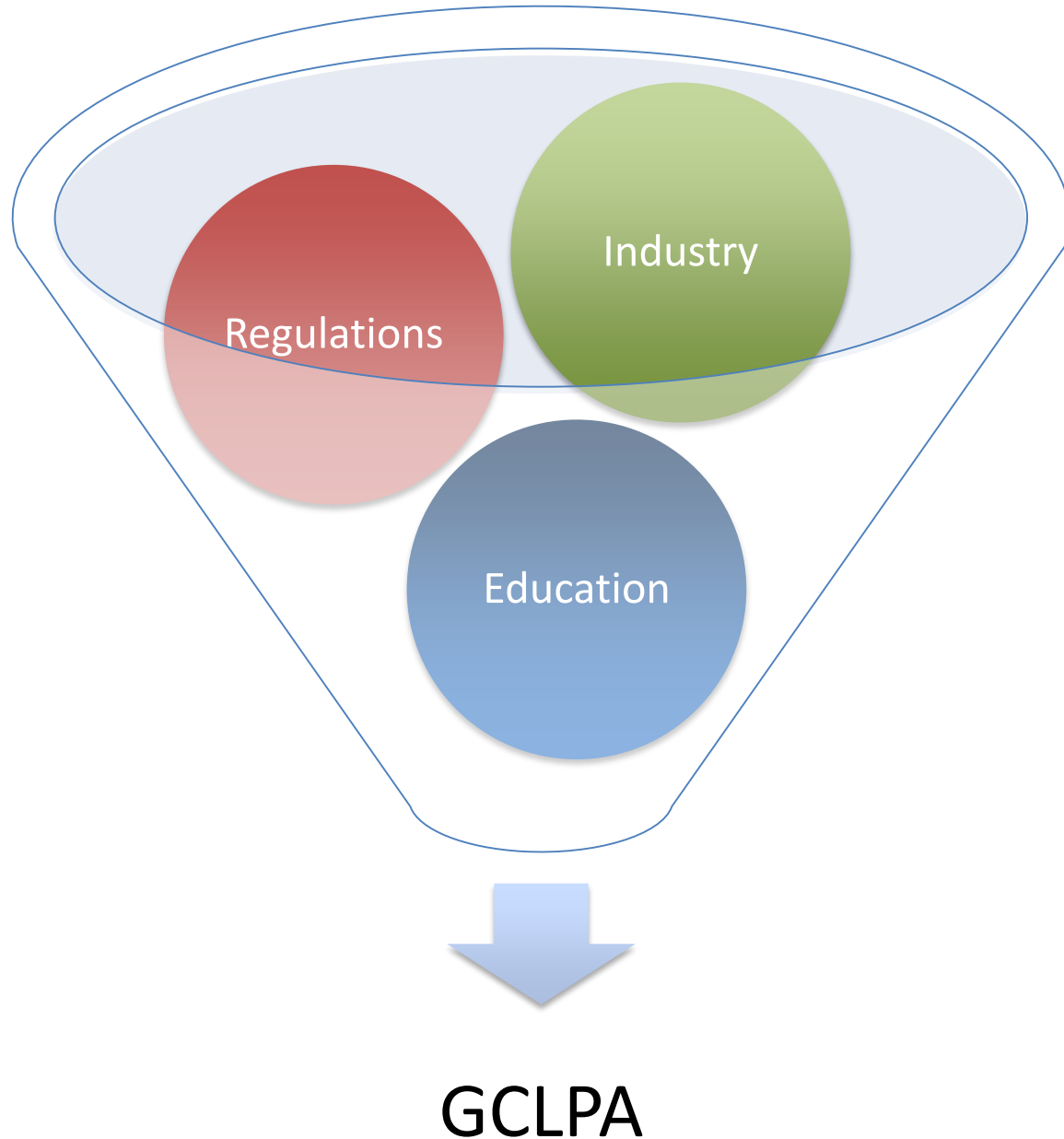
Are you willing to endorse the companies that have been *Green Certified* and established a *Partnership* with the MS4? (e.g. *keep a list of those companies available to the public*)

1. Yes
2. No
3. Yes, however I need to talk to the Mayor / Judge Executive and get back to you next week

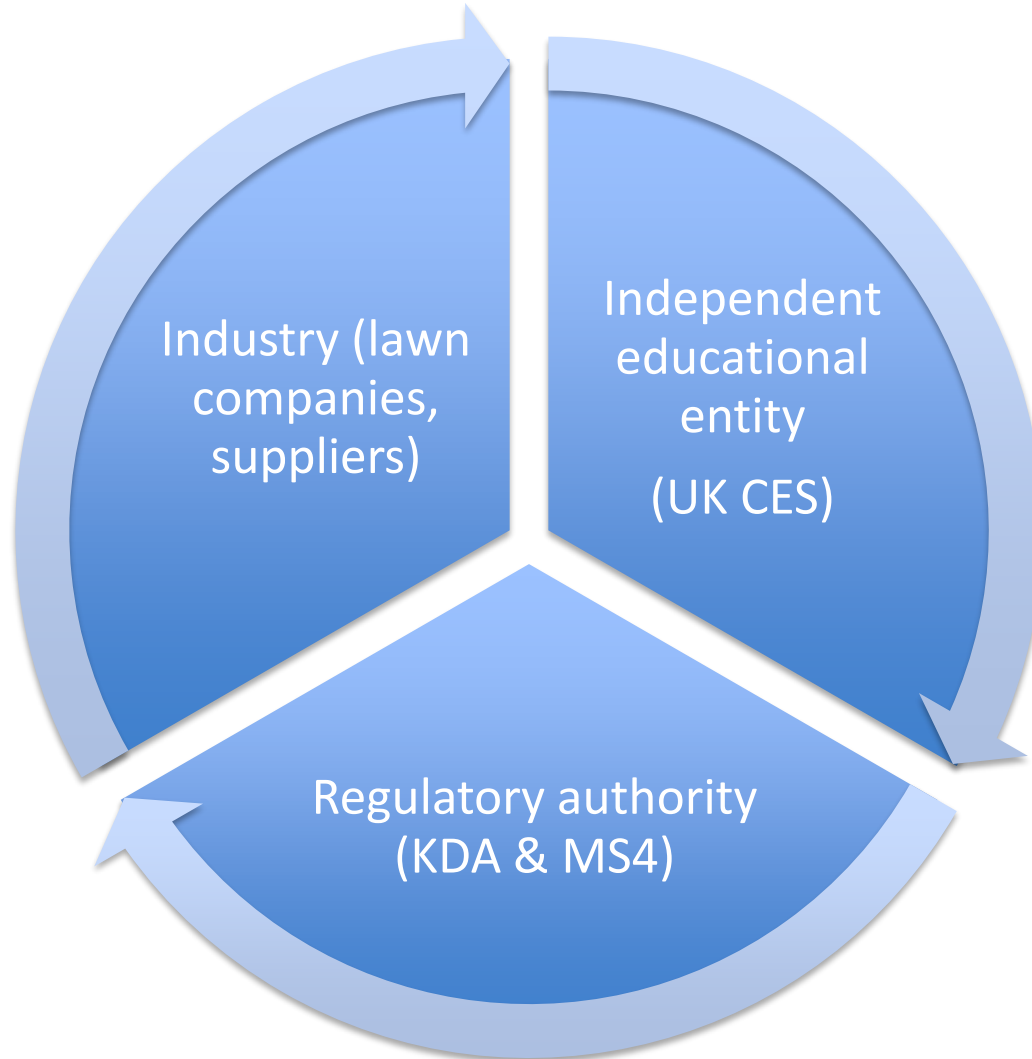
This is just a start

- Green Certification pilot program to Fayette County lawn and landscape management companies in Lexington, Winter 2018 (*LFUCG Grant*)
- Feedback will be used to adjust and modify program
- Updated Green Certification program available to all other MS4 communities Winter 2019

Can the industry regulate itself?



Green Certified Landscape Professionals Association (GCLPA)



Self-regulating, self-promoting, engaged and progressive industry association that manages itself

“What will this do for my MS4?”

- Example metrics
 - Expand and improve education/training for lawn and landscape care professionals
 - Expand MS4 partnerships with lawn care businesses
 - Improve business practices that protect water quality
 - Increase soil tests
 - Reduce/eliminate Phosphorus fertilizer applications
 - Improve timing of fertilization (Nitrogen) that minimizes environmental impact

“What will it cost my MS4?”

- Time - Engage the partners (industry and educators)
- Time & maybe \$ - Market the program
- Time & political investment - Solicit, encourage, require businesses in your community to participate
- Cost?
 - Turfgrass and landscape clientele are familiar with paying for training (not free but close)
 - Turfgrass field day (~400 participants/yr)
 - Certification for turfgrass managers (~40 participants/class)
 - Turf and landscape short course (~600 participants/year)

Questions?

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