



ESTC CoverageBook 2025



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Summary



25

Pieces of Coverage

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January

5 pieces



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January 23, 2025

ONLINE

Synthetic turf industry among the first to adopt new European...

landscapeandamenity.com/sections/profe...

The screenshot shows the LAPU website interface. At the top is a blue navigation bar with the LAPU logo and links: Home, Sections, Library, Directory, Videos, Jobs, and a 'Browse all sections' menu. Below this is a green bar with a breadcrumb trail: Home | Machinery, Plant & Vehicles | Professional Groundscare | Urban Environment | Exhibitions News | Play & Activity | Professional Horticulture. A search bar labeled 'Search our Landscape HUB' is positioned below the green bar. The main content area features a news article titled 'Synthetic turf industry among the first to adopt new European Commission sustainability framework' under the 'PROFESSIONAL GROUNDSCARE' section, dated 'Thu, Jan 23, 2025 4:06 PM'. The article text discusses the EMEA Synthetic Turf Council (ESTC) launching a new life cycle assessment (LCA) tool to help manufacturers signpost environmental performance. It mentions that the tool is the official mechanism for the synthetic turf industry in Europe and is also available for voluntary use elsewhere. The article also notes that the tool aligns with the European Commission's new Product Environmental Footprint Category Rules (PEFCR) for synthetic turf surfaces. Below the text is a graphic titled 'PEF SYNTHETIC TURF' with the tagline 'Greener Steps, Lighter Footprint' and the website 'www.pefsyntheticiturf.eu'. The graphic shows a laptop and a smartphone displaying the website. To the right of the article is a 'Featured News' sidebar with two items: 'Aqua Aid continues to grow and appoints new Commercial Director' and 'DSV's PRO Bent delivers exceptional results at Millbrook Golf Club'. Each item includes a small image and a 'Read More' link.

PROFESSIONAL GROUNDSCARE
Thu, Jan 23, 2025 4:06 PM

Synthetic turf industry among the first to adopt new European Commission sustainability framework

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In an effort to help synthetic turf manufacturers more clearly and accurately signpost the environmental performance of their products, the EMEA Synthetic Turf Council (ESTC) has announced the launch of a new life cycle assessment (LCA) tool.

The new tool has been put in place as the official mechanism for the synthetic turf industry in Europe but is also available for voluntary use by stakeholders elsewhere in the world, with licenses available to both members and non-members upon request.

It has been developed to align with the European Commission's new Product Environmental Footprint Category Rules (PEFCR) that provide guidance for the calculation and reporting of environmental impacts of the entire product life cycle of synthetic turf surfaces.

PEF SYNTHETIC TURF
Greener Steps, Lighter Footprint
www.pefsyntheticiturf.eu

The synthetic turf industry is among the first to volunteer to implement industry-specific category rules as it looks to underline its commitment to transparency around environmental impact and affirm its status as a forward-thinking industry with sustainability as one of its principal core values.

The new Category Rules have been developed in close collaboration with the European Commission (EC), as well as LCA specialists, and international sports federations including UEFA and FIFA.

Together with consultant PRé Sustainability, ESTC has developed a software tool that consistently calculates accurate environmental impact results aligned with the PEFCR.

The aim of the tool is to simplify both input and output for synthetic turf manufacturers, by only collecting mandatory, company-specific data. Results are

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January 22, 2025

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news.fmbusinessdaily.com/2025/01/synth...

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Synthetic turf industry among the first to adopt new European Commission sustainability framework

January 22, 2025

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Synthetic Turf Industry Among The First To Adopt New European Commission Sustainability Framework

In an effort to help synthetic turf manufacturers more clearly and accurately signpost the environmental performance of their products, the EMEA Synthetic Turf Council (ESTC) has announced the launch of a new life cycle assessment (LCA) tool.

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The new Category Rules have been developed in close collaboration with the European Commission (EC), as well as LCA specialists, and international

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In this issue:

- 1. Managing the risks of synthetic turf
- 2. Ensuring the safety of synthetic turf
- 3. Protecting the environment
- 4. The future of synthetic turf

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Synthetic Turf Industry among first to adopt new European Commission Sustainability Framework

22 JAN 2025

In an effort to help synthetic turf manufacturers more clearly and accurately signpost the environmental performance of their products, the EMEA Synthetic Turf Council (ESTC) has announced the launch of a new life cycle assessment (LCA) tool.

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The synthetic turf industry is among the first to volunteer to implement industry-specific category



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January 28, 2024

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Synthetic Turf industry new environmental...

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SYNTHETIC TURF INDUSTRY READIES ITSELF FOR NEW ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS

JANUARY 28, 2024

The synthetic turf industry has set its sights on the introduction of new environmental standards to prevent companies from making unsubstantiated environmental claims about their products.

At a workshop hosted in Brussels on December 12, 2023, the EMEA Synthetic Turf Council (ESTC) brought the industry together to provide insights on the intended application of the European Commission's Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) methodology.

PEF Category Rules (PEFCR) is a framework established by the European Commission to offer a standardized method for calculating and communicating the environmental performance of products throughout their life cycle. The ESTC is close to finalizing a set of category rules for synthetic turf.

Led by ESTC's appointed European PEF consultancy, PRé-Sustainability BV, the proposed synthetic turf PEFCR, will be applicable to the assessment of the environmental footprint of systems for sports and landscaping throughout their entire life cycle. As such, the rules will be applied to raw material acquisition.

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Home > News & Media > Is artificial turf being banned? We tackle the misconceptions

Is artificial turf being banned? We tackle the misconceptions

Stefan Diderich • Feb 12, 2025 • in [Synthetics](#)

The impending introduction of new EU legislation concerning microplastics has caused much confusion around the use of synthetic turf systems as a whole. To help address these misconceptions, EMEA Synthetic Turf Council (ESTC) has chosen to debunk some of the most common myths.



Synthetic turf, commonly referred to as artificial turf or artificial grass, has been a widespread product in the sport and landscaping industries since it first came to market in the 1960s.

Myth #1: Synthetic turf is being banned

March

6 pieces



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Kunstgras-LCA-tool sluit aan bij eisen Europese Unie

Geplaatst door [redactie](#)

4 mrt. 2025 2 minuten

De EMEA Synthetic Turf Council (ESTC) heeft een officiële tool voor levenscyclusanalyse (LCA) gekozen voor de kunstgrasindustrie in Europa. De tool is ontwikkeld om aan te sluiten bij de nieuwe Product Environmental Footprint Category Rules (PEFCR) van de Europese Commissie die richtlijnen biedt voor het berekenen en rapporteren van milieueffecten van de volledige levenscyclus van kunstgrasvelden.

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ESTC lanceert tool om de duurzaamheid van kunstgras te meten

Om fabrikanten van kunstgras te helpen de milieuprestaties van hun producten duidelijker en nauwkeuriger te documenteren, heeft de EMEA Synthetic Turf Council (ESTC) de lancering aangekondigd van een tool voor levenscyclusanalyse (LCA).

De nieuwe tool is in gebruik genomen als het officiële mechanisme voor de kunstgrasindustrie in Europa. Het is daarnaast ook beschikbaar voor vrijwillig gebruik door belanghebbenden elders in de wereld. Licenties zijn op verzoek beschikbaar voor zowel leden als niet-leden.

De nieuwe tool voor levenscyclusanalyse is ontwikkeld om aan te sluiten bij de nieuwe Product Environmental Footprint Category Rules (PEFCR) van de Europese Commissie. PEFCR biedt richtlijnen voor het berekenen en rapporteren van milieueffecten van de volledige levenscyclus van kunstgrasvelden.



Foto ter illustratie: Dreamstime.

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More than a third of Brits now want artificial grass banned – a 50 per cent increase from just one year ago

Posted on March 5, 2025 in Highlights, Top News



Artificial grass rose to popularity several years ago due to its cleanliness, consistently perfect aesthetic, and its ease to maintain. However, last year, data revealed that 24 per cent of people living in Britain would support a ban. Just 12 months later, new statistics show this figure has now risen to 36 per cent in support of a full ban on the product – a rise of 50 per cent in just one year.

According to research from [MyBuilder.com](#), the reliable way to hire tradespeople, more than a third of people living in the UK want to ban artificial grass. This explains the drop in popularity for the product, with data from the company itself showing enquiries for artificial grass installation were down 48 per cent year on year in 2023. Google data supports this finding, with searches for the product down 20 per cent since 2023 – and 50 percent since 2021.

The new statistics show that support for a ban is universal across all age groups and is consistent for both men and women. Geographically there are some variations, with Scottish capital Edinburgh showing the strongest support. In Edinburgh, more than half (53 per cent) of residents would support a full ban. Manchester was the least supportive – although 32 per cent still stated that they would like to see the product banned.

Other results included:

- Cardiff 41%

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March 08, 2025

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thedirt.news/more-than-a-third-of-people-...

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Environment8 March 2025



Survey reveals 36% want artificial grass banned
Research conducted by MyBuilder.com indicates that more than a third of people living in the UK want a ban artificial grass.



Made of synthetic fibres to look like natural grass, artificial turf, once commonly used in sports arenas is now being used far more regularly for residential lawns.

The environmental damage of the use of artificial grass is substantial. The [2023 Say No to Plastic Grass & Plants campaign](#) by the Society of Garden + Landscape Designers, revealed that plastic grass not only removes vital habitat and is devoid of any value for wildlife, but also causes plastic pollution, leakage of micro-plastics into waterways, flooding, contribute to urban heat islands due and contribute to greenhouse gas emissions in their production.

Artificial grass also fails to provide any food for living creatures, restricts access to the soil beneath for burrowing insects and to the ground above for soil dwellers such as worms. It restricts access to natural materials such as leaf litter, essential for feeding soil organisms like worms and microscopic animals, that keep the soil healthy. In hot weather, artificial grass reaches significantly greater temperatures than those reached by natural grass under the same weather conditions – contributing to global warming by absorbing significantly more radiation than living

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March 10, 2025

PRINT

Levelling the playing field for sustainable synthetic turf

[issuu.com/turfmattersonline/docs/turf_ma...](https://www.turfmattersonline/docs/turf_ma...)

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS/SYNTHETIC TURF

Transforming grounds management

standards. By dramatically reducing the time spent on line marking, the grounds team could redirect their efforts to other critical tasks that were previously neglected due to time constraints.

"The question was asked, does it mean we can replace a groundman or drop down to part time hours? But it was just a case of convincing them actually the reason for getting it is, obviously, for presentation and accuracy, but also to free us up to do more of the jobs we should be doing that we don't get time to do. So any time we can save through having the Turf Tank marking means we can get on with all the other peripheral stuff."

The Turf Tank robot proved to be a versatile tool, offering capabilities that extended beyond basic line marking. One of the standout benefits was the ability to

create complex designs and logos. "Since we started marking the logos, they become very popular. They just add that extra touch to the site, particularly on open mornings or if you've got a big match on. So having the logo there is really good for marketing as well."

"Other things we use it for is we mark the stripes out the bays for grass cutting. We also mark out the lines we need to follow for fertilising or spraying. So all that can be done, and that saves using flags and string lines."

The implementation of the Turf Tank robot at Taunton School has revolutionised their approach to grounds management. By significantly reducing time and labour requirements, improving accuracy and consistency, and offering versatile functionality, the Turf Tank has proven to be an invaluable asset.

Levelling the playing field for sustainable synthetic turf

Amid a push for increased transparency and credibility across the face of industry, the European Commission has introduced new guidelines to help standardise the assessment of various products' environmental impact. Working with the European Commission, the synthetic turf industry is among the first to introduce protocols that describe how the life cycle impact of synthetic turf surfaces should be undertaken. Alexander Cox, Technical Director at EMEA Synthetic

turf Council (ESTC), offers some insights as to what this entails for buyers and installers of synthetic turf alike.

For those working with synthetic turf, assessing the various environmental claims of different products is often easier said than done. Factor in the myriad methods of environmental assessment, with each making claim to be the superior methodology, and this task becomes nigh on impossible. In turn, this makes it more difficult for the manufacturers truly putting sustainability

into practice to stand out, simultaneously resulting in a lack of clarity for consumers and making purchasing decisions more complex. While this is not a challenge that is unique to the turf industry, it remains an issue all the same.

However, with the introduction of the European Commission's Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) methodology, this era appears to finally be at an end. Here, PEF offers a standardised approach to assess environmental impact, regardless of industry, with unique PEF Category Rules (PEFCR) for each sector decided by the relevant industry body. The Category Rules specify how a PEF analysis must be carried out for a specific product or industry sector, with ESTC pleased to launch our industry's own PEFCR for synthetic turf surfaces in January this year.

What current methodologies are in place?

Before diving into the specifics of PEFCR for synthetic turf, it's important to understand why these new rules are being introduced. To date, a common method of demonstrating sustainability has been through a Life Cycle Assessment (LCA). This analyses the environmental impact of a product through its entire life cycle, as the name suggests, spanning:

- Extraction of raw materials
- Manufacturing and assembly
- Transport and distribution
- Use
- Disposal, recycling, or recovery at end of life.

When conducted correctly, an LCA is a sound method of assessing environmental impact. However, a lack of standardisation across LCAs contributes to the growing number of unsubstantiated sustainability claims across the industry. For instance, one LCA study may choose to omit certain impacts or processes, leading to wildly different results between comparable studies.

In addition, LCA studies are particularly resource-intensive, which may limit the ability of SMEs to participate or deliver accurate results. This also has a direct impact on data. If only a limited amount of data is available, or is of poor quality, the conclusions of the study are likely to be inaccurate. For all its merits and positive implications, LCA is an inexact science, and must be subject to stricter regulation moving forwards, given the increasingly granular view on sustainability.

What will the scope of the new PEFCR cover?

Here, the new set of PEFCR for synthetic turf, offered by ESTC, govern the assessment of environmental impact across the industry, offering clear, comparable results for those who need to factor sustainability into purchasing decisions. It is important to recognise that this is not a total replacement of current



LCA methodologies, instead intending to build upon the benefits with a new level of standardisation that will help level the playing field for consumers and manufacturers alike.

The new rules will help provide specific guidance for the calculation and reporting of environmental impacts of the synthetic turf products life cycle, while giving particular focus to the most important parameters in relation to environmental performance. In practice, this should help to identify hotspots in production to help promote greener practice, alongside allow comparability between PEF calculations within the same product category to aid consumer selection.

The scope for the synthetic turf PEFCR is as follows, for both sports and landscape applications:

- 1. Production:** Raw material extraction, Polymer production, Yarn production (inclusive of primary and secondary backing), Turf production, Infill production, Shockpad production, Transportation between each of the above
- 2. Installation:** Transportation to field, Turf installation
- 3. Operation:** Effects of use, Field maintenance every 10 years.
- 4. End of life:** Turf removal, Transportation from field, End of life processing.

Notably, the PEFCR does not include the construction of the base, drainage system, or supporting infrastructure on which a synthetic turf system is laid. This is due to the very diverse way that fields are built across Europe, taking into account factors such as regional climatic conditions, and construction methods. As many as 16 different impact categories are assessed as part of the PEFCR, with the European Commission also asking ESTC to consider microplastic releases from fibre wear and infill.

Within this, five categories have been selected as most relevant - climate change (30.8%), particulate matter (23.8%), fossil resource use (19.3%), acidification (8.3%), and photochemical ozone formation (4.0%). Water usage (2.7%) was also identified as an area of special interest, and so is also included in the identification of most relevant life

cycle stages and processes.

Together, these metrics combine to deliver a standardised calculation for the environmental footprint of different synthetic turf products. Each component is referenced against PEF data per impact category, using both company-specific and generic data provided by the European Commission, offering an overall PEF score that can be measured against the representative industry benchmark. Crucially, this PEFCR methodology remains consistent across all manufacturers, offering a standardised method of assessing environmental impact.

How will data be collected?

Even with new PEFCR in place, the success of these regulations will still depend largely on the quality of data collection, as with a standard LCA. Here, ESTC have aimed to remedy this through the introduction of a new software tool, based on the industry leading SimaPro platform. The aim of this tool is to simplify both input and output for manufacturers, only collecting data for mandatory company-specific data, processes expected to be run by companies, and most relevant data points. Data will be verified by an independent party before results are presented as a single score figures via a non-expert dashboard.

This survey-style approach, requiring minimal user entry and focusing only on the relevant categories, offers comparable, fair results between different products and industry benchmarks. In the past, conducting a study could prove both time- and resource-intensive, while SimaPro aims to take much of the legwork and financial burden away from the manufacturer, while still ensuring accurate results.

Forging a new path

After almost five years of development, spanning numerous drafts, studies, public consultations and panel consultations, ESTC's PEFCR has now been published. With its ESTC tools to usher in a new era of transparency and data-backed sustainability, in the interest of a turf industry that is both circular and fair. The new PEFCR, backed by simplified data collection technology such as SimaPro, will allow specifier of synthetic turf to act with confidence when investing in new products, with an assurance that its sustainability claims have evidence.

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April



2 pieces

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SYNTHETIC TURF

Turf: A force for good?

In part two of our look at the pros and cons of synthetic turf, industry players assess its value to landscaping, sport and amenity





Stefan Diderich, Director General/CEO at EMEA Synthetic Turf Council (ESTC)

Despite widespread use in landscaping and sporting applications, it could be argued that synthetic turf remains among the most misunderstood products. Here, EMEA Synthetic Turf Council (ESTC) and one of its members discuss some of the areas in which synthetic turf can be a force for good and address some of the market developments intended to increase product sustainability and longevity.

Turf's Up
Synthetic turf can be seen as an easy target for criticism within landscaping, with its man-made construction frequently framed as at odds with the natural setting, comments ESTC chief executive officer Stefan Diderich. When the benefits are laid out, however, it clearly plays an essential role within the sector and can be a force for good when applied appropriately. The goal of ESTC and its members is not to undermine the key part natural grass plays, with its many benefits but environmental conditions and operating costs can make it impractical for some applications, so other solutions must exist to help cater to these needs.

Balancing the benefits
Every landscaper and grounds professional knows the struggle of those shaded areas of lawn and turf where grass just won't grow. Whether through lack of sunlight or other factors, patchy grass can be remedied through tactically placed synthetic turf, with specially designed products available to seamlessly blend in with natural grass. The opposite challenge here is too much sunlight, which can quickly cause bleaching and discoloration in natural grass. While not as much of an issue in the UK, synthetic turf is used extensively in countries such as Spain for this very reason, helping lawns stay evergreen year round. Natural grass also requires constant care - overseeding, watering, mowing, weeding, aeration, feeding, scarification and edging - to keep it in good shape. On a commercial scale, this requires skilled, full-time staff, which eat into budgets. Synthetic turf upkeep though spans occasional brushing, sweeping and removing debris - easily completed by an untrained sole operator. Domestically, tending natural grass may prove difficult for those of limited mobility, such as the elderly, while

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SYNTHETIC TURF

synthetic turf offers a practical, hassle-free alternative. With up to 49% of the UK suffering with hay fever, it presents a hypoallergenic solution.

Synthetic turf fits the bill here, not to replace natural grass but as a necessary alternative where it cannot be used. A concrete option would be unsightly and invite its own challenges of drainage and health and safety. Simply put, synthetic turf needn't be seen solely as an alternative to natural – but in the majority of cases, applied in place of hard landscaping.

Sport for all or not at all

While the benefits of synthetic turf for landscape applications are already clear, these are redoubled where sporting applications are concerned. Weather is an even greater factor here, with a short period of heavy rain putting a natural grass pitch out for the best part of a month.

Recent research from Sport England puts this into sharper focus, revealing that four in 10 organisations are already being affected by weather-related interruptions to play, while the FA estimates that 120,000 football fixtures are being lost to bad weather each year.

Synthetic turf, by comparison, is designed to drain and dry off far quicker, is mud-free, and highly resistant to damage, allowing it to be used shortly after, or even during periods of extreme weather.

With the Met Office projecting that, compared to 1990, winters are set to be up to 30% wetter by 2070, synthetic turf will clearly have a key role to play in enabling sport for years to come.

Maintenance requirements must again be factored in here. A high-level natural grass pitch demands even



more time and cost investment to maintain than that of natural grass in landscaping, with grow lights, fertilisers, and complex under soil heating through the winter all necessary, alongside a skilled grounds team.

The unfortunate reality is that this is an expense that is far out of reach for most communities and reserved only for professional sporting institutions. A synthetic turf pitch by comparison, can accommodate the use of 6 to 10 natural grass pitches, and is the most practical and cost-effective method of providing access to good quality outdoor sporting infrastructure. For many, the choice comes down to this – synthetic turf pitches, or no pitches. I believe the choice here is clear.

From Pitch To Planet

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GROUND CARE

FROM PITCH TO PLANET

Changing the synthetic turf landscape through new sustainability guidelines.

In a bid to help synthetic turf manufacturers more clearly and accurately signpost the environmental performance of their products, the European Commission has rolled out new guidelines to standardise the evaluation of products' environmental footprints.

Helen, Stefan Diederich, Director General/CEO of ESTC (EMEA Synthetic Turf Council), explains what the new framework means for football club owners and executives.

Let's Start From Grassroots

Since the introduction of synthetic turf in the 1960s, the product has drastically changed the footballing landscape by offering an affordable, high-quality playing surface for all levels of the game, from grassroots to the professional world stage.

As those who work with it will know, the increased durability of synthetic turf means it can withstand heavy use and adverse weather conditions, making it ideal for stadiums and training grounds that see frequent activity. It can be used in various climates and is particularly popular in regions with extreme weather conditions where maintaining natural grass is challenging.

Crucially, synthetic turf also provides a uniform playing surface, which can enhance the quality of play by reducing

irregularities like mud patches or uneven grass. And unlike natural grass, synthetic turf doesn't require watering, mowing or fertilising, which reduces maintenance costs and manual effort, making it ideal for clubs lower down the footballing pyramid that don't have the luxury of an extensive grounds team.

However, despite the many benefits of this product category, it has previously been challenging for football club owners and executives to understand the sustainability credentials of synthetic turf thanks to confusing and contradictory assessments.

PEFCR: A Long Awaited Change

Historically, navigating the range of environmental claims of different products was a key challenge for the industry due to a lack of standardisation between various methods of environmental assessment, with each claiming to be the superior methodology. In turn, this has meant that it is difficult for football club executives to identify which products are truly the most sustainable when looking to invest in a new playing surface.

To date, a common method of demonstrating sustainability has been through a Life Cycle Assessment (LCA). This analyses the environmental impact of a product through its entire life cycle, as the name suggests, covering:

- extraction of raw materials;
- manufacturing and assembly;

- transport and distribution;
- use;
- disposal, recycling, or recovery at end of life.

When done correctly, an LCA is effective for assessing environmental impact. However, the lack of standardisation, particularly surrounding the collection of data for each of these categories, has led to unsubstantiated sustainability claims, as different studies may require certain impacts, leading to varied results.

This is a challenge that is shared by many sectors of manufacturing, with synthetic turf no exception. For this reason, the European Commission recently developed a new Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) methodology. This offers a standardised approach to assess environmental impact, regardless of industry, with unique PEFCR (Product Environmental Footprint Category Rules) for each sector decided by the relevant industry body. The Category Rules specify how a PEF analysis must be carried out for a specific product or industry sector.

To help synthetic turf manufacturers more accurately spotlight the environmental performance of their products, ESTC and the synthetic turf industry have become among the first to submit to the PEF framework by developing their own PEFCR.

Getting To Grips With PEFCR

The new PEFCR guidelines for synthetic turf, provided by ESTC, standardise the assessment of environmental impact, offering clear and comparable results for sustainability-focused purchasing decisions. These guidelines build on existing LCA methods, aiming to level the playing field for club owners and executives.

These new rules offer specific guidance for calculating and reporting the environmental impacts of synthetic turf throughout its life cycle, focusing on key requirements. This helps identify production hotspots for greener practices and allows for comparison within the same product category.

The scope of the synthetic turf PEFCR includes:

Production: raw material extraction,



"Unlike natural grass, synthetic turf doesn't require watering, mowing or fertilising, which reduces maintenance costs and manual effort, making it ideal for clubs lower down the footballing pyramid"

polymer production, yarn production, turf production, infill production, shock pad production and transportation between these stages.

Installation: transportation to the field and turf installation.

Operation: effects of use and field maintenance every 10 years.

End of Life: turf removal, transportation from the field, and end-of-life processing.

It is important to note that the PEFCR does not cover the construction of the base, drainage system, or supporting infrastructure due to regional variations in field construction. However, it does assess 16 impact categories, with a focus on climate change, particulate matter, fossil resource use, acidification and photochemical ozone formation. Water usage is also highlighted. These in-depth metrics provide

a standardised calculation for the environmental footprint of synthetic turf products, using both company-specific and generic data to offer an overall PEF score. This consistent methodology ensures a standardised assessment of environmental impact across all manufacturers, making it easier for clubs and executives to be transparent when it comes to declaring the sustainability credentials of their chosen synthetic turf.

A Fair Game

While for many sectors, sustainability has become the buzzword of the moment, for the football industry it means big change. From the introduction of a carbon footprint calculator to making sure sustainability is built-in to the very foundations of infrastructure, the football landscape is taking tangible steps to embed ESG best

practice at the heart of the game.

These changes ultimately mean clubs will be required to report their environmental impact more transparently. This includes disclosing their carbon footprint and the steps they are taking to reduce it. The introduction of PEFCR makes it easier for club owners and executives to share this information, allowing them to get the sustainability details they need from synthetic turf manufacturers without discrepancy.

It also makes investment decisions easier. Now, club owners and executives will be able to identify, without hassle, clear PEF labelling and choose the right product for the job.

For too long, the relationship between manufacturers, club executives and owners has been disjointed thanks to confusing, contradictory claims when it comes to synthetic turf environmental assessments. This joined-up approach brings the industry together, and places sustainability at the heart of key purchasing decisions in a sector that continually strives to be circular and fair. •

Learn more about the PEFCR for synthetic turf, visit: www.pef.syntheticurf.eu



May

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'Designing a Greener Future' at ESTC congress

12 MAY 2025

Delegates from around the world travelled to Berlin for **EMEA Synthetic Turf Council (ESTC)**'s annual Congress, from 1-3 April 2025. The Congress was themed around 'Designing a Greener Future - Bridging Technology, Responsibility, and Industry'.

Industry stakeholders united to network, share ideas and discuss best practice over the three-day Congress, benefitting from a detailed and wide-ranging programme, including topics such as end-of-life solutions, extended producer responsibility (EPR), and sustainable landscaping. This came alongside a breakdown and discussion of the synthetic turf industry's recent strategic projects, which will play an important long-term role for both sports and landscaping applications.

Congress opened with a meeting of ESTC interest groups and a CEN meeting on 1 April. Both sessions were dedicated to ESTC members, taking place before non-members arrived and adding even more value to the membership.

The event for the wider membership and non-members began on the 2 April, with a general

Green Appeal

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SYNTHETIC TURF

Green appeal

Our three-part look at synthetic turf concludes by considering how 'green' it is and could be



Duncan Bennett

"When the cases of synthetic turf are laid out, we hope many will come to recognise that this product is ultimately a force for good - an essential asset landscapers can deploy as needed and address challenges natural grass struggles to," writes Duncan Bennett, managing director at EMEA Synthetic Turf Council (ESTC) member Notts Sport Ltd.

"Alongside this, it should be emphasised that the synthetic turf industry is one that is constantly innovating and our goal is to continue delivering the same high-quality products to meet applications natural grass is not suited to, yet in a more sustainable manner."

Go With the Flow

The industry has been innovating in managing water permeability and flood risk for new sports pitches and newly landscaped lawns and fields more broadly, he adds. "A critical starting point for turf innovation, as it informs all other areas of field design further down the construction process.

"Synthetic turf is much more permeable than natural grass, making it far more resistant to extreme weather conditions. Water drains off much quicker, which through careful and good design can actually aid drainage and help prevent flooding," Duncan explains.

Most pitch designers will also appoint a third-party specialist to calculate drainage requirements before the build begins, to factor in ground conditions, existing surface water drainage and percolation rates.

"Designers can then choose to take further action to ensure the pitch drains off without flood risk, such as installing hydrobrakes to slow flow rate. Most modern pitches are designed to withstand a one in 100-year storm event, plus an additional 45%, offering the highest level of security against flooding."

Rocky foundations no more

Significant innovation relates to using quarried aggregates, Duncan notes. "Traditionally, a standard synthetic pitch is constructed using a layer of quarried aggregates at the base, followed by Tarmac, shockpads and carpet.

"New developments have reduced aggregates by up to a half, also eliminating need for macadam by uniquely combining what would otherwise be separate stiff upper base and shockpad layers, substantially lowering the carbon footprint of each project thanks to minimal transport and installation requirements for heavy materials."

Moreover, the system does this while also reducing requirements for rubber crumb or other organic performance infills by up to 50%, to as little as 5kg/m². Crucially, it maintains adherence with both FIFA quality and World Rugby standards, ensuring maximum sustainability for users, Duncan states.

Going coconuts for sustainability

With the use of crumb rubber infill also set to be phased out by 2031, many synthetic turf manufacturers are actively investing in the development of sustainable alternatives with the full support of ESTC.

This includes 100% natural surfaces, with the fibres constructed from a byproduct of coconut husks and the backing from certified natural rubber latex. This system is being successfully trialled at UK major cricket





grounds and is expected to be extended to play and landscaping applications.

Natural performance infills including cork, wood chip and olive stones are gaining ground. Non-infill options are also advancing for sporting and landscaping applications, offering equal durability and more natural look, while helping cut microplastics.

Levelling the playing field

"Perhaps the most significant overarching development surrounding sustainability of synthetic turf is the Product Environmental Footprint Category Rules (PEFCR), which will help standardise assessing the environmental footprint of synthetic turf products," says Stefan Diderich, director general/CEO at EMEA Synthetic Turf Council.

Developed with the European Commission, major sporting bodies such as UEFA and FIFA and lifecycle assessment (LCA) specialists, the new category rules will span production, installation, operation, and end-of-life for synthetic turf products to provide the most complete image possible, he explains.

"Through use of a bespoke software tool developed by the partnership of ESTC and PRé Sustainability, manufacturers will be able to calculate an accurate environmental assessment for each and every synthetic turf product.

"Crucially, the tool aims to simplify both input and output for synthetic turf manufacturers, by only

collecting mandatory, company-specific data, resulting in greater standardisation for sustainability ratings across the industry.

"The knock-on benefit for landscapers is that this will allow them to act with confidence when specifying or purchasing synthetic turf products, with the most sustainable products clearly and accurately signposted. For those looking to perform carbon balancing for projects, this information will be readily available to help inform calculations."

Closing the loop

Ensuring full circularity at end of life remains a priority for the sector and more nations have a dedicated recycling facility for synthetic turf, including the UK, with more set to open in the near future, ESTC reports.

The facilities separate individual components of old turf to recycle 100% of old pitches, with large amounts becoming new products, including new synthetic turf, helping close the loop on sustainability.

"When ongoing sustainability efforts are factored in with the established benefits of synthetic turf, we hope landscapers view synthetic turf as a force for good in commercial, domestic or sport settings," Stefan says. "ESTC will continue to champion innovation that allows synthetic turf to continue offering the same benefits in the most sustainable way possible."

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A meeting of minds

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SYNTHETIC TURF

A meeting of minds

In his first column, **Stefan Diderich**, director general/CEO of EMEA Synthetic Turf Council (ESTC), discusses news from the synthetic turf sector before reviewing the body's April annual congress in Berlin



Stefan Diderich

The prime focus of landscaping revolves around cultivating the natural environment but synthetic turf has an important role to play. It's a great option where grass won't grow, or isn't practical, making it a fitting solution for various landscaping needs. It can help maintain green aesthetics where the only other viable alternative might be hard hardscaping.

However, synthetic turf remains one of today's most misunderstood products, often due to longstanding perceptions of the product category. It's important to recognise that the products now on offer are a far cry from those available 20 or even 10 years ago, and that technological advances and innovation are constantly driving the product category forward.

In this column, we intend to tackle the misconceptions, via news of product innovations, deep dives on key topics such as water permeability, or latest updates.

Landscapers should be aware of the new Product Environmental Footprint Category Rules (PEFCR), which aim to standardise the assessment of environmental impact for synthetic turf products.

From January, turf manufacturers have to comply with this framework, offering fair, comparable results between different products, allowing landscapers know how sustainable the turf they are investing in is when buying or specifying.

PEFCR was a major talking point at the congress,

themed on Designing a Greener Future – Bridging Technology, Responsibility, and Industry. It brought together record numbers of key industry leaders and experts for three days of networking and collaboration. The conference programme delivered latest technical developments, regulatory updates and emerging innovations that will help shape a sustainable future for the sector.

Schedule snapshot

ESTC members and non-members heard technical updates, keynote addresses and presentations on end-of-life solutions, Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), and sustainable landscaping.

The welcome speech mentioned the importance of synthetic turf for offering sufficient opportunities to play sports in large cities, before the morning's keynote address and technical and regulatory update, with sessions on sustainability and more in the afternoon.

Landscapers should be aware of the new Product Environmental Footprint Category Rules (PEFCR), which aim to standardise the assessment of environmental impact for synthetic turf products

Day two saw updates from leading sports governing bodies, including World Rugby, FIFA, and the FIH, as well as a session on innovation from member companies. Martin Sheppard of Smart Connection Consultancy rounded out the programme with a presentation on engaging communities on the journey to installing more synthetic turf fields.

There were many areas of interest for landscapers throughout these two days, with ESTC members formulating an action plan for the industry.

The congress offered attendees valuable opportunities to network with other industry members, share insights and play a role in advancing development of a more sustainable and technologically innovative future for the synthetic turf industry.

Find out more about ESTC's 2025 Congress: <https://estc.idloom.events/estc-congress-2025>

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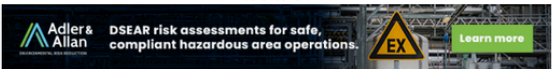
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How synthetic turf is supplying fresh water in South Africa

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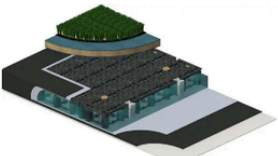
A project in South Africa is using a form of synthetic turf to enable freshwater recycling, in what seems a novel attempt to solve two problems at once: drought and a lack of recreational facilities. The two 'Cruyff Courts' are simultaneously providing a high-quality playing surface while integrating an advanced water collection and filtration system under the field, providing the local community with fresh potable water.



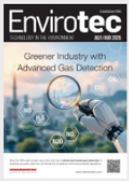
The installation has been undertaken by the Cruyff Foundation, which has a declared aim of supporting sporting endeavours for children and young people with special needs.

The project was headed up by EMEA Synthetic Turf Council (ESTC) member Dutchblue, who provided an advanced water collection and filtration system through its partners Project GreenSource SA.

The 'Catch-Store-Reuse' sports system captures rainwater, stores it in its subbase, and purifies it in a GreenSource container (a small structure adjacent to the field housing the filtration unit). Runoff collected by the system is filtered to remove contaminants, including bacteria and metals, before being pumped to a



Collected water is channeled through pre-filtering layers and stored in an underground reservoir.



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Synthetic Turf enables freshwater recycling in South Africa

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A landmark project in South Africa is highlighting how synthetic turf can be used to enable freshwater recycling. Two 'Cruyff Courts' are simultaneously providing a high-quality playing surface while integrating an advanced water collection and filtration system under the field, providing the local community with fresh potable water.

The installation of the courts is part of a wider initiative by the **Cruyff Foundation**, supporting various sports endeavours for children, and young people with special needs. The two new fields in Orange Farm, near Johannesburg, bring the total number of Cruyff Courts to 10 in the country.

The investment and innovation come as South Africa is currently grappling with one of the most severe droughts in recent history, affecting approximately 61 million people across Southern Africa.

[1] The prolonged drought has led to significant water shortages, impacting both urban and rural communities.

The Government has launched the Water Crisis Action Plan 2025, focusing on infrastructure



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SYNTHETIC TURF

How to shape water-wise landscaping



Synthetic turf is being used for smart water management. Can it be applied in landscaping? In EMEA Synthetic Turf Council's (ESTC) latest column, director general/CEO Stefan Diderich, director eneral/CEO, discusses some of the pioneering ways that it can.

You would be hard pressed to find a landscaper who has not felt the effects of drought in recent years. Just this summer, the UK has been struck by heatwave after heatwave, with drought declared across many regions and hosepipe bans affecting millions.

Maintaining a natural landscape without the most fundamental ingredient to plant life – water – is bound to be a challenge.

The unfortunate reality is that this is not an issue that will be getting easier any time soon, either. Between the years 1900 and 2020, the share of global land exposed to drought has doubled, while both the frequency and intensity of drought events has increased across all continents.

For this reason, it's critical landscapers have tools in their arsenal to brace against drought before it occurs. One of the product categories that's making significant strides in this area is synthetic turf, using advanced water collection systems that can be installed underneath the turf itself to promote more circular water usage.

For example, one of our members, Dutchblue, has recently been involved in the installation of two synthetic turf Cruyff Courts near Johannesburg, South Africa, through its partners Project GreenSource SA.

The pitches integrate an innovative catch-store-reuse sports system that captures rainwater, stores and purifies it while filtering out contaminants and is pumped out via a fountain for use as clean, potable water. This provides a dual benefit of acting as a high-quality playing surface, while helping to combat the major drought that South Africa is currently facing.

Such systems are yet to be rolled out on a large-scale basis, though it's not difficult to see the potential

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applications this may have for both commercial and domestic landscaping closer to home.

Troublesome areas of the garden where natural grass just won't go, or where block paving is currently in place instead, can now be used to capture rainwater, collect it and then supply it to plants – a particular benefit during dry periods or hosepipe bans.

Effectively, this takes areas that were previously detracting from the garden and turns them into net contributors, with the added benefit of remaining green all year round. This is just one way that synthetic turf can co-exist with and even benefit natural grass in landscaping.

Project CitySports, a pilot project conducted in Amsterdam, also found that water storage systems fitted underneath synthetic turf can help keep the surface cool. On a particularly hot day in June 2020, researchers reported that this 'cooled' turf was able to maintain a temperature of 37°C – just 1.7°C higher than a natural grass equivalent.

This again has wider potential applications for the landscaping sector – for instance, keeping children's play areas cool and safe during the summer, while simultaneously promoting more circular water usage. These are both key considerations as the UK's summers get hotter and drier, and instances of drought become all the more common.

Perhaps the most exciting aspect of all this is that these technologies still remain in their relative infancy. Our members are constantly innovating in the area of



Stefan Diderich, director general/CEO at EMEA Synthetic Turf Council (ESTC)

water management, and new, cutting-edge solutions are being delivered every year. With this, it's up to us to keep landscapers informed on new developments so that synthetic turf remains an essential part of their toolkit in the face of drought.
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November

2 pieces



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LANDSCAPING

Synthetic Turf Overcomes Desert Conditions to Facilitate Sport at Dubai's Ballers Sports Complex



Claire Middleton / 2 weeks ago



A standout project in Dubai is highlighting how premium synthetic turf solutions can be used to provide high-quality playing surfaces in desert climates.

The Ballers Sports Complex, one of Downtown Dubai's busiest sports venues, received a premium synthetic turf solution from **Standard Turf**, a member of **EMEA Synthetic Turf Council (ESTC)**, helping it to thrive in difficult desert conditions.

Facilitating sport in Dubai's desert climate can often be a challenge, meaning the project faced a series of obstacles during its progression. Extreme heat (averaging 28°C in winter, and 45°C in summer), high UV levels, sandy soils and projected heavy community use made natural grass impractical, so Standard Turf needed to use a premium synthetic turf system engineered to overcome these obstacles.^[1]

Tackling climate change with resilient projects

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Tackling climate change with resilient projects

Landscapers can design climate resilience into their projects using synthetic turf, amid increasingly frequent extreme weather events, states **Stefan Diderich**, director general/CEO of **EMEA Synthetic Turf Council (ESTC)** who discusses how in his latest column

The results are in – summer 2025 was the warmest on record in the UK¹. And there's no sign it'll stop there. Climate scientists from the Met Office have stated that a summer as hot or hotter than 2025 is now 70 times more likely due to greenhouse gas emissions from human activity.

With such a warm summer, it's easy to forget how sporadic the weather has been at times. This is perhaps best evidenced by August, which saw Storm Floris directly followed by a late summer heatwave.

Extreme weather events such as these are symptoms of the UK's changing climate, with the Met Office forecasting that winters will be up to 30% wetter, and summers up to 60% drier, by 2070².

This changing climate naturally raises challenges for landscapers, with flooding and extreme heat particular challenges. Fortunately, there are ways this can be managed through measured specification and installation of synthetic turf.

Laying the groundwork

First and foremost, landscapers must consider the unique location, topography, and geography of their site. Even in a relatively small country such as the UK, the effects of climate change can manifest in vastly different ways.

For instance, a site on top of a hill is not likely to have the same challenges as one nestled at the bottom of a valley, while a location with loamy soil must be managed differently to a site built on clay.

Managing flood risk

Working quite literally from the ground up, addressing the risk of extreme rainfall and subsequent flooding is a good starting point for any landscaper looking to climate-proof a garden - and it all begins with the sub-base.

Synthetic turf is well-known for its permeability, with the ability to quickly drain off compared to natural



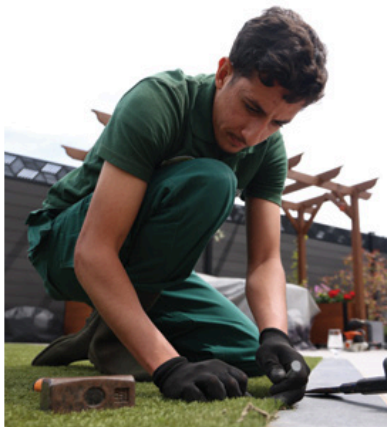
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grass. Therefore, the composition of the sub-base is often critical to how the system performs as a whole. A well-compacted sub-base, made of a material such as crushed granite, will allow water to flow through passively and prevent flash flooding below.



Taking this one step further, landscapers can create a French drain system by filling a trench with gravel and covering it with a permeable membrane, such as a piece of fabric. Add in a perforated pipe at the bottom

to carry the excess water away, and your French drain is complete. This can even be paired up with a water catchment system, allowing the water to be used for potted plants in greenhouses.

The result is a system that drains off quickly on top thanks to the synthetic turf layer, without the risk of causing flooding underground – the best of both worlds when it comes to managing wet weather.

Beating the heat

At the other end of the spectrum, landscapers must simultaneously plan around extreme heat and drought. Here, landscapers get what they pay for when it comes to quality. Artificial grass from a reputable supplier, such as an ESTC member, will withstand the heat of the sun without discolouring for years to come. On the other hand, cheap products from unestablished suppliers may not fair so well.

Many ESTC members even offer specialist, UV-resistant products that offer the best protection against overheating. While these are predominantly used in warmer climates at present, they are proving an increasingly popular option in the UK due to the growing challenge of extreme heat.

Finally, pairing your synthetic turf up with some savvy landscaping design can also help reduce surface temperatures. Trees and bushes that offer natural shade can help avoid heating of the surface through direct exposure, while adding reflective materials throughout the garden can help decrease the overall temperature – a key consideration for urban areas, where the heat island effect is likely to be at play.

www.estc.info

1. <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/about-us/news-and-media/media-centre/weather-and-climate-news/2025/summer-2025-is-the-warmest-on-record-for-the-uk>
2. <https://weather.metoffice.gov.uk/climate-change/climate-change-in-the-uk>