

▶ ForeverLawn's turf solutions are realistic and environmentally friendly.

# LEADING THE FIELD

ForeverLawn focuses on individual solutions and innovations, unlike the rest of the “one size fits all” turf industry.

By Laura Rote

“Where there’s a problem, there’s an opportunity.”

It’s something **Ken Karmie** says often, working closely with his three brothers to develop the best products in the turf industry. That way of thinking is how their company **ForeverLawn** has been able to create unique solutions to meet specific needs—and it’s made them the leader in their field.

When the two younger brothers—**Dale** and **Brian Karmie**—started the company 15 years ago, they weren’t afraid to shake up the industry. “Everyone was trying to do one size fits all and trying to do it cheaper. They came in and said, ‘Let’s do something different,’” Ken says.

## STANDOUT SOLUTIONS

“Something different” runs the gamut from ForeverLawn’s **K9Grass**—artificial grass designed specifically for dogs—to **Playground Grass Ultra** with **XStatic** antistatic technology—making it safe for all kids to play, even those who rely on electronic devices like cochlear implants, as the invention reduces static buildup. “We can create playgrounds that are accessible for children who were otherwise left out,” says **Jim Karmie**, Landscape brand manager for ForeverLawn. No matter what they’re working on, the company takes a solution-oriented approach that includes unique products, installation, and maintenance.

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K9Grass is one of ForeverLawn’s most innovative and popular solutions, as it not only helps to eliminate mud and increases cleanliness and safety, but it’s also antimicrobial and non-toxic. Perhaps the most impressive aspect of K9Grass, though, is how it ensures nasty pet waste actually goes away. Ken, K9Grass brand manager, and the ForeverLawn team, spent more than a decade developing the very best artificial grass for dogs, and he knows proper drainage is key. No one wants that odor lingering, for example, and competitors’ “dog-friendly grass” wasn’t cutting it with its sporadic drainage holes. “That will suffice for a football field but for dogs that was not sufficient,”

Ken says. ForeverLawn resurrected technology that allowed the urine to drain everywhere—switching from a tufted to a knitted product with edge to edge draining throughout. This also means you can hit the turf with a water hose and it will drain quickly, and that’s huge. Independent tests show K9Grass can drain at 2,000 to 3,000 inches per hour, or up to 100 times the typical turf’s capability. The turf’s blades are also antimicrobial and don’t require the infill, sand, or rubber of competitor products that harbor waste and slow drainage.

Another K9Grass breakthrough is the solution for indoor applications. Many pet facilities are limited to only having indoor activities

# 100

Final layer of premium backing three-layer system made from **100%** recycled plastic

# 5M

More than **5 million** square feet of ForeverLawn turf to be installed in 2018

# 10

More than **14,000,000** square feet installed over **10 years**

due to local regulations or space limitations. ForeverLawn solved that by installing K9Grass over an **AirGrid** platform (also created by ForeverLawn) that elevates the grass to allow for drainage and incorporates a patented under-grass flushing system to move liquids under the grass to the drains. This system, combined with good HVAC and proper maintenance, has benefited indoor facilities across the country.

ForeverLawn’s most exciting new product, though, is **Fusion**, which uses Legacy fiber blades that resist the deformation caused by reflective heat from Low-E windows. It’s perfect for use around glass buildings, on rooftops, and around new construction without the fear that it will be damaged from that reflective heat.

Fusion is ideal for high-traffic areas like event lawns, amusement parks, and shopping centers because it’s extremely durable. It’s a product ForeverLawn has been working on for years. “No one else has anything like it,” Jim says. “It provides a solution to an issue that has been a problem for the turf industry for a long time.” It’s the first innovation with the look of a polyethylene product in a nylon product, but that withstands twice the temperature of the polyethylene products on the market, all while having a realistic look and feel unlike other nylon offerings on the market.

ForeverLawn’s unique premium backing is another innovation that separates it from other companies, and it’s environmentally friendly. While most synthetic grasses use a single unitary backing, their premium backing has three layers that provide product stability,

cushioning, and longer life. In addition to the primary coating, a foam layer made from soybean plants using BioCel technology protects the backs of the blades. A third layer made of recycled plastic bottles is applied as part of the micromechanical seaming system ForeverLawn uses to join multiple rolls of grass together.

REMARKABLE R&D

The ForeverLawn team is constantly looking for a challenge, be it dog parks or playgrounds. Playground Grass Ultra with XStatic came about after someone told them about the static that hurts many children on the playground. Ken says the group did some research and soon realized the problem warranted a forensic scientist. “It was not cheap. We also engaged an independent think tank expert in plastics and polymers.” Within a couple of years, ForeverLawn had a new, static-free product unlike anything else in the industry.

It’s one of countless examples of ForeverLawn rising above the competition. When the family-owned company first entered the industry, there was no such thing as “playground grass,” for instance. They attended a national parks and recreation show and were the only turf company in attendance. These days, you’ll find multiple turf companies at such shows, though not all of them understand the unique needs of playgrounds. “There are a lot of playgrounds that show really premature wear; the seamwork does not hold up to the challenge. People think they’re getting something that’s designed for playgrounds, but it’s not,” Ken says, adding that the competitor’s product may look fine at first, but come back a few years later and it’s a different story.

ForeverLawn also guarantees a safer product. Their Playground Grass has been certified to meet and exceed the ASTM 1292 fall height requirements for up to 12 feet. It also meets ADA requirements. “ForeverLawn holds our Playground Grass to a higher standard than the industry,” Ken says. “The industry has certain ‘fall safe’ standards, and we’re 43% above what those standards require.”

BREAK THE MOLD



First artificial grass designed specifically for dogs

First product with multi-colored blade structure and tan thatch

First product with Alphasan antimicrobial technology



Only playground surfacing product with patent-pending anti-static technology

First ASTM 1292 safety-rated grass system



ForeverLawn also thinks of solutions no one else would dream of—like introducing tan thatch in its artificial grass for realism. “When we first came up with it the manufacturers were saying, ‘That’s dumb. Who wants tan in their grass?’” Jim says. But, the thing is, adding a touch of tan to the grass looks good. It looks real. ForeverLawn forged ahead despite naysayers. “It’s revolutionized the industry. Now you see a lot of brown thatch turf.”

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

All of this started when Dale and Brian moved to Albuquerque to work for a subsidiary of a turf company that ultimately went bankrupt. It was one of those classic “one size fits all” concepts—there was no such thing as dog turf or playground turf then. But the Karmies wanted to approach things differently, as projects have different needs. When that company went under, they jumped at the chance to do something new. “Instead of retreating back to their previous jobs, they had seen a lot of opportunity in the turf market,” Ken says. In 2004, they launched ForeverLawn. While there may be many more turf companies in the industry today than 10 years ago, Ken

ForeverLawn has turf solutions that are tailored to your needs, from K9Grass to SportsGrass to SplashGrass.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF FOREVERLAWN

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cautions people to be wary about their claims, especially when they use terms like “pet-friendly.” “I challenge people to ask them the question, ‘What is different about this turf?’ They usually have very few answers.”

Since breaking out on their own, the company has grown to nearly 50 employees at its home office in Ohio and is approaching 60 independent dealers across the U.S. They expect to have more than 100 across North America soon. ForeverLawn will install more than 5 million square feet of turf in 2018. Everyone from **Home Depot** to **Google** to **HGTV’s Chip and Joanna Gaines** have reached out to ForeverLawn for their realistic, solution-based turf and beautiful Landscape products. **DuPont** also recognized the uniqueness and quality of the ForeverLawn products and now co-brands with the ForeverLawn Select line of landscaping products, further proving the quality of products the company offers.

The brothers say the experience has been a ton of fun, but they’re

making a difference, too. “The company continues to break barriers,” Jim says. “Dale and Brian are very forward-thinking. They don’t just think about what’s there and what to do with it, but what could be.”

WHAT’S NEXT

For ForeverLawn, innovation never stops, as the company is continually working to improve its products. At the same time, R&D is focusing on additional technology to produce even more durable, realistic, and softer synthetic grass products to stay at the forefront of the industry. “We’re continually looking for things that will not only meet our high expectations and make the customers happy but also make the people who are recommending our products look good,” Jim says. “We pride ourselves on being that company that puts out product that’s specifically designed for the application number one, but that’s also going to give them the long life and performance they expect.” **gb&d**