

# MaxQ Myths and Facts

A Non-Toxic Endophyte  
to Enhance Tall Fescues

**Myth:** *MaxQ will be contaminated and revert to toxic fescue.*

**Fact:** The endophyte in MaxQ is a pure strain and can never become toxic. Fescue endophytes cannot be taken up from the soil by roots nor can they be transferred or hybridized by cross pollination. Because MaxQ stands remain persistent and competitive year after year, reinfestation by toxic fescue varieties is very unlikely under good pasture management.

**Myth:** *MaxQ is fungus (endophyte) free.*

**Fact:** MaxQ, like Kentucky 31, contains an endophyte that lives within the plant tissue. This endophyte enhances the plant's ability to withstand stress brought on by heat, drought and grazing. **Unlike the endophyte in Ky 31 fescue, the MaxQ endophyte has no adverse effects on livestock health and performance.**



**Myth:** *MaxQ pastures/hayfields cannot be used the year of establishment.*

**Fact:** If establishment year weather is favorable, MaxQ can be grazed or hayed the first year. Grazing should not begin until plant growth reaches 6-8" in height. Do not graze below a 3" height or allow animals to trample the young seedlings during the year of establishment. If harvested for hay, adjust the mower to leave a minimum of 3" stubble height.

**Myth:** *Because fescue seedlings are slow to establish, a companion crop such as small grains or ryegrass should be planted with MaxQ.*

**Fact:** All varieties of fescue are slower to become established than small grains or ryegrass. Planting a companion forage with fescue further slows its establishment. Ryegrass is a particularly aggressive competitor of young fescue seedlings and should be avoided as a companion forage. **Pennington recommends MaxQ be planted alone.** If desired, Patriot white clover can be added the year following MaxQ establishment.

**Myth:** *MaxQ requires special care and management to survive.*

**Fact:** Persistence trials at major universities across the fescue belt have shown no significant differences in stand survival between toxic Ky 31 and MaxQ. Recommended management practices for fertilization and grazing of MaxQ mirror those of all fescue pastures and hayfields.

*(over)*

1-800-285-SEED  
[www.penningtonseed.com](http://www.penningtonseed.com)



*Myth: MaxQ establishment costs are too high and not economical.*

**Fact:** Dozens of university trials comparing the performance of animals grazing non-toxic MaxQ to toxic fescue varieties have shown improvements in gain of 100% or more with MaxQ. These studies show the value of these gains to be \$35-\$145 per acre annually. Economic analysis indicates the cost of renovating a toxic fescue pasture with MaxQ can be recaptured in a stocker operation in 1-2 years and a cow/calf operation in as little as 3-5 years.

*Myth: Overseeding toxic fescue pastures with small grains and/or clovers eliminates fescue toxicity problems.*

**Fact:** Overseeding non-toxic forages into toxic fescue pastures does reduce the effects of fescue toxicity by diluting the amount of toxin ingested. However, this practice does not eliminate fescue toxicity. Research has shown production losses even when small amounts of toxin are consumed by the animal. **The only way to totally eliminate fescue toxicosis is to replace toxic fescue with non-toxic forages like MaxQ.**

*Myth: Gestating mares should not be allowed to graze fescue pastures.*

**Fact:** Fescue toxicity is a well documented problem for brood mares. Toxicity problems include foaling difficulty, weak or dead foals, retained placenta and agalactia (absence of milk). **Studies at the University of Kentucky and Mississippi State indicate no toxicity symptoms associated with pregnant mares grazing MaxQ.**

*Myth: Forage yields of fungus infested KY 31 are higher than MaxQ.*

**Fact:** University yield trials across the fescue belt have shown MaxQ forage production to be equal to or greater than Ky 31. On-farm observations show cattle prefer grazing MaxQ over Ky 31. If MaxQ and Ky 31 are being grazed side by side, cattle will selectively graze the MaxQ forage down to lower heights than Ky 31. What may be perceived as greater Ky 31 growth is actually an example of cattle refusing to eat toxic Ky 31.



**1-800-285-SEED**  
**[www.penningtonseed.com](http://www.penningtonseed.com)**