Registration of ‘MX-86’ Sheep Fescue

‘MX-86’ sheep fescue (Festuca ovina L.) (Reg. no. CV-62, PI 537103) was released by Jacklin Seed Company, Post Falls, ID, in December 1988. MX-86 originated from selections made from a seedlot of common sheep fescue from eastern Germany in 1984.

Twenty-three seed lots were screened for rate of germination before one from eastern Germany was selected. Seed was planted in a field near Spokane, WA, in May 1985. Plants were selected for uniform plant morphology from this population to produce the parental lines for MX-86. Seed yield potential was the major criteria of selection as this has been one of the major problems with cultivars of sheep fescue. A breeder seed field of spaced plants was planted in summer 1987 at Post Falls. Plants exhibiting low seed yield, light-green color, or coarse texture were removed prior to anthesis. Breeder seed was first harvested in August 1988.

In the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program fine fescue test 1990 to 1993 (2), MX-86 exhibited significantly improved seedling vigor, and dollar spot resistance (caused by Lanzia Sacc. or Moellerodiscus Henn. spp.) resistance, compared with ‘Bighorn’. MX-86 was significantly lower than Bighorn for mean turf quality, fall density, and leaf spot resistance.

In a fine fescue turf trial seeded October 1989 at North Brunswick, NJ, MX-86 had significantly better ground coverage on 27 June 1994 than ‘Eureka’ under low-maintenance conditions (1). MX-86 also exhibited significantly higher turf quality than Eureka in 1993 and 1994.

In fine fescue turf trials seeded October 1989 at Pittstown, NJ, MX-86 was significantly lower than Eureka and Bighorn sheep fescues, under low-maintenance conditions, for average turf quality for 1992 through 1994 (1). It was significantly less dense than Eureka in July 1994.

Turf trials seeded in September 1991 at North Brunswick and Adelphia, NJ, indicated that MX-86 had significantly lower turf quality than Bighorn E+ and Bighorn at Adelphia, and lower turf quality than ‘Quatro’ at North Brunswick.

Research at Texas A&M at College Station, TX, determined that MX-86 had high relative heat stress resistance as assessed by visual rating of leaf firing to supraoptimal air and soil temperatures under chronic conditions in 1990 (3).

MX-86 sheep fescue is a low-maintenance turfgrass cultivar with medium blue-green color, enhanced seedling vigor, improved dollar spot resistance, and moderate leaf spot resistance. MX-86 is adapted for use in golf course roughs, parks, cemeteries, roadsides and home lawns. Its rapid germination may be beneficial in highelevation areas. MX-86 remains attractive under low maintenance.

MX-86 is well adapted to the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, NorthCentral, Northwest, and Midwest regions of the USA and areas worldwide with similar climates.

MX-86 sheep fescue is a uniform and stable cultivar. Breeder, foundation, registered, and certified seed have produced turf with comparable quality and acceptable uniformity. Variants will occur in each generation, but these are infrequent in occurrence and are normally removed from seed stock fields. Breeder seed is maintained in each region from which it was originally distributed to ensure its continued adaptation to local environments.

Registration of ‘Eagleton’ Kentucky Bluegrass

‘Eagleton’ Kentucky bluegrass (Poa pratensis L.) (Reg. no. PI 594919) was developed and released in 1996 by Lofts Seed, Inc., of Somerset, NJ, using germplasm obtained from the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station. The experimentation for this cultivar was Eagleton 1425.

Eagleton originated as a single, highly apomictic seedling clone from the grounds of Woodlawn, home of the Eagle College Campus of Rutgers University, in North Brunswick, NJ, during the winter of 1975. An attractive, vigorous patch of grass approximately 3 m in diameter was observed in an area where most other Kentucky bluegrasses planted had considerable discoloration from disease or had been replaced by weeds. Examination of the site indicated that Eagleton probably originated as a single seedling that had persisted and spread. Vegetative propagules were transferred to field nurseries at Rutgers University for observation and seed production. Eagleton was included in a seeded turf trial in August 1976 at North Brunswick, NJ. In this trial and subsequent trials, it has performed better than medium-low-maintenance and exhibited excellent ground coverage (1). Field-grown, spore progenies were exceptionally uniform with more than 95% of the progeny plants being indistinguishable from their parent, indicating a high level of apomictic reproduction. The first seed of Eagleton was produced in Western Oregon in 1996.

Eagleton is a leafy, turf-type Kentucky bluegrass that is an attractive medium-green color, with medium-fine leaves and slow rate of vertical growth. It has the ability to spread and build a thick sod mat. It has a dense, dependable, aggressive, persistent turf that is equipped to withstand high heat stress. Good summer performance. Eagleton has shown good resistance to important turfgrass diseases such as white spot, Anthracnose, Ustilago striiformis (Westend) Niessl, dollar spot (caused by Sclerotinia homoeocarpa F.T. Bennett) (3).

Eagleton has been successfully grown in blends with many other adapted medium-dark green cultivars of Kentucky bluegrass. These blends and/or mixtures include improved turf-type perennial ryegrass (Lolium perenne L.), strong creeping red fescue (Festuca rubra), or improved turf-type tall fescue (Festuca rubra subsp. rubra). These blends and/or mixtures should be planted in locations where the lawn will not be exposed to varying light intensities, ranging from full sun to heavy shade.