

## Argentinian scientists genetically modify grass to improve fodder for livestock

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis.**

*[Editor's note: This excerpt was taken from the Google translated version of this article. Some corrections have been made for clarity]*

Dallis grass (*Paspalum dilatatum*) is an important forage which heretofore could not be cultivated due to a serious problem: it is susceptible to attack by the fungus *Claviceps*, which diminishes its seed production to non-commercial levels. Enhancement work carried out at the Faculty of Agronomy of the University of Buenos Aires (FAUBA) yielded two varieties: [one that improves ability to cultivate the grass and one with improved yield]. A second step in improving forage seeks to raise the quality of these materials through biotechnology.

....

“The problem was that the fungus attacking the grass flowers, produces seed abortion; this dramatically [lowers] performance. In addition, *Claviceps* contains hallucinogens and may even [cause hemorrhages] in cattle that ingested because it produces ergotamine.” [said Gustavo Schrauf, teacher the chair of Genetics FAUBA.]

....

“Thanks to biotechnology, both ways we’ve added features that provide more fodder value, for example, that plants [are greener longer] and produce more sugar and less lignin ( a substance that makes it less usable forage). All this is still in the experimental stage. “

Gustavo told us that the use of transgenics is advantageous compared to traditional breeding methods. “. . . [W]e have high expectations. If we increase digestibility (ie, what the animal [gains] after eating) by 1%, production of meat, milk or wool could reach up to 3%, which is much “.

**Read full article translated by Google translate:** An investigation by the FAUBA allows transgenic livestock reach

**Read the full article in the original Spanish:** Una investigación de la FAUBA permite que los transgénicos lleguen a la ganadería