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First Evidence of Genetically Modified Plants in the Wild, Scientists Report

ScienceDaily (Aug. 6, 2010) — Scientists currently performing field research in North Dakota have discovered the first evidence of established populations of genetically modified plants in the wild.

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406 plants collected, 347 (86%) tested positive for CP4 EPSPS protein (confers tolerance to glyphosate herbicide) or PAT protein (confers tolerance to glufosinate herbicide).

"There were also two instances of multiple transgenes in single individuals," said one of the study's coauthors Cynthia Sagers, University of Arkansas. "Varieties with multiple transgenic traits have not yet been released commercially, so this finding suggests that feral populations are reproducing and have become established outside of cultivation. These observations have important implications for the ecology and management of native and weedy species, as well as for the management of biotech products in the U.S."

The poster session "Evidence for the establishment and persistence of genetically modified canola populations in the

Meredith G. Schafer from the University of Arkansas and colleagues from North Dakota State University, California State University, Fresno and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency established transects of land along 5,400 km of interstate, state and county roads in North Dakota from which they collected, photographed and tested 406 canola plants.

The results -- which were recorded in early July and are set to be presented at ESA's Annual Meeting in Pittsburgh -- provide strong evidence that transgenic plants have established populations outside of agricultural fields in the U.S. Of the

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U.S.," led by Meredith G. Schafer from the University of Arkansas, will be held Friday, August 6, 2010.

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