

USDA approves first release of GE diamondback moths, in New York cabbage fields

A proposal to release genetically engineered diamondback moths in cabbage fields in upstate New York has received a green light from USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

APHIS released a final environmental assessment (EA) and FONSI – a Finding of No Significant Impact – and said it will issue a permit to [Tony Shelton](#), an entomologist at Cornell University conducting the research, because the proposed field trial is unlikely to harm the environment or human health.

The plan is to release up to 10,000 GE male moths each week during the cabbage planting cycle (about three to four months). The males are genetically engineered with a lethal gene that they pass on to females when they mate. Experiments already conducted show that the female offspring then die, usually as caterpillars.

“Successful mating between GE male and non-GE female diamondback moths produced only 9 percent female survival to pupation and no more than 1 percent female survival to adult,” according to the EA. The idea is to continue releasing the GE male moths so that they overwhelm the non-GE population, resulting in a gradual decrease of the moth population.

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Oxitec says the GE moths could provide a viable alternative to the use of insecticides.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [APHIS OKs release of GE moths in New York](#)