



MEDIA RELEASE

QUEENSLAND FARMERS MAKING SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO GREAT BARRIER REEF PLAN

Thursday 12 June 2014 (Canberra) - The 2013 Report Card on the Great Barrier Reef Water Quality Protection Plan shows that the improved land management practices adopted by farmers in reef catchments are making significant progress towards halting and reversing the decline of the quality of water entering the reef.

"In 2009, the plan outlined very ambitious targets across a range of management practice indicators to improve the quality of water flowing into the Reef from coastal catchments," said Matthew Cossey, Chief Executive Officer at CropLife Australia. "While there is no scientific evidence to indicate that current pesticide levels in the reef are having an adverse effect on reef health, farmers have been taking a proactive approach to the management of their land with modelling indicating that in just four years there has been a 28 per cent reduction in the annual average pesticide load across the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) catchments."

The latest GBR pesticide monitoring report released in 2012 showed that no GBR Marine Park Authority water quality guidelines were exceeded, and detections were at such low levels they were unlikely to present any risk to reef health. While it is imperative that crop protection products are always used in a responsible manner, it is also critical to ensure that resources are not wasted on expensive regulatory measures that impose heavily on industries and communities targeted, but have no tangible benefit to the Reef.

"The Australian plant science industry is a global leader in its full lifecycle approach to the stewardship of crop protection products and contributes over \$13 million a year on stewardship activities. This ensures that their products are sustainably managed for the benefit of users, consumers and the environment. The industry will continue to work in collaboration with governments, industry groups, farmer organisations and research bodies to ensure that Queensland farmers use their products in a responsible and environmentally conscious manner.

"The use of agricultural chemicals is vital to affordable food production, on farm productivity and the management of invasive species and noxious weeds in natural environments. In 2013, Deloitte Access Economics found that \$17.6 billion of Australian agricultural output is attributable to the use of crop protection products.

"The GBR is a spectacular, fragile and important World Heritage Area that delivers over \$6 billion annually to the Australian economy. It is therefore vital that appropriate measures, backed by credible science, are introduced in consultation with relevant sectors of the Queensland economy to improve reef health," concluded Mr Cossey.

Contact: Matt Coulton (Public Affairs Officer) Ph: 02 6230 6399 Mob: 0428 262 294

About CropLife Australia

CropLife Australia (CropLife) is the peak industry organisation representing the agricultural chemical and biotechnology (plant science) sector in Australia. CropLife represents the innovators, developers, manufacturers and formulators of crop protection and agricultural biotechnology products. The plant science industry provides products to protect crops against pests, weeds and diseases, as well as developing crop biotechnologies that are key to the nation's agricultural productivity, sustainability and food security. The plant science industry is worth more than \$17.6 billion a year to the Australian economy and directly employs thousands of people across the country. CropLife and its members are committed to the stewardship of their products throughout their lifecycle and to ensuring that human health, environment and trade issues associated with agricultural chemical use in Australia are responsibly and sustainably managed. Our member companies spend more than \$13 million a year on stewardship activities to ensure the safe and effective use of their products. CropLife ensures the responsible use of these products through its mandatory industry code of conduct and has set a benchmark for industry stewardship through programs such as *drumMUSTER*, ChemClear® and Agsafe Accreditation and Training. Our stewardship activities demonstrate our commitment to managing the impacts associated with container waste and unwanted chemicals.

Website: www.croplifeaustralia.org.au **Facebook:** www.facebook.com/croplifeoz **Twitter:** www.twitter.com/croplifeoz