

GOVERNMENT COMMENDED FOR IMPROVING FARMER ACCESS TO CRUCIAL AGVET CHEMICAL PRODUCTS

10 May 2016 (Canberra) – CropLife Australia warmly welcomed Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, the Hon Barnaby Joyce's announcement today of an initiative to further improve Australian farmers' access to crucial crop protection products. The Coalition Government is commended for supporting the fast-tracking of new agricultural and veterinary (agvet) chemical products with the announcement of \$1.6 million allocated to research grants and a further \$2.4 million in a second round of funding for applications under the 'Improved Access to Agvet Chemicals' initiative.

Matthew Cossey, Chief Executive Officer of the national peak organisation for Australia's plant science sector, CropLife Australia, today said "the Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP is to be applauded for his work in ensuring Australian farmers have access to the tools and products essential to remaining competitive in a challenging global agricultural industry while meeting the food security challenges of the future."

"A regulation generated market failure in the delivery of crop protection products exists because the cost of regulating a crop protection product in Australia is the same on a dollar basis as it is in the United States, yet the market here is one-tenth the size. The regulation of agricultural chemicals must be commensurate with risk and this funding goes some way to correcting the number of inconsistencies in the current regulatory environment," said Mr Cossey.

"The Government's initial four-year \$8 million investment in the 'Improved Access to Agvet Chemicals' initiative in 2013 was an important and responsible decision. The Government's announcement of increased grant caps, from \$50,000 to \$100,000, to provide permanent access to new uses of a registered chemical available through the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) will also help to enable more environmentally friendly pest management practices."

"The Minor Use and Specialty Crops program is crucial to the nation's agricultural productivity and our international competitiveness. A lack of pest and weed control options has a number of consequences, including acting as a barrier to the development of new agricultural industries," said Mr Cossey.

"In addition to the hundreds of major commodity farmers whose crops are susceptible to minor pests and diseases that are not significant enough to warrant new control technologies or label extensions, a number of agriculture's smaller sectors could benefit from the Government's grants announced today. Horticultural crops, in particular, face challenges as the smaller areas under production often make it uneconomic for registration of new chemical products. These grants will be a significant help to Australian agriculture by increasing its productivity and diversity."

"The small size of Australia's crop protection product market on a global comparison means that the implementation of this initiative is vital so that Australian agriculture is assured access to the latest innovations from the plant science industry and their full range of uses."

"The plant science industry and I applaud Minister Joyce and the Government for its work in ensuring the funds go into achieving real outcomes and getting value from the funding," concluded Mr Cossey.

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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 contribute more than \$13 million a year to 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.

