

## COMMIT TO INNOVATION IN AGRICULTURE ON WORLD WATER DAY

**Friday 22 March 2013 (Canberra)** – World Water Day is a chance for all Australians to remember how precious water is in our country and how reliant our food supply is on efficient use of this resource.

Matthew Cossey, Chief Executive Officer of CropLife Australia, said today, “Australian farmers currently produce almost 93 per cent of our domestic food supply. As our population increases, the agricultural sector will have to continue to find ways to produce more with less in even more challenging environmental and economic circumstances.

“The investment in research and development made by the plant science industry is pivotal to helping farmers improve production in increasingly harsh conditions, but our farmers also need the support of policy makers. It is crucial that regulation of agriculture industries facilitates innovation.

“As we enter an election year, with a great deal of talk about agricultural productivity and the opportunities of the Asian Century making headlines, it is important we remember the constant challenges our farmers face in providing Australians with a safe, affordable, and varied food supply. Water scarcity is just one such challenge.

“The need to cooperate to find innovative ways to get more agricultural output from the water used is more crucial than ever. World Water Day is an opportune time for Australian governments and industry to recommit to leading the world in sustainable food production.

“Government and industry need to continue working together to invest in innovation to meet the joint challenges of sustainability and productivity. Globally, the plant science industry is one of the world’s most innovative sectors, with the top 10 companies investing an estimated \$4.72 billion in research and development each year.

“Advances in agricultural biotechnology and modern crop protection chemistry are already saving our nation billions of dollars and reducing water usage by up to 32 per cent per acre for some crops. Diminishing natural resources, climate change and the challenge of water scarcity further emphasise the importance of embracing all of the approved tools and technologies available to farmers today, and investing in research for the tools of the future.

“Australia has an opportunity to become a world leader in sustainable, innovative food production. Our plant science industry is already considered among the best in the world, but the support of policy makers and investment in agricultural innovation is vital for Australian farmers to make the most of this opportunity.

“The prosperity that the Asian Century promises for Australian agriculture will not be realised without a concerted effort to invest in and promote the technologies our farmers need to produce more food, while conserving our precious natural resources.” Mr Cossey concluded.

### World Water Day Background:

The objective of World Water Day over the past two decades has been to raise awareness and promote sustainability of one of the world’s most precious resources. World Water Day in 2012 focused international attention on the challenges around ‘Water and Food Security’. In 2013, in reflection of the International Year of Water Cooperation, World Water Day is also dedicated to the theme of cooperation around water.

**Contact: Jessica Lee (Manager – Public Affairs) Ph: 02 6230 6399 Mob: 0410 491 261**

### 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 \$1.5 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](http://www.croplifeaustralia.org.au)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/croplifeoz](http://www.facebook.com/croplifeoz)

Twitter: [www.twitter.com/croplifeoz](http://www.twitter.com/croplifeoz)