

FACTS NOT FEAR SHOULD INFORM THE GM CROP DEBATE

Monday 16 April 2012 (Canberra) – Misguided and misinformed media campaigns against GM crops only act to unnecessarily mislead consumers and work against the interest of Australian agriculture.

“Recent statements that encourage the continued ban of GM crops in South Australia seem to be more about an individual political agenda than good public policy debate. There is no fact or scientific basis to any of the statements that indicate South Australia’s reputation, environment or public health are at risk if they allow the production of GM crops. In fact, quite the opposite is true,” CropLife Australia Chief Executive Officer, Matthew Cossey said.

“Agriculture in South Australia is actually facing a significant competitive disadvantage without the use of GM crops in the future. The importance of GM crops and the fast-growing nature of GM technology that could bring both economic and agronomic benefits for South Australia have been acknowledged by the President of the State’s Farming Federation, Peter White. Biotechnology in agriculture is delivering crucial innovation for Australia’s and the world’s farmers. Ongoing research is also being done in critical areas to enhance nutrition and higher yields, to improve drought resistance and increase salinity tolerance.”

“Comments that question the safety and labelling of GM food ingredients are just political propaganda. GM products in Australia undergo rigorous scientific assessment and are safe for consumers. Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ) already mandate the labelling of these products for consumer choice, not because of public health concerns.”

“Workable food labelling policy must be science-based and reflect the realities of agricultural supply chains and global trade, not political agendas. Technology-specific and ideologically motivated policies such as those expounded recently in the media only act to deprive responsible consumers of the choice they deserve,” Mr Cossey concluded.

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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 \$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, ChemClea® and Agsafe Accreditation and Training. Our stewardship activities demonstrate our commitment to managing the impacts associated with container waste and unwanted chemicals

