

FEEDING THE WORLD'S GROWING POPULATION WILL NEED SCIENCE BASED AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION

11 July 2012 (Canberra)—On World Population Day, governments the world over are contending with the challenge of developing policies to encourage sustainable food production. In this context, Australia is in a unique position to lead the world in finding viable solutions to hunger and malnutrition.

With a thriving agriculture industry that provides 93 per cent of its domestic food supply, Australia is a world leader in food production. Our country is embracing innovation and working solidly towards sustainable and environmentally friendly farming practices. The future of food production is heavily reliant on advances in science and technology, which allow farmers to deliver more food with fewer resources.

Political support for science-based, efficient and effective regulation will afford Australia the opportunity to set the benchmarks for the rest of the world in innovative and progressive agriculture policy. Policy makers should be doing their utmost to encourage research and innovation, embracing new technologies and supporting their path to market.

Chief Executive Officer of CropLife Australia, Matthew Cossey, today emphasised the essential role played by modern sustainable agriculture in ensuring food and nutrition security as well as economic stability.

“World Population Day should draw global attention to the fact that we will have over 9 billion mouths to feed by 2050. The ratio of arable land to population is declining by 40-55 per cent and 1.8 billion people will be living with absolute water scarcity by 2025. There has never been greater pressure on global agriculture and Australia has the ingenuity, knowledge and skills needed to develop sustainable solutions and feed and nourish the future,” Mr Cossey said.

“The plant science industry provides fundamental tools to Australian agriculture that will enable the development of these solutions. Innovative crop protection products and plant varieties enable farmers to grow more food sustainably and effectively. Alarming, 20-40% of the world's food production is lost to pests, weeds and diseases. This number would double without effective crop protection products,” Mr Cossey said.

“Agricultural biotechnology also presents huge benefits for enhancing the nutritional content of the food farmers can grow. Children suffering from malnutrition are nine times more likely to die than those provided with sufficient daily nutrients. Nutritionally enhanced foods can help to mitigate malnutrition and hunger that cost developing countries around \$450 billion in lost GDP per year and dramatically increase the risk of democratic failure, violence and civil conflict. As our population continues to grow, we need every available tool at our disposal to protect food and nutrition security.

“Research and development in agricultural plant science is critical for achieving necessary increases in food production and in addressing food insecurity. It is now crucial that governments recognise the contribution of the industry and support it accordingly with the investment it needs.

“Using a variety of innovative agricultural tools is the only way to achieve sufficient and sustainable crop production. The Australian plant science industry is committed to providing farmers with modern tools that increase yields, safeguard crops, preserve the environment and protect human health. These efficiencies help to give the world the time it needs to achieve sustainability to support its growing population,” Mr Cossey concluded.

About World Population Day: Established by the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme in 1989 as a way to focus attention on the urgency and importance of population issues. It was an outgrowth of the interest generated by the Day of Five Billion, which was observed on 11 July 1987.

Contact: Lauren Walker (Communications Director) 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.

Official Supporter



Website: www.croplifeaustralia.org.au

Facebook: www.facebook.com/croplifeoz

Twitter:

