

JOINT STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF BIOTECHNOLOGY A POSITIVE STEP FOR AUSTRALIAN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY

Plant science industry commends the Australian Government for participation in multilateral action to promote a science-based approach to regulation of biotech crops.

Thursday 18 April 2013 (Canberra) — The recent release of the Joint Statement on Innovative Agricultural Production Technologies, Particularly Plant Technologies, which Australia has formally endorsed in conjunction with Brazil, Canada, Republic of Argentina, Republic of Paraguay and the United States, signifies a positive step towards smart, science-based agricultural policy.

Matthew Cossey, CEO of CropLife Australia said today, "The statement, of which Australia is an official signatory, was produced as part of a multinational effort to address trade and food security challenges arising from differences between regulatory systems governing biotech products.

"This is an important and commendable move by the Australian government. It puts Australian farmers on an equal footing with their biggest international agricultural trading competitors, at least in terms of government attitudes towards biotechnology regulation.

"Importantly, Australia's involvement in this process means that our government has formally recognised that:

- agricultural production needs to substantially increase to meet global food, feed, fibre and energy demands in the face of population growth,
- innovative agricultural technologies need to continue to play a critical role in addressing these challenges,
- regulatory approaches related to products derived from innovative agricultural technologies should be science-based, transparent, timely, no more trade restrictive than necessary to fulfil legitimate objectives, and consistent with relevant international obligations.

"It's great to see recognition of the importance of science and innovation to increasing agricultural productivity. It would be fantastic to see these sentiments reflected in increased funding to research and development in agriculture, but this will do for a start", 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 \$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.

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