

LEAVE THE INDEPENDENT REGULATOR TO BE INDEPENDENT

27 March 2012 (Canberra) - The most critical component of an effective agricultural and veterinary chemical regulation regime is an efficient, competent, independent regulator that makes decisions on a scientific basis free from undue influence or inappropriate public campaigns.

As the peak body for the plant science industry, CropLife Australia supports scientific risk-based regulation of pesticides, as do all of our member companies. This is enforced through a world leading, mandatory code of conduct for all CropLife member companies.

CropLife Chief Executive Officer, Matthew Cossey said, "The Agricultural and Veterinary Chemical Products regulator, the APVMA, must make all decisions independent of external pressure.

"The circulation of specific public statements to unduly influence an independent regulator for a desired decision is entirely inappropriate. It is disappointing that the World Wildlife Foundation (WWF) is using the media as a means to pressure a regulator in the lead up to a decision on a specific chemical this week.

"In their public statements today, the WWF misapplies GBRMPA trigger values for safety values. They are implying that the levels of detection of pesticide in rivers situated in close proximity to cane farms equate to the levels of exposure in the reef. This misleading application of statistics appears to be nothing more than a deliberate tactic aimed at misinforming the public.

"The responsible thing for the WWF to do in this situation is to provide any data or scientific evidence on this issue to the APVMA. If this information had any credibility, it should have been formally submitted as part of the review process, not used as media propaganda."

A ban on any currently approved chemical is not without consequence and may in fact lead to a worse environmental outcome. If farmers lose access to a safe, effective and environmentally sound tool, this can cause changes to farming systems that result in worse environmental outcomes and a greater net risk to the Great Barrier Reef.

"Australia has well-informed, responsible farmers who make responsible decisions on the use of chemicals on their farms in line with the registration approvals and official use instructions. Farmers and the plant science industry continuously work to ensure that there is nothing more than a negligible risk to the Great Barrier Reef environment from the use of crop protection products. Australia is privileged to have a world leading scientifically credible and independent regulator to make these decisions based on all the facts and data available."

The APVMA's decision on the future use of any crop protection product should be the result of a risk analysis, based on scientific evidence, which is kept free from undue influence and misinformation. Those seeking to use crop protection products in the future should be confident, as is CropLife Australia, that they will be able to do so safely and effectively if it has been assessed and approved by the APVMA.

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About CropLife Australia

CropLife Australia is the peak industry organisation representing the agricultural chemical and biotechnology (plant science) sector in Australia. CropLife represents the innovators, developers, manufacturers, formulators and registrants of crop protection and agro-biotechnology products. 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 ensures the responsible use of crop protection products and the disposal of waste through its industry code of conduct and its stewardship programs such as **drumMUSTER**, ChemClear[®] and Agsafe Accreditation and Training. CropLife Australia has 18 member companies and is part a global federation of organisations representing the plant science industry which supports a network of regional and national associations in 91 countries.

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