

NATIONAL FOOD PLAN GREEN PAPER A CRUCIAL BEGINNING TO SECURING LONG-TERM FOOD SECURITY & AGRICULTURAL GROWTH IN AUSTRALIA

19 July 2012 (Canberra) – Australia's plant science industry commends the Federal Government for publishing a National Food Plan green paper and welcomes Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Senator Ludwig's initiative in proposing a national strategy to ensure consistency of biotechnology regulation.

CropLife Australia's Chief Executive Officer, Mr Matthew Cossey today said, "it is crucial that Australia has a long-term strategic vision for food production and a clear and supported plan for Australian agriculture to deliver on that vision. It is pleasing to see that the Federal Government is showing leadership in this area, however, the seriousness of the challenges of future food production should not be underestimated.

"The global pressures and demands to increase food production will only heighten over the coming years and so it is essential that the Government provides a clear policy framework to assist the nation's farming sector in meeting these demands. The world has to increase food production by 70 per cent over the next few decades to meet global food and nutritional requirements.

"To meet these ever increasing demands both political and community support for science-based, efficient and effective regulation is needed, and will afford Australia the opportunity to set the benchmarks for the rest of the world in innovative and progressive agriculture policy.

"The plant science industry was integral to the last great food production leap in the 1960's, referred to as the 'Green Revolution', which saw crop production and yields double. It will again be the plant science industry through modern agricultural chemical and biotechnology innovation that will be at the core of the solutions for meeting this next significant food production challenge.

"It is also very pleasing that the National Food Plan promises to bring some cohesion to current regulatory reforms affecting the plant science industry and agriculture more broadly. It is crucial that all regulatory reforms are viewed in the context of their effect on the capacity of Australian farmers to produce more with less. This means we need consistent science-based regulation that facilitates investment in plant science innovation, giving our farmers the tools, technologies and products they need to lead the world in food production.

"To ensure we don't squander this unique opportunity, policy makers should be doing their utmost to support and invest in research and innovation, embracing new technologies and supporting their path to market.

"There has for a long time been a clear need to develop a comprehensive plan that pulls together the key concerns voiced across our food supply chain to allow the coordination of resources and help resolve issues cooperatively. Developing a national framework will be an incredibly important step in strengthening coordination and cooperation right across the agriculture industry.

"The Government has taken a well needed step towards securing a sustainable food system. The plant science industry is 100 per cent behind this goal and will continue to invest heavily in agricultural innovation, working together with government to ensure we not only secure a quality, nutritious food supply for Australia, but also so that we can make the most of this opportunity to lead the world in the fight for global food security.

"Agricultural chemistry and biotechnology have for many years been assisting farmers to control pests, increase yields and reduce their environmental footprint and the plant science industry will continue to invest and work with Australia's farmers to secure a strong future for agriculture as a strong agriculture sector is the foundation of food production, 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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