

## Outlook for Biotech Crop Adoption Indicates Continued Global Growth

*Global biotech adoption stands at 16.7 million farmers in 29 countries with 160 million hectares planted*

**9 February 2012 (Canberra)** – Global adoption of biotech crops continues at unprecedented rates and developing countries are leading the way, the latest annual report from the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Applications (ISAAA) reveals. In 2011, developing countries adopted biotech crops at twice the rate of developed countries, giving us a clear indication that Biotech crops are proving to be a critical tool for farmers worldwide as the fight against climate change, poverty and food security intensifies.

CropLife Australia as the peak industry body for the plant science sector today stated that the findings of the ISAAA report confirm the criticality for Australian farmers to have access to and ability to adopt these important sustainable crop technologies.

During 2011, an additional 12 million hectares of biotech crops were planted representing an annual growth rate of 8 percent over 2010, according to Dr. Clive James author of the annual biotech crop report released this week by ISAAA.

Dr. James commented that the unprecedented adoption rates are testimony to overwhelming trust and confidence in biotech crops by millions of farmers worldwide. During 2011, 160 million hectares were planted (up from 148 million in 2010) by 16.7 million farmers in 29 countries, including 19 developing countries and 10 industrial countries. Such adoption represents a 94-fold increase in hectares planted since 1996, making biotech crops the fastest adopted crop technology in recent history.

### Adoption Twice as Fast and Twice as large in Developing Countries

Developing countries proved they have an appetite for biotech crop technology during 2011. Developing countries leading biotech adoption are Brazil and Argentina in Latin America; China and India in Asia; and South Africa on the continent of Africa, and together represent 40 percent of the global population.

Growth rate for biotech crops in developing countries at 11 percent or 8.2 million hectares, during 2011, was twice as fast and twice as large as industrial countries at 5 percent or 3.8 million hectares.

Developing countries grew approximately 50 percent of global biotech crops in 2011 and are expected to exceed industrial country hectareage in 2012. Additionally, more than 90 percent of farmers worldwide (equivalent to over 15 million farmers) are small resource-poor farmers in developing countries, up 8 percent or 1.3 million since 2010, said Dr. James.

### Marked Advancements Worldwide

Advancements are being experienced throughout the world, and are very important to the overall landscape of global biotech commercialization.

Highlights noted in the report include:

- United States continued to be the lead producer of biotech crops globally, at 69 million hectares, with an average adoption rate of approximately 90 percent across principal biotech crops.
- Brazil ranks second only to the USA in hectareage, with 30.3 million hectares planted. For the third consecutive year, Brazil had the largest increase in the world at 4.9 million hectares, representing an impressive year-over-year increase of 20 percent.
- India celebrated a decade of successful cultivation of biotech cotton, which has transformed the cotton crop into the most productive and profitable crop in the country, with 10.6 million hectares planted during 2011.
- China adopted biotech cotton on 71.5 percent of cotton hectareage or 3.9 million hectares. Such growth was driven by 7 million small, resource-poor farmers, who on average farm only one-half of one hectare.
- Philippines reported a 20 percent increase in hectareage of biotech maize, planting >600,000 hectares. The Philippines is the only country in Asia which plants biotech maize.
- Africa planted 2.5 million hectares of biotech crops, and is making advancements with field trials in the regulatory process for additional biotech crop countries and crops.

## Insight for future success

During the sixteen years of biotech crop commercialization, many lessons have been learned across the industry. From regulatory and approval considerations to nurturing strong biotech pipelines, sustained growth and development has been achieved through insight and global innovation driven by industry and government alike.

Dr. James also emphasised the importance of three requirements in ensuring biotech crop success. Firstly he believes that countries must secure political will and support; second, there is a need to develop innovative game-changing trait technologies which will have high impact; and thirdly, he said to ensure science-based, time- and cost-effective deregulation, in order to provide farmers new technologies for timely continued growth and productivity.

## Outlook:

- Considerable potential lies in continued adoption of high hectareage biotech crops (maize, soybean, cotton, and canola). During 2011, 160 million hectares of these crops were planted, and currently, there are approximately 150 million hectares available for potential adoption. Thirty million of the potential hectares are in China, which have assigned priority to biotech maize, and where demand for maize as a feed crop is growing fast as the country consumes more meat.
- Support for biotech crops varies across Europe, where Bt maize hectareage in 2011 was a record 114,490 hectares, up more than 25% on 2010. At the same time, BASF halted development and commercialization of all its biotech crop products for cultivation in Europe as of mid-January 2012. BASF will continue the EU regulation process for products already started such as "Fortuna," its late blight disease resistant potato.
- Commercialization of biotech wheat in North America has been revisited. Similarly, many countries and companies worldwide, are now also fast-tracking the development of a range of biotech traits in wheat to improve drought tolerance, disease resistance and grain quality. Biotech wheat is expected to be commercialized before 2020.

The increasing biotechnology adoption rates around the world are a key indication that Australian farming needs to continue to develop the use of farming technologies, such as biotech crops, if they are to maintain their position as a world leader in the farming and agricultural sector.

For more information or the executive summary, visit [www.isaaa.org](http://www.isaaa.org).

*The report is funded by two European philanthropic organizations: the Bussolera-Branca Foundation from Italy, which supports the open-sharing of knowledge on biotech crops to aid decision-making by global society; and a philanthropic unit within Ibercaja, one of the largest Spanish banks headquartered in the maize growing region of Spain.*

*The International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA) is a not-for-profit organization with an international network of centers designed to contribute to the alleviation of hunger and poverty by sharing knowledge and crop biotechnology applications. Clive James, chairman and founder of ISAAA, has lived and/or worked for the past 30 years in the developing countries of Asia, Latin America and Africa, devoting his efforts to agricultural research and development issues with a focus on crop biotechnology and global food security.*

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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 17 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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