

PLANT SCIENCE INDUSTRY WELCOMES INCREASED INVESTMENT FROM WORLD LEADERS TO FIGHT GROWING FOOD SECURITY FEARS

19 June 2012 (Canberra) – Prime Minister Julia Gillard should be congratulated for the Government’s commitment to global food security, which was reinforced with the recent announcement of significant funding to the new *Ag Results* initiative. The plant science industry welcomes the announcement and commends the Government for their support of such a key initiative, which is vital to the prosperity of Australian agriculture.

CropLife Australia’s Chief Executive Officer, Matthew Cossey, expressed his enthusiasm for the initiative saying “I am very pleased that world leaders are taking the challenge of global food security seriously. With over one billion people going to bed hungry every night, this is already a significant issue. Without a substantial increase in production, the growing demand for food, particularly across developing countries, will very likely outgrow supply, increasing pressure on farmers to produce more food with less land, soil, water and fertiliser.

“There is an urgent need for drastic measures in agriculture globally to counter this threat. The adoption of modern agricultural chemistry and biotechnology will be at the very core of the solution.

“It is also so encouraging to see that governments are now coming together to develop and fund innovation in this sector. Such commitment will inspire the plant science industry to maintain their annual multi-billion dollar research and development spend and to devote even further resources to this critical fight.”

Equipped with the appropriate scientific and technical resources, the plant science industry has for decades been innovating agriculture. The industry has already provided crucial advances such as GM crops that have revolutionised global agriculture by increasing crop yields, reducing the risks of crop disease, facilitating the switch to no-till cropping systems and multiple other environmental benefits.

Scientists have also been examining and trialling increased nutritional content in GM crops, an advancement that could prove critical to seventy-five per cent of the world’s poorest people who struggle to provide adequate food and nutrition to their families.

“With increased investment by governments we can look forward to seeing further advancements sooner and more agricultural tools and products becoming available for farmers globally. Australia can be confident that we have a world leading plant science industry that invests heavily in agricultural innovation and which stands ready to work with governments in this very urgent and serious fight so as to ensure some of our world’s most vulnerable people are given the best chance to achieve global food security”, concluded Mr Cossey.

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, ChemClea® 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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