

PROPOSED AGVETCHEM REFORMS FALL SHORT OF DELIVERING EFFICIENCY AND PUT AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY AT RISK

Wednesday 28 November 2012 (Canberra) – The Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Legislation Amendment Bill, introduced into Parliament today, contains some important reforms, but falls well short of delivering any red tape reduction or efficiencies into the regulatory system.

The significant structural changes that have been made to the existing legislation mean that a thorough, detailed assessment of the legislation and its potential effects is absolutely essential.

CropLife Australia CEO, Matthew Cossey commended Minister Ludwig for his clear commitment to genuine consultation during this reform process and expressed hope that for the sake of Australia's farmers, this commitment continues during these final stages of reform.

"If this Bill passes without significant improvements, our nation's farmers may lose access to safe and effective products on which they depend to run high yielding, environmentally sustainable and profitable farms. The consequences of this for Australian agriculture will be significant and far-reaching", Mr Cossey said.

"Government has come a long way to have arrived at the Bill in its current form, but there is still a long way to go. A number of essential reforms remain unaddressed. Despite the government's rhetoric about cutting red tape, out of 287 pages of amendments, we are still faced with reforms that have not removed one single rule, process or regulation, and several new ones have been added.

"These final stages before the Bill passes into law should be about getting it right, not rushing it", Mr Cossey continued.

"The Parliamentary Committees should be given sufficient time to hear the concerns of the agricultural sector. In its current form, the Bill will create a regulatory framework that inhibits agricultural innovation and productivity, at a time when the shortage of healthy, safe food around the world is reaching a critical level.

"An unnecessarily high regulatory burden and the associated costs compared to other markets around the world will also place an excessive handicap on Australian farmers.

"Australia's plant science industry remains committed to working with government and the parliament to ensure that these reforms will actually assist in safeguarding the international trade competitiveness of Australia's farming sector and help increase our contribution to global food security." Mr Cossey concluded.

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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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