

## WORLD WATER DAY IS A TIME FOR REFLECTION AND ACTION

**Wednesday 21 March 2012 (Canberra)** – World Water day (22 March) is a chance for all Australians to remember how precious water is to our country and how reliant the agriculture sector is on this resource.

Matthew Cossey, Chief Executive Officer of CropLife Australia, commented today that “it is an opportune time for all sectors of the agriculture industry to recommit to Australia’s farmers to be world leaders in sustainable food crop production. The plant science sector strives to provide our farmers with the most cutting edge technologies and products to assist them in the mammoth task ahead of meeting global food demands while using less water.

“The need to conserve our water supply is more crucial than ever. In the year of the farmer, it is so important we remember the constant challenges our farmers face in providing the phenomenal quality and quantity of food supply required of them both nationally and internationally, with scarce water supplies only one of their tribulations.

“Technology and innovation are going to be key contributors to the farming and wider agricultural sector in meeting the need for increased food production into the future. The expertise and investment from the plant science industry is of core importance in helping farmers achieve these goals. CropLife member companies are also committed to sustainable agriculture. This is why our industry invests in research and development to establish new products, better formulations, packaging and use systems.

“Government and industry need to continue working together to invest and innovate in the joint challenges of sustainability and productivity. Globally, the plant science industry is one of the world’s most innovative sectors, with the top 10 companies investing an estimated \$4.72 billion in research and development each year.”

Advances in biotechnology and modern crop protection chemistry have already provided significant tools to farmers. In the future they strive to offer further benefits such as drought and salinity tolerance for crops, enhanced nutrition and higher yields. Advances in crop protection products and spray techniques are also incredibly valuable for farmers as they face the constant threat of pests.

“Australia has an opportunity to become a world leader in agricultural science and technology. Importantly, our plant science industry is already considered amongst the best in the world. But the threat of climate change and the challenges we face due to water scarcity further emphasise the importance of embracing the tools these technologies offer.

“The fight to achieve global food security will not be won without innovation and technology, it is our most valuable asset.” Mr Cossey concluded.

### World Water Day Background:

The objective of World Water Day over the past two decades has been to raise awareness and promote sustainability of one of the world’s most precious resources. 2011 was to focus international attention on the impact of rapid urban population growth, industrialization and uncertainties caused by climate change, conflicts and natural disasters on urban water systems. The push continues in 2012 with the focus this year highlighting the challenges ahead specifically around ‘Water and Food Security’.

**Contact:** Lauren Walker (Communications Director) Ph: (02) 6230 6399 Mob: 0410 491 261

### 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.

