

AMENDMENTS BRING AG CHEMICAL REGULATION CLOSER TO COMMON SENSE

Thursday 19 December 2013 (Canberra) – Today's federal government consultation paper on amendments to the *Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Code* demonstrates a genuine commitment to improving efficiency in regulation of the agriculture sector, without compromising human health, safety or environmental outcomes.

"Minister Joyce should be commended for acting so swiftly to implement the government's election commitments in this area," said Matthew Cossey, Chief Executive Officer of CropLife Australia, today.

"Although we acknowledge that the APVMA is currently carrying out its own regulatory reform process, the government's amendments to the code will better enable farmers to access the tools they need to farm productively and sustainably. It is absolutely vital that agchem regulation is commensurate with risk as the costs of unnecessary regulation are unfairly borne by farmers and consumers.

"An inefficient regulator is a problem for protecting human health and the environment, as well as for agricultural productivity. The government's proposed amendments remove a number of unnecessary processes and duplication, which will allow the APVMA to respond more promptly to address areas of actual risk.

"The recently released ABARES *Review of Selected Regulatory Burdens on Agriculture and Forestry Businesses* confirms the importance of the amendments proposed in the government's consultation paper today. ABARES has highlighted the need for an efficient regulator and a regulatory framework that does not create unnecessary cost burdens that will stifle innovation.

"It is vital that any regulation in this space facilitates farmers' access to targeted, safe and effective chemistry. According to a Deloitte Access Economics report released by CropLife Australia last month, 68 per cent of the total value of Australian crop production, or \$17.6 billion of Australian agricultural output, can be attributed to the use of crop protection products.

"The agricultural chemical sector creates 9,250 full time equivalent jobs across Australia and makes multiple contributions to the economy in areas including exports, manufacturing and trade.

"It is crucial for the crop protection industry and the farmers, workers and communities it supports that the regulatory system protects human health and the environment without adding unnecessary and untargeted processes. The amendments proposed in today's consultation paper are a step in the right direction.

"The consultation paper prioritises the protection of human health and the environment, and it is clear that the proposed amendments will serve to enhance the efficiency of processes aimed at protecting workers, communities and the environment," 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 \$17.6 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.