

## TASMANIA'S GM MORATORIUM EXTENSION A LOSS FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

**Thursday 9 January 2014 (Canberra)** – Today's decision from the Tasmanian government to extend its moratorium on GM crops bodes poorly for both the profitability and sustainability of Tasmanian agriculture.

"It is disappointing to see a decision like this being made against the weight of scientific and economic evidence. Good public policy is based on actual evidence, not speculation," Matthew Cossey, Chief Executive of CropLife Australia said today.

"At the very least the government's commitment to a yearly review of the ban indicates some awareness of the enormous continuing and future benefits of agricultural biotechnology. However, this is cold comfort for farmers currently struggling to maintain sustainable and competitive businesses.

"Without access to the latest technologies, Tasmanian farmers will miss out on the environmental and economic benefits GM crops are already bringing to mainland states and farmers across the globe. In 2011 alone, the use of GM crops globally was responsible for savings in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of 23 billion kg; that is the equivalent of removing 80 per cent of the cars registered in Australia from the road for one year.

"The use of GM crops has also reduced water use in cropping by up to 32 per cent. Pesticide use has been reduced by up to 86 per cent in some crops. The Tasmanian government has chosen to deny Tasmanian farmers these proven benefits on the basis of groundless speculation.

"Both consultants' reports sourced by the government on this issue concluded that there was little to no indication of a price premium generated by GM-free status. This decision is clearly political, and that is deeply disappointing for those with an interest in the future of Tasmanian agriculture.

"The government's own commissioned report states that over the past decade, Tasmania's agricultural sector has suffered a \$40 million net farm-gate loss due to this moratorium.

"The government has essentially based this decision on the speculative notion that consumer sentiment may turn against GMOs in the future. This is in direct contradiction to Australian government data that shows that consumer acceptance of GM food has increased steadily over time.

"Important decisions that affect the future of an entire sector, with far-reaching implications for the environment and the state economy should not be made solely on political and ideological grounds.

"The plant science industry urges the Tasmanian Government to take note of the available evidence when making important decisions pertaining to agriculture in the future, for the sake of farmers, the environment and the economy," 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.