



## MEDIA RELEASE

### GLOBAL ADOPTION OF BIOTECH CROPS CONTINUES TO RISE AS ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENT BENEFITS ARE RECOGNISED

**16 February 2014 (Canberra)** – Independent reports just published by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Applications (ISAAA) confirmed the positive benefits plant biotechnology has for farmers worldwide, and the potential assistance to farmers in mitigating and adapting to the risks of climate change conditions in 2050.

The IFPRI report measured the impacts of agricultural innovation on farm productivity, prices, hunger, and trade flows to 2050 and identifies practices that could significantly benefit developing nations.

Using a first-of-its-kind data model, IFPRI pinpoints the agricultural technologies and practices that can most significantly reduce food prices and food insecurity in developing nations. The study profiles 11 agricultural innovations including crop protection, drought tolerance, heat tolerance, no-till farming, and water harvesting.

"These reports highlight the importance of innovations coming from the plant science sector in addressing the current and future challenges faced by farmers worldwide. They reaffirm that modern farming using the latest crop protection and biotechnology innovations will play a crucial role in food and fibre production in Australia and globally in the coming decades," said Matthew Cossey, Chief Executive Officer of CropLife Australia.

"These reports highlight how important it is that Australian farmers be able to use new, innovative and safe technologies to remain globally competitive, meet the requirements of increased food demand, and farm sustainably on limited arable land."

The ISAAA report indicates more than 18 million farmers in 27 countries planted biotech crops in 2013. Global biotech crop acreage has increased from 4.2 million acres in 1996 to over 432 million acres in 2013. During this 18 year period, more than a 100-fold increase of commercial biotech crop acreage has been reported.

The report also highlights that biotech crops have reduced the need for 497 million kg of pesticides, cut CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 27 billion kg in 2012 alone (equivalent to removing 12 million cars from the road for one year), have conserved biodiversity by saving 304 million acres of land from being placed in agricultural production, and alleviated poverty for 16.5 million small farmers and farm families, totalling more than 65 million people.

In Australia, 1.5 million acres of genetically modified (GM) cotton and canola were planted in 2013. Last year, planting of GM canola in Western Australia went up 38 percent from 2012. Last week, suppliers notified GM canola growers in Western Australia that unprecedented demand meant that orders for the latest high performance seed varieties had already been exceeded.

"Australian farmers, like farmers all around the world, recognise the enormous economic and environmental benefits that come with the use of agricultural biotechnology innovations. On top of the global environmental benefits noted in the ISAAA report, the use of GM crops has reduced water use in cropping by up to 32 percent," concluded Mr Cossey.

A full copy of the IFPRI report, *Food Security in a World of Natural Resource Scarcity: The Role of Agricultural Technologies* is available online at [www.ifpri.org/publication/food-security-world-natural-resource-scarcity](http://www.ifpri.org/publication/food-security-world-natural-resource-scarcity). More information about the ISAAA report is available online at [www.isaaa.org](http://www.isaaa.org).

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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.