



MEDIA RELEASE

INITIATIVE ON SCIENCE-BASED INFORMATION ON AGRICULTURAL BIOTECHNOLOGY COMMENDED

Thursday 20 February 2014 (Canberra) – Today's launch by the Agricultural Biotechnology Council of Australia (ABCA) of a public information campaign on coexistence of farming is essential to ensure the Australian public has balanced, credible science-based information on biotechnology.

"The science of agricultural biotechnology is well established and clear, as are the current and future economic and environmental benefits of agricultural biotechnology innovation," Matthew Cossey, Chief Executive of CropLife Australia said today.

"This initiative by ABCA is especially valuable and important at a time when there is significant public discussion on these issues, some of which is not based on fact or evidence in any way.

"CropLife Australia commends ABCA's initiative to provide the Australian community with scientific facts and evidence. It is especially important during a time when many activist groups and individuals with specific political agendas are actively spreading misleading information and seeking to create unnecessary conflict between farmers.

"Every legitimate scientific and regulatory body that has examined the science-based evidence has arrived at the conclusion that approved genetically modified (GM) crops are as safe as their conventional counterparts. This includes the World Health Organisation, the Australian Academy of Science, the European Commission, the American National Academy of Sciences, the Royal Society of Medicine and many more.

"Farmers are facing increasingly extreme and unpredictable climatic conditions, diminishing natural resources, and our available arable land is shrinking. Without access to the latest technologies, Australian farmers will miss out on the environmental and economic benefits GM crops are already bringing to farmers across the globe.

"In 2012 alone, the use of GM crops globally was responsible for savings in CO₂ emissions of 27 billion kg; that is the equivalent of removing 12 million cars from the road for one year. The use of GM crops has also reduced water use in some cropping by up to 32 per cent and significantly reduced inputs such as pesticides by up to 86 per cent in some crops.

"We need to do everything we can to ensure Australian farmers have access to the same safe, effective tools and technologies as their international competitors. We need to make sure they can access a variety of markets for high quality produce, without being subjected to uniquely irrational and unreasonable standards.

"The plant science industry urges facts and science-based evidence to be the basis of important public decisions pertaining to agriculture in the future, for the sake of farmers, the environment and the economy, and global food security" concluded Mr Cossey. To make an informed decision visit www.abca.com.au/coexistence

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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.