

UNNECESSARY CONFLICT HURTS ALL AUSTRALIAN FARMERS

10 February 2014 (Canberra) - The peak representative organisation for the Australian plant science industry says that Australian farming will suffer without the necessary changes to regulations to ensure that Australia's diverse farming heritage continues in harmony as it always has.

"Australian farmers work hard to provide safe and nutritious food, and high quality feed and fibre to national and international consumers," said Matthew Cossey, Chief Executive Officer of CropLife Australia. "Managing coexistence is not unique to modern or organic farming.

"Australian farmers have successfully grown and kept separate different crops for decades. Many farmers grow GM and non-GM canola side by side, and after five years of growing GM canola there has not been one incident across over 3 million tonnes of canola delivered domestically, or over 10 million tonnes delivered internationally, where an end user has not received what they had ordered in terms of the GM status.

"Australia's impractical organic criteria and standards, which are unique to the Australian organic industry, are out of step with the rest of the world. Australia's major trading partners, including Europe, the US and Canada, all have standards for organic production that do not place impossible requirements on organic farmers or their farming neighbours. This type of bad regulation leads to unnecessary conflict which will only hurt all farmers and Australian agriculture as a whole in the long term if not rectified. Standards and regulations in agriculture must recognise that nature does not operate in absolutes and biological systems do not operate in isolation.

"Interested parties would be best to stop creating more unnecessary conflict around this issue through misinformation for their own narrow political agenda and instead devote their time towards contributing to better public policy for the nation's agricultural sector. The calls to reinstate a GM moratorium in Western Australia that was never removed, for example, highlight the ignorance of some participating in the debate," said Mr Cossey.

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.

"Western Australian farmers, like farmers all around the world, recognise the enormous economic and environmental benefits that come with the use of agricultural biotechnology innovation. In 2011 alone, the use of GM crops globally was responsible for savings in CO₂ 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 reduced water use in cropping by up to 32 per cent.

"Australian farmers must be able to use innovative, safe technology to remain globally competitive, meet the requirements of increased food demand, and farm sustainably on limited arable land."

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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.

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