



MEDIA RELEASE

CONSUMER RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS SHOULDN'T BE MISLEADING AND DECEPTIVE IN THEIR OWN CAMPAIGNS

11 April 2014 (Canberra) – The misleading and deceptive campaign by CHOICE to prevent the removal of unnecessary and inefficient regulation of chemical crop protection products is disappointing. It is particularly concerning considering the last time CHOICE ran this campaign they were caught out misleading consumers. It's a pity they seek to do it again.

"I'm disappointed and concerned to see CHOICE misleading Australian consumers on this issue yet again," said Matthew Cossey, Chief Executive Officer of CropLife Australia. "Today I've written to CHOICE asking them to cease their deceptive and irresponsible campaign. If CHOICE wishes to advocate a position then they should at least base it on fact."

"The changes the Australian Government will be making will not, in any way, be reducing the standard to which any chemical crop protection product is tested and in fact will ensure an efficient regulator that focuses on the highest levels of human health and environmental protection."

"If CHOICE is serious about a world's best practice system that protects human health and the environment, then it should be advocating to ensure that the regulator tasked with this role is not burdened with unnecessary and inefficient bureaucracy that distracts them from their primary role," said Mr Cossey.

The current risk-based, data and evidence-driven approach is far more effective than overwhelming the regulator with arbitrary time-based reassessment of all products. The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) can review a product or constituent at any time, upon receiving new data or information from a registrant or any other third party here in Australia or overseas and there is a positive proactive obligation to provide that information on a product or constituent as soon as they become aware of it.

"Every single agricultural chemical product available for sale in Australia has been subjected to a rigorous, science-based risk assessment in Australia under Australian conditions. Different circumstances, environments and crop types consequently mean that different products are available in different countries."

The APVMA is globally recognised as a scientifically and technically competent regulator. Its existing Chemical Review Program has been independently reviewed by the Productivity Commission and the Australian National Audit Office and has been found to effectively identify and prioritise existing chemicals requiring review. The current system is also in line with international best practice as dictated by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), of which Australia is a member, in its 'Recommendation of the Council on Regulatory Policy and Governance'.

"The APVMA's Chemical Review Program has been effectively designed to meet the policy objective of ensuring human and environmental health. What is needed is a more efficient regulator to conduct reviews in a more timely manner, not extra, unnecessary bureaucracy that distracts it and slows it down," said Mr Cossey.

"CHOICE plays a very important role in protecting consumer rights and to maintain that credibility they shouldn't be running false and deceptive campaigns. Otherwise consumers will end up not being able to have confidence in CHOICE or the basis on which it runs its campaigns."

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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.