



## MEDIA RELEASE

### INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY IS VITAL TO AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION

**Friday 25 April 2014 (Canberra)** – Intellectual Property (IP) touches and improves all aspects of our lives. Our morning coffee, the way we get to work, the way we communicate and the way we entertain ourselves have all improved thanks to IP.

“On April 26 every year, we celebrate World Intellectual Property Day to promote discussion of the role of IP in encouraging innovation and creativity,” said Matthew Cossey, Chief Executive of CropLife Australia.

“Innovation in the agricultural industry would not occur if IP didn’t provide promise of return for years of research, development and investment.”

The contribution that IP has made to agricultural innovation should be acknowledged. Just as patenting has facilitated the invention of vaccines, pacemakers, solar panels and smart phones, it has encouraged innovations that have allowed farmers all over the world to be increasingly productive, safe and efficient.”

“The tractor was first patented in 1886. By replacing horses and mules for power, tractors save over 655 million man hours per year per farmer. The first fungicide was patented in 1934 and, along with other innovative crop protection products, have cut annual global crop losses in half. The first plant biotechnology patent was registered in 1992 and biotech crops have since been grown on more than 1.5 billion hectares, adding \$111 billion to global farm incomes.

“Australian farmers have a reputation for being inventive and innovative, which has allowed them to produce high quality food, feed and fibre for Australia and the world. Australian farmers in particular have a reputation for operating in extremely diverse environments sustainably and productively, and are world leaders in the efficient use of water and other natural resources.

“It is vital that Australian farmers have access to technology and innovation that allows them to become increasingly efficient in their use of limited arable land, while farming sustainably and remaining globally competitive. Farmers face the challenge of feeding a growing population, while combating the challenges of rising costs, competing land uses and changing climates.

“While innovations such as no-till farming, drip irrigation, crop protection products and agricultural biotechnology have increased Australia farmers’ arsenal of tools, we cannot afford to become complacent. We must continue to invest in research, development and implementation to continue to be a global leader in modern farming,” Mr Cossey said. For more information on IP, visit [ip52.org](http://ip52.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.

**Website:** [www.croplifeaustralia.org.au](http://www.croplifeaustralia.org.au)

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