



MEDIA RELEASE

A WELCOME BOOST FOR AUSTRALIA'S AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY COMPETITIVENESS

14 October 2014 (Canberra) – The Australian plant science industry warmly welcomes the Federal Government's Industry Innovation and Competitiveness Agenda released by the Prime Minister and Industry Minister today. Significantly reducing unnecessary regulatory costs is a necessity for Australia's agricultural industries and is at the core to boosting competitiveness. The Prime Minister the Hon Tony Abbott MP, Minister for Industry the Hon Ian Macfarlane MP and Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister the Hon Josh Frydenberg MP, should be commended and congratulated for this policy.

"Today's announcement that systems, services or products that have been approved under a trusted international standard or risk assessment should no longer need additional requirements for approval in Australia, is a well-considered and imperative step forward in policy that recognises the realities of the global marketplace for our industry," Chief Executive Officer of CropLife Australia, Matthew Cossey said.

"It is encouraging that the Federal Government continues to deliver on its promises to streamline Australian regulation and remove unnecessary red tape. The new policy is clearly a step in the right direction. The plant science industry would like to see it applied as soon as possible to the several regulatory authorities that cover the plant science industry.

"Now the pressure is on Government departments, agencies and regulatory authorities to culturally adopt the newly announced policy in their operations. Unnecessary costs and delays have direct impacts on plant science innovation, domestic productivity and international competitiveness. The Department of Agriculture's current 'First Principles Review of Cost Recovery at the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority' is the perfect opportunity to show a real commitment to reducing significant regulatory costs and not simply different ways to recover those costs from industry."

"The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority is also perfectly positioned to adopt this policy in their business operations, which will see genuine benefits to the plant science industry and our ability to support the Australian farming sector with the latest products."

A Deloitte Access Economics report released last year shows that 68 per cent of the total value of Australian crop production, or \$17.6 billion of Australian agricultural output, can be attributed to the use of crop protection products.

"This confirms that an Australia without modern, approved, safe agricultural chemistry used by farmers in a responsible manner would be an Australia incapable of commercially producing the array of fresh, local produce we take for granted every day. Our grocery bills would be almost twice as expensive and the variety of local food to which we'd have access would be alarmingly narrow," said Mr Cossey.

"A regulatory system that facilitates innovation in agricultural chemistry will stand Australia in good stead to protect its crops and economy from ever-adapting pests and diseases. It is absolutely vital that Australian farmers have access to the most up-to-date, sustainable agricultural chemical products for the sake of our farmers, our food supply and our economy."

"Fully implemented, this latest policy will improve Australian regulation markedly and deliver real benefits to the Australian farming sector as a result. It represents a modern, mature policy approach that is in step with the realities of the global marketplace. The Australian public and farmers will win equally under this new approach if successfully and genuinely implemented," concluded Mr Cossey.

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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. 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.

