



MEDIA RELEASE

RECORD NUMBER OF GLOBAL PLANTINGS OF BIOTECH CROPS SHOW TIME IS UP FOR STATE MORATORIA

29 January 2015 (Canberra) – The latest independent report published by the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Applications (ISAAA) shows that biotech crop acreage has increased again in 2014 and confirms the benefits plant biotechnology has for farmers worldwide.

The ISAAA report shows 2014 was the 19th year of successful commercialisation of biotech crops with more than 450 billion acres of biotech crops planted since 1996 across 20 developing and eight industrialised countries representing more than 60 percent of the world's population. This 100-fold increase makes biotech crops the fastest adopted crop technology in recent times.

The report also highlights that since 1996 biotech crops have improved the sustainable use of pesticides, saving 500 million kg; conserved biodiversity by saving 326 million acres of land from being placed in agricultural production; alleviated poverty for 16.5 million small farmers and farm families, totalling more than 65 million people; and reduced CO₂ emissions from agriculture by 28 billion kg in 2013 alone (equivalent to removing 12.4 million cars from the road for one year).

“This report confirms the importance of Australian farmers being able to choose to use new, innovative, safe and approved technologies to remain globally competitive, meet the requirements of increased food demand and farm sustainably on limited arable land,” said Matthew Cossey, Chief Executive Officer of CropLife Australia.

“Modern farming using biotechnology will play a crucial role in food, feed and fibre production in Australia and this report highlights the need to ensure non-science based and unnecessary costly regulation doesn't hold Australia back from reaping the benefits and being a world leader in innovation. This is further evidence that state moratoria on genetically modified crops is completely unnecessary and it is time for all state moratoria to be repealed.”

In Australia, planting of genetically modified (GM) herbicide tolerant canola increased by around 50 per cent to 845,100 acres in 2014, with the fastest rate of adoption occurring in Western Australia as growers there realise that choosing GM canola is choosing sustainable, environmentally friendly and profitable farming.

“Australian farmers, like farmers all around the world, recognise the enormous agronomic, economic and environmental benefits that come with the use of agricultural biotechnology innovations. The repeal of state GM moratoria will unshackle Australian farmers and allow them to compete on a level playing field in what is an aggressively competitive global market,” said Mr Cossey.

“GM crops are the most tested and regulated food product in the world. Countless independent, long-term studies have been carried out by universities, government organisations, public institutions and private companies around the world over the past few decades. Every legitimate scientific and regulatory body that has examined the evidence has arrived at the conclusion that GM crops and the foods they produce are as safe as their conventional counterparts.

“It is time that public policies and regulations for GM crops are based on facts and science, and the ideologically driven, baseless scare campaigns by activist groups stop unduly influencing agricultural policy,” concluded Mr Cossey. More information about the ISAAA report is available online at www.isaaa.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 contribute more than \$13 million a year to 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.