



MEDIA RELEASE

AUSTRALIAN FARMERS GROWING GM CROPS GAIN \$885 MILLION

Friday 8 May 2015 (Canberra) - Crop biotechnology continues to deliver major economic and environmental benefits according to an independent report released by UK-based PG Economics.

“Australian farmers using GM canola or cotton have reaped more than US\$885 million in farm income benefits over the 18 year period covered by the report because of crop biotechnology,” said Matthew Cossey, CropLife Australia’s Chief Executive Officer.

“With GM cotton accounting for almost all cotton production in Australia, cotton farmers had a net farm income gain of more than US\$97 million in 2013, with reduced costs equivalent to an annual production increase of more than 5%. The average Australian farmer growing GM canola had an average net increase in gross margins of US\$60.66 per hectare in 2013, which is a national increase of more than US\$13 million.”

“GM crops have proven to be a great investment globally with farmers seeing an average return of US\$4.04 for every dollar invested into crop biotechnology. This is a net farm income benefit of US\$20.5 billion in 2013 and US\$133.5 billion since 1996.”

“Even more impressive is the contribution of GM crops to the global food supply. The increased productivity of GM crops has meant an additional 274 million tonnes of corn, 138 million tonnes of soybeans, 21.7 million tonnes of cotton lint and 8 million tonnes of canola have been produced between 1996 and 2013, compared to the use of non-GM crops.”

“These crop biotechnology innovations has allowed a reduction of the equivalent of 28 billion kilograms of carbon dioxide in emissions from agriculture practices because of innovations allowing reduced fuel usage and additional soil carbon storage from reduced tillage with GM crops.”

“If not for the availability of GM crops in 2013, plantings on an additional 18 million hectares of land would have been required to maintain current global food production. Instead, the use of GM crops has alleviated pressure on forests and natural habitat while farmers have continued to meet global food demands.”

“This report adds to a wealth of evidence, including the international organisation, ISAAA, recently released *Global Status of Commercialized Biotech/GM Crops: 2014* brief, which highlights the benefits and necessity of agricultural biotechnology for Australia and the world.”

“Challenges such as increasing food demand for a world population of 9.6 billion by 2050, limited arable land, more environmentally sustainable agriculture and ever-growing competition can be answered through the use of new, innovative and safe technologies. It’s essential Australian farmers have access to the fastest adopted, safe and highly regulated and significantly beneficial crop technology in the world, so they are not left behind.”

“This report by PG Economics provides yet another credible source of evidence of significant economic and productivity gains as well as substantial environmental benefits from the use of GM crops.”

A full copy of PG Economic’s report, *GM Crops: global socio-economic and environmental impacts 1996-2013*, can be accessed online at www.pgeconomics.co.uk

Contact: Jaelle Bajada (Manager – Public Affairs) Ph: 02 6230 6399 Mob: 0410 491 261

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.

Website: www.croplife.org.au

Facebook: www.facebook.com/croplifeoz

Twitter: www.twitter.com/croplifeoz