



## MEDIA RELEASE

### AGRICULTURAL INNOVATIONS CRUCIAL TO SUSTAINABLE FARMING IN AUSTRALIA

**Friday 5 June 2015 (Canberra)** – World Environment Day provides an important opportunity to recognise the agricultural innovations that support Australian farmers to produce high quality food, feed and fibre for the world more sustainably.

“The theme of this year’s World Environment Day is ‘Seven Billion Dreams. One Planet. Consume with Care’ which highlights the need for responsible management of the planet’s resources,” said CropLife Australia’s Chief Executive Officer, Matthew Cossey, “and it is a timely reminder of our nation’s farmers who, as the stewards of our arable land, practice sustainable agriculture assisted by modern crop protection products and genetically modified (GM) crops.”

“Australian farmers are using the latest technologies and innovations to sustainably adapt to modern challenges of feeding a rapidly growing world population of 9.6 billion by 2050 on limited arable land with changing climate patterns.”

“Australian cotton farmers began using crop biotechnology in 1996 and today almost the entire national cotton crop is based on herbicide tolerant and insect resistant varieties. The use of GM cotton, along with improved on farm management practices, has made a significant contribution to the sustainable use of insecticides applied to Australian cotton crops,” said Mr Cossey.

“Other benefits of GM cotton are increased populations of beneficial insects and wildlife in cotton fields, a decrease in labour and fuel usage, improved soil quality, reduced production costs, increased yield and further opportunities to grow cotton in areas of high pest infestation.”

“A recent independent report from UK-based PG Economics found that higher yields from GM crops have reduced the need for 18 million hectares of planting to maintain global food production in 2013. Instead, the world’s demands for food have been met while simultaneously protecting the biodiversity of forests and natural habitats.”

“Crop biotechnology innovations have 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.”

“Crop protection products assist water conservation by helping farmers efficiently control weeds that threaten scarce water resources.”

“The plant science industry in Australia has also shown its commitment to safeguarding the environment through world leading industry stewardship programs designed to minimise environmental impacts of the industry. Agsafe, the wholly owned subsidiary of CropLife Australia, runs successful programs such as **drumMUSTER**, which collects and recycles pesticide containers, and ChemClear®, which safely removes damaged or expired agricultural chemicals from the environment.”

“Australian farmers have throughout history embraced modern agricultural practices because of proven environmental and economic benefits of new technologies. The Australian plant science industry is committed to providing farmers the tools that increase yields, safeguard crops, protect human health and preserve the environment,” Mr Cossey concluded.

**About World Environment Day:** World Environment Day (WED) is an annual event for people from all walks of life to come together to ensure a cleaner, greener and brighter outlook for themselves and future generations.

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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.

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

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