



MEDIA RELEASE

Queensland Farmers Contributing to Success of Great Barrier Reef Plan

22 September 2015 (Canberra) – The 2014 Report Card on the Great Barrier Reef Water Quality Protection Plan shows farmers in reef catchments are continuing to adopt improved land management practices, successfully contributing to the reversal of the decline of the quality of water entering the reef.

“The plan launched in 2009 outlined very ambitious targets across a range of management practice indicators to improve the quality of water flowing into the Reef from coastal catchments,” said Matthew Cossey, Chief Executive Officer at CropLife Australia.

“While there is no scientific evidence to indicate that current pesticide levels in the reef are having an adverse effect on reef health, farmers have been taking a proactive approach to the management of their land with modelling indicating that in just five years there has been a 30.5 per cent overall reduction in the annual average pesticide load across the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) catchments.”

“Grain growers in the Burdekin region are exceeding the pesticide reduction target proving that it is not necessary to choose between agriculture and the Reef. We can have agricultural systems that take advantage of the significant benefits that accrue from the use of crop protection products while minimising the risk of any adverse effects to the reef.”

“The Australian plant science industry is a global leader in its full lifecycle approach to the stewardship of crop protection products and contributes over \$13 million a year on stewardship activities. This ensures that their products are sustainably managed for the benefit of users, consumers and the environment. The industry will continue to work in collaboration with governments, industry groups, farmer organisations and research bodies to ensure that Queensland farmers use their products in a responsible and environmentally conscious manner.

“The use of crop protection products is vital to affordable food production, on farm productivity and the management of invasive species and noxious weeds in natural environments. In 2013, Deloitte Access Economics found that \$17.6 billion of Australian agricultural output is attributable to the use of crop protection products.

“The GBR is a spectacular, fragile and important World Heritage Area that delivers over \$6 billion annually to the Australian economy. It is therefore vital that appropriate measures, backed by credible science, are introduced in consultation with relevant sectors of the Queensland economy to improve reef health,” 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. 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.

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