



## MEDIA RELEASE

### **WORLD FOOD DAY: FARMERS BREAKING THE CYCLE OF RURAL POVERTY AND FEEDING THE WORLD WITH AGRICULTURAL INNOVATIONS**

**16 October 2015 (Canberra)** – Today's World Food Day, which focuses on how agriculture can break the cycle of rural poverty, is an opportunity to reflect on the importance of innovations in modern agriculture in assisting rural communities in the developing world break free of poverty and farmers in the developed world become more profitable and internationally competitive.

"With recent estimates from the World Bank indicating that more than 2.2 billion people world-wide are living below the poverty line, it is clear that poverty is still a global issue," said CropLife Australia Chief Executive Officer, Matthew Cossey. "Farmers, equipped with agricultural innovations, such as those developed by the plant science industry, are well placed to take on this challenge by helping to reduce hunger and malnutrition in the short-term and decrease poverty in the long-term."

"The plant science industry provides farmers with the tools to become more profitable and more productive. According to a recent brief by the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications, more than 16.5 million small farmers in 2013 had seen significant gains in yields and farm income from using genetically modified (GM) crops. This directly benefits their 65 million family members, assists in economic development and providing food, feed and fibre for their rural communities."

"Modern crop protection products provide pest management solutions that prevent the loss of more than 50 per cent of the world's food crops annually, which is crucial to farmers providing safe and nutritious food to those in poverty and the world."

"It is no secret that the world must produce a daunting quantity of food to meet the rapidly growing demand. The United Nations predicts that the global population will reach 9.6 billion by 2050. Farmers must produce higher yields while using fewer resources to ensure long-term, sustainable food production."

"Scientists around the world are not only developing food crops that are more resistant to drought, heat, salinity and pests, they are also using genetic modification to create crops that have increased nutritional value. The World Health Organization has reported that about 250 million preschool children are affected by Vitamin A deficiency. Providing those children with Vitamin A could prevent about one-third of all deaths that occur under the age of five, meaning that 2.7 million children could be saved."

"Given that almost half of the global population exists on a diet consisting mainly of rice, a not-for-profit initiative by the Rockefeller Foundation has seen the development of Golden Rice, which is designed to produce beta-carotene, a precursor of Vitamin A, in the edible part of the rice plant," said Mr Cossey."

"The use of GM crops globally has also reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 28 billion kg in 2013 alone (equivalent to removing more than 12 million cars from the road for one year), and have conserved biodiversity by saving 304 million acres of land from being placed in agricultural production."

"A 2013 report by Deloitte Access Economics (*Economic activity attributable to Crop Protection Products*) showed that 68 per cent (\$17.6 billion) of Australian agricultural production is attributable to the use of crop protection products. The plant science sector is just one of many industries providing innovations that assist farmers in being more productive and sustainable," concluded Mr Cossey.

For more information about World Food Day visit <http://www.fao.org/world-food-day/home/en/>

**Contact: Cameron Wilson (Communications and Research Officer) Ph: 02 6230 6399**

#### **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)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/croplifeoz](http://www.facebook.com/croplifeoz)

**Twitter:** [www.twitter.com/croplifeoz](http://www.twitter.com/croplifeoz)