



MEDIA RELEASE

AUSTRALIAN FARMERS WILL LOSE IN RELOCATION OF NATIONAL REGULATOR

9 June 2016 (Canberra) – Crucial agricultural product innovations will be significantly delayed and in some cases denied to the Australian farming sector due to disruptions with the unnecessary relocation of the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) announced by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, the Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP.

Matthew Cossey, Chief Executive Officer of the peak industry organisation for Australia's plant science sector, CropLife Australia, today said "the considerable operational disruption created by the unnecessary relocation of the APVMA will severely impact farmer access to crucial agricultural products. This will have a significant negative impact on national agricultural productivity."

"It is also disappointing that the announcement of the APVMA relocation to Armidale in the Minister's electorate has been made outside of the cost benefit analysis process that was announced just two months ago, which is yet to be completed or publicly released," said Mr Cossey.

"Small economic benefits to the Minister's electorate from the relocation of the APVMA to Armidale pales in significance to the net loss to Australia's agricultural productivity that this relocation will cause. There's no point trying to dress this up as having any real benefit to the APVMA's operations."

"The APVMA's unnecessary relocation from Canberra to Armidale will create severe disruption to its operations and undermine the efficiency measures currently being implemented. In the meantime, farmers will not gain access to the latest innovations the plant science industry is trying to bring to the Australian market."

"The APVMA is a globally respected, scientifically and technically sound regulator of agricultural chemicals, however, it has not been operating in an efficient manner. We're at the end of a long and drawn out efficiency reform process and this relocation will seriously set back efficiency reforms. We acknowledge the announcement of \$24.1 million in funding to assist with the relocation of the APVMA but that alone will not offset the serious expert staffing challenges this relocation poses," said Mr Cossey.

"Considering this arbitrary announcement has been made, it is now crucial that the agricultural and veterinary regulatory reform package is given priority by both sides of politics and extra funding is also provided to ensure this important efficiency reform is appropriately supported and implemented as a matter of urgency."

"As a national peak organisation for an agricultural related industry, we support measures that improve economic activity in rural and regional Australia but only where there is a net advantage to the nation as a whole. CropLife strongly supports the establishment of a Centre of Excellence at the University of New England, Armidale, however, that would be better served by relocating policy divisions of the federal Department of Agriculture and Water Resources to Armidale, which could involve more staff and ironically deliver a greater economic impact, rather than the relocation of the APVMA."

"We now call on the Minister to consider this as a more viable option for Armidale, rural and regional Australia and the national farming sector. We acknowledge Minister Joyce for being a strong voice for his electorate, however, there are better ways to support rural and regional centres without impacting negatively on national agricultural productivity and farmers across the country," 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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