



MEDIA RELEASE

PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION'S REGULATORY EFFICIENCY RECOMMENDATIONS CRUCIAL FOR PLANT SCIENCE INNOVATIONS

21 July 2016 (Canberra) – CropLife Australia has welcomed the release of the Productivity Commission's draft report into Regulation of Australian Agriculture which highlights the importance of improving regulatory efficiency and removing unnecessary and duplicative regulations on agricultural chemical (agchem) and genetically modified (GM) crop innovation.

Matthew Cossey, Chief Executive Officer of the CropLife Australia, today said "We welcome the recommendations that reinforce how crucial it is for Australian agriculture to improve efficiency in agchem regulations, such as better use of international evidence in assessments. The draft report also highlights how much work is still needed to improve regulatory efficiency to allow for innovation in a Australian agriculture."

"The recommendation to implement a national control-of-use regime for agvet chemicals (which includes increased harmonisation of off-label use provisions), with the aim of having the regime in place in all states and territories by the end of 2018, will align the regulatory requirements between all jurisdictions in Australia, removing duplication and inconsistencies and therefore unnecessary costs to industry."

"Given the 20 years of success in GM crops side-by-side with non-GM crops in Australia and internationally, the Commission's recommendation that the New South Wales, South Australian, Western Australian, Tasmanian and Australian Capital Territory Governments remove their moratoria (prohibitions) on GM crops by 2018 is one based on evidence and scientific facts."

"Farmers increasingly choose to grow GM crops despite vocal anti-science activist campaigns. Recent figures show 448,000 ha of GM canola planted this year, yet another increase in GM crop plantings, as farmers see the benefits of weed management and increased yields."

"The Commission's further recommendation for an information campaign led by the responsible government regulators and agencies to provide accurate information about genetic modification seed breeding techniques is welcomed considering the significant amount of misleading and baseless claims made by well organised activist organisations."

"Additional and unnecessary state-level regulations create inconsistencies in the market and hinder investment in agricultural innovations that prevent Australian farmers from having access to the latest innovative farming tools, negatively affecting market returns at the farm gate."

"A truly productive, competitive and sustainable agricultural industry in Australia requires regulatory oversight that is efficient, effective and where necessary commensurate with the risks, costs and benefits to the broader community."

"There were a number of further regulatory issues raised by CropLife that were summarised in the Commission's report and we encourage the Commission to continue to engage with the plant science industry and the agricultural sector more broadly in the development of the final report. We then look forward to the Government's action on the Commission's recommendations," 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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