

WA GOVERNMENT'S GM MORATORIUM REPEAL SECURES FARMER CHOICE

21 October 2016 (Canberra) – Farmers in Western Australia will now have guaranteed access to new approved cropping innovation and security in their choice to realise the clear financial, agronomic and environmental benefits from growing approved genetically modified (GM) crops thanks to the WA Government's repeal of the unnecessary moratorium.

Matthew Cossey, Chief Executive Officer of the peak industry organisation for Australia's plant science sector, CropLife Australia, today said "the repeal of the GM Crops Free Areas Act 2003 is based on fact and evidence and the WA Government should be commended for standing firm in its commitment to support farmer choice."

"Policies based on facts and science have never been more crucial given the ever-increasing demands on farming and the government's commitment to secure WA's agricultural sector growth as an important component of the economy must be applauded."

"The Barnett Government has displayed leadership, foresight and an unwavering commitment to WA farmers in their efforts to secure farmer choice to access important agricultural tools, in the face of baseless and misleading scare-campaigns."

"The passing of the government's repeal bill ensures WA's agriculture sector continues to be able to embrace innovation and modern improved farming technologies, serving WA growers well now, and in the future, and clearing the way for a more productive and environmentally sustainable agricultural sector," said Mr Cossey.

"The WA Government's support of farmer choice should be held up as a shining example to all other states with unnecessary moratoria on GM crops."

"Just as important to consumers as it is to farmers is the need to farm more environmentally sustainably, productively and profitably. The use of GM crops has drastically improved the sustainable use of crop production products through reduced use of pesticides, has saved 27 million litres of fuel use and reduced 71.5 million kilograms of carbon dioxide being released into the atmosphere while increasing farm incomes in WA by \$22 million just this year. That's why the repeal of the moratorium has been strongly supported by producer and farmer groups in WA, noteworthy academics in WA's universities and the plant science industry," said Mr Cossey.

"WA producers and farmers have been growing GM and non-GM crops side-by-side successfully and productively for many years without creating marketing issues with segregation managed by the bulk grain handlers. They now have full confidence to choose whichever approved crop suits their land and business model."

"The repeal of the antiquated moratorium means that organic farmers can continue to make their premium while farmers using GM canola can continue to make the most of the weed management benefits and increased yields GM seeds provide them, ensuring no WA farmer loses out," said Mr Cossey.

"Consumers can also have confidence in Australia's robust safety assessments and regulations for all GM crops and the choice provided by Australia's stringent labelling requirements. The repeal of the moratorium on GM crops doesn't change that in any way – it simply removes what is widely recognised as unnecessary stifling of innovation."

"The successful repeal of the moratorium is a win for farmers, consumers, and proof that common-sense can prevail. The state's farming future will benefit from this for generations to come and the Barnett Government has shown their genuine commitment to the state's farming success," concluded Mr Cossey.

Contact: Jaelle Bajada (Director – Corporate Affairs) Ph: 02 6273 2733 Mob : 0410 491 261

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.