



MEDIA RELEASE

APVMA RELOCATION ANNOUNCEMENT

25 November 2016 (Canberra) – Today’s announcement confirming the relocation of the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) to Armidale is disappointing and lacks any initiatives that would make it a genuine Centre of Excellence. CropLife Australia will seek to work with the Government to minimise the impact on Australian farmer productivity.

“Simply relocating an agency from one building in Canberra to one in Armidale does not make a Centre of Excellence,” said Matthew Cossey, Chief Executive Officer of CropLife Australia. “While we recognise the Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP, is acting with good intentions, just relocation in itself doesn’t achieve anything except interrupting the efforts being made by the APVMA to improve regulatory efficiency.”

“The relocation of Australia’s agricultural and chemical regulator was not an idea generated from any stakeholder consultation and while CropLife has engaged in the process since the decision was made, it is disappointing that there have been no initiatives or associated funding to truly deliver a genuine Centre of Excellence.”

“While we believe a relocation in and of itself will have negative consequences for Australian farming productivity, there is opportunity to deliver structural changes and initiatives that would leverage technology to streamline APVMA and associated regulatory operations,” said Mr Cossey.

“Direct funding for an online regulatory assessment platform, necessary for the development of a next generation regulator, is missing, as is any structural reform in-line with the 2014 National Commission of Audit or the *2008 Productivity Commission Research Report Chemicals and Plastics Regulation* that could have delivered real regulatory efficiency.”

“Co-locating the minor use and specialty crop program with the University of New England would leverage the network of university researchers and deliver more sustainable management practices while alleviating existing economic and regulatory market failures, similar to successful international programs such as the IR-4 in the United States. It’s unfortunate that the announcement today without such initiatives, was such a missed opportunity,” said Mr Cossey.

“Minimising the disruption to Australia’s farming productivity requires careful planning and significant input from affected industry stakeholders. Despite the best of planning, transitional offsets for registrants are necessary to account for the resulting delays to product registration of critical tools for Australian farmers.”

“While CropLife Australia, as the representative body of the agricultural chemical registrants that are the clients of the APVMA, disagrees with a simple relocation, we recognise that the Deputy Prime Minister believes that this is a good idea. It’s imperative that the Government now works with key stakeholders including, CropLife Australia, the National Farmers’ Federation and other industry stakeholders to ensure the delivery of outcomes that enhance Australian farmers’ productivity.”

“What’s also critical is continuity of senior management at the APVMA into the future to manage this process while also pursuing the agency’s crucial efficiency agenda. The Deputy Prime Minister needs to ensure regulatory assessments of crucial agricultural products are not affected by this relocation, for the sake of Australian farmer productivity,” 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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