



MEDIA RELEASE

GOVERNMENT ACTION NEEDED TO CUT AGRICULTURAL RED TAPE HINDERING PLANT SCIENCE INNOVATIONS

29 March 2017 (Canberra) – The Productivity Commission’s final report into Regulation of Australian Agriculture is an urgent call to action for the Federal Government to remove unnecessary regulations on genetically modified (GM) crop innovations and improve agricultural chemical regulatory efficiency, thereby ensuring the future success of Australia’s agriculture industry.

Matthew Cossey, Chief Executive Officer of CropLife Australia, today said “We welcome the release of the Productivity Commission’s final report and recommendations that reaffirm the importance of efficiency in agchem regulations, such as better use of international evidence in assessments.”

“The cost of every crop protection product that reaches the market is now at US\$286 million and takes 11 years of research and development. At the same time, farmers face ever increasing pest and climate pressures whilst always seeking to improve yield. It is now more important than ever to make the changes necessary to ensure the latest innovations are in the hands of Australia’s farmer more quickly while still ensuring the highest safety and efficacy standards.”

“Australia is fortunate to have an independent, scientifically competent and technically proficient regulator, however ongoing issues relating to efficiency, predictability and consistency, now being compounded by an unnecessary move to Armidale, are seriously affecting farmer access to the latest crop protection products.”

“Implementation of a national control-of-use regime for agricultural chemicals and increasing harmonisation of off-label use provisions would also remove duplication and inconsistencies. These are simple measures that can be actioned now to remove unnecessary costs to industry and farmers.”

“With more than 20 years of successful use of GM crops being grown side-by-side with non-GM crops in Australia and internationally, it’s not surprising to see the Commission recommend the removal of the moratoria (prohibitions) on GM crops in New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory,” said Mr Cossey.

“The removal of the moratoria and repeal of the relevant legislation in Western Australia late last year secured farmer choice in a state that has benefited financially, agronomically and environmentally from the use of GM canola. It is further evidence policies based on facts and science have never been more crucial given the ever-increasing demands on farming.”

“The Commission’s recommendation that these state governments should also seek to increase public knowledge about GM crops is a welcome reminder of the need for government leadership and commitment to Australian farmers and their choice to use safe and approved agricultural tools.”

“The significant amount of misleading and baseless claims in relation to GM crops made by well-organised activist organisations does not serve the Australian public well and has been the basis of unnecessary labelling requirements of foods containing genetically modified genes,” said Mr Cossey.

“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. We now look forward to the Federal Government acting on the Commission’s recommendations,” concluded Mr Cossey.

CropLife Australia’s 2016 submission to the Productivity Commission’s inquiry into Regulation in Agriculture is available on the [CropLife Australia website](#).

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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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