



## MEDIA RELEASE

### NEW REPORT HIGHLIGHTS SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS OF GM CROPS

**6 June 2017 (Canberra)** – A new report released overnight in the UK has found that crop biotechnology has significantly reduced agriculture’s environmental impact and stimulated economic growth in Australia and 25 other countries around the world.

The independent UK-based PG Economics report has found that over the last 20 years’ innovative agriculture has contributed to preserving the earth’s natural resources while allowing farmers to grow more, high quality crops, on less land.

Matthew Cossey, Chief Executive Officer of CropLife Australia said “Australian farmers have embraced crop biotechnology, growing both GM canola and GM cotton and have reaped more than US\$1 billion in farm income benefits over the past 20 years.

“With GM cotton accounting for almost all cotton production in Australia, cotton farmers had a net farm income gain of more than US\$55.8 million in 2015, and cumulatively since 1996 the gains have been US\$949 million. The average Australian farmer growing GM canola in 2015 had an average net increase in gross margins of US\$38 per hectare, which is a national gain of nearly US\$17 million in farm income.”

“GM crops have proven to be a great investment globally with farmers seeing an average return of US\$5.15 for every dollar invested into crop biotechnology in developing countries and US\$2.76 in developed countries. This is a net farm income benefit of US\$15.5 billion in 2015 and US\$167.7 billion since 1996.”

“Even more impressive is the contribution of GM crops to the global food supply. The increased productivity of GM crops has meant an additional 357.7 million tonnes of corn, 180.3 million tonnes of soybeans, 25.2 million tonnes of cotton and 10.6 million tonnes of canola have been produced between 1996 and 2015, which would not have been achieved if conventional technology had been used.”

“These crop biotechnology innovations have allowed a reduction of the equivalent of 26.7 billion kilograms of carbon dioxide in emissions from agriculture practices because of innovations allowing reduced fuel usage and additional soil carbon storage from reduced tillage with GM crops,” said Mr Cossey.

“Australian farmers have always embraced innovation in agriculture and the rapid adoption of GM crops is evidence of farmers seeing the clear financial, agronomic and environmental benefits of modern crop breeding innovation.”

“The 20 years of successful GM cultivation in Australia, and the ongoing evidence of environmental and economic benefits of biotechnology support the Productivity Commission’s recommendations in the final *Regulation of Australian Agriculture* report, which highlights the importance of improving regulatory efficiency and removing unnecessary and duplicative regulations on GM crop innovation.”

“Australia’s unnecessary state-based moratoria serve no purpose other than to stifle innovation and in some cases act as a political football for people who blatantly refuse to acknowledge the real-world benefits GM crops provide to farmers and the nation. It is time for the remaining states with GM crop cultivation moratoria to have them repealed and unshackle agricultural innovation for the benefit of their farming sectors”

“When farmers are given access and the opportunity of growing GM crops, they can grow more on less land, increase crop yields, contribute to international competitiveness, and reduce agriculture’s environmental impact. Evidence has shown that given the choice, farmers increasingly choose to grow GM crops despite the remnants of extreme and vocal anti-science activist campaigns.”

“In the face of these numerous benefits of GM crops and the real-world experience of 20 years of GM crop cultivation in Australia, state-based moratoria just don’t make sense. Several independent and government commissioned reports show that Tasmania and South Australia have not gained a marketing advantage from a GM-free status, while their farmers have missed out on their share of the US\$1 billion income benefits gained by Australian farmers with access to crop biotechnology over the last 20 years,” concluded Mr Cossey.

The PG Economics *GM crops global socio-economic and environmental impacts 1996-2015* report is available at:  
[www.pgeconomics.co.uk](http://www.pgeconomics.co.uk)

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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. 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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