

APVMA'S PERFORMANCE STEADY, HIGHLIGHTS NEED TO FOCUS ON CRITICAL INNOVATIVE PRODUCTS

30 APRIL 2018 (Canberra) – The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) 2018 March quarter performance statistics, released today, show a small improvement in crop protection product assessment and registration timeframe performance from last quarter. Timeframe performance for new and innovative products has, however, dropped further.

Matthew Cossey, Chief Executive Officer of CropLife Australia, said the APVMA's performance improvement in crop protection product registrations of 76 per cent of assessments completed on time, up slightly from 72 per cent reported in the previous (December 2017) quarter is welcomed.

"The timeliness of crop protection product registrations, as well as the overall performance of the regulator, is improving in challenging circumstances under the direction of the Chief Executive Officer Dr Chris Parker and we continue to support the regulator in seeking improvements," said Mr Cossey.

"Timeframe performance for new and innovative product applications that will significantly drive Australian agricultural productivity have, however, dropped further with just 38 per cent completed within timeframe. This is down from the sub-par 49 per cent completed within timeframe in the 2017 December quarter."

"The regulator's worsening capability to finalise the more complex agricultural chemical applications within timeframe denies Australian farmers access to new and innovative products that the plant science industry provides, further limiting farmers ability to improve productivity and compete internationally."

"CropLife sought the urgent implementation of 17 regulatory reform proposals in July 2017 to address the expected significant resource and capability losses of experienced regulatory scientists by the APVMA during its transition to Armidale. It appears the consequences of these losses are now being realised, and yet the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources continues to drag its feet with the urgent regulatory reform needed to ensure Australian farmers continue to have access to innovative agricultural chemical products."

"It is now beyond time that the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources delivers targeted reforms that will free the APVMA from unnecessary and out-dated regulatory processes, helping the regulator to fully meet their statutory obligation of finalising 100% of application types within the legislated timeframe," said Mr Cossey.

"The assessment and registration of crop protection products is the substantive component of the APVMA's work and timeliness is crucial to ensuring Australian farmers have access to important agricultural tools."

"CropLife Australia looks forward to the APVMA's performance continuing to improve in all areas and will continue to work with the APVMA and the Government to help deliver the necessary reforms that will improve the regulator's efficiency," 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.

