

## BASELESS SCARE CAMPAIGNS AND POLITICS LEAD TO EU BAN ON CLASS OF INSECTICIDES

**28 APRIL 2018 (Canberra)** – In a blow for science-based, independent regulatory processes, the European Commission’s Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed today voted to extend a European Union-wide ban on neonicotinoid pesticides used in farming. This is despite there being no scientific evidence to suggest that the environment or bee health benefited at all from the 2013 restrictions in the European Union.

Matthew Cossey, CEO of CropLife Australia, said today, that “agricultural chemical regulatory decisions made on political and not scientific grounds, puts an unnecessary considerable strain on farmers and the environment as older, less effective agricultural chemicals are used instead”.

“What would be terrible here though is if a similar activist campaign is adopted in Australia to ban what is new, modern, more effective chemistry that is better for protecting bees - the use of pesticides, whether they are natural or synthetic compounds, is crucial in all forms of farming,” he said.

“In Australia we have the healthiest managed honey bee colonies in the world yet neonicotinoid insecticides have been widely used in Australia since 1990. The health of Australia’s managed honey bee colonies is due to Australia being free of some major pests and diseases, in particular the invasive varroa destructor mite, which has devastated bee colonies internationally.”

“The latest beekeeping industry figures show a strong and thriving sector with the number of hives and number of beekeepers having increased by 45 per cent and 58 per cent respectively since 2015. Yet we hear activists using terms such as “beepocalypse”, in an attempt to frighten regulators into banning the use of neonicotinoids in Australian farming. These activist campaigns are irresponsible and misleading,” said Mr Cossey.

“We are lucky in Australia to have a globally respected, scientifically and technically sound independent regulator of agricultural chemicals in the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA). The APVMA conducts risk assessments on all agricultural and home gardening chemical products, ensuring that when used in accordance with label directions, the products present no unacceptable risk to users, consumers, pollinators or the environment.”

“The APVMA also recently reviewed the use of neonicotinoid insecticides in Australia and concluded that when used in accordance with approved label directions, neonicotinoids are just as safe for bees as other insecticides.”

“CropLife recognises that insecticide spray drift during crop flowering season can also unintentionally cause harm to bees. For this reason, CropLife, in partnership with the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council, developed BeeConnected, a world-first smart-phone platform that has been enabling clear, rapid communication between farmers and beekeepers for three years.”

“Crop protection products are essential to the production of safe, nutritious, affordable and pest-free food, feed and fibre. Australian farmers and natural landscape managers require agricultural chemicals to manage an environment that is constantly under attack by fungus, weeds and pests. That’s why it is crucial that regulatory decisions on these important farming tools are based on scientific evidence and not baseless fearmongering,” 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 \$20.6 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.

