



MEDIA RELEASE

FEDERAL BUDGET DELIVERS NECESSARY COMMITMENTS TO IMPROVE AUSTRALIAN FARMERS' ACCESS TO CRUCIAL CROP PROTECTION PRODUCTS BUT NEW BOARD COSTS SHOULD NOT BE MET BY INDUSTRY

9 May 2018 (Canberra) – CropLife Australia welcomes the Government's budget commitment today of a further smart and responsible investment to improve Australian farmers' access to crucial crop protection products.

Matthew Cossey, Chief Executive Officer of the national peak organisation for Australia's plant science sector, CropLife Australia, today said "the government's continued support for the registration of agricultural chemical products for minor uses and specialty crops with a further funding commitment of \$6.3 million over two years will continue what will be a profitable investment in Australia's agricultural sector."

"Minister Littleproud is to be congratulated for his work in ensuring Australian farmers have access to the tools and products essential to remaining competitive in a challenging global agricultural industry while meeting the food security challenges of the future."

"The Government's initial four-year \$8 million investment in the 'Improved Access to Agvet Chemicals' initiative in 2013 was an important and responsible decision, helping to alleviate the regulation-generated market failure. This failure results from the high costs associated with registering products for minor uses and specialty crops not being offset by the volume of sales.

"An analysis of the US specialty crops program showed that every dollar spent by government in assisting specialty growers in the US returned more than \$500 to the economy. The US model, which has been in place for more than 50 years, also facilitates greater investment by the private sector and as a result both US agriculture and tax payers win," said Mr Cossey.

"The \$10.1 million federal budget commitment towards the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) digital strategy is also welcomed and will hopefully go a long way in streamlining important agricultural chemical regulatory activities. It is vitally important that this funding is, however, mapped specifically to the requirements of the APVMA following relocation to Armidale, thereby enabling the APVMA to become a next generation regulator," said Mr Cossey.

"The budget funding for the digital strategy should underpin genuine efficiency by the regulator in its crucial role of ensuring Australian farmers have timely access to innovative products and tools to help them farm more efficiently and sustainably for a growing global population."

"It is concerning however to see the cost of establishing a Governing Board for the APVMA being imposed on the industry. With the regulator funded by industry, these extra costs on farm gate are not needed by farmers and it is difficult to conceive how another level of bureaucracy, absent of other reforms, will achieve efficiency in the regulatory system."

"If the Board is meant to deliver genuine efficiency then the legislation required to form the new Board should be placed in the next proposed tranche of regulatory reforms that is intended to streamline regulatory operations of the APVMA," 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.

