



MEDIA RELEASE

APVMA RECOVERED PERFORMANCE WELCOMED

27 NOVEMBER 2018 (Canberra) – The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) performance statistics for the September 2018 quarter, released today, show that crop protection product assessment and registration timeframe performance has returned to 2014-15 levels.

Mr Matthew Cossey, Chief Executive Officer of CropLife Australia, said, “Industry is very glad to see the performance return to previous levels and commends the APVMA on clearing a backlog of applications.

“Following the announcement the APVMA would relocate to Armidale, timeframe performance for pesticide approvals plunged from 81 per cent to its low point of 24 per cent in the June 2017 quarter.

“This quarter’s recovery to 80 per cent for pesticide product applications is a return to performance before the announcement of the relocation, which saw the loss of experienced regulatory scientists and had a significant impact on operational performance.”

Mr Cossey continued, “It is disappointing that timeframe performance remains below statutory obligations. We will continue to support the regulator to improve operational efficiency by seeking long-overdue structural, regulatory and legislative improvements.

“While there is improvement in some areas, timeframe performance for critical new and innovative product applications that will significantly drive Australian farming productivity has dropped to 44 per cent.”

Mr Cossey noted 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.

At a Senate Inquiry hearing last week the APVMA confirmed just six of its 90 regulatory scientists had relocated to Armidale. This loss of experience and institutional knowledge represents a real risk to the agency’s operation. The recently announced retention of a Canberra office will help to minimise some of this impact.

Mr Cossey concluded, “It is essential that improvement is sustained, particularly as the agency completes its relocation to Armidale next year. The plant science and farming sectors must not be disadvantaged further by the ongoing disruption to APVMA operations.”

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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 millions of dollars 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.

