



MEDIA STATEMENT

LIFTING GM MORATORIUM A WIN FOR FARMERS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

19 August 2019 (Canberra) – The plant science industry commends Minister Whetstone and the Marshall Government on their decision to lift the Genetically Modified Food Crops Moratorium on mainland South Australia. We now call on all parties to support this science-based decision so farmers in South Australia can access the clear environmental, agronomic and financial benefits of growing approved GM crops.

With the demands on farming ever-increasing, policies based on facts, science and independent analysis have never been more crucial. Through this sensible decision, Minister Whetstone and the Marshall Government have displayed great leadership, foresight and an unwavering commitment to South Australian farmers and the state's agriculture sector more broadly.

Multiple reports have provided clear evidence that the South Australian GM crop moratorium has not delivered any benefit to the state's farming sector. In fact, South Australian farmers have been denied the chance to increase profitability and environmental sustainability by not having access to GM crops. It is estimated to have cost the state's canola industry \$33 million since 2004.

GM crops are not just beneficial for farmers, they attract great environmental benefits too. Adoption of GM crops has already saved 183 million hectares of land from cultivation and is responsible for savings in CO₂ emissions of 27 billion kg – the equivalent of removing 90 per cent of passenger cars registered in Australia from the road for one year.

South Australians can be assured that lifting the GM moratorium will not impact current agricultural commodity price premiums, nor will it impact any other farmers who choose to continue with conventional or organic crops. Farmers will now have access to choose whichever approved crop suits their land and business model – no farmer loses out.

The proposed removal of the moratorium does not alter the strict licencing and accreditation rules surrounding the use of GM crops. This stringent system is in place right across the supply chain, from seed storage and seed sellers, to agronomists and farmers. It is on top of Australia's world-class safety regulatory system for all GM crops.

Across Australia and the world, farmers have been growing GM and non-GM crops side-by-side successfully and productively for many years without creating marketing issues with segregation managed by the bulk grain handlers.

South Australia has a long and successful history in research and development of plant breeding innovations. It's time their farmers actually gain access to this agricultural technology to keep in step with farmers from other mainland Australian states and major agricultural nations around the world.

Statement attributable to: Matthew Cossey, Chief Executive Officer, CropLife Australia

About CropLife Australia

CropLife Australia is the national peak industry organisation representing the plant science sector in Australia. CropLife's members are the world-leading innovators, developers, manufacturers and formulators of crop protection and crop biotechnology products. The plant science industry, worth more than \$20 billion a year to Australian agricultural production, provides products to protect crops against pests, weeds and diseases, as well as developing crop biotechnologies key to the nation's agricultural productivity, profitability and sustainability. CropLife is part of the plant science industry's 91 country international federation.

