

Put science and farming above politics

3 December 2019 (Canberra) – CropLife Australia welcomes the announcement from Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, the Hon Tim Whetstone MP, that the South Australian Government has introduced a Bill to lift the GM crop moratorium on mainland South Australia.

GM crops already being grown across the rest of mainland Australia enable farmers to reduce carbon emissions, use pesticides more sustainably and protect the soil through no-till farming. Crops recently approved by the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator address additional sustainability issues. Oil from a GM safflower can be used to replace petroleum-based raw ingredients in the manufacture of plastics and lubricants. The new omega-3 GM canola can accumulate high levels of the crucial oil that can be used as a human dietary supplement. One hectare of this new GM crop will produce as much omega-3 oil as crushing ten tonnes of fish.

GM crops being trialed and developed – including by teams working at the Waite Campus in Adelaide – could help South Australian farmers combat environmental stresses such as drought, acidic soils, salinity and frost, and provide health benefits to consumers with products such as fortified cereals, healthier starches and oils modified to be lower in saturated fats.

GM crops are beneficial for farmers and the environment. Matters of proven science should be above politics and we're calling on the South Australian Parliament to allow GM crop cultivation on mainland South Australia.

Removing the GM moratorium is about all farmers simply having a choice to grow whichever approved crops – including GM crops – best suit their land and business model so that no farmer loses out.

Farmers in Western Australia, Victoria and New South Wales are proof that GM crop cultivation does successfully co-exist with non-GM and organic farming practices, whilst still enabling all premiums in the market.

Without the moratorium on mainland South Australia, the state's agricultural research sector would have more opportunity to develop the crops of tomorrow. If regulatory hurdles are left to stand, South Australia will continue to be bypassed.

It comes down to the fact that South Australian farmers are still being denied access to the sustainable solution of genetically modified crops to assist with the challenges of drought and climate change. The South Australian Parliament now has another opportunity to put in place modern, science and evidence-based legislation and give their farmers the same advantages as those in neighbouring states.

Any member of the South Australian Parliament who is genuinely committed to environmental sustainability, science and farming should support this Bill.

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

Contact: Katherine Delbridge | 0410 491 261 | katherine.delbridge@croplife.org.au

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.