

SA Upper House denies farmer access to crucial agricultural technology

10 December 2019 (Canberra) – Less than two weeks after disallowing the South Australian Government’s regulations to enable GM crop cultivation on mainland South Australia, the South Australian Upper House has again denied the state’s farmers access to GM crops by voting down a Bill members of the Upper House requested.

Chief Executive Officer of CropLife Australia, Matthew Cossey, said, “It is very disappointing that once again South Australian farmers have been let down by their Parliament. The pleas of scientists and farmers to modernise and improve the sustainability of South Australia’s agricultural sector have been ignored.

“It seems disingenuous that those who voted against the Bill proposed things such as unnecessary compensation schemes as justification for their position. Such propositions are equivalent to offering solutions to problems that don’t exist.

“Proposing options that have been rejected in Australia and across the world after serious consideration, is not how you make good policy.”

Mr Cossey continued, “There has not been a single legitimate instance in Australia of a non-GM or organic grower suffering a pure economic loss directly from the unintended presence of an approved GM crop.

“Earlier this year a Western Australian Parliamentary Committee found there was no systemic GM contamination issue in WA and hence no compensation scheme is required. This is the same experience in other Australian states where GM crops are grown and across the world.

“South Australia’s own legal system already provides the most effective mechanism should any farmer be entitled to compensation for any matter.

“Farmers are the experts when it comes to coexistence of farming practices and grain handlers the experts at ensuring sound export, storage and handling practices are followed.

“Growers and handlers across the world have proven their abilities and it is a dark day for the South Australian grains industry which has not been trusted to get on with what they do best and allow South Australian farming to become more sustainable and profitable.

“This is not an academic or theoretical debate. There are examples of successful GM cropping in coexistence with other farming practices right across Australia and the world. The concerns of activists have been comprehensively disproven. There was no basis for the opposition or crossbench to vote against this Bill.”

Mr Cossey concluded, “If the South Australian opposition and crossbenchers are serious about their support of the science of GM and the state’s farmers, then we’re committed to sitting down with them and working through what are rational and reasonable solutions to the concerns they’ve raised.”

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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.