

## GM crops needed as we face the challenge of food security

**29 September 2020 (Canberra)** – In his address today at the launch of the fourth edition of *The Official Australian Reference Guide to Agricultural Biotechnology and GM Crops* (the Guide) at the National Press Club in Canberra, Chief Executive Officer of CropLife Australia, Matthew Cossey, declared that Agriculture is moving beyond just improving food security to underpinning our ability globally to achieve UN Sustainable Development Goals.

“A new generation of farmers, environmentalists and policy makers will help shape how agriculture will intersect with not just climate change, biodiversity and livelihoods, but also social rights including how agriculture can improve equity in the developing world.

“Farmers are being challenged like never before to deliver higher yields with less resources, produce more nutritious foods and improve existing agricultural methods and practices. All this while facing unprecedented droughts, floods and bushfires. Not to mention a global pandemic... our system still needs to evolve to support innovation and to give farmers access to all the tools they need to produce our food, feed and fibre. Otherwise, Australia will fall behind, and we will miss out on crucial developments.” Said Mr Cossey.

Also speaking today were Ken Matthews AO, Chairman of the Agricultural Biotechnology Council of Australia and Dr Caitlin Byrt, a Research Group Leader with ANU.

Mr Cossey continued, “Food in the developed world is safer now than at any time in human history, yet consumers are still easily led astray by activists’ narrow and self-serving agendas. This, in turn, poses the risk of politicians responding to that ignorance to the detriment of not just farming, but the community at large, because, of course we all need to eat.

“The challenge here is, how do we ensure that the Australian community recognise that the nation’s farmers are world’s best practice growers and producers and to remain so they need to have access to new safe ag innovations such as GM and gene edited crops.

“It is the responsibility and indeed obligation of all of us in the sector to fill this gap between the science and the public discourse and, most importantly, the science and the policy... We need to help consumers make their own choices, based on facts and not fear or on a romanticised vision of agriculture.

“For science to prevail, the world needs to be informed regarding the real challenges we face to feed a growing global population.”

Mr Cossey concluded, “The Australian Biotechnology Council of Australia, its expert panel and its specialist advisers should be congratulated and commended for this latest and updated edition of *The Official Australian Reference Guide to Agricultural Biotechnology and GM Crops*.”

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Visit [abca.com.au](http://abca.com.au) to download *The Official Australian Reference Guide to Agricultural Biotechnology and GM Crops*

**Contact:** Katherine Delbridge | 0410 491 261 | [katherine.delbridge@croplife.org.au](mailto: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.