

## Global report shows GM crops continue to have a positive impact

**01 December 2020 (Canberra)** – The latest independent report published by the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Applications (ISAAA) shows that agricultural biotechnology is continuing to have significant benefits for farmers, communities, consumers, economies and the environment.

Matthew Cossey, Chief Executive Officer of CropLife Australia, said, “The 55th ISAAA report confirms why it’s so important that Australian farmers are able to choose innovative, safe and approved technologies like GM crops. This choice allows them to remain globally competitive, meet the requirements of increased food demand and farm sustainably in a changing and challenging climate.

“Modern farming using biotechnology innovations is playing an increasingly crucial role in food, feed and fibre production in Australia and around the world. This report highlights the need for responsive, science-based regulation so that Australia isn’t held back from reaping the benefits and continuing its position as a world leader in agricultural innovation.”

The ISAAA report marks twenty-four years of successful commercial GM crop cultivation. In 2019, 190.4 million hectares of GM crops were grown globally. Seventy-one countries now utilise biotech crops with 29 nations, including 24 developing and five industrial countries, growing GM crops. An additional 42 non-planting countries formally regulate the importation and use of biotech crops for food, feed and processing.

GM crops on offer have expanded beyond the “big four” (corn, soybean, cotton and canola), and now include lucerne, sugar beets, sugarcane, papaya, safflower, eggplant, squash, apples and pineapple, offering more choice to food producers and consumers.

Mr Cossey continued, “Since 1996 GM crops have improved the sustainable use of pesticides and conserved biodiversity by saving more than 231 million hectares of land from agricultural production. They have alleviated poverty for 17 million small hold farmers and their families and reduced CO2 emissions from agriculture in 2018 by 23 billion kg.

“When farmers are given access to choose GM crops, they can grow more on less land, increase crop yields, contribute to international competitiveness and reduce agriculture’s environmental impact.

“There’s no question that GM crops have a positive impact on sustainability and productivity. South Australia recently became the last mainland Australian state to embrace this agricultural technology, which means we will see even more environmental and agronomic benefits across Australia, allowing our farming sector to continue to thrive,” Mr Cossey concluded.

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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.