

NSW to ensure its farmers maintain and improve access to future GM Crop innovations

02 March 2021 (Canberra) – Farmers in New South Wales will be assured of access to approved genetically modified crop innovations with the NSW Government announcement today it will not be seeking to continue a moratorium due to expire 1 July 2021. This will bring NSW into line with all other mainland states and with Australia's major agricultural competitors, ensuring that the state's farmers are not disadvantaged in the coming decades.

Chief Executive Officer of CropLife Australia, the national peak industry organisation for the plant science sector, Mr Matthew Cossey, welcomed the news saying, "Farmers in New South Wales have benefited from the advantages of growing GM cotton and GM canola since 1996 and 2008 respectively, helping them adopt more environmentally sustainable and profitable farming practices, but this has only been done through specific exemptions to date.

"This move is a strong sign that the Berejiklian Government is committed to supporting farmers and having scientific based policy and regulation. Minister Marshall should be commended for recognising that the GM crop moratorium is outdated and a limit to farming innovation.

"Giving farmers access to all new innovations approved by the Federal Regulator allows them to make their own choice to grow what best fits their needs and business model. This is crucial, especially as they continue to face periods of drought and increasingly harsher conditions in a changing climate.

"NSW has been a leader in agricultural biotechnology. The expiration of the moratorium is the next step to ensuring NSW remains a leader in farming innovation. This decision aligns NSW with all other mainland states in Australia and gives farmers access to all GM crops that have been approved under the strictest of assessments for commercial cultivation by the independent federal agency, The Office of the Gene Technology Regulator.

"The data is clear and universally supported, approved GM crops are as safe for human health as traditional plant breeding and provide major environmental and productivity benefits. The positive impact of GM crops on the environment and on farming practices has been clearly demonstrated with GM crops increasing food production, saving millions of hectares from ploughing and cultivation and reducing CO2 emissions by more than 27 million tonnes per annum.

"The agricultural sector in NSW is highly trained and experienced in managing the co-existence of GM and non-GM crops and all farming systems have only improved and grown during the time GM crops have been commercially cultivated in the state. All the processes for accreditation, licensing or stewardship are already in place. The NSW Farmers' Association supports the use of approved biotechnology to progress agricultural production and allow for choice for all farmers.

"The moratorium expiring will encourage stronger research and innovation and ensure easier access to current and future GM crops approved for commercialisation.

"This announcement should be welcomed by all parties committed to science-based policy and I expect they would only commend Minister Marshall on this important step for NSW farming."

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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.