

Plant Science Industry welcomes continuation of Improved Access to Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals program

12 May 2021 (Canberra) – CropLife Australia welcomes the Morrison Government’s commitment to farming by extending the Improved Access to Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals program with a further \$9 million over four years.

Chief Executive Officer of CropLife Australia, the national peak industry organisation for the plant science sector, Mr Matthew Cossey, said, “This Budget commitment will continue to improve access to agricultural chemicals for minor uses and specialty crops.

“The program has already seen 192 grants totalling \$11.86 million which have resulted in 41 new permit uses and eight new label uses for minor use agvet chemicals. Minister Littleproud is to be congratulated for his commitment to the program.

“This program is not only a win for agriculture but a win for taxpayers. As a recent ABARES report showed, the estimated average return for each dollar invested is \$117, which totals at an average of \$17 million per project.

“Not only will a minor use program increase the productivity of Australian agriculture, but it also stands to enable more environmentally friendly pest management practices. Access to modern, target-specific chemicals can reduce the overuse of older, broader-spectrum chemicals. A minor use program also encourages more investment in developing these products.

“As the cost of developing and registering crop protection products continues to increase, so too does the risk that the nation’s farmers will not have adequate access to essential tools and products to control pests, weeds and diseases. The small size of Australia’s crop protection product market on a global comparison means that the implementation of this initiative is vital so that Australian agriculture is assured access to the latest innovations from the plant science industry and their full range of uses.

“The Access to Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals program will improve responsible and effective chemical product usage, while ensuring Australia’s farming sector is a world leader in environmentally friendly, sustainable, integrated pest management systems through available chemistry.”

Mr Cossey concluded, “Never before in human history have so many people relied on so few to produce their food. Less than half of one per cent of Australia’s population produce essentially all the food, feed and fibre on behalf of the other 99.5 per cent of the population. As a nation and a global community, we have delegated the most important responsibility of being fed to a relatively small number of people. Australian farmers must be able to access the latest technologies and innovations to remain globally competitive and continue to produce safe, high-quality food, feed and fibre.”

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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.