
Today marks major ag innovation milestone with farmers in all mainland Australian states now free to grow GM crops

01 July 2021 (Canberra) – 1 July 2021 marks the expiry of the NSW GM crop moratorium, meaning every mainland state can now access all approved GM crops. This brings Australia’s farmers into line with their major international agricultural competitors and underpins a great productivity and environmental sustainability leap for Australian farming.

Chief Executive Officer of CropLife Australia, the national peak industry organisation for the plant science sector, Mr Matthew Cossey, said, “Today is a huge leap forward for innovative, modern and sustainable agriculture. With the NSW moratorium expiring today, state governments across mainland Australia have now all made decisions in the best interest of their farmers by allowing them access to all GM cropping innovations approved by the Federal Gene Technology Regulator.

“Farmers should be the ones to make their own choices about what crops to grow that best fit their farming environment and business model. Having access to GM crops is only going to become more important as farmers continue to face periods of drought and increasingly harsher conditions in a changing climate.

“Recent crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic, have not only highlighted the value of technological advances – such as those that facilitated the rapid development and public access to vaccines – but also the importance of the regulatory framework being prepared, responsive and fit-for-purpose under these circumstances. The importance of food security highlighted by the pandemic is a prime example of the continuous need for exploration and development of agricultural innovations via both conventional systems and modern approaches, such as genetic modification, gene editing and in chemical and biological crop protection.

“The global pandemic caused the single greatest disruption to global food supply in generations. Throughout, the Australian agriculture sector has delivered continuity in supply of safe and nutritious food, feed and fibre to domestic and global markets. All this while managing the challenges associated with access to critical farm inputs, supply chain services, an agricultural workforce and border restrictions. Safe and effective biotechnology and crop protection innovations will play an increasing role in meeting and mitigating food production and supply challenges.

“A major strength of biotechnology is that it does so much more than boost agricultural yields. Biotechnology has strong environmental and industrial credentials and presents substantial possibilities in medicine and healthcare for the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of serious illness and disease.

“With all mainland Australian state moratoria removed, we will see stronger research and innovation which will facilitate access to current and future biotechnology crops approved for Australian farming.”

Mr Cossey concluded, “We need all jurisdictions – at home and abroad – to keep in step with international biotechnology advances in the laboratory, paddocks and through policy and regulation to support our farmers to remain world’s best.”

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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.