

## World Food Day reminds us of the importance of agricultural science

**16 October 2021 (Canberra)** - The focus of World Food Day this year is "Our actions are our future - Better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life."

Chief Executive Officer of CropLife Australia, the national peak industry organisation for the plant science sector, Mr Matthew Cossey, said, "World Food Day is a reminder of the challenges in sustainably producing enough food to meet the nutritional demands of an increasing world population. The United Nations predicts that the global population will reach nearly 10 billion by 2050, so our farmers are going to need to produce higher yields while using fewer resources to ensure long-term sustainable food production.

"Farmers having access to safe modern farming innovations is essential if they are to successfully take on these challenges, assisting in the reduction of hunger, malnutrition and poverty in the developing world and meeting the ever-increasing demands of consumers in the developed world.

"Science will play an even more important role in farming and food production in the coming decades. Ensuring that crop losses can be minimised in even more challenging circumstances will be important for Australian farmers and their international competitors. Modern crop protection products provide pest management solutions that prevent the loss of more than 50 per cent of the world's food crops annually. These products are crucial to farmers in providing safe, nutritious and affordable food.

"Innovative plant science tools also help farmers reduce their environmental footprint by allowing them to sustainably grow more crops on less land using less water. Scientists and researchers are not only developing food crops that are more resistant to drought, heat, salinity and pests, they are also using genetic modification to create crops that have increased nutritional value. Biotechnology innovations such as Golden Rice as an effective source of Vitamin A and Cavendish bananas resistant to Panama Disease (TR4), will generate an ongoing source of nutritious food, produced in an environmentally sustainable way."

Food waste contributes to around eight per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions and can cause as much damage to our planet as plastic waste. Food is wasted for cosmetic reasons like size, shape or colour, by consumers who misunderstand "best before" labels and general overbuying.

Mr Cossey continued, "The food waste reduction efforts of the United Nations and governments around the world have a strong ally in the plant science industry with gene edited crops – like apples – that reduce browning."

Mr Cossey concluded, "The innovations of the plant science industry were at the centre of the Third Agricultural Revolution and it will again be the innovations of the plant science industry that will be at the core of the Fourth Agricultural Revolution. We must achieve another leap in production by ensuring access to modern crop protection products and agricultural biotechnology innovations, if we wish to sustainably meet the important challenge of feeding the world."

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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.