

New APVMA Board has important job ahead

08 April 2022 (Canberra) - The first priority for the Board announced for the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) today will be to outline how it will ensure the protection of the independence and scientific integrity of the regulator and how it will justify its own costs to the nation's farming sector.

Chief Executive Officer of CropLife Australia, the national peak industry organisation for the plant science sector, Mr. Matthew Cossey today acknowledged the announcement, "A Board for the APVMA was not at the top of industry's list when it came to improvements and efficiencies for this regulator. Now that it's been appointed it's firmly on the Government, the Department and the Board itself to prove its value. Not in the least because industry and the farming sector will be picking up the tab for the Board after its first two years of operation.

"The APVMA is world-recognised for its scientific credentials in its work as an expert independent regulator. It is critical that the Board establishes a culture and doctrine that protects the integrity of the APVMA's independent and evidence-based decision-making processes. It is also incumbent on the Board to deliver a step-change in efficiency of the regulator if it is to justify its own existence.

"I congratulate the Chair, Dr Carrie Hillyard AM, and other board members on their appointment. CropLife anticipates a constructive relationship with the new Board with a view to ensuring efficiencies are delivered. Further efficiencies are essential so that Australia's farmers have timely access to crucial crop protection products and that significant improvements achieved over the last couple of years are built upon.

"However, the lack of consultation, engagement or visibility of the selection of the Board by the Department highlights its operations are far from best-practice in these matters.

"We call on both sides of politics to commit to fully funding the ongoing operations of the APVMA Board otherwise it will be the only governance Board of a federal regulator that does not receive any government funding. That is not fair to the ag industry, especially considering this regulator is only focused on work crucial for Australian agriculture.

Mr. Cossey concluded, "CropLife and our members will continue to work constructively with the regulator, Department and Federal Government on implementing targeted reforms to see further, genuine efficiency improvements and remove unnecessary regulatory burden. This is important so the APVMA can further improve efficiency to exceed the minimum statutory requirements that they recently finally returned to."

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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.