
There may be reasons for spray drift, but there's no excuse for it

11 April 2023 (Canberra) – Australian farmers are the world’s best and the nation is lucky to have such dedicated and highly skilled people in agriculture, however some spray drift events over summer has demonstrated a situation in which the vast majority have been let down by the few.

Chief Executive Officer of CropLife Australia, Mr Matthew Cossey, said, “Australia’s agricultural sector is coming off the back of successive years of la nina conditions that have been responsible for record yields across much of Australia, but also floods and an influx of summer weeds.”

Targeted, pre-plant knockdown application of crop protection products is a critical best management practice for farmers who practice conservation agriculture. With this comes a responsibility which farmers should keep front of mind as they prepare for the 2023 season.

“There may be reasons why spray drift can occur, but there is absolutely no excuse for it. Spray drift not only leads to economic and productivity losses, but the bad practice of a few may also threaten access to crop protection products through prohibitive regulation for the many, and that would lead to significant negative impact on all farming. Millions of dollars are invested each year by industry to continually strengthen systems that support product stewardship through research and development, education, technology and training,” said Mr Cossey.


CropLife’s StewardshipFirst initiative includes best-practice product application guides such as [SprayBest](#) and [MyAgCHEMUSE](#), which were specifically developed to help farmers, spray contractors and environmental land managers maximise the benefits of crop protection products without negatively impacting neighbours or the environment.

Australia is also fortunate to have one of the world’s most highly regarded, technically competent, independent regulators in the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) at its helm. The APVMA robustly assesses all scientific information for human health and environmental safety and efficacy before approving a product. It also provides strict conditions of use that are legally binding.

At the farm-level, applicators should always make sure to read and understand product labels before use and follow best-practice guidelines to anticipate weather conditions, monitor temperatures and keep records. Plans should remain dynamic as weather

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.



patterns can change unexpectedly and if they're not certain, don't spray and seek expert advice.

Mr Cossey continued, "Importantly, if a suspected incident does occur, it's crucial to report it to relevant state authorities in a timely fashion, to allow proper investigation and data collection. Likewise, it is the responsibility of those authorities to ensure that regular monitoring, compliance with the label directions and enforcement measures are being taken.

"Actions to prevent spray drift must be sensible and informed by both evidence and sound science rather than public speculation. Swift action by authorities to investigate and act on reports of spray drift removes the risk of playing the blame game and instead turns everyone's focus towards maintaining the industry's well-earned clean and green reputation.

"In order to continue to strive for sustainable agricultural practices while maintaining access to crucial technologies, it is everyone's responsibility to play their part when it comes to staying on target," concluded Mr Cossey.

Visit www.stewardshipfirst.com.au for CropLife's industry-led best practice application guides MyAgCHEMUSE and SprayBEST for responsible application and spray drift management.

- ENDS

Contact: Elyse Denman | 0459 550 010 | elyse.denman@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.

