
World Environment Day - Solutions to Agricultural Plastic Pollution

5 June 2023 (Canberra) – This World Environment Day, the UN is calling on more upstream measures to support the transition to a circular economy for plastic use. In Australia, the CropLife initiated drumMUSTER® program accounts for 40 per cent of Australia’s recycling efforts - leading the way on genuine solutions to plastic pollution. This important program is supported by CropLife’s program partner the National Farmers Federation and available to the whole plant science industry for its plastic containers.

“Plastic packaging plays an essential role in Australia’s agricultural sector, for the safe transport, storage and handling of pesticides and other inputs,” said Chief Executive Officer of CropLife Australia, the national peak industry organisation for the plant science sector, Mr Matthew Cossey.

“It’s a Catch-22 with plastic – the very thing that makes it useful also makes it problematic. We know that in the case of agricultural plastics, upstream measures spanning plastic reduction, waste collection, recycling and pollution prevention are better for the environment, farmers and the plant science industry. That’s why CropLife and its members are committed to our mandatory code of conduct to ensure that plastic packaging waste is collected, disposed of and recycled responsibly,” said Mr Cossey.

Globally, the plant science industry is one of the world’s most innovative sectors, investing tens of billions of dollars in research and development each year to establish new products and better formulations, packaging and use systems. These long-standing industry-led programs that existed before the introduction of regulatory requirements are now being used as a model for further state and national stewardship initiatives to help Australia meet its recycling and waste reduction targets.


The UNEP report Turning off the Tap, acknowledges that recycling alone could reduce plastic pollution by 20 per cent by 2040, however better recycling technology and lower costs are needed to enable the transition.

“Soft plastics are one of the most difficult materials to recycle and make up 66 per cent of plastics used in agriculture,” said Mr Cossey.

“The advancement of technologies right here in Australia and CropLife’s long legacy of genuine stewardship initiatives has provided an exciting opportunity to establish bagMUSTER® – Australia’s first industry-led collection and recycling initiative for agricultural product bags.

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.



“It’s estimated that bagMUSTER® could remove another 22,000 tonnes of plastic from landfill each year and create a new circular economy for plastic into useful products such as fuel, new plastic materials and even clothing.

“The bagMUSTER® and drumMUSTER® programs are part of CropLife Australia’s StewardshipFirst® initiative, a comprehensive suite of stewardship programs, serving as an example to other industries, both nationally and globally, of what a genuine product stewardship looks like.

“A collaborative approach with the support of farmer organisations that supports innovation in agriculture will continue to deliver results. Government, industry and farmers must continue to work together to improve sustainability and productivity, starting with better recognition and support for industry stewardship programs like these that ensure long term responsible product use, disposal and recycling,” Mr Cossey concluded.

- 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.

