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## World Population Day a reminder that Agricultural innovations needed to sustain a growing population

**11 July 2023 (Canberra) (World Population Day)** – As the global population continues to surge towards 9.7 billion people by 2050, the challenge of sustainable food production is more important than ever. The 30 per cent increase in population will require a 70 per cent increase in food production by 2050. Meeting this escalating demand for food and nutrition, while simultaneously conserving natural resources and further improving farming sustainability will require science-based innovative solutions more than ever.

Matthew Cossey, Chief Executive Officer of CropLife Australia, the national peak industry organisation for the plant science sector said “The world doesn’t have the luxury of doing what we have always done, or worse reverting back to old agricultural practices, if we are to meet the global food security challenges of the future. We must find ways to increase the yield of available farming land, which will only be achieved through investment in R&D, plant science innovation and sound policy and regulation that supports sustainable farming intensification.

“In 1960 we were feeding around two people per hectare of land, by 2050 we will have to feed at least six people per hectare of land or less. World Population Day is not just about the sheer number of new mouths to feed, but about a shared responsibility to ensure we meet the most basic human rights.

“Claims that the world already has an overabundance of food not only ignores dietary patterns and assumes that food is equally distributed to meet the nutritional needs of every person in the world, but it is also based on a premise that all food loss and waste doesn’t exist,” said Mr Cossey.


Less than one per cent of Australia’s population produce all Australia’s food while also exporting 70 per cent of production overseas. Without access to modern crop protection products, farmers could lose as much as 50 per cent of their annual production to pests, weeds and diseases.

The use of agricultural biotechnology to produce more nutritious crops with resilience to pests, disease and climate change is also becoming increasingly crucial to food security and nutrition globally. Over 400 million hectares of genetically modified (GM) crops have been cultivated worldwide since 1996 and over one trillion meals containing GM food ingredients have been consumed globally.

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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.



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Mr Cossey continued, “There is no one silver bullet to these complex issues, however innovations in agricultural practices and technologies will continue to be crucial tools in sustainable food production as they have been for centuries. By implementing advanced farming techniques, optimising inputs and developing novel crop varieties, we can significantly increase yield and mitigate environmental impacts.

“As we approach the 2030 deadline for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations, the pressure to do better will only continue to increase. It is imperative that we prioritise access to agricultural innovations as a key driver of global food security by removing regulatory barriers to the introduction of new agricultural biotechnology plant traits and technologies and crop protection innovations in Australia,” Mr Cossey concluded.

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