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## **World Food Day – Navigating food fads in the global fight against hunger**

**16 October 2023, Canberra** – Around 800 million people around the world suffer from food insecurity and hunger while at the same time food trends and fads are spreading more quickly than ever. This World Food Day, CropLife Australia is highlighting the impact that these trends can have on sustainable food production, supply and inequality.

“Consumers are increasingly seeking out new and novel dietary choices, both in Australia and globally,” said Matthew Cossey, Chief Executive Officer of CropLife Australia, the national peak industry organisation for the plant science sector.

“It is great that they can have such choice and a privilege to have the option. While short-term food trends can provide exciting opportunities for innovation and diversification in the food industry, it’s essential for producers, consumers and policymakers to be mindful of their broader implications. It takes years for farmers and supporting sectors such as the plant science industry to introduce and get new produce options to commercial viability in a sustainable way. Short-term food fads can pose a real threat to financial feasibility for farmers and producers and to the broader challenge of delivering food security for all.

“Thanks to product marketing and social media, we’ve seen a rise in short-term food trends that eliminate perfectly healthy foods based on the food group or how they’re produced. The plant science industry supports all farming systems with innovations but we know that preferences of some consumers for organic, biodynamic and “Non-GMO” foods, for example, are not by definition healthier or more environmentally sustainable,” said Mr Cossey.


“Shifts in consumer preferences may put sudden demand on specific products, ingredients or production methods that create cascading pressure on supply chains. Furthermore, some food trends and policies made on the basis of environmental sustainability can counterproductively strain resources and result in increased carbon emissions, food loss and deforestation,” Mr Cossey added.

“The EU farm to fork policies that aim to reduce pesticide use by 50 per cent and increase organic production is a prime example. It is predicted that under these policies, global food production would reduce by 12 per cent and increase deforestation and emissions in other countries to make up for these losses.”

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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 \$31.6 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 a part of the plant science industry’s 91 country international federation.



Polices that impact food production have real consequences for global hunger and poverty too, with the number of food-insecure people in the world predicted to rise by 185 million on top of the extra two billion people we will need to feed in 2050.

“The agriculture industry has a big job to do. To ensure long-term, sustainable food production, farmers must have access to cutting-edge farming innovations. These innovations not only combat global hunger, malnutrition, and poverty but also meet the ever-growing demands of consumers,” said Mr. Cossey.

“The role of science in agriculture is poised to play a crucial role in food security in the coming decades. Modern pesticides offer pest management solutions that prevent the loss of more than half of the world's food crops annually in order to meet the global food demand.”

Agricultural biotechnology also provides significant environmental and consumer benefits. Scientists and researchers are developing food crops that exhibit enhanced resistance to drought, heat, salinity, and pests. These innovations also lead to crops with increased nutritional value to combat nutritional deficiencies and disease like Golden Rice, a potent source of Vitamin A.

Mr Cossey concluded, “People’s relationship with food in food secure nations is complex. It’s emotional, social, essential for life but sometimes mis-informed. In non-food secure nations it’s simply about achieving minimum food and nutritional requirements. Above all we have a choice to make and with that comes responsibility. It’s crucial that the choices we make are based on scientific evidence, not false ideology or fads.

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