

AUSTRALIA'S FIRST AGRICULTURE WHITE PAPER WELCOMED

Saturday 4 July 2015 (Canberra) – The Australian plant science industry warmly welcomes the Federal Government's Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper released by the Prime Minister and Agriculture Minister today. Australia's agriculture industry has had tremendous success in the face of many challenges and the White Paper provides a clear, long-term, strategic vision supported by smart targeted policies to prepare for the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. The Prime Minister the Hon Tony Abbott MP and the Minister for Agriculture the Hon Barnaby Joyce MP should be commended and congratulated for the White Paper.

"Four years ago I highlighted the importance of a long-term strategic vision for agriculture for the same reasons the nation has one for defence," said CropLife Australia's Chief Executive Officer, Matthew Cossey. "Minister Joyce should be congratulated for delivering a White Paper that sets appropriate policies for a healthy agriculture sector while ensuring innovation is encouraged and unhindered by onerous red-tape and unnecessary regulations."

"The Australian plant science sector and agriculture industry more broadly simply needs a clear vision and stability in the regulatory environment to allow it to invest long-term and deliver outcomes for the nation. We commend the government for delivering a White Paper that is the foundation document to achieving that and we look forward to working with government and the broader farming sector to ensure the implementation of the vision in this document."

"While White Papers provide stability and long-term strategic focus, they are living documents and we should look to review and re-energise this document in five to eight years-time while maintaining focus on a competitive and sustainable agriculture industry. A bi-partisan approach to managing such a process is the key to long-term success for Australia's agriculture industry and I congratulate Minister Joyce for driving this process."

"One standout initiative within this White Paper, particularly for the plant science industry and farming sector, is today's announcement that the Minor Use and Specialty Crops program will be further funded. It is a smart and responsible investment in Australia's future agricultural competitiveness and if utilised properly will increase the productivity of Australian agriculture while enabling more environmentally friendly pest management practices."

"For some time the plant science industry and the farming sector has advocated for a program to address a number of inconsistencies in, and market failure caused by, the regulation of agricultural chemicals. This failure comes from the fact that the cost of regulating a crop protection product in Australia is three times more than in the United States even though the size of the Australian market is one-tenth the size of the United States' market," said Mr Cossey.

"The government's initial \$8 million commitment was a responsible decision in the midst of last year's tough federal budget and today's further funding announcement of the Minor Use and Specialty Crops program is a significant signal to the plant science industry that Australia is open for business."

"Similar programs in the United States have demonstrated that every dollar invested in a minor use program generates a net return to the economy of \$500. Not only is the Minor Use and Specialty Crops program a smart investment that will increase the productivity of Australian agriculture, it stands to enable more environmentally friendly pest management practices," said Mr Cossey.

"An appropriately targeted, moderately funded minor use program in Australia enables the majority of off-label and permitted uses to be assessed by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority and registered. This will allow appropriate maximum residue limits to be implemented and as a result, significantly reduce incidences of pesticide residues in minor crops exceeding the Australian Standard, such as what has been reported in two of the last three WA Department of Health food monitoring testing programs."

"Government investment in agriculture is an investment that delivers for the nation as whole. The Australian public and farmers will win equally under this new plan for a sustainable and competitive agriculture industry." Mr Cossey concluded.

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About CropLife Australia

CropLife Australia (CropLife) is the peak industry organisation representing the agricultural chemical and biotechnology (plant science) sector in Australia. CropLife represents the innovators, developers, manufacturers and formulators of crop protection and agricultural biotechnology products. The plant science industry provides products to protect crops against pests, weeds and diseases, as well as developing crop biotechnologies that are key to the nation's agricultural productivity, sustainability and food security. The plant science industry is worth more than \$17.6 billion a year to the Australian economy and directly employs thousands of people across the country. CropLife and its members are committed to the stewardship of their products throughout their lifecycle and to ensuring that human health, environment and trade issues associated with agricultural chemical use in Australia are responsibly and sustainably managed. Our member companies contribute more than \$13 million a year to stewardship activities to ensure the safe and effective use of their products. CropLife ensures the responsible use of these products through its mandatory industry code of conduct and has set a benchmark for industry stewardship through programs such as **drumMUSTER**, ChemClear® and Agsafe Accreditation and Training. Our stewardship activities demonstrate our commitment to managing the impacts associated with container waste and unwanted chemicals.

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