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CropLife AUSTRALIA

MEDIA RELEASE

GLOBAL REPORTS CONFIRM GM CROPS DELIVERING BENEFITS TO FARMERS, AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

27 June 2018 (Canberra) – The latest independent reports published by the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Applications (ISAAA) and UK-based PG Economics released overnight confirm that plant biotechnology continues to have significant benefits for farmers, communities, consumers, economies and the environment.

“The reports confirm the importance of Australian farmers being able to choose innovative, safe and approved technologies to remain globally competitive, meet the requirements of increased food demand, and farm sustainably in a changing and challenging climate,” said Matthew Cossey, Chief Executive Officer of CropLife Australia.

“Modern farming using biotechnology innovation plays an increasingly crucial role in food, feed and fibre production in Australia. These reports highlight the need to ensure non-science based and unnecessary costly regulation doesn’t hold Australia back from reaping the benefits and being a world leader in agricultural innovation.”

“The ISAAA report marks twenty-one years of successful commercialisation of GM crops reaching 189.8 million hectares globally in 2017 compared to 185.1 million hectares in 2016. In 2017, 67 countries used biotech crops, including planting in 19 developing and five industrial countries; and an additional 43 non-planting countries that formally regulate the importation and use of biotech crops for food, feed and processing.”

“The PG Economics report highlights the environmental benefits of GM crops, with GM crop-related carbon dioxide emission savings from reduced fuel use and additional soil carbon sequestration equal to the removal of 16.75 million cars from the roads in 2016, an increase from 12 million in 2015.”

“Even more impressive is the contribution of GM crops to the global food supply. The increased productivity of GM crops has meant an additional 213 million tons of soybeans, 405 million tons of maize, 27.5 million tons of cotton lint and 11.6 million tons of canola, which would not have been achieved if conventional technology had been used.” said Mr Cossey.

“Australian farmers continue to embrace crop biotechnology with an 8 per cent increase in GM crop plantings, seeing 924,000 hectares compared to 852,000 hectares in 2016. In 2017, there were 491,528 hectares of biotech canola grown in Australia, that’s a 10 per cent increase from the 446,226 hectares planted in 2016. While in the same period 432,000 hectares were planted with biotech cotton, an increase of 6.7 per cent.”

“GM cotton is one the great success stories of Australian agriculture, comprising nearly 100 per cent of the Australian cotton crop. Adoption of GM technology has resulted in greater water use efficiency and has greatly improved the cotton industry’s sustainable use of pesticides.”

“With GM cotton accounting for almost all cotton production in Australia, cotton farmers had a net farm income benefit of more than US$239 per hectare directly attributable to the technology in 2016; and cumulatively since 1996 the gains have been US$1.06 billion. The average Australian farmer growing GM canola in 2016 had an average net increase in gross margins of US$45 per hectare, with a cumulative gain of US$89.9 million since commercial cultivation was approved.”

“When farmers are given access and the opportunity of growing GM crops, they can grow more on less land, increase crop yields, contribute to international competitiveness, and reduce agriculture’s environmental impact. Evidence has shown that given the choice, farmers increasingly choose to grow GM crops despite the remnants of extreme and vocal anti-science activist campaigns,” concluded Mr Cossey.

The PG Economics *GM crops global socio-economic and environmental impacts 1996-2016* report is available at: ***www.pgeconomics.co.uk***. The ISAAA *Global Status of Commercialized Biotech/GM Crops in 2017: Biotech Crop Adoption Surges as Economic Benefits Accumulate in 22 Years* report can be downloaded here: ***http://www.isaaa.org/resources/publications/briefs/53/default.asp***

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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 ***drum****MUSTER,* ChemClear® and Agsafe Accreditation and Training. Our stewardship activities demonstrate our commitment to managing the impacts associated with container waste and unwanted chemicals.