

APVMA'S PERFORMANCE STEADY: CONTINUED IMPROVEMENT NEEDED

24 JULY 2018 (Canberra) – The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) 2018 June quarter performance statistics, released today, show that crop protection product assessment and registration timeframe performance has now stabilised for the last three quarters.

Mr Matthew Cossey, Chief Executive Officer of CropLife Australia, said “it is reassuring that the APVMA's performance, specifically for crop protection product registrations, has recovered from its all-time low at 24 per cent in the June quarter last year to 77 per cent in this quarter. While it is pleasing there has been a stabilisation in the last three quarters, performance seems to have plateaued at a level which is still well below its statutory timeframes”.

“It is disappointing that timeframe performance for crop protection products continues to hold back the APVMA's overall performance statistics and we continue to support the Regulator in seeking the overdue and much needed structural regulatory and legislative improvements that will allow the Regulator to continue to improve its operational efficiency,” said Mr Cossey.

“Timeframe performance for critical new and innovative product applications that will significantly drive Australian agricultural productivity have improved slightly to 47 per cent completed within timeframe, compared with just 38 per cent in the March quarter. The Regulator's continued inability to finalise the more complex agricultural chemical applications within timeframe denies Australian farmers access to new and innovative products that the plant science industry provides, further limiting farmers' ability to improve productivity and compete internationally.”

“The recently announced retention of a Canberra-based APVMA office may curb the further loss of experienced regulatory scientists and other key staff from the Regulator. It's critical that no further disruption as a result of relocation occurs, and with the Regulator keeping a Canberra office we are hopeful that this will mitigate further disruption when the Regulator undertakes its substantial relocation to Armidale.”

“The APVMA has over the last 12 months introduced a range of measures to improve its operational performance, for which it should be commended. It is now beyond time that the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources delivers targeted, industry supported reforms that will free the APVMA from unnecessary and out-dated regulatory processes and maintain the integrity of the regulatory system, to help the Regulator fully meet its statutory timeframe obligations,” said Mr Cossey.

“The assessment and registration of crop protection products is the substantive component of the APVMA's work and timeliness is crucial to ensuring Australian farmers have access to important agricultural tools.”

“CropLife Australia looks forward to the APVMA's performance continuing to improve in all areas and will continue to work with the APVMA and the Government to help deliver the necessary reforms that will improve the Regulator's efficiency,” concluded Mr Cossey.

Contact: Jaelle Bajada (Director – Corporate Affairs) Ph: 02 6273 2733 Mob : 0410 491 261

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 \$20.6 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 millions of dollars 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.

