

National Recycling Week: Towards a circular economy for agricultural plastics

11 November 2024

This National Recycling Week, CropLife Australia, the national peak industry body for the plant science sector, is calling on both federal, state and territory governments to provide practical support for industries that are delivering real solutions towards a circular economy for agricultural plastics.

With ongoing innovations, partnerships, and a steadfast commitment to stewardship, CropLife and its members are tackling the challenge of agricultural plastic waste with great support from the farming sector. With the challenge of increasing recycling within Australian agriculture, targeted government support will be essential for the sector if it is to meaningfully contribute to Australia's target to be a circular economy by 2030.

Australian agriculture uses approximately 82,300 tonnes of plastic annually, with just over 12 per cent currently being recycled. CropLife Australia is determined to shift this trajectory by expanding collection initiatives and advocating for greater investment in advanced recycling infrastructure. CropLife's *drumMUSTER*[®] program alone contributes nearly 50 per cent of the hard plastics recycled in agriculture.

Matthew Cossey, CEO of CropLife Australia, stated, "Plastic packaging plays an essential role in the safe transport, use, and storage of critical agricultural products such as seeds, pesticides, and other inputs. But we must move beyond current recycling rates if we are to address agriculture's plastic waste challenges effectively."


The plant science industry's flagship program, *drumMUSTER*[®], has been operating for 26 years, collecting and recycling over 43.5 million plastic containers and diverting approximately 45,000 tonnes of plastic from landfill. With a network of over 840 collection points, *drumMUSTER*[®] stands as a leading example of industry-led stewardship.

CropLife also celebrates the successful pilot and forthcoming national rollout of bagMUSTER[®], Australia's first industry-led, not-for-profit, collection and recycling initiative for plastic agricultural input bags.

Mr. Cossey emphasised the importance of collaboration, "Programs like *drumMUSTER*[®] and bagMUSTER[®] succeed due to the support of farmers, recycling businesses, local governments, and community groups. To fully tackle agricultural plastic waste, we need enhanced support from state and federal governments. This includes targeted investment in advanced recycling technologies and initiatives addressing hard-to-reach waste streams."

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.



CropLife and its members' product stewardship initiatives, including *drumMUSTER*[®] and *bagMUSTER*[®], set a benchmark for effective, industry-led solutions in managing their products and packaging waste. These programs highlight the plant science industry's commitment to whole-of-lifecycle product stewardship and demonstrate the tangible and outcomes-focused sustainability impact of industry leadership.

For more information on these programs, please visit bagmuster.org.au and drummuster.org.au.

- ENDS

Contact: Justin Crosby | 0427 524 443 | justin.crosby@croplife.org.au

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.

