
Ongoing declines in APVMA performance taxing an overburdened farming sector

Canberra, 18 November 2024: The most recent Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) performance statistics show over one in four new plant product assessments are no longer completed within legislated timeframes – creating real costs for farmers and families.

For over two years, the APVMA's timeframe performance for major pesticide applications continue to languish below mandated statutory timeframes, with performance in the most recent quarter sitting at just 72.3 per cent of applications completed on-time.

"This disappointing performance continues to fail Australian farmers, creating delays in their ability to access to the latest innovative crop protection farming tools," said Chief Executive Officer of CropLife Australia, the national peak industry organisation for the plant science sector, Mr Matthew Cossey.

"These delays add yet another hurdle to the ability of Australia's farmers to complete globally. It means they have fewer options available to them to protect crop yields and leaves them facing higher costs from damage caused by devastating insects, weeds, and diseases.

"The prolonged period of below expected performance also seriously undermines the plant science industry's capacity to support Australian agriculture.

"With challenges to our agricultural sector coming from climate change, as well as new and emerging pests such as Fall armyworm, access to the latest agricultural chemical technologies are important to curbing the cost-of-living pressures felt by families right across Australia.


At a recent Senate Estimates hearing, the APVMA admitted the Government's increased expectation for it to finalise a number of chemical reviews has severely impacted its ability to meet its statutory timeframes for new pesticides.

"Government funding is critical to resourcing the APVMA's public good functions, such as chemical review, allowing cost recovered funds to be devoted to ensuring new chemical technologies get into the paddock when they are needed.

"With fees and charges ultimately paid by farmers, proposals that seek to increase the APVMA's cost recovery will only doubly penalise Australian farmers; increasing the cost of critical farm-inputs and further delaying access to new products already available to farmers in larger markets.

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.



“The greater demands placed on the APVMA by the Government mean the current proposal to increase its resourcing through higher levels of cost recovery is akin to placing a band-aid over the structural long-term needs of the regulator.

Presently, the APVMA is the only pesticide regulator in the OECD that does not receive Government funding to cover the public good outcomes it creates through the essential functions of reviewing chemical safety and undertaking compliance and enforcement activities.

“While the reported results are disappointing, the opportunity for improvement exists as the APVMA’s dedicated team of professional regulatory scientists and specialist staff settle under the management of new CEO Scott Hansen.

“However, if the Government is to truly claim the legacy of delivering the pesticide regulator Australian’s deserve, it is time for it to step up to the plate and deliver the funding that will deliver the sustainable resource base it needs to make it happen.

“This funding is essential to the APVMA being able to deliver the full breadth of its regulatory functions, delivering its statutory objective of enhancing the economic viability of Australia’s primary industries by ensuring farmers have access to safe and effective chemicals,” concluded Mr Cossey.

- 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.

