
CropLife Australia calls for science-centred approach to productivity this Science Week

15 August 2025 (Canberra) – As Science Week celebrations draw to a close, CropLife Australia is calling for a continued push for science to be at the core of all good policy decisions. With productivity high on the agenda this week, CropLife is highlighting the need for Australia to continue to lean into science to ensure agricultural productivity and better environmental outcomes.

Australia's plant science sector is underpinned by independent, science-based regulatory frameworks that have enabled decades of innovation on-farm. However, structural barriers and outdated processes are now limiting the full potential of this innovation, threatening productivity growth at a time when it is urgently needed.

"Crop protection and biotechnology products have delivered enormous value to Australian agriculture," said CropLife Australia Chief Executive Officer Matthew Cossey. "But delays in regulatory approvals of agricultural technologies and the commercial uncertainty this creates are now restraining innovation, and in turn, holding back productivity."

"Our regulators and policy settings should drive scientific innovation and productivity, not slow it down."


Crop protection products alone contributed \$31 billion to agricultural output in 2020–21, or 73 per cent of total crop production value. Technologies such as herbicide-enabled no-till farming have been essential for farmers and they adapt to climate change.

"Compounding regulatory delays and inefficiencies that continue to be ignored over the years mean Australian farmers are now having to wait longer for access to new technologies already available overseas that would enable further sustainable shifts in productivity output," said Mr Cossey.

A decade of reforms has given the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) the enabling tools it needs to run efficiently, including access to independent external scientific reviewers and fit-for-purpose digital assessment technologies. However, declining performance and escalating delays continues to be a major concern. Full industry cost recovery, a model not used by any other OECD pesticide regulator, has discouraged innovation, slowed product approvals, and created an uneven playing field.

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.



“Longstanding barriers are also limiting progress in biotechnology,” continued Mr Cossey.

“Despite strong scientific consensus and global regulatory shifts, Australia has yet to implement the recommendations of the Third Review of the National Gene Technology Scheme, which began in 2017.”

“While other countries like New Zealand are forging ahead with modern, flexible gene technology regulations, Australia is still debating changes made seven years ago.

“Australia has all the ingredients to be a leader in agricultural innovation, world-class science, advanced farming systems, and a strong safety record. What’s needed now is a science-driven policy and regulatory environment that supports and rewards investment.

“Productivity growth in agriculture needs technology that allows farmers to do more with less. It’s the role of government to enable those innovations to reach the farm gate faster. Without that, we risk falling behind and losing the economic and environmental benefits these technologies deliver.”

Mr Cossey concluded, “Science Week is a timely reminder that supporting innovation is not just about celebrating research, it’s about creating the right environment for it to thrive. The Government must act now.”

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