AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGIES COULD INCREASE GLOBAL CROP YIELDS AS MUCH AS 67 PERCENT AND CUT FOOD PRICES NEARLY IN HALF BY 2050

14 February 2014 (Canberra) – Global population and income growth, and the impacts of climate change, will further escalate the pressure for increased and more sustainable agricultural production to feed a hungry planet.

A new study by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) measures the impacts of agricultural innovation on farm productivity, prices, hunger, and trade flows to 2050 and identifies practices that could significantly benefit developing nations.

Food Security in a World of Growing Natural Resource Scarcity: The Role of Agricultural Technologies, examines 11 agricultural practices and technologies and how they could help farmers around the world improve the sustainability of growing three of the world's main staple crops – maize, rice, and wheat.

Using a first-of-its-kind data model, IFPRI pinpoints the agricultural technologies and practices that can most significantly reduce food prices and food insecurity in developing nations. The study profiles 11 agricultural innovations: crop protection, drip irrigation, drought tolerance, heat tolerance, integrated soil fertility management, no-till farming, nutrient use efficiency, organic agriculture, precision agriculture, sprinkler irrigation, and water harvesting.

CropLife Australia's Chief Executive Officer, Matthew Cossey, said "This latest study reinforces that there is no silver bullet solution to ensuring food security. The reality is that no single agricultural technology or farming practice will provide sufficient food for the world in 2050, just as Mark Rosegrant, lead author of the book and director of IFPRI's Environment and Production Technology Division stated. Instead we must advocate for and utilise a range of these technologies in order to maximise yields."

"We must also see a stop in political driven agendas that have no basis in science and fact, seeking to introduce completely unnecessary conflict on issues of different farming systems because meeting the challenge of global food security will be tough enough as it is".

"This study highlights that the combination of agricultural technologies and practices such as heat-tolerant crops and no-till farming, could reduce food prices by up to 49 percent for maize, up to 43 percent for rice, and 45 percent for wheat due to increased crop productivity".

The anticipated negative effects of climate change on agricultural productivity as well as projected population growth by 2050, suggest that food insecurity and food prices will increase. For example, the effects of climate change could decrease global maize yields by as much as 18 percent by 2050, making it even more difficult to feed the world if farmers cannot adopt all available agricultural technologies.

Crop biotechnology use in Australia has already delivered considerable environmental benefits by reducing the use of arable land and contributing to significant reductions of the release of greenhouse gas emissions from agricultural practices. In 2011, this was equivalent to removing 23 billion kg of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, or equal to removing 10.2 million cars – 80 per cent of the cars registered in Australia – from the road for one year.

"The provision of safe and nutritious food, and high quality feed and fibre to a hungry planet in a changing climate is one of many reasons Australian farming methods need to be able to have access to the latest chemical crop protection products and biotechnology innovations.," said Mr Cossey..

Australian farmers must be able to adopt the latest safe and proven agricultural technologies and innovations to combat the threat of food insecurity, the impacts of climate change and increasing costs, while remaining internationally competitive.

IFPRI was established in 1975 to identify and analyse alternative national and international strategies and policies for meeting the food needs of the developing world, with particular emphasis on low-income countries and on the poorer groups in those countries. The report is available online at ***www.ifpri.org/publication/food-***

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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 spend more than $13 million a year on 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.

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