

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Report Shows Positive Evolution of Pesticide Products Since 1960

Continued high investment in R&D has led to significant advancements in the efficacy and safety of crop protection products, providing new tools to farmers

Brussels — 20 November 2018 — A high level of investment from the crop protection industry to research and develop new products has led to a continual improvement in both the effectiveness and safety profile of pesticides, according to a new report published today.

The report, “The Evolution of the Crop Protection Industry Since 1960”, written by market analysts Phillips McDougall, charts how technological advancements have helped the crop protection industry meet increasingly rigorous regulatory requirements, meet societal expectations for ever-safer products, while also helping farmers meet the growing global demand for food.

The report notes that there has been a 95% reduction in the application rate of a pesticide per hectare since 1950, meaning farmers need to apply a lower dose to achieve the same efficacy. In addition, the amount of food produced from every tonne of active ingredient used has gone up by more than 10% since 1980.

At the same time, the product safety profile has improved. The World Health Organization (WHO) classifies pesticides into four safety categories from Class 1 (extremely and highly hazardous) to Class U (unlikely to be hazardous). The report states that an average 40% reduction in acute toxicity since the 1960s has meant half of all active ingredients introduced since 2000 are Class U, with no new active ingredients introduced into Class 1.

It is important to note, however, that the capacity of regulatory systems in low income countries to protect confidential business information related to a new product is often insufficient, jeopardizing the industry’s investment, stifling innovation and sometimes leaving farmers without access to new technology.

Howard Minigh, President of CropLife International, which represents the plant science industry and commissioned the report, said the data in the report showed progress based on a laser-focus on improvements.

“Our commitment is to ensure our products are safe for people and the environment. At the same time, we need to provide effective products that meet farmers’ needs to protect their crop against losses. This report shows how continued investment in innovation has helped us move towards both goals by continuing to develop cutting-edge products,” said Mr Minigh.

“As innovators, we don’t rest here, the industry must continue to push the boundaries for ever-safer products. We must also continue to research and develop new products to help farmers meet the immense challenges ahead with climate change pressures, increasing populations and the need to protect precious biodiversity and natural resources from expanding cultivated area.

Mr Minigh concluded: “Fundamental to these advancements in technology is a regulatory environment, including the protection of certain confidential business information, that provides our members with the confidence and encouragement for continued investment. Low income countries also need support to build their regulatory capacity to ensure all farmers can have access to new products.”

To see some of the innovations that are changing the face of the crop protection industry [watch our #CropTech innovation video series](#).

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Notes to Editor:

1. CropLife International is the voice of the global plant science industry. It champions the role of agricultural innovations in crop protection and plant biotechnology in supporting and advancing sustainable agriculture; helping farmers feed a growing population while looking after the planet; and progressing rural communities. The world needs farmers, and farmers need plant science. CropLife International is proud to be at the heart of helping farmers grow.
2. CropLife International members are: BASF, Bayer, Corteva Agriscience (Agriculture Division of DowDuPont), FMC, Sumitomo Chemical and Syngenta.