Press Release

New Report Examines Innovative Conservation Technologies in Agriculture

Brussels, 22 June 2004 --- CropLife International releases a new report on innovative farming techniques entitled, “Conservation Technologies and the Plant Science Industry: Managing Natural Resources Sustainably.” The report will be launched on 23 June 2004 at the 4th International Weed Science Congress in Durban, South Africa.

The report highlights the way in which plant science technologies deliver a range of benefits such as more efficient use of water, reduction in soil erosion, increased biodiversity, better air quality and increased farm incomes.

“Conservation technologies are at the heart of sustainable agriculture”, stated Christian Verschueren, Director General, CropLife International. “Increasing food production whilst protecting the ecosystem and natural resources for future generations is made possible through these dynamic solutions.”

Sustainable Agriculture – The Evolving Paradigm
Over the next 30 years, agriculture will have to sustain an additional 2 billion people from an increasingly fragile resource base. Sustainable practices in agriculture, collectively described as conservation technologies, integrate management of available soil, water and biological resources with appropriate inputs, such as improved seeds, crop protection products and fertilizers.

Permanent soil cover is one of the main principles of conservation technologies in agriculture. Minimum or zero tillage helps to prevent wind and water erosion and loss of ground moisture. It also improves soil biodiversity, increases soil fertility, reduces carbon emissions and reduces labour, time and farm power costs. Experience shows that implementation of Integrated Pest Management (IPM)* approaches also assists with management of disease, insect, and weed problems.

Conservation Techniques in Practice
Use of conservation techniques has already demonstrated marked economic, and environmental benefits for small, medium and large farms in the developing and developed world alike. The plant science industry has been working with researchers and farming communities throughout the world to assist in the development and dissemination of location-specific, sustainable practices. As a result, to date, nearly 60 million hectares worldwide are under low or no tillage.

The CropLife International report details some examples of the results of implementing conservation techniques in many countries around the world:

- Farmers in Paraguay practice conservation tillage techniques on over 1 million hectares to help overcome the negative impact of mechanized tillage and intensive crop management practices.
- In Canada, conservation tillage is used on more than 4 million hectares covering a range of crops, including wheat, maize and canola.
- In the U.K, nearly 30% of all agricultural land uses conservation agriculture to address soil degradation due to erosion.
- Conservation practices in South Asia have improved productivity, reduced cultivation costs, lowered weed populations and contributed to water savings for rice and wheat crops. These are the staple food crops in the region, feeding and providing livelihoods for 1.8 billion people.
- In Malaysia, the rubber and oil palm plantation industry has developed a zero-burning replanting technique. Besides contributing to a cleaner environment and
reducing air pollution, this method replenishes soil organic matter and improves the physical and chemical properties of the soil.

- In **Australia**, planting of wheat without cultivation allows large areas to be covered quickly and crops to be established early, making full use of moisture from early season rains and shortening the period when soils are exposed to wind erosion.

- No-till farmers in **Ghana** obtained maize yields that were 45% higher than farmers who did not use this technology during normal years. In a dry year such as 2000, the yield was 48% higher.

The full report can be accessed on CropLife International’s website at [www.croplife.org/pub/conservationtech](http://www.croplife.org/pub/conservationtech).

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**Note to Editors:**

CropLife International is the global federation representing the plant science industry. It supports a network of regional and national associations in 88 countries, and is led by companies such as BASF, Bayer CropScience, Dow AgroSciences, DuPont, FMC, Monsanto, Sumitomo and Syngenta. CropLife International promotes the benefits of crop protection and biotechnology products, their importance to sustainable agriculture and food production, and their responsible use through stewardship activities.

*The plant science industry supports IPM as defined by the [FAO International Code on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides](http://www.fao.org/docrep/004/x6100e/x6100e00.htm): “Integrated Pest Management (IPM) means the careful consideration of all available pest control techniques and subsequent measures that discourage the development of pest populations and keep pesticides and other interventions to levels that are economically justified and reduce or minimize risks to human health and the environment.” For farmers and pest control operators, IPM is the best combination of cultural, biological and chemical measures that provides the most cost effective, environmentally sound and socially acceptable method of managing diseases, insects, weeds and other pests according to local conditions.

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