

Press Release

Plant Science Industry Says "Water Matters"

New publication highlights industry's contribution to water management in agriculture

Brussels, 19 April 2004 --- The UN's Commission on Sustainable Development meets in New York today, two years after the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Important issues such as access to water and sanitation are on the agenda of the meeting, as well as of the entire international community. On this occasion, CropLife International launches its new publication "Water Matters for Sustainable Agriculture," a compilation of water-related case studies from around the world. It highlights the plant science industry's activities with regard to water conservation, use efficiency and protection.

"Agriculture, as a major user of water, has a particular responsibility towards the most efficient and environmentally friendly use of this resource. Our industry supports sustainable water management in agriculture. The examples contained in the publication illustrate contributions from our industry and other partners in the agricultural area," stated Annik Dollacker, Chair, CropLife International Sustainable Agriculture Project Team.

Agriculture accounts for some 70% of global water use, primarily through irrigation – and the number of irrigated hectares are expected to further increase. While major water savings in agriculture will have to come from improved irrigation systems, the plant science industry takes the opportunity to highlight how it contributes to water use efficiency and water quality protection. Some examples include:

- Low or no-till agricultural practices, often enabled through the use of weed management products, improve the land's ability to capture and retain moisture. As a result of no-till practices, farmers in many countries optimize their yields and are better off than farmers who did not use this practice.
- Weed control reduces a crop's competition for moisture, resulting in "more crop per drop." Combined with new rice production systems, water consumption can be significantly reduced. This is particularly critical as rice is the most water intensive crop in Asia.
- Research and development for enhanced crop varieties offer great potential for the future. Drought tolerant plants, for instance, may substantially improve a crop's water needs and result in less water consumption.

In addition to these examples, the CropLife publication also emphasizes industry's work to promote good agricultural practices and product stewardship, and highlights innovative strategies and partnerships that have been pursued with a variety of stakeholders, including academia, governments, NGOs and other industry groups.

"Our companies and associations will continue to play an important role in improving water management in agriculture. Progress can only be made when various stakeholders are involved in the process. The private sector, the public sector and other stakeholders must work together in partnership for sustainable solutions to help preserve our world's natural resources," stated Christian Verschuere, Director General, CropLife International.

The publication can be accessed on CropLife International's website (www.croplife.org/pub/watermatters) or by contacting Christine Gould at Christine@croplife.org.

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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 87 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.

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