

**Press Release  
For Immediate Release**

## **CropLife Asia spotlights role of plant science with climate change mitigation this Earth Day**

**Singapore, 22 April 2020** – This Earth Day, CropLife Asia and its member companies join in the call for action as the impact of climate change continues to be felt by the region's farmers and cited advancements in plant science as a means to help growers mitigate these changing climatic conditions in a sustainable manner.

The effects of climate change such as erratic weather patterns, the spread of pests and diseases, loss of biodiversity and water scarcity will continue to worsen as the planet warms. India and Pakistan experienced a record-breaking heatwave from May to June last year with temperatures soaring to 51 degrees Celsius in some cities. The delayed monsoon season in 2019 also created a challenging landscape for many rice farmers in countries surrounding the Mekong River such as Myanmar, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia. Climate change is increasingly having an impact on Asian farmer livelihood and productivity – and as a result, regional food security.

“Across the region's agricultural sector and food production systems, the ill-effects of climate change are wreaking havoc in Asia,” said Dr. Siang Hee Tan, Executive Director of CropLife Asia. “In light of the stress climate change is placing on the region's food productivity, the plant science industry has an important role to play in helping farmers grow more food with fewer resources on less land. This Earth Day, and every day, we remain committed to bringing new technology and innovations to bear in supporting Asia's growers mitigate the real and increasing challenges posed by climate change.”

To meet the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular those on poverty and hunger, agriculture and food systems need to sustainably boost productivity and efficiency. The world's population is expected to grow to nearly 10 billion by 2050. This means that food production will need to increase by 50 percent to keep up with growth and ensure societal food security. This increase can be achieved, and without causing further environmental damage, by transforming food systems, encouraging innovation and research, and adopting sustainable farming practices.

It is estimated that agriculture contributes 17 percent of greenhouse gas emissions. Plant biotechnology and crop protection products are helping farmers to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. They have helped facilitate less ploughing on farms, which leaves soil undisturbed and keeps carbon in the ground. In 2016, this helped reduce CO2 emissions by 27 million kg – which is the equivalent of removing 17 million cars from the road.

As agriculture accounts for 70 percent of water usage globally, actions to produce more with less water will make a significant impact towards adapting to climate change. The United Nations estimates that around one billion people in dry regions may face increasing water scarcity soon. To address this, plant scientists have developed biotech crops with drought-tolerant and water-use efficiency traits. For example, drought-tolerant corn, grown commercially for the first time in 2013, shows a yield increase of about 5 percent over other varieties.<sup>1</sup> Water-efficient sugarcane also has the potential to protect yields and reduce water requirements.



*Helping Asia's Farmers Grow*

Biotech seeds and pesticides also enable no-till agriculture which means farmers do not have to plough their lands, thus decreasing soil erosion and runoff into waterways and resulting in cleaner and safer water.

Furthermore, between 1996 and 2015, biotech seeds helped grow an additional 574 million tons of crops globally, including soybeans, maize, cotton and canola. By growing more on existing farmland, we can help preserve forests. If higher yielding biotech crops had not been available from 1996-2017, an additional 183 million hectares of farmland would have been needed to maintain global production levels.

###

***About CropLife Asia***

CropLife Asia is a non-profit society and the regional organization of CropLife International, the voice of the global plant science industry. We advocate a safe, secure food supply, and our vision is food security enabled by innovative agriculture. CropLife Asia supports the work of 15 member associations across the continent and is led by six member companies at the forefront of crop protection, seeds and/or biotechnology research and development. For more information, visit us at [www.croplifeasia.org](http://www.croplifeasia.org).

***For more information please contact:***

***Duke Hipp***

*Director, Public Affairs*

*CropLife Asia*

*Tel: (65) 6221 1615*

[duke.hipp@croplifeasia.org](mailto:duke.hipp@croplifeasia.org)

---

<sup>i</sup> CropLife International, Biotech Crop Traits Conserve Water, April 2014