

# Spotlight Shines on Sustainable Food Security & Enabling Smallholder Farmers in Asia as Plant Science Industry Leaders Converge on Singapore

CropLife Asia 2017 Annual General Meeting Kicks off, Bringing Industry Representatives together to Discuss Challenges to Regional Food Security & Role of Plant Science

SINGAPORE, Mar 9, 2017 - (ACN Newswire) - In commencing its 2017 Annual General Meeting today in Singapore, CropLife Asia began a two-day event that is bringing together international and regional leaders in the plant science industry as well as the larger agricultural community. The yearly event provides a platform for these agriculture experts to share insights around the topic of safe and sustainable Food Security for Asia as well as discuss global and regional best practices. The topic of helping ensure Food Security for a growing world is a timely one, as projections have the global population set to eclipse nine billion inhabitants by the year 2050, and Asia alone likely to have one billion more people calling it home then. By just 2025, an additional 60 million men, women and children are expected to be living in Southeast Asia. "Feeding more people with fewer natural resources and less arable land is a monumental challenge we face collectively - and the solution must be a shared one," said Howard Minigh, President and CEO, CropLife International. Mr. Minigh is a participant with this year's event. "From farm to fork, we all have a role to play; and the tools and technology of the plant science industry are a critical component." This challenge is particularly pronounced here in Asia, where we have the smallest-sized farms and the largest number of smallholder farmers. It's estimated that 85% of the world's 525 million smallholder farmers live and work within our continent - around 100 million in ASEAN alone. Smallholder farmers in the region also face unique barriers, including: access to technology, extension services, market, financial credit; impact of climate and weather-related factors; lack of organization; as well as informal landholdings among others. This lethal mix takes a toll. The gap between potential yield and actual on-farm yield is a big one for smallholder farmers across most crops - by most estimates, ASEAN farmers in particular are rarely able to achieve more than 70% of potential yields. "We depend on our region's smallholder farmers more than ever," added Tina Lawton, President of CropLife Asia. "With fewer resources and more challenges to mitigate, they have a daunting task. Empowering and enabling Asia's smallholder farmers to meet these challenges is a goal worth pursuing - and a responsibility our industry in Asia takes seriously." Through advancements in crop protection and plant biotechnology, the plant science industry is doing its part and providing invaluable tools for the smallholder farmer toolbox. Here in Asia and around the world, these innovations in technology are better enabling farmers to sustainably increase their yields, use fewer resources, and minimize the impact on our environment. It's estimated that 50% of global food production would be lost to pests and disease if not for crop protection products. The protection these advanced pesticides provide isn't limited to the field - they also help prolong the viable life and prevent post-harvest losses of these crops while in storage as well. Additionally, biotech crops increased the production of food, feed, and fiber from 1996 to 2013 around the world by 441 million tons. At the same time, biotech crops helped slow the advance of climate change by reducing carbon emissions. In 2013 alone, it's estimated that biotech crop plantings lowered carbon dioxide emissions equivalent to removing 12.4 million cars from the road for an entire year. "The innovative technologies of plant science are changing the game and increasingly becoming an essential tool in the toolbox towards a sustainable solution to Food Security in Asia," shared Dr. Siang Hee Tan, Executive Director of CropLife Asia. "While we've made great strides in bringing these technologies to bear in the region in helping tackle the food production challenges we face, we have more work ahead of us." The CropLife Asia 2017 Annual General Meeting will conclude on Friday, March 10. 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 eight 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). Contact: Duke Hipp Director, Public Affairs CropLife Asia Tel: +65 6221 1615 [duke.hipp@croplifeasia.org](mailto:duke.hipp@croplifeasia.org)

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