

NEWS RELEASE

Transferring technology to Indonesia's farmers to boost food security

13 October, 2009 (Jakarta) -- The Indonesian government is concerned about the future of food security in the country as its population expands. Thus, it will prioritize agricultural development in partnership with the private sector to help farmers improve productivity in a sustainable manner.

Indonesia's population is expected to balloon to 288 million in 2020, up from 240 million in 2009. In 2010, the Ministry of Agriculture will partner CropLife Indonesia to expand its farmer education program on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) to more regions in the country, including Lampung. The objective is to equip growers with knowledge on the responsible use of crop protection in order to improve farm productivity and income. Because of bountiful harvests and better quality crops, farmers trained on GAP have enjoyed income increases of up to 50 percent.

CropLife Indonesia, a not-for-profit association representing the plant science industry, is also concerned about the future of food security in Indonesia. While food prices have fallen from the peaks of 2008, they are still high compared with previous years. There is an urgent need to work with the government and other partners to expand agriculture and food production in the country.

"The plant science industry is committed to transferring technology and innovation to farmers to help them grow more food," says Nandang Holil, Chairman of CropLife Indonesia. "Like farmers in many parts of the world, Indonesian growers face challenges such as global warming and decreasing arable land. Technology such as biotech crops and crop protection products can work in tandem to help farmers raise productivity," Nandang adds.

Agricultural technology helps farmers produce more food with lower per acre cost. Helping Indonesia's farmers access innovations such as better seed varieties and crop protection products, along with training on Integrated Pest Management, will help boost Indonesia's farm productivity in a sustainable manner.

Studies have shown that crop protection products help farmers in Indonesia increase yields effectively: ⁱ

- If farmers did not use pesticides, rice yields could fall by 57 percent;
- Without herbicides and fungicides, rice yields could be reduced by 16 percent;
- Corn yields in Indonesia could fall 32 percent without crop protection.

Biotechnology will also benefit Indonesian farmers going forward. Biotech crops have improved the income and quality of life of small and resource-poor farmers and their families, and contributed to the alleviation of their poverty in countries such as India, China, South Africa, and the Philippines. ⁱⁱ

In 2010, CropLife Indonesia and its partners also plan to launch an environmental conservation program in 2010 in Tegal and Berebes in Central Java Province. The partnership, which includes the Ministry of Agriculture and waste management companies, will train farmers on responsible ways to dispose and recycle used pesticide containers.

Other plans in the pipeline from 2010 include partnering Indonesia's key food retailers on initiatives to enhance food safety and working with the government to put farming at the heart of policy making. CropLife Indonesia supports Farming First, an initiative on sustainable development in agriculture that highlights eight key principles: Safeguard natural resources; share knowledge with farmers; build local access; prioritize research imperatives; enable access to markets and protect harvests.

Indeed, the income and livelihood of Indonesian farmers have improved significantly because of technology and training provided by CropLife Indonesia and its partners.

Karya Ketaren, 39, who grows potatoes and chrysanthemums on his 3.7-acre farm in Karo Regency in North Sumatra, used to struggle with low crop yields. Pests ravaged his crops, causing his potato output to plunge as much as 40 percent. The problem was worse during the rainy season between January and May, a time when pest attacks typically rise, he says.

However, with training by CropLife Indonesia and its partner AMARTA on GAP, his potato harvest grew 70 percent. In addition, Karya's operating expenses fell 60 percent in line with reduced pesticide usage.

AMARTA is a three-year project funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) to assist the Government of Indonesia in developing a strong agribusiness sector, raising productivity and the quality of high-value export crops.

To benefit more Indonesian farmers in the long term, CropLife Indonesia plans to forge closer cooperation with the government and other partners on programs that help growers increase yields, access technology and improve access to markets.

"The plant science industry is committed to helping Indonesia feed its people in a sustainable manner," says Tan Siang Hee, Executive Director of CropLife Asia. "Agricultural innovations can provide practical solutions to Indonesia's farmers to increase productivity. The key to food security is to provide farmers, who are stewards of the land, with resources to grow sustainably."

###

About **CropLife Indonesia**:

CropLife Indonesia promotes the benefits and responsible use of crop protection and plant biotechnology products, as well as sound regulatory frameworks in support of sustainable agriculture in Indonesia. CropLife Indonesia is a unit of [CropLife Asia](#), a federation of the plant science industry in 15 countries in the Asia Pacific and part of the global network of CropLife International, led by member companies at the forefront of crop production research and development.

ⁱ Knutson, Ronald D., C. Robert Taylor, John B Penson; Edward G Smith., 1990, *Economic Impact of Reduced Chemical Use*. Knutson and Associates. College Station, Texas, USA.

ⁱⁱ <http://www.isaaa.org/resources/publications/briefs/39/highlights/default.html>