

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **CropLife Asia Supports United Nations Focus on Investing in Women in Agriculture**

**Giving Women Access to Resources and Training Boosts Farm Productivity, Lifts Communities out of Poverty**

**Singapore, 10 July 2009** – On World Population Day 2009, CropLife Asia supports the United Nations' call to tackle poverty and hunger by empowering women. Giving female farmers the tools they need to feed their families and communities is a key step to addressing these goals.

The world's population is projected to increase by more than 2 billion by 2050, and much of this increase will be in Asia, where 60 percent of farmers are women.

"Adequate food production and security in Asia relies heavily on women farmers having access to modern technology and the skills to use it to increase productivity in order to feed their families and lift themselves out of poverty," said CropLife Asia's Stewardship Director Martin Gibson.

"CropLife Asia's stewardship and education programs benefit these women, and the plant science industry continues to conduct its programs in many countries in the region."

In 2008, CropLife Asia's stewardship programs directly reached over 90,000 farmers and 12,000 extension workers.

Increased agricultural productivity improves livelihoods and helps lift communities out of poverty. The plant science industry is committed to these twin goals and invests significantly in innovation to develop products to that end.

- Modern agriculture has helped increase per capita food supplies in the developing world by 25% since 1960, while maintaining a stable area of land under cultivation despite population growth from 2.5 billion to 5.5 billion.
- Crop protection products reduce crop losses to pests and disease by 20-40%.
- Herbicide use frees up women and children from laborious hand-weeding tasks in many parts of the world, enabling children to attend school and preventing spinal deformation among women.
- Plant biotechnology increases farmer incomes. A family planting Bt corn, for example, earns 34% more than if he used conventional corn – enough to support a family of five.<sup>1</sup> Bt corn is enhanced to protect plants from insect pests such as corn borers.
- Plant biotechnology is being used to develop plants that can grow in stressed conditions, such as droughts, heat and high salinity.

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<sup>1</sup> International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Applications (ISAAA), 2003



*Representing the Plant Science Industry*

CropLife Asia supports the need to tackle poverty and hunger at its roots. Giving Asia's farmers the tools and knowledge to feed their families and communities is a key step to addressing this, and one which the plant science industry wholeheartedly supports.

Note to editors:

CropLife Asia promotes the benefits of crop protection and biotechnology products, their importance to sustainable agriculture and food production, and their responsible use through stewardship activities in the Asia Pacific region. As a regional unit of CropLife International—a global federation of the plant science industry in 91 countries—CropLife Asia supports the work of 16 member associations and is led by member companies at the forefront of crop production research and development.

[www.croplifeasia.org](http://www.croplifeasia.org)

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