

# Annual Report 2002



Annual General Meeting  
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
May 2003

# New Mission, Vision, and Values: CropLife Asia in 2002



PierreLouis Dupont  
Vice-President



Timothy M. Oviatt  
Executive Director

**T**he Plant Science Industry was confronted by significant challenges during 2002. Harsh environmental conditions, such as the severe drought in Australia and most of the sub-continent, and a drop in commodity prices yielded indifferent results for most of our companies. Market conditions in China were largely unfavourable, and both China and India's entry into WTO precipitated restructuring of the crop protection landscape in these countries.

China was the centre of numerous trade related issues in 2002 with the issuance of new biotechnology regulations in March, and the requirement for safety certificates for GM commodities. November saw the Chinese State Economic and Trade Commission outline extensive revisions to agrochemical production that will have wide ranging effects not just in China but region-wide.

National policies on agrochemicals and GM crops were largely prompted by import concerns over MRLs, biosafety, and unregistered products. With a new regulatory system in place, the Philippine authorities granted approval for the commercial planting of a GM crop, and GM cotton was planted for the first time in India in June. Biotechnology made its mark in the region and will surely broaden its considerable sphere of influence in 2003.

CropLife Asia formally superseded APCPA in March and with it a new mission, vision, and values were adopted. Streamlining of project teams in-line with CropLife International saw Stewardship, Regulatory Affairs, and Biotechnology as the three cornerstones of CropLife Asia's activities. The year also saw APRTC's [agle@rn](mailto:agle@rn) become fully operation and headlining CropLife International's presentation at WSSD in Johannesburg.

Towards the end of 2002 our President, Mr. James C. Collins, returned to the United States from his Hong Kong regional office. It has been my privilege to serve as acting President in his absence.

Much has been achieved, yet the issues we face diversify and we must consolidate our strengths. With the committed individuals amongst our ranks working together, CropLife Asia is strategically positioned to meet the challenges head on in 2003.

**C**ropLife International reconfirmed that the dominant focus of the global industry will be on agricultural chemicals and activities supporting traditional crop protection products.

The primary role of CropLife International remains that of representing and coordinating the policies and priorities of the plant science industry. CropLife will continue to globally pursue the improved understanding of the importance of intellectual property rights, an issue that bears enormous consequences for numerous industries.

CropLife Asia's priorities and goals essentially mirror those of its parent organisation – a dominant emphasis on agrochemicals, but full accommodation of crop biotechnology. During 2002 CropLife Asia completed its goals of structural and policy alignment with CropLife International. In this context, a review of several of 2002's key initiatives is worthy of note.

- ASEAN Regulatory Harmonisation initiative with FAO, GTZ and the Thai Department of Agriculture;
- More People, Less Land – Technology's Role in Sustainable Agriculture in Asia - conference staged;
- ASEAN Residues Workshop completed in Hanoi;
- Biotechnology working group established;
- Stewardship working group organised with a broader charter to include IPM, safe use, and container management;
- Regular participation in and input to CropLife International's standing committees;
- Expanded and improved working relationships with national associations; and
- A more comprehensive communications program.

The issues facing the plant science industry will continue to pose significant challenges. The determination and support by industry leaders in the Asia-Pacific who participate in CropLife Asia's working groups and on its Co-ordinating Council will insure that industry's investment in CropLife Asia continues to pay dividends.

# Global Alignment, Local Achievement: CropLife Asia's Project Teams



**T**he Regulatory Affairs Project Team (RAPT) had a very active year in 2002 with five main initiatives realised over the year.

In January, CropLife Asia helped organise a **Workshop on Regulatory Harmonisation in ASEAN Countries** together with the German technical aid organisation GTZ, Thailand's Ministry of Agriculture, and the Asia-Pacific Regional Office of FAO. The network, supported by the regulators' interest, organised and jointly sponsored a three-day workshop on the topic

The workshop committed to a stepwise plan to harmonise their regulatory requirements over several years. First priority was given to harmonise submission formats, data requirements, safety aspects of labels, guidelines for biopesticides, and definitions with respect to IPR. Working groups developed option papers for a second session in May, and CropLife Asia submitted detailed position papers for consideration.

The National Agencies, expanded to include Myanmar, Laos and Brunei, have applied for a FAO Technical Co-operation Project, to assist the implementation phase at the national level over the next several years. The project is now under final consideration within the FAO and funding should flow by mid-2003. The implementation of changes at the national level, which will be aided by the work of consultants, is expected to be slow due to the need to amend national regulations and avoid additional costs to agencies and to industry.

CropLife Asia is continuing to **Assist the Cambodian Authorities** in their efforts to set up an effective registration system for crop protection products. CropLife Asia provided a custom built PC-based database to the regulators to assist in their duties. CropLife companies are supportive of the current registration procedures but the pace of new registrations has been slower than expected due to the difficult trading and security environment and the plethora of grey imports, fakes, and unregistered products on sale. CropLife Asia provided crop protection manuals and other literature to facilitate capacity building, and will run two training courses in 2003 to train provincial extension staff of the registration agency

(BAMS). Additional industry support is being provided for Safe Use training.

An international workshop on **Residue Issues** was jointly organised together with the Plant Protection Department of Vietnam and the ASEAN Secretariat in Hanoi in October. The event, which involved many expert overseas speakers, attracted 50 participants with equal numbers from the public and private sectors.

The workshop, which was held in conjunction with a meeting of the ASEAN Expert Working Group on the Harmonisation of Residue MRLs, helped to raise the understanding of residue issues in the regulatory community. CropLife Asia is continuing to emphasise residue issue as critical to the use and management of crop protection products and is pressing for closer industry involvement with the ASEAN Expert Working Group.

The Project Team is using many avenues to encourage National Agencies to **Adopt the FAO/WHO Specifications as National Standards** and use of the FAO criteria to assist in the determination of chemical equivalence between original and 'me too' technicals. This position has been incorporated into a CropLife Asia position paper on data requirements presented to the ASEAN harmonisation initiative, and opportunities for further lobbying are sought in 2003.

Stronger links with the regulatory teams within the National Association members of CropLife Asia is a high priority for 2003. Representatives from the National Association of India and China were invited to the RAPT meetings and efforts were made to support the technical teams from National Associations and keep them abreast of issues and developments in regulatory science.

These efforts were exemplified by the extensive assistance to the Crop Protection Association of China (CPAC) in respect to revision of National pesticide guidelines and the exclusion of out-dated requirements. Support was also provided to CropLife Philippines in respect of government proposed initiatives on residue testing and the Government of Vietnam was lobbied on proposed registration changes. Regional assistance at the National level is viewed as a key methodology for RAPT in future.



**T**he Biotechnology Project team assimilated some of the duties of the Sustainable Agriculture Project Team mid-year following its final meeting in May. The new team, under the Chairmanship of Brett Begemann, sought to identify its key responsibilities and founding mandate:

1. Co-ordination and alignment of industry efforts in the areas of Crop Biotechnology guidelines and regulations, minimise duplication, leverage existing industry/association resources, collaborating fully with external partners.
2. Making CropLife International's Biotechnology Committee aware of regional viewpoints. Helping develop and communicate regional industry positions and implement global CropLife initiatives.
3. Participation in a regional network to promote the benefits of Crop Biotechnology including integrated crop management and sustainable agriculture.
4. Assist capacity building on Crop Biotechnology in public and private institutions across the region commensurate with the needs of the individual countries.

Thus the team's founding mandate centred on the commercialisation and acceptance of biotechnology with due consideration of the regulatory aspects. The team developed eight key activities under its mandate:

1. Promotion of "Precautionary Approach" as opposed to the much more conservative "precautionary principle."
2. Promote Approval of GM Products by specific gene insertions (events) rather than by approval of the modified plant.
3. Promotion of the Model Biosafety Law from CropLife International's Biotechnology Committee.
4. Demonstrate the documented Benefits in Developing Countries of Biotechnology achievable for the Asian farmer and consumer.
5. Promote measures to Ensure the Sustainability of the Technology.
6. Show how the technology can Co-exist with conventional farming and organic farming.
7. Promote a reasonable and achievable approach to Adventitious Presence.
8. Encourage a balanced and harmonized approach to the approval of Stacked Traits across the region.

The *More People, Less Land - Technology's Role in Sustainable Agriculture in Asia* conference staged successfully in Bangkok allowed the presentation and discussion of many of these key objectives. Good press coverage emerged post conference in support of biotechnology in Asia. The project team awaits the May 2003 launch of the CropLife *Model Biosafety law* as a catalyst for activities under this activity in 2003.

**C**ropLife Asia's communications programme received a completely revised and updated mandate under the CropLife branding introduced in 2002. With communications becoming an integral part of all of CropLife Asia's activities, a greater participation in the project teams and proactive involvement with the issues confronting the industry in Asia were called for. Whilst the first part of the year continued the revision of CropLife's communications tools within the current portfolio, the latter part of the year witnessed a shift in priority towards involvement in project team activities, alignment of tools and other initiatives with CropLife values, and the development of a new partnership initiative (aPScom) and monthly newsletter (agVIEW ASIA) for debut in 2003. A revised communications plan was developed following a comprehensive audit of tools and issues facing the industry in Asia. It was presented at the Co-ordinating Council meeting in Seoul, South Korea in October.

Four editions of CropLife Asia's flagship journal *Agrolinks* were published in 2002 covering a broad range of subjects from the Plant Science Industry. Features included the launch of the CropLife brand, the Precautionary Principle, Agbiotech & Sustainable Development in Asia, and one entire issue largely dedicated to the *More People, Less Land* conference. Feature articles included analysis of regional agricultural policy, adventitious presence, IPR in China, IPM in India & the Philippines, and market intelligence reports from around the region. Subscriptions to *Agrolinks* continued to grow throughout the year, reaching 7500 copies by year end. Much time and effort was spent on readership development, ensuring that CropLife's communications flagship reached as many up-to-date and qualified readers from the region as possible. The journal also embraced issues from the seed and fertiliser industries, and was given bonus distribution at the International Seed Federation (ISF) Congress in Chicago, USA.

CropLife Asia's website was the focus for output from *More People, Less Land* conference and from the ASEAN *Agrochemicals Residues Workshop* held in Hanoi. Page views of the website doubled over the year, and the site was earmarked for re-development in 2003.

The new monthly newsletter and a regional communications network were initiated late 2002 and discussed at the global communications committee in Washington DC. 2003 will herald an overhaul of current tools, implementation of new initiatives and a focus on the multitude of issues confronting the industry, and how best communications can facilitate pertinent industry messages.



**T**he Stewardship & Sustainable Agriculture Project Team was renamed the Stewardship Project Team in August 2002, and despite the name change the team remained committed towards sustainable agriculture, as are all project teams and activities of CropLife Asia. Alignment with CropLife International in name and also in mission and values, specifically, "To improve and promote the plant science industry's contribution to sustainable agriculture through stewardship."

As in previous years, CropLife Asia committed nearly US\$ 500,000 towards funding of safe use projects around the region. With such funds at its disposal, the team's primary aim was a renewed emphasis on the proper targeting of issues and an independent audit of outcomes, coupled with the challenge of measuring the success of a diverse spectrum of activities.

A key element in the strategic development of the Association's stewardship activities for 2002 and beyond was a *Safe/Responsible Use Regional Workshop* held in August 2002 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The workshop heard presentations on safe use initiatives from around the Asia-Pacific region, and also from Africa and Latin America. The workshop evaluated previous safe use programs, analysing the real impact of such initiatives and looked to identify new approaches to safe and responsible use.

The delegates agreed that there were some take-away messages from the papers presented that reinforced the points arising from papers at the previous Safe Use Workshop in 2001, most notably:

1. More attention to the training and protection of contract workers.
2. Safe use training and education efforts need to be subject to external monitoring.
3. New means must be sought to improve and institutionalise behavioural practices.
4. There should not be overdue emphasis on protective equipment to reduce worker exposure under conditions where the required equipment is not affordable or not practical in the local weather conditions.

Stewardship support for Cambodia was identified as a pressing issue, and a training programme for farm workers in collaboration with local authorities was proposed and accepted. The project team also looked at the region's IPM efforts with particular reference to successful projects in India and the Philippines. Ongoing initiatives on obsolete stocks and container management were earmarked for attention in 2003. A probable re-branding of Stewardship efforts, in line with CropLife International, was also considered during a busy year.

## Officer Bearers, Co-ordinating Council & Staff



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Lim Jung Lee  
**Malaysia Crop Care & Public Health Association**

Chatree Pitakpaivan  
**Thai Crop Protection Association**

Kim YongWhan  
**Korea Crop Protection Association**

Yoshihiko Yamamoto  
**Japan Crop Protection Association**

### Staff

Timothy M. Oviatt  
**Executive Director**

Alan Browning  
**Technical Director**

Andrew D. Roberts  
**Communications Director**

Phetdee Santadkornkarn - **Executive Assistant**  
Rampai Narasertsrisuk - **Accountant**  
Sompratana Na Lampoon - **Administrative Assistant**



**CropLife ASIA**  
28F Rasa Tower, 555 Phaholyothin Rd.,  
Chatuchak, Bangkok  
Thailand 10900  
Tel: +66 2 937 0487  
Fax: +66 2 937 0491  
E-mail: [info@croplifeasia.org](mailto:info@croplifeasia.org)  
<http://www.croplifeasia.org>