



MEDIA RELEASE

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Agricultural pest and disease chemical resistance a top priority for new RIRDC forum

Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) has today launched the AgVet Technology Priority List in a bid to address farm productivity issues caused by growing resistance to agricultural pesticides and veterinary (AgVet) chemicals.

The Priority List is the first outcome of the AgVet Collaborative Forum established in June, through RIRDC's National Rural Issues program, with Department of Agriculture support, to identify solutions to key weed, pest and disease challenges through improved access to AgVet technologies. In an Australian first, the Forum facilitated a direct, formal discussion between AgVet technology users and the businesses producing them.

Released today on RIRDC's website, www.rirdc.gov.au/agvet, the Priority List aims to highlight business opportunities for AgVet companies by providing direction on industry needs and a process to identify potential partnerships and co-investment opportunities with industry.

“The AgVet Technology Priority List is a groundbreaking advancement that aims to build a pool of more robust AgVet technologies to help drive a sustainable and productive future for Australian agriculture,” said RIRDC Managing Director Craig Burns.

“Significantly, plant and animal industry representatives and chemical companies came together for the first time through the Forum and identified solutions to a high proportion of previously unsolvable issues. For example, of the one third of the crop/pest priorities submitted by the plant industries that had no solution, over half of these now have solutions.

“In addition, all issues raised by the animal industries had a solution identified. In particular, access to anesthetic technology for improving animal welfare has been listed as a high priority as a result.”

While pest and disease chemical resistance has long been an issue for Australia's cropping and livestock sectors, new and emerging industries also face a lack of adequate AgVet technologies, with these challenges expected to significantly increase within the next decade.

“This issue is exacerbated by a lack of investment incentive for Agvet chemical registrants, meaning many Australian producers do not have the same level of access to pesticides as their competitors,” added Mr Burns.

“For example, Californian wine producers can access double the range of fungicides accessible to Australian producers.



“Australia represents less than three per cent of the global crop pesticide market and less than 1.5 per cent of the broader global AgVet market. Given the relatively small market size and high regulatory costs for chemical registration, the case for commercial investment is not always strong.

“But access to a wider range of appropriate AgVet technologies will give Australian producers a broader suite of solutions to assist them in producing clean, healthy food in a sustainable manner. The benefits flow beyond the farm gate to improved environmental, animal welfare and food quality outcomes.”

The AgVet Technology Priority List has been welcomed by the agricultural industry, with Reg Kidd, Chair of the National Farmers Federation AgVet Chemicals Taskforce, saying collaboration was key to achieving the efficiency and effectiveness of agricultural chemical reforms.

“The Forum provides a process for stocktaking where we are: the good, bad and ugly,” said Mr Kidd. “It is about where we want to be collectively for all industry partners. It’s pleasing to see all relevant players are now working together strategically to provide a united voice to the relevant authorities, government and politicians.”

Dr Bob Crouch from the Goat Industry Council of Australia, echoed these sentiments, saying: “The Forum has provided us with valuable contacts in the AgVet chemical industry and a way forward to improving the management of Australia’s goats in higher rainfall areas, improving animal welfare and Australian goat industry profitability both locally and globally.”

While Andrew Bomm, Policy Manager of the Ricegrowers’ Association of Australia Inc., said: “The rice industry is a strong supporter of this initiative. The collaboration RIRDC has started through this process is essential to industries like ours gaining timely access to previously unavailable chemical technologies.”

For more information about RIRDC’s new AgVet Technology Priority List and Collaborative Forum, please visit www.rirdc.gov.au/agvet.

Interview opportunity: Simon Winter, RIRDC External Program Manager / or Reg Kidd, Chair of the National Farmers Federation AgVet Chemicals Taskforce / or Dr Bob Crouch from the Goat Industry Council of Australia.

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