



The Hon. Senator Joe Ludwig
Minister for Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry

The Hon. Senator Nick Sherry
Minister Assisting on Deregulation

M E D I A R E L E A S E

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Reforms a boost for agriculture and veterinary chemicals

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Senator Joe Ludwig, and the Minister Assisting on Deregulation, Senator Nick Sherry, today announced a comprehensive package of reforms to cut red tape and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of agricultural and veterinary (agvet) chemicals regulation.

The reforms aim to encourage the development of modern and safe chemicals by removing barriers for companies to invest in cutting edge technologies and improve access to chemical products for users.

Minister Ludwig released the draft legislation and said reform in this area was long overdue.

“These measures provide for great outcomes all round; for manufactures and farmers, the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA), the public and the environment,” Minister Ludwig said.

“We are making these changes to ensure we have the most efficient and effective systems for the future while improving the protections for human health and the environment. The reforms will result in a more straightforward assessment process that is easier to understand and more cost effective to administer.”

The reforms implement the August 2010 election commitment for the Better Regulation of Chemicals and incorporate work undertaken as part of a Better Regulation Ministerial Partnership between the two ministers.

The measures allow the regulator, the APVMA, to better focus on protecting human health and the environment while providing better outcomes for business certainty.

The measures will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of agvet chemicals regulation by:

- making it simpler to know what is required before applying and lodging with the APVMA, while at the same time, making it easier and more efficient for the regulator to operate;
- improving the APVMA’s procedures, timelines and quality requirements, for all stages of the assessment and registration process;
- addressing stakeholder concerns about human health and the environment, by
 - introducing a requirement for chemicals companies to regularly demonstrate that their chemicals meet appropriate health and safety standards and

Media contacts:

Minister Ludwig’s office: Melissa Patch 0418 734 413 or Katana Smith 0459 813 574
Senator Sherry’s office: Joe Scavo 0413 800 757

- improving chemical review by encouraging more data to be submitted by improving intellectual property (ie data) protection and placing time limits on the APVMA;
- establishing an independent science panel to provide advice on the chemical re-registration regime and on chemicals assessment generally; and
- updating the APVMA's compliance regime to improve the APVMA's ability to effectively ensure compliance with its decisions.
- making it easier to understand the roles and responsibilities of government in agvet chemical regulation by codifying and publishing the risk framework for agvet chemicals regulation;

Senator Sherry said the reforms will improve the operation of the APVMA and create a regulatory framework for agricultural and veterinary chemicals that benefits the chemicals industry and end users.

“This will ensure that chemical companies deal with a professional regulator that has transparent and efficient processes in place to register and review chemicals, while end users such as farmers will have timely access to new chemicals,” Minister Sherry said.

Both ministers expressed their gratitude for the contribution stakeholders had made to the consultation process on the reforms to date. The draft legislation will be open for public comment until the end of February 2012.

Further reforms are also in progress under a Council of Australian Governments' decision to develop a single national framework for the regulation of agvet chemicals.

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