

# Center for Agricultural and Rural Sustainability

## CARS Newsletter

March 16, 2015

**CARS Faculty meeting:** Tuesday March 24, 9-12 in AGRI 115. Don't forget to send [Heather](#) your networking information sheet, even if you can't make the meeting.

**CARS Website:** Visit the new CARS website at <http://cars.uark.edu>! Please update any old CARS links you may have. We would gladly link to, or include information on your projects, as well as dates of special events on the Events page. Please send your info to [Heather](#).

**CARS Logo:** To help build the CARS community and increase CARS recognition, please include the CARS logo (attached) to your presentations or posters of your CARS related work. Additionally, if you do present posters/talks on CARS projects, we can post them on the CARS website and share them in the newsletter.

**CARS Newsletter:** [Let us know](#) if you would like to include anything in the newsletter such as events, project results or conference highlights, etc.

**Field Print Calculator:** Dr. Bill Robertson began working with the Fieldprint Calculator (FPC), developed by [Field to Market](#), while he was employed with the National Cotton Council. When he came back to the University of Arkansas in May, 2014 he continued this work to be sure that the cotton industry was comfortable with the tool before they started recommending its use.

Field to Market has developed the FPC for use in corn, soybean, wheat, alfalfa, rice, cotton, and potatoes. The calculator determines values for various sustainability indicators based on land and management information that is entered into the tool. These indicators include: land use, conservation, soil carbon, irrigation water use, water quality, energy use, and greenhouse gas emissions. The tool also gives producers or users the ability to forecast the impact of particular practices on these indicators before they actually implement the change. For example, a grower interested in changing from minimum tillage to no-till or wanting to add a cover crop into a rotation can see the impact of this change on energy use, greenhouse gas emission, water quality, etc.

Robertson is using the FPC on several fields with the Cotton Research Verification Program (CRVP) where they use university recommendations, track inputs, and expenses. It's being tested on some of the Discovery Farms on other crops as well. The useful thing about the FPC is that it documents the producer practices and how it impacts environmental sustainability. Coupled with the CRVP, economics can be added to verify the profitability of conservation. One of the goals Robertson has for his program is to improve irrigation water use efficiency and soil health. The FPC is a tool that can help document improvement. Good data is still needed to improve the tool especially for the profitability of adopting more sustainable practices.

Robertson has conducted in-service trainings to introduce the agents to the FPC with field data from the CRVP. Robertson will be conducting additional trainings this year with the Arkansas SARE Professional Development Program using the FPC and demonstrating cover crops to improve soil health and improve irrigation water use efficiency. Upon completion of this training the agents will be able to alter scenarios and management plans, view changes in the various indicators and visualize the change in the size of the fieldprint. The FPC is a tool that can help evaluate production systems in a way that is not currently conducted to improve our efficiency and to become more profitable and sustainable. The FPC is being verified in cotton through several pilot projects in other areas of the country as well including Texas, Louisiana and Tennessee. For more information on the Fieldprint Calculator visit the [Field to Market](#) website.