

# FIELD TO MARKET COLLABORATION OF THE YEAR SAMPLE NOMINATION



The **Collaboration of the Year Award** recognizes an outstanding Project registered in Field to Market’s Continuous Improvement Accelerator that has demonstrated achievements in advancing continuous improvement in sustainable agriculture at the field and landscape level and serves as a model for peers across the supply chain.

Use this handout to review a condensed version of the 2019 Collaboration of the Year Nomination, the Rice Stewardship Partnership, and learn what components make up a successful nomination. Please note the original nomination included additional information, such as letters of nomination, Fieldprint Analysis data, and other resources.

As an additional resource for members preparing nominations for the Sustainability Leadership Awards, we hosted a Field to Market In Focus webinar on crafting a strong awards nomination. Please [refer to the webinar slides and recording](#) to learn answers to frequently asked questions and tips on preparing your nomination.

**The Sustainability Leadership Awards nomination period is now open through July 31st, 2020.** To submit a nomination, please visit the [Field to Market Member Portal](#) and contact [Communications Manager Carter Purcell](#) with any questions.

## Collaboration Overview

### Name of Collaboration

Rice Stewardship Partnership

### Intended Goals or Purpose of Collaboration

The Rice Stewardship Partnership was formed to conserve three critical natural resources in North America - working ricelands, water, and wetland wildlife. The intention of the partners of the collaboration is to work with producers in putting more conservation practices in place to work towards continuous improvements in these areas, and the Field to Market Fieldprint Calculator was adopted as a tool for measuring progress.

## Partners Involved

### Organization #1 Name

Ducks Unlimited

### Is this organization a member of Field to Market?

- Yes

### Organization #2 Name

USA Rice

### Is this organization a member of Field to Market?

- Yes

### Organization #3 Name

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

### Is this organization a member of Field to Market?

- Yes

### Organization #4 Name

Nestle Purina PetCare Company

### Is this organization a member of Field to Market?

- Yes

### Organization #5 Name

The Mosaic Company

### Is this organization a member of Field to Market?

- Yes

## Nominator Contact Information

The Partnership was an early adopter of the Fieldprint® Calculator as an innovative evaluation tool for on-the-ground conservation planning and practice delivery. When the Partnership was awarded its first Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) grant in 2014 to accelerate adoption of conservation practices, a commitment was made to use the Fieldprint® Calculator as a tool for helping farmers track resource inputs and calculate environmental benefits. The Partnership oversees a National Fieldprint Project across four of the six rice producing states. To date over 42,000 acres have been analyzed via the Fieldprint Platform working side-by-side with engaged producers. Additionally, the Partnership has benefitted from the work of the Education and Outreach Committee, adapting materials for one-on-one work with farmers. Learning from the committee's focus on return on investment, the Partnership is employing the same "dollars and sense" approach in its ongoing irrigation pump efficiency work and other activities.

Finally, the Partnership's integration with Field to Market goes well beyond the use of the Fieldprint® Calculator and leveraging resources developed by the Education and Outreach Committee. Annina Rupe of DU was one of the first members of the Field to Market Project Administrator's Network, sharing learnings to benefit all. She also served on the 3.0 advisory committee and has piloted the new and evolving program interface to provide recommendations for improvement. The Partnership will be comparing data runs in both past and present Calculator versions to compare results and test model improvements. Lastly, USA Rice staff and members have also been integral in serving on the Metrics Committee and subgroups to support improvements in other metrics. Of note is the work done with Field to Market's Senior Scientist Allison Thompson in commissioning research to improve the GHG metric for rice, which led to significant improvements in Version 3.0 for rice. These efforts to strengthen the Fieldprint® Calculator and Field to Market platform are integral in the work of the Partnership to drive continuous improvement.

**(2) Please provide a brief overview of the collaboration, including the shared challenge or opportunity that formed it, the goals the partners hope to accomplish and the roles and responsibilities of each partner organization.**

USA Rice and DU formed the Rice Stewardship Partnership in February 2013, with a vision to conserve three critical natural resources in North America; working ricelands, water and wetland wildlife. USA Rice represents U.S. rice farmers, millers, merchants and allied businesses, and DU conserves and manages wetlands and associated habitats for North America's waterfowl. This is the first time that an entire commodity crop worked to establish a conservation program developed solely for its producers. The 2014 Farm Bill authorized the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to create the new conservation program known as the Regional Conservation Partnership Program. For RCPP, funds are competitively awarded to conservation projects designed by local partners specifically for their regions. Participating partners invest along with the NRCS to leverage additional funds.

The goal of the Partnership is to offer rice producers several on-farm conservation options focusing on water quantity, water quality, and wildlife habitat, all while trending to a more sustainable future. Sustainability of the rice industry is important to all, and through the work and support of the many partners in the collaboration, the Partnership is helping ensure that the rice farms have the options necessary to conserve natural resources and contribute to the sustainability of each operation.

This collaboration would not be successful without the aid of 23 financial sponsors, including 10 organizations that are involved with Field to Market. Ducks Unlimited and USA Rice's network of staff on the ground are responsible for working with the state and local NRCS offices to get conservation practices applied following program signups and working with the producers to navigate necessary documentation and record keeping. The Partnership's National Fieldprint Project Sponsors (BASF, Corteva AgriScience, DU, the Mosaic Company, Nestle Purina PetCare, RiceTec, Riceland Foods, USA Rice, USDA NRCS, and Walmart) provide financial support for the project to multiply and leverage the NRCS dollars and to collaborate on supply chain activities.

One critical way the staff works with producers is to help input and analyze data from the Fieldprint® Calculator and go over their results. Another important component of this collaboration is providing technical assistance to the producers. This is provided not only by the Partnership but also by partners such as Riceland, BASF, Anheuser-Busch, and Mosaic, to name a few. Another responsibility of the Partnership is working with Field to Market on improving the Fieldprint® Calculator. Partnership representatives are on every formal Field to Market committee. All of these efforts are geared towards providing conservation opportunities for our rice producers and catalyzing their continuous improvement.

**(3) Please describe how the collaboration advances Field to Market’s mission (i.e., creating opportunities across the agricultural supply chain for continuous improvements in productivity, environmental quality, and human well-being).**

At Field to Market’s June Plenary the membership voted unanimously to uphold the mission of “Providing collaborative leadership that is committed to creating opportunities across the agricultural value chain for continuous improvements in productivity, profitability, and environmental outcomes.” Following are five examples of what the Rice Stewardship Partnership is doing to advance the Field to Market mission:

- Putting Farmer Livelihoods First - Starting with the rice producer, the most important activity delivered by the Partnership is conservation planning and technical assistance. In order to make on-farm improvements, one must know where they stand and where they are going. The Partnership hosts 20 trusted advisors and supports 10 Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) technicians all to provide planning and assistance and put farmer livelihoods first.
- Meeting Farmers Where They Are – Every rice producer is at a different place on his or her journey of continuous improvement. To foster progress no matter where you are, our conservation practice offerings are stair-stepped from basic to intermediate and advanced. For example, with nutrient management one can begin with basic Land Grant University soil samples and testing, move to intermediate grid sampling and zone fertilizer prescriptions, and finally graduate to finer grids and GPS-guided variable rate application. Identical steps are promoted under irrigation, pest, and energy management and more.
- Building Up the Next Generation - There are 4,176 unique farm entities that grow rice in our targeted states. Of these, 301, or 7%, are beginning farmers. Since 2015, our first NRCS public sign-up period, our team of trusted advisors has worked with 57 young/beginning farmers. This number represents 24% of our Partnership farmer population to date (n=242) and more than three times the national average of the rice-growing populace. Targeted outreach will continue to recruit our agriculture leaders of tomorrow.
- Fostering Collaborative Leadership – Rice Stewardship Partnership members work collaboratively to create and support opportunities for continuous improvements in productivity, profitability and environmental outcomes in rice production. The Partnership is composed of 23 value-chain and rural foundation entities, and all invest time, intellect and financial resources into the effort. Almost half (10 of 23) are also Field to Market members including BASF, Corteva AgriScience, DU, the Mosaic Company, Nestle Purina PetCare, RiceTec, Riceland Foods, USA Rice, USDA NRCS, and Walmart. Leaders from these 10 member organizations are present on Field to Market’s Board (3 seats), at least one Co-Chairmen on every formal committee, represent all five sectors, and are firmly committed to advancing Field to Market’s mission as well as that of the Partnership.
- Supporting Commitment to Continuous Improvements – Core to Field to Market’s mission is continuous improvement and measurement thereof. And this too is central to the Partnership and our foundation with NRCS conservation programs. Partnership leaders have demonstrated this commitment through extensive investment in the Fieldprint Platform. As mentioned previously, USA Rice commenced research to improve the GHG metric for rice, which led to significant improvements in Version 3.0, and the research results entitled “Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Management Practices that Affect Emissions in US Rice Systems” were published in the peer reviewed Journal of Environmental Quality. The Partnership also committed \$10,000 to the capital campaign to build 3.0. Annina Rupe with DU served on the 3.0 advisory committee and has piloted the program interface to provide recommendations for improvement. In addition to this commitment to improvements in the Fieldprint Platform, the Partnership has also led several return on investment (ROI) projects and GPS/remote sensing evaluations, all aimed at creating opportunities across the agricultural value chain for continuous improvements in productivity, profitability, and environmental outcomes.

**(4) Please provide a brief overview of the outcomes to date. What lessons have partners learned resulting from the collaboration that can either increase effectiveness (if ongoing) or inform future collaborations?**

Top 10 Outcomes to Date:

- Rice Producer Advisory Committee - Established an important producer-led advisory committee, two producers from each state for a total of 12, one with a USA Rice background, and the other with a DU affiliation. This assures we put producer livelihoods first and foremost which is essential to the success of any future collaboration.
- NRCS Network – Initiated collaboration with six NRCS State Operations across the six rice-growing states to

focus on common natural resource concerns of water quantity, quality, and wetland wildlife and supporting on-the-ground practices to improve environmental outcomes.

- Value Chain Collaboration – Built a 23-member and growing financial sponsor and advisory team, who provides funds for boots-on-the-ground, and direction from the rice value chain.
- Trusted Advisors - Built a field team of over 20 knowledgeable and dedicated field staff, and the Partnership also supports 10 SWCD technicians, all to serve rice producers and 90 NRCS Field Offices covering rice country.
- Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) – Provides a flagship example of public-private partnerships integrated with Field to Market's tools and resources. The Partnership collectively has been awarded nine RCPP projects across all six rice-growing states.
- Farmer and Farm Impacts - Collectively these nine RCPP awards have - or will soon provide – a total of over \$80 million in conservation financial assistance for conserving water and wildlife in rice country. This conservation financial assistance will positively impact over 1000 farms and over 800,000 acres through 2024 – our next five years of operation.
- Young Farmer Engagement - The national average for young and beginning farmers as primary operators in rice is 7%. Through aggressive and targeted outreach efforts of Partnership field staff, young farmers as Rice Stewardship conservation contract holders is 24%, more than a 3-fold increase.
- Fieldprint® Calculator Outcomes - Focused Fieldprint® Calculator efforts in AR, LA, MS, TX; acres = 42,490; farm entities = 83; number of fields = 850. Individual farmers were most interested in scores compared to others (pilot benchmark). These varied among participants yet offered insights and direction for future management actions. The overall project when compared to state and national benchmarks showed greatest improvements in soil conservation, soil carbon, and land use efficiency. Irrigation efficiency and associated energy were highly variable, likely owed to variable rainfall plus the unique double cropping or “ratooning” along the Gulf Coast.
- Working Wetlands - Ricelands are working wetlands and one job they do is clean up our water. Six (6) farms in Louisiana who use surface water from adjacent muddy bayous for irrigation were evaluated. Sediment laden water lifted from the bayous averaged 340 mg/L of suspended solids. Water exiting the rice farm averaged 63 Mg/L, representing a five-fold decrease.
- Innovative Irrigation Technique of Alternate Wetting and Drying (AWD) – The Partnership has deployed the innovative AWD irrigation strategy, executing timely dry downs to break methane formation and capture summer rains, on 27,000 acres to date. Calculations based on peer-reviewed research showed this technique reduced GHG emissions by 21,000 metric tonnes of CO2 equivalents, and saved approximately 19,000 acre-feet of groundwater. (Using EPA calculators, that is same as taking 4,500 cars from U.S. highways for a whole year and filling 9,200 Olympic-size swimming pools with irrigation groundwater.)

Lessons Learned - Achieving Scale of Conservation Impact – To date, the Partnership has completed approximately 200,000 acres of conservation projects to conserve working ricelands, water, and wildlife. Final statistics show the number of people who derive all or part of their annual income from these first 242 farm operations is over 3,000. Projects are underway, or soon to be underway, that will impact an additional 600,000 acres (for a total of 800,000 acres), several hundred more farms, and thousands of more people. Scale is achievable in today's U.S. agriculture sector. Although strategies to achieve scale may vary, we believe a few lessons must be followed. First, start with the producers, understand their challenges, limitations, and economics. Meet producers where they are. Second, do not ignore the 150-year-old framework of USDA, and the locally led SWCDs. Lastly, you must add field staff capacity, manpower if you will, with the passion and commitment to make a difference in conserving our natural resources for the future.

##### **(5) How are the partners communicating their involvement in the collaboration and sharing lessons learned with others?**

The U.S. Rice Industry Sustainability Report was released early in 2019 and has been a beneficial tool for sharing the message of the Partnership and the Fieldprint® Platform (selected sections included in Collaboration in Action packet). This report outlines the sustainability story of the rice industry and the quantifiable strides that have been made just over the past 36 years, using the Field to Market National Indicators Report. In addition to the report, the partners have communicated with producers and industry

people face-to-face at field days as well as conferences.

Regular meetings with the producer-focused Partnership Advisory Committee and the USA Rice Sustainability Committee are a prime example of how lessons learned are shared with others. These groups are instrumental in providing feedback for the Partnership when it comes to brainstorming or troubleshooting. Communication is interwoven through this producer and partner network. One example of this is Brandon Bauman. Brandon is a member of our Partnership Advisory Committee but also worked with Riceland to input his farm data into the Fieldprint® Calculator via the Riceland, Kellogg, and Syngenta Arkansas Rice Fieldprint Project. In addition to this, Brandon was selected as a Field to Market Farmer Spotlight. Other producers with similar connections are Jennifer James, Jeff Durand, Mike and Ryan Sullivan, and Christian Richard, all whom have been recognized by Field to Market in the recent past. These connections among producers, Field to Market, the Rice Stewardship Partnership, and other collaborators provides a means for communicating and sharing lessons learned.

Finally, supply chain partners who are members of the Partnership often highlight and share the work they are doing with rice growers through presentations they give at agriculture and sustainability-related meetings and conferences across their network.

**(6) Please include a quote from one of the partnering organizations and/or stakeholders impacted by this collaboration, highlighting the accomplishments and value of the collaboration's efforts.**

The Rice Stewardship Partnership has truly spurred the collective action of the entire U.S. rice industry to positively impact farmer livelihoods while addressing priority natural resource concerns of water, soil, and wildlife. This value-chain wide approach reflects the very spirit and intent of both the NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program, and Field to Market's collaborative efforts, and serves as a model for others to follow.

Attributed Name: Mike Sullivan  
Organization: Arkansas Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Title: State Conservationist

**Required Enclosures: Photos**

- [Rice-Stewardship-Partnership-Photos.pdf](#)

**Required Enclosure: Collaboration in Action**

- [Rice-Stewardship-Partnership-Collaboration-in-Action-2019-Final.pdf](#)

**Optional Enclosures: Case Studies or Media**

- [Rice-Stewardship-Partnership-Media-2019.pdf](#)

**Optional Enclosures: Letters of Recommendation**

- [Rice-Stewardship-Partnership-Letters-of-Support.pdf](#)



# COLLABORATION IN ACTION

## Table of Contents

Financial Sponsor Logo Stack.....	2
- Partnership sponsors and Field to Market members	
Partner TA Capacity Map.....	3
- Partnership field staff locations across 6 rice states	
Rice Sustainability Report.....	4
- Field to Market spotlights in industry wide report	
Rice Stewardship Annual Report.....	10
-Field to Market spotlights in Annual Partnership Report	
Fieldprint Calculator Results.....	14
-Example of results from Partnership-led Fieldprint Calculator Project	



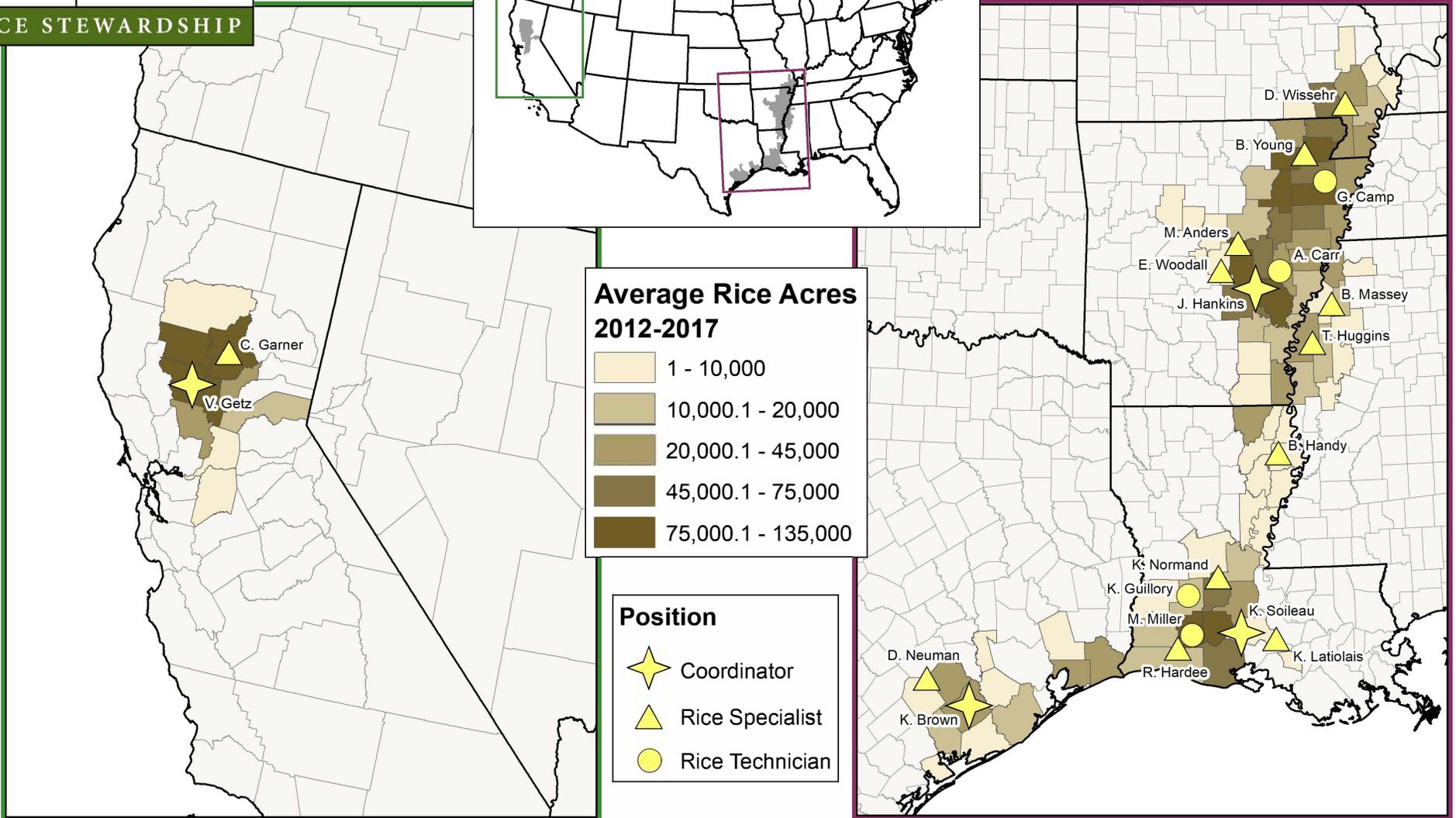
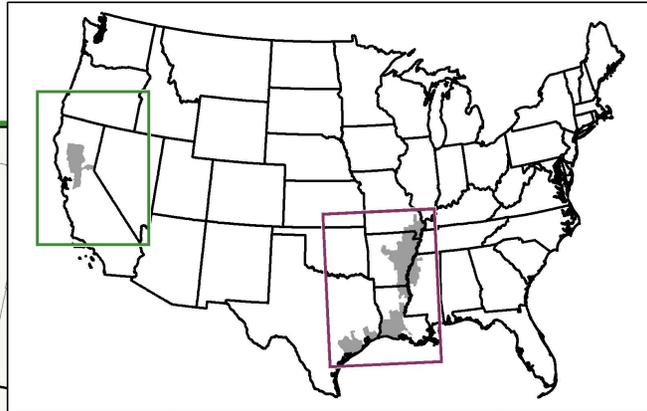
# THANK YOU! TO OUR LEADING FINANCIAL SUPPORTERS:



A SPECIAL THANKS TO BOB AND KIM SPOERL FOR THEIR FINANCIAL SUPPORT.



RICE STEWARDSHIP



Partner TA Capacity Map - Progress Report - Spring 2019



# U.S. Rice Industry Sustainability Report

The Sustainability Story of U.S. Rice:  
Impressive History  
Bright Future



**Sustainability** and conservation may begin at the farm, but these important values continue at the mill and down the food supply chain. The U.S. rice industry is working to ensure the principles and accomplishments of our men and women are recognized for what they are: second-to-none.

The unique structure of USA Rice and its existing cohesive working relationship between farmers, millers, merchants, and other stakeholders has enabled the U.S. rice industry to come together through its Sustainability Committee to work on common goals moving rice sustainability forward.

The U.S. rice industry is proud of its accomplishments and will continue to improve, leading the world in on-farm production efficiencies, environmental improvements, wildlife preservation, and food safety.



Where you see the Grown in the USA logo, you can be assured that you are buying healthy, sustainable, U.S.-grown rice.

Nearly 85 percent of the rice consumed in the United States is U.S.-grown on family farms across the six major rice-producing states: Arkansas, California, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Texas. Rice farmers harvest roughly 20 billion pounds of rice grown on 2.8 million acres of sustainably managed farmland. The rice not consumed domestically—roughly 50 percent of the crop in most years—is exported to more than 120 countries around the globe.

**Over the past 36 years, improved sustainability practices have led to increased crop yields while also yielding some of the greatest environmental benefits.**

Rice conservation practices continue advancing and evolving, and the goal remains the same: produce more rice while using less water and less energy; improve water quality, air quality, and soil conservation; and enhance wildlife habitats to support biodiversity. All without the use of genetically modified organisms (GMO's).

Rice yield per acre increased 62 percent between 1980 and 2015 as determined by Field to Market in the 2016 National Indicators Report.<sup>1</sup> Production increases have also been significant. In 1980, total rice production was 146 million hundredweights compared to 193 million hundredweights of rice produced in 2015, a 32 percent increase.

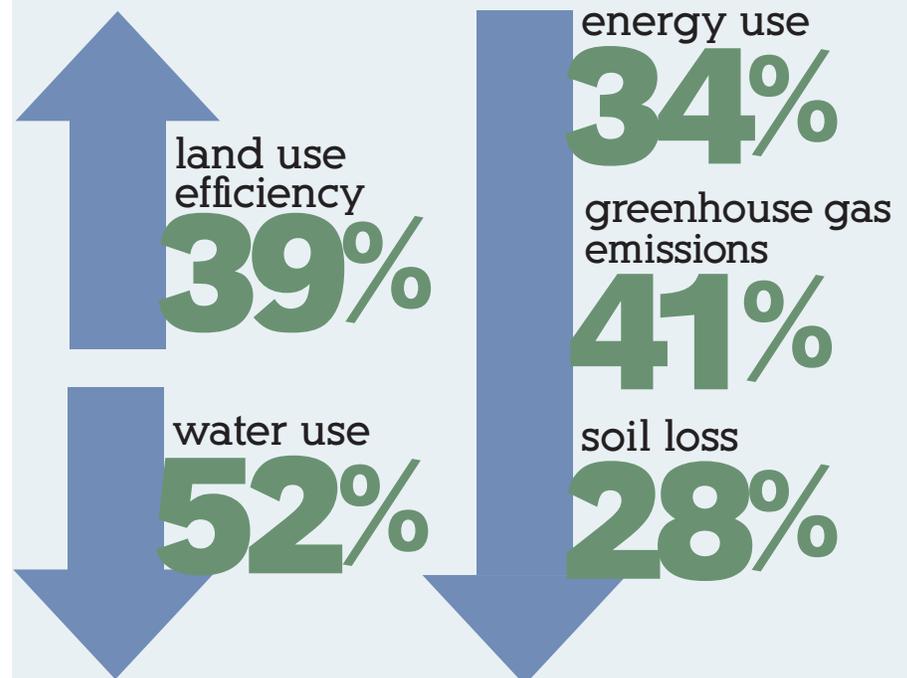
“While the scores for rice within the various metrics have fluctuated over the years, we have not stopped improving overall from where we were in 1980. We can't only look at a snapshot of our records to determine where we are for the long-haul. It's important to look at the big picture to see just how far we've come.”

— Jennifer James,  
Arkansas rice farmer,  
chair of the USA Rice  
Sustainability Committee

## U.S. Rice and Reduced Environmental Impacts: 1980 – 2015

(Per hundred pounds of rice produced)

Field to Market 2016 National Indicators Report (Based on linear trend analysis, 1980 – 2015)



All segments of the U.S. rice industry are invested in sustainable production and milling practices because it is personal – rice farmers often live on the land they work, and rice mills are important economic drivers in their communities. Together they provide tens of thousands of jobs and inject billions of dollars into the economy – all while standing on a strong record of environmental stewardship.

In 2015, the value of U.S. rice production was \$2.4 billion.<sup>2</sup> Farming alone was estimated to have a total output effect on the U.S. economy of \$5.65 billion, providing more than 31,700 jobs.<sup>3</sup> Rice milling operations constitute a significant sector of the U.S. rice industry, and economic contributions of rice milling were estimated to be \$9.34 billion in 2016 in total output value.

The net economic contribution of U.S. rice milling on the U.S. economy was \$3.5 billion (including forward market linkages).<sup>4</sup> Innovative techniques and improvements in U.S. rice production have reduced the time spent in fields to just seven man-hours per acre as compared to the 300 hours often still required in less developed countries.<sup>5</sup> All while, rice farms and mills abide by a range of laws and regulations ensuring the safety of their workers and environmental compliance.

As the main economic driver for many small communities, the rice industry is committed to giving back through a variety

of activities including sponsoring community sports and recreation and donations to local food banks, to name a few.

Land stewardship is a long-term commitment to and an investment in the future, supported by collaborative partnerships. U.S. rice farmers participate in several USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) programs. They work with Ducks Unlimited and USA Rice through the Rice Stewardship Partnership to enhance and promote voluntary participation in sustainable production practices. Farmers and millers are also partnering with end users to discuss how to achieve common goals and consider how various sustainability platforms can help to measure improvements toward those goals.

Research and technology help advance conservation practices and further improve efficient use of environmental resources. Sprinkled throughout this report are several stories highlighting these efforts. For example, farmers using more efficient irrigation systems have positive impacts on soil and water use. Some of these same irrigation practices also help conserve energy, while renewable energy sources are also being used to decrease energy use.

As consumers and the food industry demand more sustainable products and world population continues to increase, the U.S. rice industry is one step ahead, working to improve and building upon the rice story for a sustainable future.

*- Rice Stewardship -*  
2017 ANNUAL REPORT



 <p>DUCKS UNLIMITED</p>	<p>USA Rice</p> 
<p>RICE STEWARDSHIP</p>	

# Agroecology:

## UNDERSTANDING ECOSYSTEM BENEFITS DERIVED FROM SUSTAINABLE RICE FARMING

**A**gricultural systems have historically been managed for maximum production of food and fiber to support our ever-growing human population. However, many of these agricultural landscapes, especially rice, also provide a wide range of additional ecosystem goods and services that are valuable to society, our economy, and the environment, including a wide variety of wildlife species.

Ecosystem services are the direct and indirect contributions of ecosystems to human well-being. Key ecosystem services provided through advanced management of ricelands include nutrient cycling and soil health; improvements in water and air quality; managing water quantity; and/or providing cultural values through recreation and ecotourism.

It is no secret that winter flooded rice is valuable habitat for North American waterfowl populations. While we can quantify this foraging value to waterfowl, many of the other benefits derived from sustainable rice production still need to be measured and communicated. Through our Rice

Stewardship efforts, we aim to evaluate conservation practices implemented on ricelands throughout the Mississippi Alluvial Valley and Gulf Coast to assess impacts on a wide array of ecosystem services.

First, using data collected through Rice Stewardship efforts, Field to Market's Fieldprint Platform® will help us document the many outcomes provided through integration of all components of the rice farming system. Specific ecosystem services to be indexed here include soil conservation, soil health, water quantity, energy and greenhouse gases, reflecting efforts to improve on-farm efficiencies and environmental performance.

Over time, as more data is collected and compiled, a more detailed analysis will emerge, including quantitative and qualitative assessment of goods and services and impacts to rice cooperators. This level of information will aid in describing program success and designing national policies related to sustainable agroecological approaches such as those led by the rice industry today.

### *Ecosystem Service:* SOIL RETENTION

Under the National Rice RCPP, producers in southeast Missouri held winter rainfall on 13,390 acres in winter 2016-2017. Approximately two-thirds of these acres were no-till while the remaining third was tilled after harvest. If these acres had been traditionally tilled in fall and left to drain rainfall over winter, a total of 6,680\* tons of soil would have been lost from fields. With the increased level of no-till and holding winter rainfall, only an estimated 780 tons of soil were lost. That means participating producers reduced soil losses by 88 percent and prevented 380 dump trucks of soil from entering the waterways of southeast Missouri. Soil loss prevention is just one of the ecosystem services and benefits we plan to calculate moving forward to help us communicate the importance of Rice Stewardship to a broader audience, including policy decision makers.

\* Based on research published in the Journal of Soil and Water Conservation (2009 Vol. 64:3).

# Measuring SUCCESS



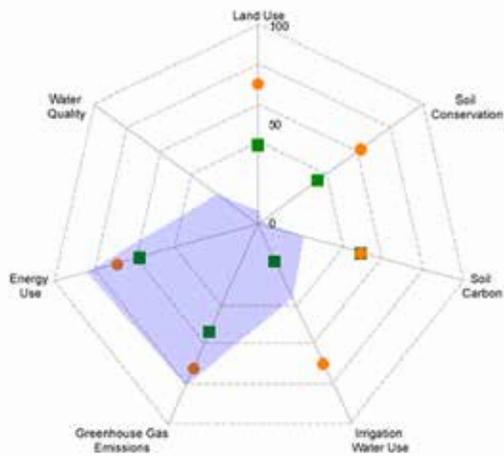
One of the tools we are using to track resource inputs and savings through Rice Stewardship efforts is the Fieldprint® Platform. Designed by Field to Market: The Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture, the platform is an online application that allows producers to benchmark their farm's sustainability performance against as many as eight sustainability indicators. The available sustainability indicators are land use, soil conservation, soil carbon, irrigation water use, energy use, greenhouse gas emissions, biodiversity, and water quality. Producers input on-farm and production data, and the Fieldprint® Platform produces a "spidergram" that gauges each field's sustainability performance.

The value of the Fieldprint® Platform to producers is the ability to compare their operation to their peers enrolled in our stewardship projects, and to state and national benchmarks, helping them identify areas of production where they can lessen their impact on the environment. In subsequent years, producers can not only compare

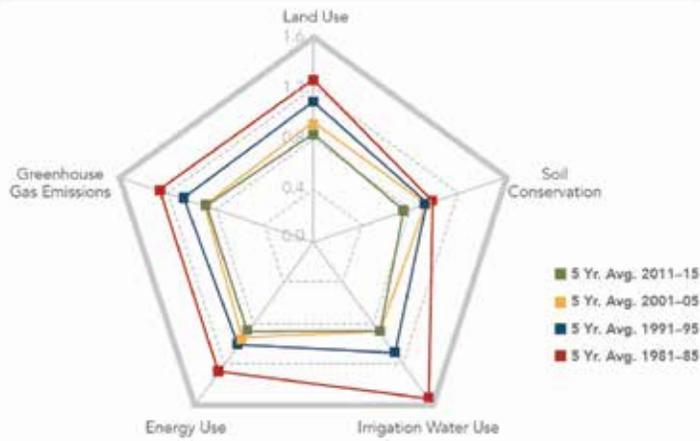
their fields' results to peers and benchmarks, but they can also compare it to prior-year results and see how the practices they have put in place affect their footprint.

For Rice Stewardship sponsors like the NRCS, the Fieldprint® Platform provides a first-year baseline from which to work. In subsequent years, we can determine what impact conservation practices have on resources. Ultimately, this will help us all ensure that our project's practices are truly valuable to conservation and achieving the desired improvements.

To rice supply-chain sponsors, like Walmart, The Mosaic Company, BASF, RiceTec, Dow AgroSciences, and others, the Fieldprint® Platform helps to identify conservation efforts that result in less impact on resources and focus their production support or acquisition of ingredients accordingly. Companies have been increasingly focused on sustaining natural resources while feeding the world. The Fieldprint® Platform gives them quantifiable metrics to use as they make business decisions.



*Individual Producers* WILL GET A SPIDERGRAM LIKE THIS, WHICH SHOWS NATIONAL (GREEN SQUARE) AND STATE (ORANGE DOT) BENCHMARKS COMPARED TO AN INDIVIDUAL PROJECT FIELD (PURPLE AREA).



*National Benchmarks* FOR RICE PRODUCTION FROM 1981-2015 DEMONSTRATE ≠CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT.

Source: *Field to Market: The Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture*, 2016. Environmental and Socioeconomic Indicators for Measuring Outcomes of On Farm Agricultural Production in the United States (Third Edition).





## **MEDIA ARTICLES**

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

GAP Report.....	2
- Partnership-led Fieldprint Calculator project highlight in global annual report	
Field to Market Annual Report.....	4
- Rice Stewardship Partnership and Jeff Durand highlight	
Sullivan Farmer Spotlight.....	9
- Participant in Partnership-led Fieldprint Calculator project selected for Annual Farmer Spotlight	
Richard Farmer Spotlight.....	11
- Participant in Partnership-led Fieldprint Calculator project selected for Annual Farmer Spotlight	



GLOBAL AGRICULTURAL  
PRODUCTIVITY REPORT®

## Sustainability in an Uncertain Season



GLOBAL HARVEST INITIATIVE

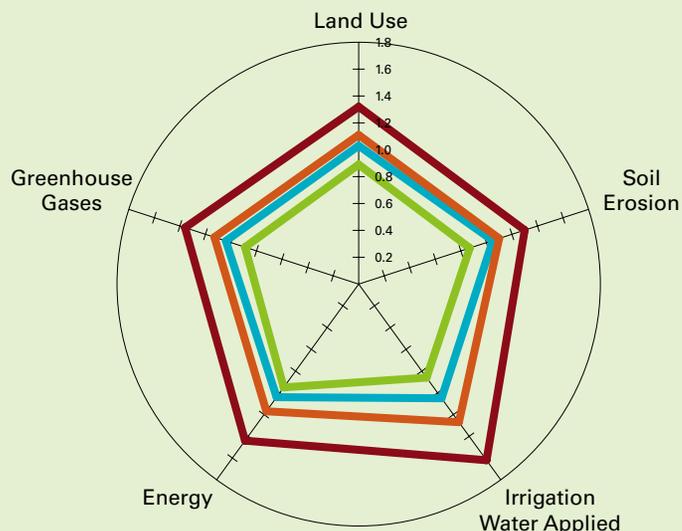
## STEWARDSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE RICE AND WILDLIFE

Rice is the world's most widely consumed grain, sustaining approximately half of the global population. Nearly half of the rice produced in the U.S. is exported. With 2.77 million acres under rice production (2015), U.S. rice growers are stewards of wetlands used by North America's waterfowl and 32 other at-risk species. **An environmentally sustainable approach to producing rice not only protects wildlife and the resource base, but also helps achieve global food security.**

As the world's leader in wetlands conservation, **Ducks Unlimited (DU)** counts the rice industry as a key partner in sustaining the future of waterfowl. The compatibility of on-farm conservation practices that improve water quality, farm profitability and wildlife habitat led DU to join forces with **USA Rice** to form the **Rice Stewardship Partnership**. The **Mosaic Company Foundation** has provided key funding for the partnership's work in the Mississippi Alluvial Valley, where most of the U.S. rice crop is grown.

Working with the **U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service**, the Rice Stewardship Partnership helps farmers meet the increasing demand for rice while improving environmental performance and farm profitability and preserving wetland resources. Collaborating with leading agricultural, conservation and environmental organizations, the partnership equips rice producers with the support, knowledge, tools and practices to improve farm management and water quality, thereby reducing the level of nutrients lost to the Mississippi River. Mosaic's interest in the program stems from a desire to promote the **4R Nutrient Stewardship framework** (*Right Nutrient Source, Right Rate, Right Time, Right Place*) at

**Figure 8:** Productive, Sustainable Rice: Index of Per Pound Production Resource Impacts, U.S., 1980–2011



Source: Field to Market, 2012 Environmental and Socioeconomic Indicators Report, Rice.

Since the 1980s, farmers have produced more rice using less water, energy and land acreage, along with a reduction in soil erosion and greenhouse gas. Rice growers in the U.S. now use the latest in proven irrigation and production practices, saving water and generating carbon emission credits as part of California's carbon cap-and-trade market.

- 5 year average 1980–1984
- 5 year average 1987–1991
- 5 year average 1997–2001
- 5 year average 2007–2011

*Field to Market® is a diverse alliance working across the agricultural supply chain for continuous improvements in productivity, environmental quality and human well-being, and provides collaborative leadership that engages in industry-wide dialogue, grounded in science and open to the full range of technology choices.*

the field level to achieve optimal crop uptake of nutrients while minimizing environmental impacts.

There are numerous other environmental benefits of the program. Water use efficiency recommendations, including alternative irrigation strategies, help conserve water and reduce demand on surface and groundwater resources. The partnership promotes practices that minimize energy consumption, reduce diesel fuel use and improve rice crop residue management — all of which translate to reduced GHG emissions and improved air quality. These efforts support the farmer's profitability by maximizing the efficiency of inputs and reducing costs.



The Rice Stewardship Partnership delivers conservation and greenhouse gas mitigation practices that improve farmer profitability and meet the global demand for food.

Credit: Mike Checkett



Field to Market®



# 2015 ANNUAL REPORT

INSIGHTS | CONTRIBUTIONS | PARTNERSHIPS | COLLABORATION

# A YEAR IN REVIEW



## PARTNERING TO ADVANCE CONSERVATION AT THE LANDSCAPE LEVEL

*Field to Market celebrated the announcement of approved grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) to collaborative projects with members such as Ducks Unlimited and USA Rice.*

Leveraging commitments from the public and private sectors strengthens our ability to advance sustainable outcomes for U.S. agriculture. By collaborating with our members through these projects, Field to Market is helping monitor the efforts of hundreds of rice producers to address water quantity, water quality and wildlife habitat across more than 400,000 acres. USDA's support for cross-sector partnerships is yet another signal that an unprecedented degree of collaboration is needed to help us feed 9+ billion people by 2050, while responsibly managing our planet's natural resources. **Learn more about RCPP Projects on page 25.**



Scott Manley of Ducks Unlimited (right) and Jeff Durand, a participating rice farmer in a RCPP Project in Louisiana, stand together in ripe rice.

## EXPANDING FIELDPRINT PROJECTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Together, Field to Market's membership more than doubled the number of active Fieldprint® Projects across the country, engaging growers managing 1.5 million acres through 49 Fieldprint Projects. **Read more on page 11.**

## BROADENING THE FIELD TO MARKET TEAM

Field to Market hired a science & research director to oversee the refinement of Field to Market's metrics and an administrative assistant to provide support to the Alliance's growing program and membership.



# The Power of Partnership in Driving Conservation at the Landscape Level

Helping producers improve the environment while maintaining a vibrant agricultural market depends on a robust collaboration between the public and private sector. The launch of the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service responded to this need, forging public-private partnerships to advance conservation at the landscape level.

In its first round, USDA awarded \$370 million in funding to over 100 high-impact conservation projects across the nation, including a RCPP project with more than 40 collaborating partners, led by Ducks Unlimited and USA Rice. The Rice Stewardship Partnership – Sustaining the Future of Rice RCPP Project was awarded one of the most significant grants in the first round, with \$10 million over four years.

Tackling the challenge of sustaining rice on the landscape, Ducks Unlimited and USA Rice set out to provide financial and technical assistance opportunities to rice growers to help improve the efficiency of irrigation water use and minimize water quality impacts in three critical regions: California's Central Valley, the Gulf Coast and the Mississippi River Valley.

USA Rice, the leading trade association for all segments



of the U.S. rice industry with engaged membership in all six major rice-producing states, was able to connect partners from across the entire supply chain and capture widespread support. Ducks Unlimited, a non-profit conservation organization that conserves and restores North American waterfowl and wetland habitat, harnessed the expertise of their biologists, engineers and grant administrators to shepherd the grant application.

"The Regional Conservation Partnership Program gave us an opportunity to flesh out what conservation practices are needed across the entire rice industry to ensure that rice can be cultivated for

generations to come," shared Dr. Scott Manley, director of Conservation Innovation at Ducks Unlimited.

The Partnership's vision is to conserve three of the nation's important natural resources: working ricelands, water and wetland wildlife. Ensuring adequate supplies of water is fundamental to sustaining the future of rice. And more than three million acres of rice across the country provide not only a working wetland that grows crops and food to feed the world, but also a very valuable habitat for waterfowl, according to Scott.

"What's good for rice is good for ducks," emphasized Scott.