



# Making a Good Fact Sheet

Tips & Facts Sheet

## Our definitions:

- A **“Fact sheet”** provides clear, simple and practical “how to” information. The target audience is often *intermediaries* who will work with farmers.
- An **“Info sheet”** is a short document (e.g., 1 page) that provides general information to give a broad understanding of a topic. The target audience is often *intermediaries* who will work with farmers.
- A **“Farmers note”** is developed for *farmers* (In many cases, this may require development for a non-literate audience.)



**Figure 1.** Use pictures to stress a key point. (Source: UC Statewide IPM Project)

## Good fact sheets are:

1. **For a target audience** – Be clear on who they are and what information **they** need to act?
2. **Understandable** – Use simple, easily understood language. Avoid Jargon or specialized technical terms.
3. **Relevant** – Ensure recommendations are beneficial and appropriate for the target area.
4. **Action-oriented** – Provide enough information so that someone can actually do something based on the FS. In development of the sheet, separate “need to know” from “nice to know”.

## Suggested sections and tips:

<b>Title.</b> Have a title that is descriptive (i.e., stands alone)
<b>Introduction.</b> Include an opening paragraph that clearly and briefly introduces and defines the topic (2-3 sentences). It should respond to the questions what is being discussed and why it is important. Consider using bullet points for main points. Link key points to pictures.
<b>How to information?</b> Present information concisely (often bullet points) and list information required by the audience to successfully implement a practice. Start lists with the most important information first. In developing, ask “Can the practice be implemented with the information presented?”. More complex issues may need to be broken into separate fact sheets. If recommending, ask if the information has been validated in the target area. Link key points to pictures. Recognize sources.
<b>Prepared by.</b> List all contributors, contact details and year.
<b>For more (References).</b> Include short web links or reference title, author and year.
<b>Branding.</b> Include contact details and use institution logo and colors
<b>Review.</b> Have 1) someone read for simplicity, clarity of language and ease of understanding, and 2) a technical expert sign off on correctness and relevance of content.

## Formatting and content

- **Pictures.** Include a subtitle that stresses a key point from the fact sheet. Acknowledge source and reduce picture size (for on-line documents). Check if the picture is clear if copied in black and white.
- **Language.** Use terms that are easily understood. Avoid repetition (unless important to stress a point). Use boxes or pictures to stress key points. Avoid unnecessary detail – distinguish between “need to know” and “nice to know”. Avoid exact numbers if not valid across environments.
- **Tables.** Useful for presenting a lot of information quickly and clearly.
- **Length.** Aim for 1 page in length (to reduce field costs, if hard copies are required).