

FAQ 15

Where Can I Find Information About Farm Accounting Software?

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The Ag Software Directory is a highly recommended starting point for anyone looking for any type of agricultural software. Some farmers utilize either Quicken or Quickbooks for farm accounting. Extension Specialists in several states, including Iowa, Nebraska, Ohio, Oklahoma, and Tennessee, have produced a wealth of information about how to adapt these programs for farm use. Denise Schroeder, CFS Educator in White County, is an excellent resource person for Quickbooks questions; and Ralph Booker, ANR Educator in Marshall County, is an excellent resource person for Quicken questions.

Another potential source of information about accounting software is your accountant or income tax practitioner. It sometimes makes good sense to adopt a particular accounting program merely because your accountant uses it. It always makes good sense to involve your accountant in setting up the chart of accounts in whatever accounting software you acquire.

Resources for Farm Accounting Software

Resources	Sources
Agricultural Software Directory	http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/agdex/agsoft
Web site from CPA Online offering free software searches	http://www.findaccountingsoftware.com

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Where to Obtain Information on Farm Accounting Software

Indiana farmers use one of three types of commercially available accounting software to keep computerized farm financial records. These are: electronic checkbooks, small business accounting systems, and farm accounting systems. The right accounting application is the one that will best meet a farmer's information needs. Once the farmer has thought about what he or she wants the system to provide, the next step is to look at what software is available and the features and capabilities of the available systems.

The following are a sampling of commercially available farm accounting software. This is not intended to be a complete list. The publication of this list does not constitute an endorsement of any of these programs nor does it reflect in any way on the software that was left off this list. For a more complete list of farm software please visit the Agricultural Software Directory on the Internet at: <http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/agdex/agsoft>

The name of each software program is listed first in the space below. The manufacturer's suggested retail price appears in parentheses after the software name. The price shown here is for a single user version of the software. Some of these programs, like Perception Accounting, TransAction Plus, and Farm Fund\$, represent only the basic accounting "module" in an integrated farm management information system. Integrated farm management systems have capabilities that extend beyond financial accounting. The other modules available with these systems, if desired, will add considerably to the price of the system. Price is subject to change and will vary with the vendor. Also, some software companies require new purchasers to pay an annual fee for technical support.

Farm Accounting Software

AgCHEK Accounting (\$695)	AgManager Package 4 (\$2,995)
Perception Accounting (\$695)	AgriSolutions Inc. – Brighton, IL
Red Wing Business Systems – Red Wing, MN Phone: (800) 732-9464 Internet: www.redwingsoftware.com	Phone: (800) 829-5555 Internet: www.agrisolutions.com
TransAction Plus (\$995)	PC Mars for Windows, Complete (\$350)
TransAction Lite (\$595)	PC Mars for Windows, Lite (\$225)
FBS Systems Inc. – Aledo, IL Phone: (800) 437-7638 Internet: www.fbssystems.com	Iowa Farm Business Association – Ames, IA Phone: (515) 223-5802 Internet: www.iowafarmbusiness.org

Electronic Checkbooks and Small Business Accounting Systems

The following are a sampling of electronic checkbook and small business accounting systems used in agriculture. Again this list is nowhere near complete, nor is it intended to be an endorsement of the listed products. For a more complete listing of such software visit the following Internet address: <http://www.findaccountingsoftware.com>.

This Internet site provides a link to each software company's Web site. These sites are generally excellent sources of information that can be used to evaluate accounting software alternatives. Many of the most popular of these types of products are available in stores and are oftentimes available at a discount relative to the manufacturer's suggested retail price. Also, accounting software is sometimes purchased as part of the software bundle that is sold with a new computer. It is quite possible that a farm business owner's accounting information needs will be best served by using different software for the farm business, for the home and family, and for any non-farm businesses.

Electronic Checkbooks

Money 2002 Deluxe (\$64.95) Microsoft Corp. – Redmond, WA Phone: (800) 426-9400 Internet: www.microsoft.com	Quicken 2002 Deluxe (\$59.95) Intuit Inc. – Mountain View, CA Phone: (800) 811-8766 Internet: www.intuit.com
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Farmers who want to switch from the Indiana Farm Record Book to a computer accounting program sometimes start with an electronic checkbook. One merely needs to substitute the income and expense column headings from the Indiana Farm Record Book for the software application's pre-loaded chart of accounts or income and expense categories in order to have a reasonable facsimile of the Indiana Farm Record Book. Electronic checkbooks work well as a simple record for income tax compliance. The small business accounting systems that follow are a better choice than electronic checkbooks for business record keeping where tracking assets, liabilities, and owner equity account balances is important.

Small Business Accounting Systems

Peachtree Complete Accounting 2002 (\$269.95) Peachtree Software Inc. – Norcross, GA Phone: (800) 247-3224 Internet: www.peachtree.com	Quickbooks Pro 2002 (\$279.95) Intuit Inc. – Mountain View, CA Phone: (888) 246-8848 Internet: www.intuit.com
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A trial version of the more expensive software programs is oftentimes available. Trial versions give the prospective user a chance to try the software on for size before having to commit to what is in some cases a sizeable expenditure. Good hunting!

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