Crop and Forage Recordkeeping Software

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Producers who have computers frequently ask about the availability of software programs to manage crop and forage production records. Before purchasing a software program, it is important to analyze the value of such a system with regards to making better management decisions. Producers should evaluate their existing records to determine the types of information sought from a software program. Are inventory records important? Are summary reports of primary interest? By considering specific record needs, the producer is better equipped to choose an appropriate software package. This publication is a compilation of software programs to be used as a reference for agricultural producers.[1]

If the producer is not currently keeping any records on crop or field performance, a good starting point may be some basic production records. Row crops and pasture forages have numerous production practices that should be recorded. Good managers will want to maintain records on variety, planting rates, fertilizer rates, pesticides, fuel consumption, grain, hay, or forage matter produced, etc. for each field maintained in order to determine prolific or inefficient areas of the operation. Some records, such as Restricted Use Pesticides (RUPs) application, must be maintained according to the 1990 FACT Act.[2]

The most difficult steps to building a valuable recordkeeping system are (1) making time for recordkeeping, (2) determining which information is economically feasible to collect, and (3) summarizing the data for use in the decision-making process. Meaningful crop and forage records may be handwritten (for example, see agecon.okstate.edu/farmbook) or kept on a computer. The choice of programs, features, and cost of software are the "fine-tuning" portion of recordkeeping. In the following summary of nine commercially-available crop record keeping software packages, the features are described under three headings:
- Common Features
- Technological Information
- Advanced Features

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1 Oklahoma State University does not endorse any of these software programs.
2 For more information about the FACT Act, please refer to OSU Extension Fact Sheet EPP-322, Pesticide Record-keeping Requirements for Crop Production.

The program purchase costs range from $199 to $995 for basic versions of the software; advanced versions are more expensive. Many software companies offer free program demonstration copies. Programs have various computer requirements such as minimum processor type and speed, minimum RAM, operating system, and hard disk space. Most programs provide comprehensive data entry fields, as well as production summaries.

Before purchasing any software, determine the level and cost of software support that will be provided by the company. In addition, some programs have specific enterprise information that is required before the program will work. Sorting and filtering capabilities and the type of reports generated may vary, but in many cases, producers have the opportunity to customize reports to meet specific needs. Another important feature may include the ability to query or search the data for specific field information. Every operator must determine the amount of time available to devote to practical recordkeeping and weigh this commitment against software costs, data entry features, and the need for information for management purposes.

Information provided about the following programs was taken from the software provider's website and/or software demos. The summary does not cover all available programs or individual program features. Programs may have other capabilities that are not described in the summary. Producers should contact the respective companies for current purchase information, details on features, and specific hardware requirements.

The features summarized in the tables are not all-inclusive. Some of the software packages go into intricate detail in products applied to the fields and have detailed scale tickets for harvest sales. As the user experiments with demo versions of the software packages, the capabilities of each program become clearer. Several of the software companies have additional software products and/or modules that work with the basic software package to enhance user control. The end user decides how much information to input, track, calculate, and summarize.

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SST Summit Plus
SST Development Group, Inc.
824 N. Country Club Rd.
Stillwater, OK 74075
Phone: 888-377-5334 / 405-377-5334
Fax: 405-377-5746
Website: http://www.sstsoftware.com/index.htm

Farm Trac
Farm Works
P.O. Box 250
Hamilton, IN 46742
Phone: 800-225-2848
Fax: 260-488-3737
Website: http://www.farmworks.com

Landtrend
Ag2Networks
Rod Turner P.Ag.
Box 89
Amisk, Alberta.
T0B 0B0
Phone: 780-856-3344; 780-669-2039
Fax: 780-856-3345
E-mail: Rod@Ag2Networks.com
Website: http://www.Ag2Networks.com

AgExpert Field Master
AgExpert, A division of Farm Credit Canada
10 Research Drive, Suite/bureau 170
Regina, SK
Canada S4S 7J7
Phone: 800-667-7893, 306-721-7949
Fax: 306-721-1981
E-mail: Info@AgExpert.ca
Website: http://www.agexpert.ca/en/index.asp

Farm Files Crops
Farm Files
12861 S. Widmer
Olathe, KS 66062
Phone: 913-515-5991
Fax: 913-239-9318
E-mail: sales@levelfivesolutions.com
Website: http://www.farmfiles.com/crops.html

MapShots EASi Suite
MapShots
4610 Ansley Lane
Cumming, GA 30040
Phone: 678-513-6093
Fax: 770-781-9471
E-mail: info@mapshots.com
Website: http://www.mapshots.com

The Bottom Line
Prairie Agri Photo Ltd.
P.O. Box 817
Carman, Manitoba
Canada R0G 0J0
Phone: 800-374-8078, 204-745-2479
Fax: 204-745-2141
E-mail: pap@prairieagri.com
Website: http://www.prairieagri.com/btmline.html

Field Management System
Winsoft Development
E-mail: info@winsoftdevelopment.com
Website: http://www.winsoftdevelopment.com/FMS.htm

WinCrop, Farm View Record Keeper, LandView DSS Pro
Landview Systems
#600, 10665 – Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
Canada T5J 3S9
Phone: 800-616-9401, 780-448-7476
Fax: 780-421-1270
E-mail: mail@landview.com
Website: http://www.landview.com/products.html

Common Features

	SST Summit Plus	Farm Works Farm Trac	Ag2Networks Landtrend	AgExpert Field Manager PRO (Desktop/Mobile)	Farm Files Crops	MapShots, Inc. EASi Suite Crop Management	Prairie Agri Photo The Bottom Line	Winsoft Field Management System (FMS)	LandView Wincrop
Record quantity and costs of:									
Tillage practices	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Machinery usage		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Seeding	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Fertilizing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Insecticide application	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Field level reports	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Harvest data	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Planting date	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Variety	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Log soil test points/manage soil nutrient levels	✓	Farm Site	✓	✓		✓		✓	DSS Pro
Inventory/storage tracking		Farm Funds		✓	✓				DSS Pro
Irrigation expense calculation		Farm Funds	✓			✓			
Crop insurance		Farm Funds	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Break-even analysis		✓	✓	✓					
Collect/import field boundaries	✓	Farm Site				✓			Mapper
Calculate acreage	✓	✓	✓			✓			Mapper
Equipment records: (ex. service interval, serial numbers, burn rate of fuel, purchase, repair)		✓	✓						
Track crop rotation		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓
Delineate patches of weed and insect infestation	✓	Farm Site		✓		✓			✓
Customizable reports	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Previous crop	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓
Input weather conditions	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓
Import pictures		✓		✓		✓		✓	✓
Calculate net income		Farm Funds		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Divide fields into multiple crop zones	✓	Farm Site		✓		✓			DSS Pro
Mapping ability	✓	Farm Site	✓		✓	✓			✓

Technological Information

	SST Summit Plus	Farm Works Farm Trac	Ag2Networks Landtrend	AgExpert Field Manager PRO (Desktop/Mobile)	Farm Files Crops	MapShots, Inc. EASi Suite Crop Management	Prairie Agri Photo The Bottom Line	Winsoft Field Management System (FMS)	LandView Wincrop
Synchronize with Hand-held Device*	Pocket PC	Pocket PC, Windows CE, or Laptop	Palm	Pocket PC 2003/Windows Mobile 5.0	No	Pocket PC	No	No	No
Free Demo	Product Tour on Website/ Call for free Demo	Downloadable on Website	Downloadable on Website	Downloadable on Website	Downloadable on Website	Product Tour on Website & Demo CD Available	Downloadable on Website	Downloadable on Website	Downloadable on Website
Support	$300/calendar year for unlimited technical support and upgrades	First month phone support free then $150/year or $30/month. Free e-mail, internet discussion groups, and fax alternatives	Free via e-mail	1 year free (Phone, updates, weekly bulletin) included	30 days free	Free online discussion forum	Free via phone	Free support and upgrades	3 months free, phone, fax, or e-mail
Operating System	Microsoft© Windows NT, 2000, or XP	Microsoft© Windows 98 or higher	Microsoft© Windows 95 or higher	Microsoft© Windows 2000/XP	Microsoft© Windows 95 or higher	Microsoft© Windows XP (2000 is acceptable)	Microsoft©q Windows 95 or higher		Microsoft© Windows 98 or higher
Processor	Intel Pentium or AMD 750 MHz	Pentium	Pentium	1.4 GHz +	Pentium	Pentium III 933 MHz +	Pentium		Pentium, 66 MHz +
Minimum RAM	128 MB	64 MB	128 MB	256 MB	16 MB	256 MB	8 MB		16 MB
Hard Disk Requirement	10 GB	60 MB	5 MB	100 MB	20 MB	20 MB	1 MB		
Cost**	$900	$250	$280	$499	$200	$995	$290	$199	$349

* Additional charges for hand-held software apply.
** Prices are subject to change

Advanced Features

	SST Summit Plus	Farm Works Farm Trac	Ag2Networks Landtrend	AgExpert Field Manager PRO (Desktop/Mobile)	Farm Files Crops	MapShots, Inc. EASi Suite Crop Management	Prairie Agri Photo The Bottom Line	Winsoft Field Management System (FMS)	LandView Wincrop
Restricted usage pesticide reporting		Yes				Yes			
GIS[1] or GPS[2] technology	GIS/GPS	GIS - Farm Site GPS - Farm Site Mate	GPS optional	GPS	No	GIS	No	No	DSS Pro
Integrate with other software	Additional SST software	Additional Farm Works software	No	AgExpert Analyst	Reports export to Microsoft	Reports export to Microsoft Excel & Adobe Excel Acrobat & Integrates with other software[3]	No	No	No
Online database	SST FarmRite Network	Yes - First year of AgriDNA included	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Define soil type per field	Multiple	Farm Site Multiple	Predominant	No	No	Multiple	No	No	DSS Pro
Record government subsidy	No	Farm Funds	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Leasing arrangements: Define tenant/landlord share %	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
Leasing arrangements: Override default share % for any product	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No

1 Geographic Information Systems
2 Global Positioning System
3 Mapshots also integrates with RedWing Perception Accounting (www.redwingsoftware.com), JDOffice and JDMap (www.deere.com), SGIS (www.sgissoftware.com), FarmWorks (www.farmworks.com), Pioneer FIM (www.pioneer.com), and Agris AgroGuide (www.agris.com)

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The Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service
Bringing the University to You!

The Cooperative Extension Service is the largest, most successful informal educational organization in the world. It is a nationwide system funded and guided by a partnership of federal, state, and local governments that delivers information to help people help themselves through the land-grant university system.

Extension carries out programs in the broad categories of agriculture, natural resources and environment; family and consumer sciences; 4-H and other youth; and community resource development. Extension staff members live and work among the people they serve to help stimulate and educate Americans to plan ahead and cope with their problems.

Some characteristics of the Cooperative Extension system are:

- The federal, state, and local governments cooperatively share in its financial support and program direction.

- It is administered by the land-grant university as designated by the state legislature through an Extension director.

- Extension programs are nonpolitical, objective, and research-based information.

- It provides practical, problem-oriented education for people of all ages. It is designated to take the knowledge of the university to those persons who do not or cannot participate in the formal classroom instruction of the university.

- It utilizes research from university, government, and other sources to help people make their own decisions.

- More than a million volunteers help multiply the impact of the Extension professional staff.

- It dispenses no funds to the public.

- It is not a regulatory agency, but it does inform people of regulations and of their options in meeting them.

- Local programs are developed and carried out in full recognition of national problems and goals.

- The Extension staff educates people through personal contacts, meetings, demonstrations, and the mass media.

- Extension has the built-in flexibility to adjust its programs and subject matter to meet new needs. Activities shift from year to year as citizen groups and Extension workers close to the problems advise changes.