



carolina farm
stewardship association

Record Keeping Software Review

PRODUCTION RECORDKEEPING PROGRAMS

COG Pro

Type: Organic Certification, Production, GAPs

Website: <https://cog-pro.com/>

Cost: Crops: One Year: \$79, Two Years: \$150
Crops & Livestock: One Year: \$129, Two Years: \$250
Crops & GAP: One Year: \$129, Two Years \$250
Crops & Livestock & Gap: One Year: \$159, Two Years: \$310

USER FRIENDLY: This program is very user friendly and you can sign in as a guest to try the program before purchasing. The program has well organized categories, which are easy to navigate and comes with a good online user manual.

HANDLE COMPLEX PLANS: This program supports complex production plans for crop and livestock production as well as Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs). The program can generate detailed reports but does not have the capacity to generate farm maps that would be helpful in documenting crop rotation. One critical piece that COG Pro lacks: the ability to record attempts to source organic seed and planting stock when conventional alternatives must be used.

ACCESS W/OUT INTERNET: Access via internet only.

CALENDAR: This program does not include any calendar functions.

RECORD INPUT USE: This program can generate excellent records of input use. The user is able to attach files such as statements verifying non-GMO and non-treated seed and organic certificates for applicable inputs.

TRACK MULTIPLE MARKETS: You can track harvests and product value by crop, variety, field, harvest date, and lot number but not by market. You can also keep record of customers contact information.

PRINTABLE DOCUMENTS: This program has excellent printing options, allowing users to print production reports and records, as well as customized analytical reports.

VISUAL AID FEATURES: This program is laid out well and contains tabs and sub tabs which allow users to easily view various categories of records. The program also allows users to upload images and documents. However, it would be helpful if there was a mapping component that showed field layout.

TRACK IRRIGATION: This program allows the user to indicate irrigation available by field but does not provide any tracking or record keeping of irrigation schedule or use.



ROTATIONAL PLANNING: This program allows users to keep field records from year to year but does not generate reports for multiple year crop planning. Users are able to view past planting and grazing records to avoid short rotation intervals by bed or field.

FOOD SAFETY RECORDS: This program includes a very detailed section on GAPs, enabling the user to record and print GAP related activities.

EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE: This program allows the user to record equipment cleaning but not maintenance.

OVERALL COMMENTS: This program is designed to assist users in maintaining records necessary for organic and GAPs certification. While it is not designed to record detailed production planning and practices, it does allow you to keep farm production records for activities relevant to organic certification. While it does enable the user to record and document most required activities, it does not allow users to document scouting for plant and livestock health, pest issues, or to make other notes related to meeting organic standards. It also lacks a strong mapping feature, which would be helpful for maintaining up-to-date farm maps of fields designated organic, in transition, or conventional. While COG Pro does not have the ability to meet all record keeping requirements for certified organic production; it does cover a strong majority of them.

AgRenaissance (Field Recon 13.2.0)

Type: Production

Website: <http://agrenaissance.com/>

Cost: \$350 for new users: includes support, upgrades, and new releases until the annual renewal of the Support Plan, which is July 1 of each year. Renewal cost of \$250 and provides access to tech support, as well as all new releases and updates to FieldRecon and PocketRecon. The Support Plan must be purchased annually to continue receiving tech support and FieldRecon updates. To re-activate a lapsed Support Plan, you must pay for the upcoming year, plus 50% of the missed renewal payments.

USER FRIENDLY: This is a very comprehensive program; however, users need to have a good understanding about the program and what it offers to take full advantage of it. The AgRenaissance team provides a one-on-one webinar with new clients to walk you through the program. The tutorial videos are helpful when understanding the mapping features in particular. It would be helpful if there was a written user's manual as well, but technicians are eager to help when you contact them with your specific questions.

HANDLE COMPLEX PLANS: This program offers an incredible amount of detail and information for complex production planning. Users can access a fairly exhaustive listing of crops, weeds, pests, diseases, and inputs when recording field plans and making notes. Users can generate detailed maps via GIS and detailed reports including scouting history and recommendations, treatment applications,



carolina farm
stewardship association

irrigation, tillage, and planting and harvesting reports. However, this program is designed for crop production and does not accommodate records for livestock production.

ACCESS W/OUT INTERNET: Users need to download the program via the internet but can then use the program without being connected to the internet. Essential tutorials are only available online.

CALENDAR: The program does not include a calendar; however, it does allow you to print task lists based on the type of field operation and flag tasks for future follow-up.

RECORD INPUT USE: This program allows the user to make in-depth records of input use including application rate and method as well as environmental conditions such as wind speed/direction, crop height, and rainfall pre- and post-application. Users can print comprehensive reports of all inputs applied during the growing season. It also allows you to keep track of scouting activities and pest management recommendations that could help certified organic operations justify the use of restricted pest inputs.

TRACK MULTIPLE MARKETS: This program currently does not have any features to track markets, however, users can designate a selling price when recording harvest data.

PRINTABLE DOCUMENTS: This program has excellent printing options, allowing users to generate reports by activity, field, or by crop.

VISUAL AID FEATURES: The mapping tool is sophisticated and would be very useful if you invested the time it takes to set it up. The program also allows you to generate detailed field maps including the addition of multiple GIS layers.

TRACK IRRIGATION: This program allows you to schedule and track irrigation and generates detailed reports on irrigation use including when, how long, how much, location of equipment, and tracks meter readings.

ROTATIONAL PLANNING: The program does include some specific functions that allow for multiple year crop planning but it does not allow for easy analysis of crop rotations within a field.

FOOD SAFETY RECORDS: This program does not include functions specific to GAPs or food safety. However, when recording harvest information, it is possible to designate picking lot numbers. Aside from this, FieldRecon doesn't accommodate recordkeeping for sanitation practices and other relevant food safety data.

EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE: This program does not enable users to schedule or record equipment maintenance; however, their staff was receptive to the idea of adding this function.



carolina farm
stewardship association

COMMENTS: This is a robust record keeping program with powerful tools. However, there are a few gaps in what it can do, including the absence of market recording functions and the fact that crop rotation is not easy to assess in the current version. It also requires users to be technically savvy to get the most out of it.

AgSquared

Type: Production

Website: <http://www.agsquared.com/>

Cost: \$60 / year

USER FRIENDLY: This program is user friendly with point and click features that provides prompting of required and helpful fields. It does require some time to learn about the features the program offers. There are some short tutorial videos to assist users, a help button, and unlimited call-in-support. Johnny's Selected Seeds is sponsoring free 30 day trials to anyone interested in the program.

HANDLE COMPLEX PLANS: AgSquared enables users to develop detailed crop plans on an annual basis and while you cannot make multi-year crop rotations you are able to easily see what has been planted in past seasons (by field and by bed) to avoid short rotations. Program offers flexible scheduling of tasks, good planning features for successive crop plantings. AgSquared is for crop production only; the program does not include any livestock features.

ACCESS W/OUT INTERNET: Users must have internet connection to enter information into the program. However, users can export documents to Excel for viewing and printing without internet access.

CALENDAR: This program has a great calendar feature enabling users to input tasks and check them off when completed. The program also enables users to easily “drag” tasks around on the calendar, assign them to specific staff, and include detailed descriptions of each task.

RECORD INPUT USE: The ability to keep detailed record of input use is a great feature of this program. It allows users to schedule and record input applications within specific fields including application type, rate, and location. Users can schedule input applications on the calendar, make journal entries, and print both the calendar and journal entries; however, you cannot create a report of just input applications.

TRACK MULTIPLE MARKETS: There is no marketing component, which would be helpful when calculating for projected market needs.

PRINTABLE DOCUMENTS: Users can print calendar and journal entries directly from the program and export seed orders, propagation plan, field plan, and harvest projections to Excel for review and printing. However, there is no feature that allows for printing of specific categories, such as inputs used or field work completed.



VISUAL AID FEATURES: Users can map fields and other features of the farm which allow you to easily select them when adding a new field activity or record. Users can also upload images specific to their operations. However, the mapping function doesn't calculate acreage, which would be helpful, nor is it possible to designate varying lengths of beds in an irregular field.

TRACK IRRIGATION: Users can schedule irrigating events on the tasks calendar according to specific fields and beds. However, there is no feature to coordinate total on-farm irrigation, thus users are not able to track overall water use. It would be helpful if irrigation management was a separate feature, allowing users to calculate demand by crop for better planning.

ROTATIONAL PLANNING: This program has one of the more robust rotational planning features of the software we reviewed. Users can view crop plans from previous seasons in the same field and by beds. Users can export crop plans, enabling users to document field history, which is a component of the Organic System Plan.

FOOD SAFETY RECORDS: This program does not include functions specific to GAPs or food safety. Users can schedule GAP activities in the events calendar, however, there is no way to pull this information in order to document that the activities were performed.

EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE: This program has no features specific to equipment maintenance but you can schedule routine maintenance tasks on the calendar.

COMMENTS: This program contains a number of great features for crop production including a good calendar function, the ability to record input use and irrigation, and rotational planning capabilities. However, the program is only for crop production, does not allow users to track markets, or calculate the number of seedlings for a given planting. The mapping function cannot handle irregularly shaped fields nor can you designate different beds lengths in the same field. The program does not allow users to export entries from the calendar by category, i.e. input applications or field work.

Crop Planning

Type: Production

Website: <http://code.google.com/p/cropplanning/>

Cost: Free

USER FRIENDLY: Provides basic tutorials about how to use the program.

HANDLE COMPLEX PLANS: This program does not handle complex plans.

ACCESS W/OUT INTERNET: Users can use the program without internet access after downloading; however, tutorials are only available via the internet.



carolina farm
stewardship association

CALENDAR: Generates to do lists based on task related to individual crop plantings. In the future, users may be able to synch tasks to a Google calendar but this feature is not currently a part of the program offerings.

RECORD INPUT USE: This program does not have any features to allow users to record input use.

TRACK MULTIPLE MARKETS: This program does not have features to allow users to track market production and sales.

PRINTABLE DOCUMENTS: Data can be downloaded to Excel or PDF for manipulation and printing.

VISUAL AID FEATURES: This program does not have any visual aids.

TRACK IRRIGATION: This program does not allow users to record irrigation use.

ROTATIONAL PLANNING: The program has no functions that allow for recording production practices.

FOOD SAFETY RECORDS: The program has no functions that allow for recording practices association with GAPs.

EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE: This program does not enable users to schedule or record equipment maintenance.

COMMENTS: This program does not offer many robust features for production planning and record keeping. The program is currently in the development phase and the programmers would appreciate feedback. If you choose to try this program, please provide them with feedback in order to make the program more useful.

FINANCIAL RECORDKEEPING PROGRAMS

Veggie Compass

Type: Financial

Website: <http://www.veggiecompass.com/>

Cost: Free

USER FRIENDLY: This program comes with an excellent user guide with information about each spreadsheet as well as information embedded in column and row headings in Excel. However, users do need to be comfortable working in Microsoft Excel to use this program effectively.

HANDLE COMPLEX PLANS: Capable of handling detailed information regarding farm sales, expenses, and labor.



ACCESS W/OUT INTERNET: Users can use the program without internet after downloading the program and user's manual.

CALENDAR: This program does not include any calendar functions.

RECORD INPUT USE: This program only allows for cost of inputs, not use.

TRACK MULTIPLE MARKETS: This program allows you to track production costs, labor, and sales for multiple markets.

PRINTABLE DOCUMENTS: Users can print all Excel documents.

VISUAL AID FEATURES: Color coded and well organized. But it is just Excel spreadsheets, no additional visual aids are provided.

COMMENTS: This is a useful year-end financial planning program that enables users to track income and expenses incurred during the year. While Veggie Compass allows for excellent tracking of income from various markets, farm expenses, and labor, it is not intended or useful for recording production activities.

CSA MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

CSA Member Assembler

Type: CSA Management

Website: <http://www.smallfarmcentral.com/memberssembler>

Cost: Ranges from \$30 to \$400+/month depending on package options (based on number of CSA members).

USER FRIENDLY: This program is very user friendly and comes with a free tutorial webinars, one-on-one technical assistance, and a searchable "knowledge base" by topic.

HANDLE COMPLEX PLANS: While this program is not designed to be a planning and production tool, it offers several helpful features to manage membership sign up, track payments and balances, and communicate efficiently with members.

ACCESS W/OUT INTERNET: Access via internet only.

CALENDAR: This program does not have any calendar features, however, there are some helpful planning features such as scheduling CSA member payments, tracking members on vacation, and setting up automatic email reminders to CSA members.



TRACK MULTIPLE MARKETS: This program is designed for CSA management. However, there is a free online system to pre-sell items at farmers markets or to sell extra to CSA members.

PRINTABLE DOCUMENTS: Data can be downloaded into Excel for manipulation and printing. You can also print pick lists and CSA box labels for customized shares. You can also print your pre-sell lists.

COMMENTS: This program is designed to help users manage CSA membership and delivery. It has a number of functions to help make managing a CSA easier including, online member sign-up, automatic email reminders to members, electronic payment and tracking, and management of weekly produce allocations to members. It also has a member retention tool which allows users to track their success at keeping members. If labor savings are factored in, the program fee seems manageable and justifiable.

FARMIGO

Type: CSA Management

Website: <http://help.farmigo.com/why-farmigo.html>

Cost: 2% of CSA sales, minimum of \$150/month only charged during the months of delivery, \$200 initial deposit used towards future payments

USER FRIENDLY: An excellent, detailed help page lays out all the functions and features of this program with step-by-step screen shots to help users navigate. During the set up process, users are linked with a technical advisor to choose appropriate settings for the needs of the operation. Telephone assistance is available for the duration of program subscription.

HANDLE COMPLEX PLANS: This program can help streamline the many facets of traditional single-farm CSAs and also offers features that are more targeted to bundled CSA programs. The program enables users to identify particular items by the producer and a tab to display multiple producer profiles. Sign up members and management their payments; develop and share pick up location details, delivery routes and other logistics; measure the success of your program by using the various analytics offered.

ACCESS W/OUT INTERNET: Access via internet only.

CALENDAR: Allows scheduling of pick up times, billing for various payment plans, and email communication with members.

TRACK MULTIPLE MARKETS: This program allows for the easy management of multiple pick up locations and also provides a web store platform for the sale of additional items to members and guests.

PRINTABLE DOCUMENTS: Several dozen printable reports can be generated for much of the data that is entered into the system (harvest, box building, pick up location details, delivery routes, etc) or collected from CSA members (contact info, payment). These reports can be downloaded as PDF or CSV file for manipulation or further analysis.



carolina farm
stewardship association

COMMENTS: This program is designed to help users manage CSA membership and delivery and is an impressively comprehensive and adaptable program that could handle a diversity of CSA sizes and models. It seems particularly helpful that the program can generate so many unique reports and graphics that help users understand membership, delivery and payment trends. The web store function is the “gravy” on top of it all, allowing users to more easily maximize their profit at their various delivery locations and to help offset the program fee of 2% of CSA sales.