Introduction to Farm-to-Customer Sales Software

► **Interest in using software platforms for sales increased during the COVID-19 pandemic as many food distribution channels faced challenges. Sales software can facilitate and support direct sales to consumers, allowing growers to try different marketing channels and experiment with how they reach their community.**

Whether you want to start selling through an online storefront, manage a community-supported agriculture (CSA) operation, or manage sales and distribution from the farm or a farmer's market, many options are available.

Point-of-sale systems handle customer payments, help manage sales, and track inventory. Block (formerly known as Square), Shopify, Clover, and QuickBooks Desktop Point of Sale are just a few. These are all generic platforms that are not specific to farming.

Some sales platforms created for farms with direct sales are described in table 1. Each offers an e-commerce storefront, including credit card processing and offline payments, some accounting features/integrations, some marketing features/integrations, and distribution management features.

There are some up-front costs to implementing any of these platforms, including the introductory cost of the

product as well as the initial time spent entering your farm's information. Some platforms offer the option to input your information and perform most of the initial setup for an additional fee. When considering the costs associated with using these products, it is important to think about the potential value the product could add to your operation. There is certainly value to your time as a business owner, and these products can often help owners overcome hardships they face in scaling up their farm business.

Not every generic E-commerce product and farm-specific platform is included in table 1, as there are many. Farmers should research which platform may work best for their operation and use the information provided in this publication as an introduction to farm-specific sales platforms.

Table 1. Comparison of Sales Platforms for Farms with Direct Sales

	Pricing Style	Credit Card Transaction Fee	CSA Management
Barn2Door	Monthly fee + setup fee	Yes	No
Farmigo	% of sales with monthly minimum	Not specified	Yes
Food4All	% per order with maximum charge	Yes	Yes, for additional fee
GrazeCart	Monthly fee	Yes	No
Harvie	% of sales + setup fee	Yes	Yes
Local Food Marketplace	Setup fee + monthly fee	Not specified	Yes, an add-on module
Local Line	Monthly fee	Not specified	Yes
MarketGardenPro	Free basic plan or $10/month	Not specified	No
Open Food Network	Donation-based pricing	Not specified; limited payment methods	No

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