Direct Sales Software Platforms

DIRECT SALES SOFTWARE PLATFORMS

While markets, restaurants, and other food distribution channels close or reduce operations to prevent the spread of COVID-19, farms across the country have expressed interest in using software platforms that support direct sales to consumers in their communities. This publication highlights product options and sales models that farmers may find helpful.

The selected products are farm-specific sales platforms that support single-farm, direct sales. Generic e-commerce platforms, platforms that sell farm products to consumers, and farm aggregators or food hubs are not included.

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Feature	Description	1000EcoFarms	Barn2Door	Cropolis	CSAware	EatFromFarms	Farmers Web	Farmigo	Food4All	GrazeCart	GrownBy	HarvestHand	Harvie	Local Food Marketplace	Local Line	Local Orbit	MyRealFoods	Open Food Network	Online Farm Markets	WhatsGood
E-commerce storefront	Post individual items for sale in an online shop	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
CSA / subscription management	Offer subscription products ("farm shares") and manage CSA members			✓			✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
Order forms	Create availability lists to send to customer list and customers can order directly from list			✓		✓							✓	✓	✓					
Multi-farm / Food hub features	Facilitates multiple farms selling through one storefront or availability list					✓	✓					✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Process credit card payments	Customer can purchase products online with a credit card	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Offline payment options	Customer can pay offline with cash, check, EBT/SNAP, or other in-person payment		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Accounting tools or integration	Data automatically exported to Quickbooks, or other significant accounting reporting features		✓		✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Marketing tools or integration	Email or SMS customers through platform, or customer date integrates with third-party CRM, or other significant marketing features		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Distribution management	Facilitates logistics tasks, such as delivery route planning and packing lists		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

DIRECT SALES MODELS

Reactions to the COVID-19 epidemic have quickly increased interest in buying food from grocery store and restaurant alternatives. Farmers across the country have turned to the sales models in the below chart to help them meet their local demand.

This chart briefly describes the sales channels that farmers in our Coalition have been turning to, offers a few questions that farmers should consider before hastily changing their sales model, and suggests software platforms that may help support a shift to each model.

Sales Model	Description	Questions to Consider	Products to Consider
Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)	A method of pre-selling shares of your season's harvest prior to the start of your season. Also refers to any subscription-based farm sales, usually distributed weekly or monthly to customers via on-farm pick-up, at a distribution site, or delivered to customers' homes.	Do you produce a diverse product mix that will make joining your CSA worthwhile? Are you capable of managing weekly communications with each of your customers? Is your customer base familiar with CSA? Can your customers pay for your CSA upfront, or do you have the capacity to collect payments throughout the season? Are you capable of delivery, or is your farm easily/safely accessible to your customers?	Farmigo Harvie CSAware GrownBy HarvestHand Local Food Marketplace
Virtual Farmers Markets / Farmers Market Pre-Orders	Sell your farm's products on an e-commerce website or app that also sells other farms' products, with distribution happening at a common physical site.	How are market farmers organized in your region? Are they using a shared sales platform? Who is administering the program? Can you accept payments online? How will consumers find out about this buying opportunity? Do you have a safe distribution location?	Cropolis Local Orbit Local Line WhatsGood Open Food Network Online Farm Markets
Buying club / Online order form	Use an ordering app to send weekly availability lists to your customer list, or to a group of consumers using social media. Distribute via on-farm pick-up, at a distribution site, or deliver to customers' homes.	Do you have a customer contact list, or the capacity to build one? Do you produce a diverse product mix that will make joining your buying club or reviewing your order forms worthwhile? Are you capable of delivery, or is your farm easily/safely accessible to your customers? Can you accept payments online?	GrazeCart Barn2Door Cropolis WhatsGood HarvestHand GrownBy Farmers Web Food4All 1000 EcoFarms Harvie My Real Foods
Multi-farm sales / Food hub	Sell products from multiple farms in such a way that the customer makes one transaction and receives one distribution.	Who is going to manage the logistics? Consider: order processing, payment processing, distribution, customer service. Is there enough profit margin to compensate someone to do this work? Do you have a safe place to aggregate and distribute products? Have you worked with these other farmers before? How will the sales and distribution schedule align with each farm's operations?	Farmigo EatFromFarms Local Orbit My Real Foods CSAware Local Line Open Food Network Local Food Marketplace Online Farm Markets
Home shipping	Customers can purchase products online and receive them at their homes.	Are you capable of home delivery? Consider: driving distance, cold storage infrastructure, labor. Do you have enough profit margin to pay for shipping supplies or delivery cost? How much can you increase your prices to cover costs? Is your product appropriate for shipping? How would you need to change your farm operations to ship products to customers?	GrazeCart EatFromFarms Barn2Door Farmers Web Food4All 1000 EcoFarms

SOFTWARE PLATFORM DETAILS

	Platform	Description	Pricing
	1000 EcoFarms	Online sales profiles for farms. Display your product inventory online and process credit card sales. https://1000ecofarms.com/	4.9% of sales or $24/month 2.9% + $0.30 per credit card transaction
	Barn2Door	Online storefront which can be embedded into your website. Multiple third-party integrations. Subscription (CSA) sales possible. More details: https://tilth.org/app/uploads/2020/03/Barn2Door.pdf https://www.barn2door.com/	$59–99/month 2.9% + $0.30 per credit card transaction $299–499 setup fee
	Cropolis	Build and send order forms / availability lists to your customers which they can buy from directly; unlimited number of forms and customer groups. https://cropolis.co/	$49–99/month 2.9% + $0.30 per credit card transaction
	CSAware	CSA management: create shares and add-on product, share customization, member management, and distribution tools. Owned by Local Harvest, a national directory of family farms and farmers markets. https://www.csaware.com/	2% of sales, min. $100/month Credit card transaction fee not specified
	EatFromFarms	E-commerce storefront with variable weight pricing feature. "Subvendor" feature that supports multi-farm sales. https://eatfromfarms.com/	$9/month + $0.25–0.50/order 2.9% + $0.30 per credit card transaction
	Farmers Web	Build and send order forms / availability lists to your customers which they can buy from directly. Integrates with AgSquared crop management software for an additional fee. https://www.farmersweb.com/	$75–100/month 3.5% + $0.30 per credit card transaction +$10/month for Quickbooks integration

SOFTWARE PLATFORM DETAILS

FARMIGO	**Farmigo**	Comprehensive sales management platform for CSA and multi-farm sales. **https://www.farmigo.com/**	2% of sales, min. $150/month Credit card transaction fee not specified
Food4All	**Food4All**	Online storefront to display product inventory and process sales, with some reporting features. More details: https://tilth.org/app/uploads/2020/03/Food4All_OnlineSalesWebinar_200424.pdf **https://www.food4all.com/**	2.5% + $0.95 per order ($9.95 maximum per order) 3.4% + $.030 per credit card transaction
GrazeCart	**GrazeCart**	Online storefront to display product inventory and process sales. Includes website builder and robust distribution management tools. Originally designed by a farm family for their own sales needs. **https://grazecart.com/**	$59-199/month 2.9% + $.030 per credit card transaction
FARM GENERATIONS A FARMER-OWNED COOPERATIVE	**GrownBy**	CSA sales management platform in beta, offering free beta testing accounts to farmers. Owned by Farm Generations Cooperative, an offshoot of National Young Farmers Coalition. **https://www.farmgenerations.coop/**	2.9% + $.030 per credit card transaction
	HarvestHand	CSA management software owned and operated by farmers in Canada. No credit card processing supported, only Paypal or bank transfers. **http://www.harvesthand.com/**	$10 per member per year, first 10 members free
HARVIE	**Harvie**	Comprehensive CSA management platform designed for member share customization, with robust customer support. More details: https://tilth.org/app/uploads/2020/03/Harvie_OnlineSalesWebinar_200424.pdf **https://www.harvie.farm/**	7% of sales 2.9% + $0.30 per credit card transaction $500 setup fee

SOFTWARE PLATFORM DETAILS

	Platform	Description	Pricing
	Local Food Marketplace	Comprehensive sales management platform for CSA and multi-farm sales. More details: https://tilth.org/app/uploads/2020/03/LocalFoodMarketPlace_OnlineSalesWebinar_200424.pdf **https://home.localfoodmarketplace.com/**	$499-999 setup fee plus monthly fee based on features See pricing page for details: https://home.localfoodmarketplace.com/producer-pricing/
	Local Line	Online storefront and order management platform for single farms, farmers markets, or multi-farm collaborations. Option to embed into your website. **https://site.localline.ca/**	$50–80/month plus additional fees for extra features Credit card transaction fee not specified
	Local Orbit	Comprehensive order management platform for multi-farm sales. **https://localorbit.com/**	$70–450/month 2.9% + $0.30 per credit card transaction
	MyRealFoods	Ordering platform with features that support multi-farm buying clubs. No credit card processing; online payments processed through Paypal. **https://myrealfoods.com/**	1% of sales, min. $25/mo.
	Open Food Network	Open source farm sales platform, operated by a global collaborative network. Designed to support multi-farm / food hub sales. More details: https://tilth.org/app/uploads/2020/03/OpenFoodNetwork_OnlineSalesWebinar_200424.pdf **https://openfoodnetwork.net/**	Pricing is donation-based in USA Credit card transaction fee not specified
	Online Farm Markets	Online storefront to display product inventory and process sales, with some multi-farm sales features. **https://onlinefarmmarkets.com/**	5% of sales or $35/month Credit card transaction fee not specified
	WhatsGood	Virtual farmers market application that processes online sales. Offers "white label" apps for individual farmers markets. **https://cravehq.com/farmers-market/**	5% of sales

LEARN MORE

Full links to each listed resource can be found on the next page.

Questions for considering online sales platforms

Review **these questions** composed by Oregon Tilth. They also collected the answers from five popular farm sales platforms to help you learn more about their products.

Legal risks of online sales platforms

Listen to a **podcast episode**, produced by Farm Commons, about the legal risks related to selling through an online platform or CSA program.

Marketing education

Many organizations have recently hosted webinars and published guidebooks to introduce farmers to particular sales products and to online marketing strategy in general. Here are a few examples:

Help consumers find local farms

Maps and lists of farms that sell to the general public can help consumers who are new to buying directly from farmers.

Examples include the **MassGrown Map**, a statewide effort; a **Google Map** coordinated by Future Harvest CASA; and a **farm directory** produced by GrowNYC.

Try a mainstream e-commerce platform

The software products highlighted in this guide were designed specifically for farms. There's a wide world of e-commerce products for other direct-marketing businesses. Often, these will provide the cheapest and easiest-to-use solutions for simple online sales. And more complicated sales models, like CSA, can be supported by product integrations.

Square-Up offers a free basic online store, or you can pay for more features. **Squarespace** and **Shopify** are other competitive options.

Oregon Tilth Webinar:	**Online Sales Platforms for Farmers**
Alderspring Ranch course:	**Start Selling Online and Shipping in 5 Days**
Local Line guide:	**The Direct Market Farmer's Guide to COVID-19**
GrazeCart article:	**The Farm SEO Checklist: 5 Tips to Get Started**
FACT webinars:	**Strategies for Online Farm Stores**
	Create a Farm Website
	Find and Engage Customers on Social Media

RESOURCE LINKS

Questions for Considering Online Sales Platforms (Oregon Tilth)
https://tilth.org/education/resources/questions-for-considering-online-sales-platforms-for-farms-direct-marketing/

Legal Risks of Online Sales Platforms and CSAs (Farm Commons)
https://farmcommons.org/episode-15-farm-sales-through-online-platforms-and-csa-covid-19-coverage-part-4

Online Sales Platforms for Farmers (Oregon Tilth)
https://tilth.org/education/resources/online-sales-platforms-for-farmers/

Start Selling Online and Shipping in 5 Days (Alderspring Ranch)
https://www.alderspring.com/grassrootstartup/shipping-in-five-days

The Direct Market Farmer's Guide to COVID-19 (Local Line)
https://go.localline.ca/hubfs/Gated Content/PDFs/Local Line_The Direct Market Farmers Guide to COVID-19.pdf

The Farm SEO Checklist: 5 Tips to Get Started (GrazeCart)
https://www.anymeeting.com/WebConference/RecordingDefault.aspx?c_psrid=EA50DC82894838&code=281-668-086

Strategies for Online Farm Stores (Food Animal Concerns Trust)
https://www.anymeeting.com/WebConference/RecordingDefault.aspx?c_psrid=E959DC8980493D&code=463-177-309

Create a Farm Website (Food Animal Concerns Trust)
https://www.anymeeting.com/WebConference/RecordingDefault.aspx?c_psrid=E959DB81854A3E&code=592-748-820

Find and Engage Customers on Social Media (Food Animal Concerns Trust)
https://grazecart.com/blog/the-seo-checklist-5-tips-to-get-started

MassGrown Map (Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources)
https://massnrc.org/farmlocator/map.aspx

Where and How to Buy Local During COVID-19 (Future Harvest Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture)
https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=15AjGlXGDQ1xvO6pEhgRm92CW1gGLPfGc&ll=38.55432233779649%2C-78.76473069999997&z=7

Greenmarket Alternative Sales Channel Directory (GrowNYC)
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1MOWl8Cg4xyCvAmR06cFhJ9obYR5ToZD_XhSEcgekjzY/edit#gid=1829695724

Square-Up e-commerce platform: https://squareup.com/us/en/online-store

Sqaurespace e-commerce platform: https://www.squarespace.com/ecommerce-website

Shopify e-commerce platform: https://www.shopify.com/