2021 UPDATE



FARMER TO FARMER

ECOMMERCE PLATFORMS

In early 2020 as COVID-19 hit the United States, consumers quickly moved to purchasing food directly from farmers. Farmers responded by moving quickly to online sales, contactless payments, and contactless deliveries. In order to assist farmers with choosing a software platform for their direct sales, the National Young Farmers Coalition produced a <u>Farmer Guide to Direct Sales Software Platforms</u>. That guide focuses exclusively on farm-specific sales platforms and includes details on pricing, features, and links to additional information on 19 different platforms.

This report details farmer ratings for the eight most popular of those farm-specific sales platforms plus four additional platforms that are not farm-specific and are used by many farmers. This report is designed as a companion piece to the <u>Farmer Guide to Direct Sales Software Platforms</u> and will not repeat information contained in that Guide. Instead it augments the Guide with farmer-to-farmer ratings and details about farmer experiences using the platforms.

The information in this report was compiled through two national surveys of farmers conducted by the <u>CSA Innovation Network</u> in June 2020 and again in November 2021. There were a total of 327 anonymous responses, with 273 farmers contributing data on the 24 platforms included in the survey. This report highlights the 12 platforms that received ratings from at least 10 farmers, including three new entries beyond the 2020 report. For information on additional platforms, see the <u>Resources</u> at the end of this report.











------Price-------Price-------

Click logo to skip to the page for the platform	OVERALL Rating 0 - 5	SET UP	MONTHLY	ADDITIONAL PRICING INFO	PRICING LINK	BEST USE
Barn2Door	3.50	\$399 to \$599	\$84-\$199	4 plans to choose from at different fee levels	barn2door.com/pricing	Farm specific sales, pricing tiers for different customer types
eat from farms	4.66	-	\$15	Must pre-pay for the first 4 months (\$60), Free assistance with set up	eatfromfarms.com/page/ pricing	CSA, farm specific sales, one or multiple sellers
FARMIGO	3.02	-	2% of sales \$150 min	Fees only in months with deliveries, rate discounted for monthly sales over \$100,000	farmigo.com	CSA customization
GrazeCart	4.74	-	\$124 for 100 orders	Additional services available for additional fees, including set up	grazecart.com/pricing	Meat sales, pricing tiers for different customer types
Grownex	4.37	-	2% per transaction	Only credit card transactions are charged; offline payments are free.	https://www.farmgenerations.coop/pricing	CSA (not customized) & local direct sales
HARVIE	3.24	\$1,000	7% per transaction	10,000 transactions free with setup, optional 15% customer acquisition fee/new customer	harvie.farm/sell/#fees	CSA customization
LOCAL LINE	3.75	-	\$48-\$990	Multiple billing options, additional services available for additional fees	site.localline.ca/pricing	Farm specific sales, pricing tiers for different customer types
OPEN FOOD NETWORK	4.50	-	\$15-\$100	Multiple options for individuals, groups, or markets and food hubs, pay what you can	about.openfoodnetwork. net/?page_id=114	One or multiple sellers in the store, multiple languages
shopify	3.83	-	\$29-\$299	3 plans to choose from at different fee levels	shopify.com/pricing	Getting started with online sales
Square	3.90	-	\$0-\$72	4 plans to choose from at different fee levels	squareup.com/us/en/onli ne-store/plans	Getting started with online sales
SQUARESPACE	3.82	-	\$18-\$40	3 plans to choose from at different fee levels	squarespace.com/pricing	Getting started with online sales
WOO COMMERCE	3.76	-	-	Must have a WordPress website, fees are highly customizable and variable	woocommerce.com/post s/woocommerce-pricing/	Getting started with online sales

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BARN2DOOR.COM

RATINGS 27 users & 24 ratings

OVERALL	3.50	☆	☆	☆	£	忿
SET UP EXPERIENCE	3.75	☆	☆	☆	À	☆
EASE OF USE, FARMER	3.63	☆	☆	☆	Ā	忿
EASE OF USE, CUSTOMER	3.81	☆	☆	☆	Ā	厽
VALUE FOR THE PRICE	3.35	☆	☆	☆	À	☆
CUSTOMER SERVICE	3.62	☆	☆	☆	À	忿

SALES CHANNELS

Barn2Door can be used for most sales channels including CSA (but not easily for weekly customization), on-farm sales, home delivery, wholesale, and farmers markets. It allows for different pricing tiers by customer or sales channel.

FARMER PROFILE AND VIDEO TOUR

- Lovefood Farm written Barn2Door profile
- Lovefood Farm video tour Barn2Door store and backend

FARMER COMMENTS

"This platform cannot manage customized CSA, but is fantastic for basic CSA and online sales. I have used 4 different platforms to sell online since 2014, and Barn2Door is my favorite."

"Web design option resulted in a very impressive website. Personal assistant from B2D is responsive and diligent. Love that they don't keep any percent from sales, except for Stripe fees."

"Variable pricing so you can sell by the piece or by the pound.

Website setup available in upper pricing tiers. Email compatible with MailChimp. Customer service rep. Learn center to help you with things and an onboarding manager. Customers say it's very easy to use from their side."

"Based on the price, I would not recommend this for people that do not think they will do more than \$100/week starting out... On the other hand if growing online sales is a big part of your business plan and you are optimistic about the growth of those sales starting with B2D to begin with will save a lot of hassle."

COMPLETE DETAIL

Pros/Cons/Farmer Comments for Barn2Door



EatfromFarms



EATFROMFARMS.COM

RATINGS 30 users & 30 ratings

OVERALL	4.66	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆
SET UP EXPERIENCE	4.43	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆
EASE OF USE, FARMER	4.47	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆
EASE OF USE, CUSTOMER	4.40	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆
VALUE FOR THE PRICE	4.87	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆
CUSTOMER SERVICE	4.97	☆	☆	☆	☆	A

SALES CHANNELS

Eat from Farms can be used for most sales channels including on-farm sales, home delivery, farmers markets, multi-farm sales, food hubs, and CSA (including a "buyer account" where members can pre-pay and draw down the balance on customized orders). It allows for variable weight pricing and product bundles.

PLATFORM DEMO

- Demo of customizable CSA store by Eat from Farms
- Platform overview video by Eat from Farms

FARMER COMMENTS

"Been using this platform for almost 10 years. It has been instrumental in growing our farm business astronomically. I wouldn't use anything else for a beginner, intermediate, or advanced farmer."

"We've used EFF for years and have watched as George works to make the experience and platform more responsive to our needs and our customers' needs. It's a fabulous platform to start with very functional without a lot of confusing bells and whistles."

"The platform is incredibly low-cost. The back-end is as easy to set up and use as Facebook. Developer George Dugan is reliably available to help any time."

"Shopping and Website in One. We get many compliments on how professional it looks and how easy it is. Customer service is the best!

"Very easy to set up and maintain. Allows multiple vendors to share the same online store - good for farmers markets."

COMPLETE DETAIL

Pros/Cons/Farmer Comments for EatfromFarms



Farmigo



<u>farmigo.com</u>

RATINGS 19 users & 17 ratings

OVERALL	3.02	*	*	☆	☆	☆
SET UP EXPERIENCE	3.25	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆
EASE OF USE, FARMER	3.23	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆
EASE OF USE, CUSTOMER	3.00	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆
VALUE FOR THE PRICE	2.79	☆	☆	×	☆	☆
CUSTOMER SERVICE	3.19	☆	☆	☆	☆	$\stackrel{\leftrightarrow}{\sim}$

SALES CHANNELS

Farmigo is best for customized CSA shares. CSA members get a message from the farmer each week letting them know what is in the share and giving them the opportunity to change the contents (within limits the farmer sets) by a deadline (also set by the farmer). If members do not want to customize their share, they get the standard box. Farmigo can also be used to sell extras to CSA members and some respondents are using it for farmers markets and home delivery. SNAP/EBT payments are in development for 2022.

FARMER PROFILE AND VIDEO TOUR

- Crossroads Community Farm written Farmigo profile
- Farmigo staff presentation

FARMER COMMENTS

"Fairly easy to use customer interface. Lots of control on my end."

"This is currently by far the best platform for CSA and Choice CSAs. HANDS DOWN!"

"Hard to customize or add uniqueness about the farm. Our members found it difficult to use. Reporting didn't work for us."

"It's an affordable alternative to Harvie, and it's a decent 'plug and play' management tool for csa subscriptions."

"As a platform it's rather dated in its interface and rather rigid in what it can do. For customizable shares it makes sense, but for simply managing CSA memberships and selling extras it was a disappointment. Support staffing is limited and I don't always get answers when I need them."

"Too much money for what it did and didn't do (no automated emails, little flexibility in set up)."

COMPLETE DETAIL

Pros/Cons/Farmer Comments for Farmigo





GRAZECART.COM

RATINGS 23 users & 13 ratings

OVERALL	4.74	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆
SET UP EXPERIENCE	4.40	☆	☆	☆	☆	À
EASE OF USE, FARMER	4.57	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆
EASE OF USE, CUSTOMER	4.47	☆	☆	☆	☆	À
VALUE FOR THE PRICE	4.47	☆	☆	☆	☆	Ā
CUSTOMER SERVICE	4.52	☆	☆	☆	☆	À

SALES CHANNELS

GrazeCart can be used for most sales channels including on-farm sales, home delivery, multi-farm sales, wholesale accounts, and CSA (but not easily for weekly customization). It allows for different pricing tiers by customer or sales channel, variable weight sales, and is built with delivery routes in mind.

FARMER PROFILE AND VIDEO TOUR

- Gwenyn Hill Farm written GrazeCart profile
- Gwenyn Hill Farm video tour of GrazeCart store and backend

FARMER COMMENTS

"Designed by farmers, easy to use, professional looking."

"Love it, wandered once to another platform for minor issues, and quickly came back!."

"Built with delivery routes, home delivery, and shipping in mind, so it's very easy to set those things up without having to create work arounds. Very user friendly for customers with clean, attractive layouts. Great inventory system - you can track inventory by the package but also charge by the weight. Automated and customizable customer communication. Great customer service. Integrates fairly well with QuickBooks. Multiple pricing options for different kinds of customers (wholesale vs. retail)."

"If there is a downside it is that it was built for a specific market fulfillment type. That is to service buying clubs and home delivery. Those work seamlessly. You have to be a lot more creative to make it integrate with farmers market or CSA programs."

COMPLETE DETAIL

Pros/Cons/Farmer Comments for GrazeCart





GROWNBY.API

RATINGS 20 users & 19 ratings

OVERALL	4.37	☆	☆	☆	☆	£
SET UP EXPERIENCE	4.37	☆	☆	☆	☆	Å
EASE OF USE, FARMER	4.22	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆
EASE OF USE, CUSTOMER	4.05	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆
VALUE FOR THE PRICE	4.47	☆	☆	☆	☆	À
CUSTOMER SERVICE	4.84	☆	☆	☆	☆	À

SALES CHANNELS

Grown By is best for CSA (but not for weekly customization), farmers market, on-farm sales, and home delivery. Online and offline customer payments are both supported and include installment, deposit, and pay in full options. The cooperative business model means that those who join the cooperative as members/owners have some influence in ongoing platform development and also share in company profits.

VIDEO TOURS

- Footprint Farm video tour of GrownBy store and backend
- Hearty Roots Farm <u>video tour of GrownBy mobile app</u>

FARMER COMMENTS

"Grown By went online the same month that I was desperately in search of a solution that would work for my very small scale. I feel really lucky to have found it and will continue using and recommending it to everyone who will listen!"

"Excellent tools for managing CSAs and share distributions.

Customer ability to skip weeks, add products, and make changes is a major labor saver."

"It's a farmer-owned co-op with lots of room to expand in features as membership & sales grow."

"It has been an affordable way for my very small farm to sell subscriptions. The leadership is super accessible and interested in helping folks use the platform in ways that work for them. I also love that it's cooperatively owned."

"New platform so there's not as many features built as some of the other software that's been around."

COMPLETE DETAIL

Pros/Cons/Farmer Comments for Grown By



HARVIE

HARVIE.FARM

RATINGS 17 users & 16 ratings

OVERALL	3.24	☆	*	☆	☆	☆
SET UP EXPERIENCE	3.57	☆	☆	☆	X	☆
EASE OF USE, FARMER	2.77	☆	☆	X	☆	☆
EASE OF USE, CUSTOMER	3.34	☆	☆	☆	☆	$\stackrel{\wedge}{\sim}$
VALUE FOR THE PRICE	2.83	☆	☆	☆	$\stackrel{\wedge}{\approx}$	$\stackrel{\wedge}{\sim}$
CUSTOMER SERVICE	3.84	☆	☆	☆	X	☆

SALES CHANNELS

Harvie is best for customized CSA shares. CSA members set their vegetable preferences at the beginning of the season and Harvie designs a weekly share for each member based on those preferences and what the farm has available that week. Members can also choose to further customize their share weekly or buy extras. Some respondents are also using Harvie Farm Stand for farmers market, home delivery, and on-farm sales.

FARMER PROFILE AND VIDEO TOURS

- Park Ridge Organics written Harvie profile
- Park Ridge Organics <u>video tour of Harvie store and backend</u>

FARMER COMMENTS

"Customer service was very good, which is great since the platform was very complicated to set up and operate."

"This is a huge part of our business, so we have to deal with it if we like it or not. It has expanded our business significantly by giving potential members what they want: choice."

"Most customizable. Excellent for members. Customer support for both members and farmers. Harvie can help answer those tedious questions. Also they offer recipes and can help with marketing."

"Highly organized and adaptable platform for customizing weekly deliveries and selling extras. Great staff and really great concept."

"Many tasks that should be easy are not accessible to Farm admins, and require contacting Harvie support for resolutions. Mechanics could be more flexible for each farm to adapt as needed. Confusion for members about "Harvie support" vs. "Farm support" that encroaches on farm to member relationship building."

COMPLETE DETAIL

Pros/Cons/Farmer Comments for Harvie



Local Line



LOCALLINE.CA

RATINGS 34 users & 27 ratings

OVERALL	3.75	☆	☆	☆	£	☆
SET UP EXPERIENCE	3.88	☆	☆	☆	£	☆
EASE OF USE, FARMER	3.71	☆	☆	☆	£	☆
EASE OF USE, CUSTOMER	3.43	☆	☆	☆	£	☆
VALUE FOR THE PRICE	3.53	☆	☆	☆	£	☆
CUSTOMER SERVICE	4.39	☆	☆	☆	☆	A

SALES CHANNELS

Local Line can be used for most sales channels including farmers market, home delivery, on-farm sales, food hubs, wholesale, and CSA (but not for weekly customization). It allows customers to choose from multiple payment methods including cash, check, credit card, and even SNAP. Credit cards are processed through the platform, and all other payments must be completed directly between the farmer and the customer.

FARMER PROFILE AND VIDEO TOUR

- Shared Legacy Farms written Local Line profile
- Shared Legacy Farms <u>video tour of Local Line store and</u> backend functions

FARMER COMMENTS

"I think Local Line as it stands is the beginning to something great.

I feel that it could still be more user friendly. Navigating as a customer isn't as seamless as it could be, especially mobile use."

"Allows an infinite number of products, organizes orders, allows for easier delivery and pick-up logistics."

"Local Line is a great product. We appreciate the ease with which we were able to transition, but sincerely wish it looked a bit more polished, and was a bit more streamlined for the customer's experience."

"We have had customers get confused by the ordering process, especially when it comes to selecting their method for receiving their produce (pick-up or delivery). The website sometimes glitches and forces customers to start the ordering process over, or to abandon the site and look elsewhere."

COMPLETE DETAIL

Pros/Cons/Farmer Comments for Local Line



Open Food Network



OPENFOODNETWORK.ORG

RATINGS 13 users & 11 ratings

OVERALL	4.50	☆	☆	☆	☆	A
SET UP EXPERIENCE	3.91	☆	☆	☆	A	岙
EASE OF USE, FARMER	4.00	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆
EASE OF USE, CUSTOMER	4.00	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆
VALUE FOR THE PRICE	4.45	☆	☆	☆	☆	Å
CUSTOMER SERVICE	4.45	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆

SALES CHANNELS

Open Food Network can be used for all sales channels including farmers market, home delivery, on-farm sales, food hubs, wholesale, and CSA (but not for weekly customization).

VIDEO TOUR

Basic platform overview by Open Food Network

FARMER COMMENTS

"Worked well as a place to take and track online CSA payments and signups. Low cost. Customer service was exceptionally friendly and responsive."

"There was a strong learning curve to use this program, but once I got the hang of it I was able to update it easily. Easy to use as a customer. I like that there is no cost associated with this platform. It is a really great service for farmers."

"Great flexibility and fluidity of use between farms and delivery sites. Easy to create aggregation in an affordable way for the farmer."

"Worked well as a place to take and track online CSA payments and signups. Low cost. Customer service was exceptionally friendly and responsive."

"Reports offered are very limited. Payment options are limited."

COMPLETE DETAIL

Pros/Cons/Farmer Comments for Open Food Network





SHOPIFY.COM

RATINGS 31 users & 24 ratings

OVERALL	3.83	☆	☆	☆	*	☆
SET UP EXPERIENCE	4.00	☆	☆	☆	*	☆
EASE OF USE, FARMER	3.65	*	*	☆	☆	☆
EASE OF USE, CUSTOMER	4.46	☆	☆	☆	*	☆
VALUE FOR THE PRICE	3.55	☆	☆	☆	X	☆
CUSTOMER SERVICE	3.20	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆

SALES CHANNELS

Shopify can be used for all sales channels including home delivery, on-farm sales, farmers market, wholesale, and CSA (but not easily for weekly customization). As a common platform for many uses beyond farm sales, Shopify is an easy entry point for eCommerce and an easy place to start with online sales.

FARMER PROFILE AND VIDEO TOUR

<u>Schenker Family Farms on Spotify</u> (minute 28:27) by West Central Missouri Action Agency

FARMER COMMENTS

"Easy to enter product. When you have many SKUs this platform is the best, but it's not suited well to the CSA model."

"Tons of add-ons/apps for just about anything. Super responsive customer support. Good customer analysis and reporting.

Integrates with other platforms - quickbooks etc. It looks awesome and professional. Because it's the industry leader and also because you can't change too much about the checkout experience it looks really familiar and safe to customers."

"All those extra apps cost money, so things can add up pretty quickly if you need all the bells and whistles. There is so much possible that it can be a little hard to figure out where to start."

"There are two contenders for our business: Farmigo first and Shopify second. We are currently evaluating ways to move to Shopify as it would save us thousands of dollars a year, but Farmigo has great reporting and is built for CSAs, particularly Choice CSAs! So we feel it's worth the money."

COMPLETE DETAIL

Pros/Cons/Farmer Comments for Shopify



Square



SQUARE.COM

RATINGS 99 users & 86 ratings

OVERALL	3.90	☆	*	☆	*	☆
SET UP EXPERIENCE	4.08	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆
EASE OF USE, FARMER	3.95	☆	☆	*	*	☆
EASE OF USE, CUSTOMER	4.32	☆	☆	*	☆	☆
VALUE FOR THE PRICE	4.19	☆	☆	*	☆	☆
CUSTOMER SERVICE	3.31	☆	☆	☆	X	☆

SALES CHANNELS

Square is best for on-farm sales and farmers markets. It can also be used for home delivery and CSA (but not easily for weekly customization). As a common platform for many uses beyond farm sales, Square is an easy entry point for eCommerce and an easy place to start with online sales.

FARMER PROFILE AND VIDEO TOUR

Wolf Creek Farm on Square (minute 49:16) by West Central Missouri Action Agency

FARMER COMMENTS

"You have your own site, and it looks really nice and unique. It's easy to set up, easy for the customer to use. Can use square gift cards which is what we use for our market-style CSA so that was a perfect integration. We also use Square for tracking and accepting farmers market sales so the reports integrate seamlessly."

"We went with this platform because it is free (aside from credit card fees) and pretty easy to set up. The platform is relatively easy to use, makes products look sexy, and offers a slick, smooth customer experience. If customers want to pay with a different payment method, (cash/check), I've created 100% off coupon codes for them--then we don't get charged any credit card fees!"

"Not specific to food/farm businesses and lacks features that would make farm sales easier to manage. For selling fresh produce, it does NOT have a good way to print packing slips or do some key reporting. You get what you pay for."

COMPLETE DETAIL

Pros/Cons/Farmer Comments for Square





SQUARESPACE.COM

RATINGS 46 users & 39 ratings

OVERALL	3.82	☆	☆	☆	A	忿
SET UP EXPERIENCE	3.90	☆	☆	☆	£	忿
EASE OF USE, FARMER	3.69	☆	☆	☆	A	☆
EASE OF USE, CUSTOMER	4.05	☆	☆	☆	☆	$\stackrel{\wedge}{\approx}$
VALUE FOR THE PRICE	3.95	☆	☆	☆	£	念
CUSTOMER SERVICE	3.32	☆	☆	☆	Å	☆

SALES CHANNELS

Squarespace is best for home delivery, on-farm sales, CSA, and farmers market. It can also be used for wholesale and multi-farm sales. Squarespace provides for both a website and an integrated online store. As a common platform for many uses beyond farm sales, Squarespace is an easy entry point for eCommerce and an easy place to start with online sales.

FARMER PROFILE AND VIDEO TOUR

- Raleigh's Hillside Farm written Squarespace profile
- Raleigh's Hillside Farm <u>video tour of store and backend</u>

FARMER COMMENTS

"We use Squarespace for our website, and we love it. It is user friendly, renews all your stuff for you, and keeps us looking good. It even has email now, so you can streamline many things."

"Lots of Googling to figure out how to do anything beyond a very basic level. There are also some weird back-end things that need to be dealt with one-by-one which I found very time consuming."

"Time consuming to set up individual listings. Wish I could better separate sales channels (CSA shares vs. market offerings.)"

"It's very affordable for what it does, and if you know a bit about website design, you can create a custom shop just for your farm. We use this for all our CSA subscriptions and CSA add-on sales."

"No cash option. Doesn't give total number of items sold (which would help with harvest numbers)."

COMPLETE DETAIL

Pros/Cons/Farmer Comments for Squarespace





WOOCOMMERCE.COM

RATINGS 21 users & 18 ratings

OVERALL	3.76	☆	\Rightarrow	☆		☆
SET UP EXPERIENCE	3.51	*	☆	☆	*	☆
EASE OF USE, FARMER	3.55	*	*	☆	×	☆
EASE OF USE, CUSTOMER	4.00	*	☆	☆	☆	☆
VALUE FOR THE PRICE	4.21	*	☆	☆	☆	☆
CUSTOMER SERVICE	2.96	*	☆	*	☆	☆

SALES CHANNELS

WooCommerce can be used for all sales channels including home delivery, on-farm sales, CSA, and wholesale. It requires a WordPress website and is then added as a plugin. It is not designed to be specific to farm sales.

FARMER COMMENTS

"WooCommerce has no fees, infinite plugins, and integrations. It's easy to manage inventory, and seems like a good choice for a growing farm business that will want more options in the future."

"Ability to customize, low fees"

"Free for basic setup. Most crucial functions require a paid plugin. Data is yours and won't disappear after cancellation. Works within website branding and styling. Shopping cart is part of the website, not a separate page on another platform's server."

"Almost all extended functionality comes from paid plugins.

Documentation is ok, not great. Can be hard to customize. Lots of layers of potentially conflicting plugins- if something is not working properly, it can be hard to find the culprit and then fix it, unless you are or have a developer."

"Potential high learning curve or expense to hire someone else to do the website work."

COMPLETE DETAIL

Pros/Cons/Farmer Comments for WooCommerce



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- CSA Ideas Lab <u>Farmer to Farmer eCommerce Exchange Webinar</u>
- CSA Innovation Network <u>Questions to Ask When Choosing Your Farm's eCommerce Platform</u>
- The Land Connection Considerations for choosing an e-commerce platform for selling your farm products
- National Young Farmers Coalition <u>Farmer Guide to Direct Sales Software Platforms</u>
- Lake Pepin Local Online Platform Comparison Chart for Aggregated Sales
- North Central SARE (Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education) <u>COVID-19 Sales and Marketing Resources</u>, including numerous resources, farmer interviews, and webinars from organizations around the Midwest.

