



Introduction

Farmplan: Financial and Production Planning Software for Farmers and Lenders.

Farmplan version 2.0 was released in January 2002. It is an enhancement over the previous version 1.04 released November 2000. Over the past year we have taken the suggestions made by farmers, lenders and our staff and have made many improvements to the program to provide you with better information.

Farmplan is a farm financial and production planning tool, written in *Microsoft Excel* '97, useful to farmers and lenders, and available for free download from the Manitoba Agriculture and Food web site at <http://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture>

From hobby farmers to large commercial enterprises, agricultural producers can use Farmplan computer software as a tool to help make farm management decisions.

Farmplan software generates documents such as the debt servicing worksheet, a pro-forma net worth statement, monthly cash flow, and cash and accrual farm income statements and space for five years of history. The plan addresses viability issues, shows producers the direction in which their farm is going and more importantly, where they will be financially at the end of the plan.

This program will be useful to farmers who are used to doing farm planning and filling out annual lines of credit for their financial institution. It shows producers if their plan will make money, and it also provides financial institutions with all the information they need in support of their lending activity.

Manitoba Agriculture and Food has developed this program primarily for its staff to use in assisting farmers with financial and production planning. We are not in the business of developing farm software. However, we know that our departmental software is also useful directly by producers, lenders and others outside the

department. Therefore, we are making it available to the public through our web site in the interest of all Manitoba farmers.

Farmplan requires users to have a computer that runs in a Windows 95 environment (or higher), the Microsoft Excel 97 program (or higher), a working knowledge of Excel and a compatible printer. Producers who do not have Microsoft Excel '97 (or higher) can purchase Microsoft Office XP, Small Business Edition, DSP/OEM version for less than \$300 from most computer stores¹. Having Excel also enables producers to use the Cost of Production programs and other Decision-Support Software (a total of over 40 programs) that are available for download from the Manitoba Agriculture and Food web site.

Farmers who want to receive a copy of the program, but do not have Internet access, are asked to bring a diskette to their local Manitoba Agriculture and Food office.

We would encourage farmers to make arrangements with the Agricultural Representative or Farm Management Specialist at their local Manitoba Agriculture and Food office for assistance in using the program and interpreting the results.

Contact:

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¹ **Excel Buying Tip:** You can purchase the **DSP/OEM** version of **Microsoft Office XP, Small Business Edition** from most computer stores for under **\$300**. This purchase will include Excel, Word, Publisher and Outlook, all 2002. The DSP/OEM version costs less than the “regular” price of \$695. To “qualify” for the DSP/OEM version, Microsoft requires that you buy some hardware along with your software purchase. Any hardware purchase will qualify you for the DSP/OEM version, even if you buy only Ram, Hard Drives or, sometimes, a package of case screws (\$1-\$2.) Also remember that students and teachers get discounts. For more information on the other MS-Office XP editions, such as the Professional Edition DSP/OEM version (\$610) which includes all of the above plus PowerPoint and Access, see the Microsoft web site at <http://www.microsoft.com/office/howtobuy/choosing.htm#smallbiz>

In the past it was possible to buy the “Excel Competitive-Upgrade Package” for \$170, which let you upgrade from Excel '95 to Excel '97 (or higher.) This has all changed since the release of Microsoft Office XP. The latest Upgrade package upgrades you only from Excel '97 (or higher) up to Excel 2002 – that’s it! Also, programs such as MS-Works, Quattro or Lotus no longer qualify you for the “competitive upgrade.” For more information on Microsoft upgrades, see <http://www.microsoft.com/office/howtobuy/upgrading.htm>