



THE PROFITABLE FARMER'S TOOLKIT

30+ ideas, systems, apps, and tools to shave
hours off your week, increase your
effectiveness and multiply your impact

GROWING

FARMERS

WELCOME!

Thanks for downloading our toolkit guide.

Over the 16 years I have been farming and consulting, we have visited and worked with many farms, tried dozens of systems, spent thousands of dollars on trialing products, and wasted many hours trying to set up frustrating software.

In this guide you'll get the products, services, and tools that can make you incredibly successful. In addition, there are links to videos that help explain some of the products in more detail. The outline is on the next page.



Note: some of these tools might not be the right one at your stage of farming, make sure to do your research before buying! For example, don't just go buy a POS system because I say so, make sure that its the right system for your farm.

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One of my mentors always told me,

“Michael, a farmer first has to be a great marketer, then a good businessperson, and finally, a farmer.”

Today, it's essential that you have a website, a Facebook page, and a Google listing. Typically it's the website that can be most intimidating, but nowadays, it's very easy. Here's how it works...



We recommend using [GoDaddy](#) to buy your domain and hosting. Cheap, easy, fast, and with good service. They also offer a host of other web services if you want to go with a one stop shop. We have also had good success using [Bluehost](#) in the past as well. They offer many of the same services as GoDaddy.

To build your site, we recommend the Wordpress platform using [Elegant themes Divi Builder](#). It makes building a highly customized site quick and easy. If [Wordpress](#) overwhelms you, then we would recommend using [Wix](#) or [Squarespace](#) as plug-and-play website builders. They don't have quite the flexibility of Wordpress, but are super simple.



BUSINESS SOFTWARE

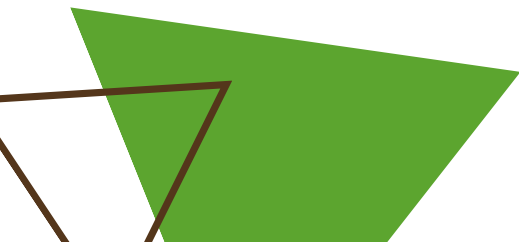
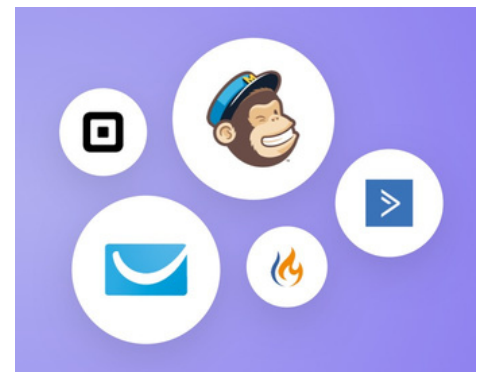


We also recommend using Google Workspace to house your email, backup your photos, and store all your documents. We have managed multiple businesses and each have used Google Apps with great success. One major advantage of going with business level (\$5 per user per month) is having custom email addresses on your domain.



With Google Photos, we can take pictures of things in the field and use the app as a virtual brain for plantings, disease, and things we want to remember visually. It automatically syncs the photos taken with your phone into the cloud, and then clears them off your phone to free up space. It's searchable by date, person, even by item in the picture. (Yes, type in lettuce and it will pull up all the pictures containing lettuce!)

For sending a basic email newsletter, you can't go wrong with MailChimp. Unless you are mailing to thousands of people, Your account will be free. They have great tutorials as well. If you are looking to take things to the next level and do advanced automation, we just started using ActiveCampaign for our email and so far have loved it.



FINANCIAL SOFTWARE



Keeping track of the books on a farm is essential to knowing if you are making money or not. Too many farmers we work with just go by the balance in the checking account. Not good! The problem is, many systems are difficult to understand, which makes it hard to keep track of the necessary information. In fact, this is the first area that we recommend farms have outside help with. However, if you are planning on doing it yourself, here are a few programs that we have found very helpful.



Quickbooks Online is the ubiquitous financial software on the market and has come a long way in ease of use. The receipt functionality is great and there are many advantages to having everything in the cloud. The downside is it's not cheap (anywhere from \$5-30 a month)



If you are looking for a free program I have been very happy with waveapps.com and find it intuitive, the service exceptional, and best of all it's free! We run several of our less complicated businesses with it.



For tracking mileage on the farm MileIQ is straightforward and helps us make sure we are saving every penny in travel that we can. It's as easy as swiping right and left! There is a basic free version and a pro paid account.



I love the free scannable app for inputting documents, business cards, receipts, and other information into the cloud. It has great features, such as being able to easily email documents or send them to specific Google Drive folders. I use this app every day!

ONLINE & POS SYSTEMS

Going off the mantra “you can’t manage what you can’t measure,” many of our clients are moving to POS systems to take orders online, track farmers market sales, and take credit cards. The advantages of this includes convenience for the customer, the ability to gather data and know exactly when, how, and at what rate their products are selling and easy management of custom orders.

We have worked with three different systems and each has its strengths and weaknesses.



SQUARE

We originally used Square to process credit cards at our farmers market and then they added a FREE POS system. While it lacks a lot of other higher end software features, it's great for beginners!



SHOPIFY

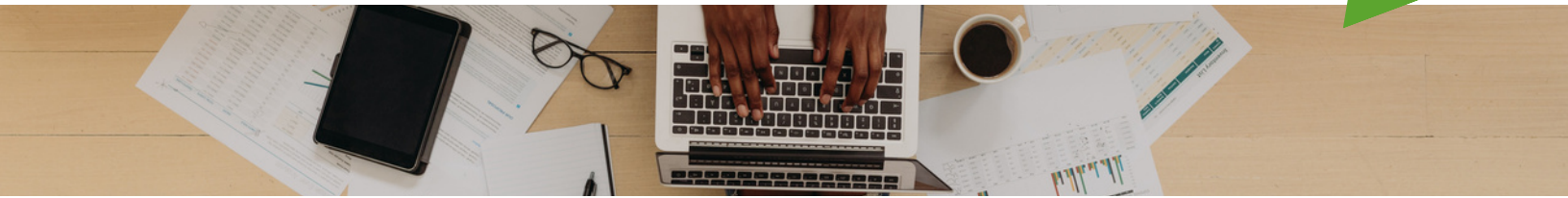
Is more like a sales system. It offers a POS, Web store and shopping cart, and other features. There is a monthly maintenance fee (\$9 to several hundred dollars) for the software, but a lot of advantages, it even allows you to offer a storefront through your Facebook page!



LOCAL LINE

We love Local Line because it's easy to use and has comprehensive features focused on farmers. They also have a super helpful customer service team!

HARDWARE & OFFICE TOOLS



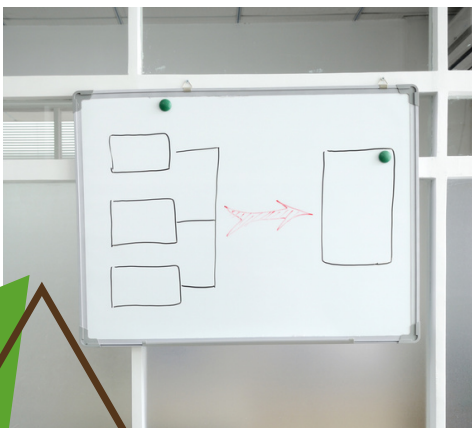
Having properly setup and easy-to-use hardware is important as well. And I'll confess, I'm an Apple junkie. I couldn't live without my Macbook Pro (I usually buy reconditioned right from Apple) and iPhone 11.

Those two tools are integral for me being able to manage on the go.



From taking chef orders in the field, to reviewing contracts and weather from the tractor seat, to sending high quality pest pictures to to my local extension agent, and shooting videos of our crops for our customers, this is the dashboard of my systems. When I travel, I frequently use it as a hotspot for my computer. And I love how everything syncs seamlessly. Plus it has a flashlight! 😊

Protecting them is important too! I love this waterproof case from Lifeproof. I've used them for years and they will send you a new replacement case if it breaks.



Whiteboard: I'm a big fan of the humble whiteboard. I found this one on Amazon that's in my office. It's a great value compared to the ones locally for the price. And every office needs sticky notes as well! I've color coded my notes in the office and it makes a huge difference. Allows me to instantly know what's due, when, to who!



WEATHER TOOLS

Keeping track of the weather is vital for any farmer. Measuring greenhouse temperatures, knowing wind speed and projected rainfall are essential. Early in our farming career, we invested in the Vantage Pro 2 weather station system and it became invaluable for us. You can use multiple sensors, and set up alerts to text or telephone. While expensive, the dependability, accuracy, and versatility of this system is well worth the money.



Of course, we are always using multiple apps to keep track of the weather as well. I really like the NOAA website for super accurate reporting, but also rely on The Weather Channel and the Weatherbug apps as well. Each has its advantages, so trying them all out is a good idea.

Best of all – they are free!



SOIL TOOLS

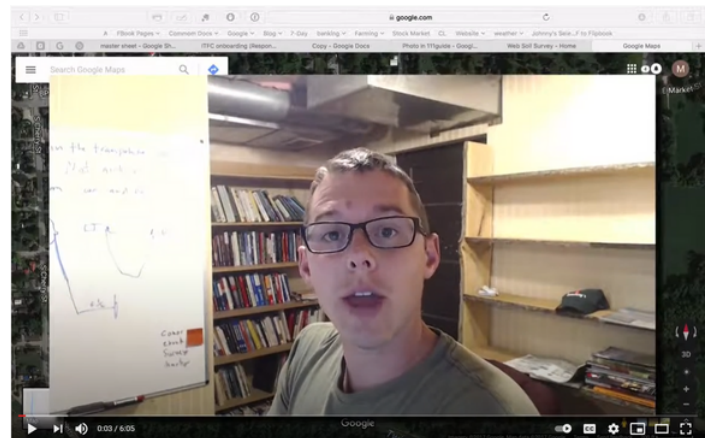


There is a major advantage that US growers have because the government spent a lot of money to track the different soils across the US and put them in an easily searchable database.

WEB SOIL SURVEY

Here's a video where I explain how to quickly use the software. Trust me, if you didn't know about this before, now you will be hooked!

WATCH NOW



You'll also need one of these soil sampling probes. Forestry Suppliers has a number of different types available as well. Or you can use a shovel. They work, just harder to use.

GET YOURS

IN THE GREENHOUSE



Our farm is built around our covered production, and I feel strongly that it's important to your farm's success. We use companies such as Harnois, Rimol Greenhouse Systems, and Four Season Tools for our larger structures. If you are looking for smaller, caterpillar style tunnels, you can't beat the price of Farmer's Friend tunnels. I will caution that they are not built for high snow load so you may want to think about bracing them or narrowing the bow spacing if you get a lot of snow.



**Don't Miss
our
Tunnel Buying
Guide Course**

PROPAGATION AREA

We believe that a great transplant is the key to a great farm system. That's why we like to make sure our greenhouses are set up with systems that are easy to use and will last a long time.



LASER TEMPERATURE GUN

this is an easy way to measure temperatures in the greenhouse (and the field). Wonder why your peppers aren't germinating? it may just be too cool - this will tell you. You'll have this one the rest of your life.

Click on the image to be taken to an external page where you can buy the item



Water systems are a huge weakness. Hoses used to be a huge frustration until we discovered the Dramm ones. If you wear them out, you send them back!! If you are buying a bunch, it ends up being cheaper from Rainflo. **BUY THEM.** You'll thank me later!

For watering new seedlings, we really like the Wonder Waterer. For best performance, reduce the flow a bit. It has an integrated filter which keeps everything clean.



I really like these brass full-flow shutoffs - they will be used daily on your farm. We actually did wear them out, but only after approximately 20,000 uses!



After seedlings are up, we like the Dramm 1100 breaker. Delivers lots of water super gently.



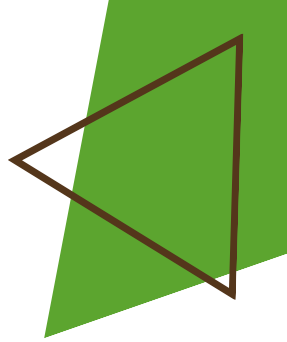
No system would be complete without a few of these 4-way full-flow splitters. There's one on each of our faucets! [Get Yours Here](#)



Quick-Connects are another huge time saver. We used to use the integrated brass ones but found after a while they always stuck. [Now we use these.](#) Buying a bunch? [This website is cheaper.](#)



FIELD TOOLS



GREENS HARVESTER

We've known Jonathan and his team for a while now, and have tried every iteration of the harvester since he started producing them commercially. This product speaks for itself. It's pretty incredible, and the new version is slick. Cuts your greens harvesting time by 80% or more!

This isn't for everyone (especially those with big rocks) but a lot of people love this for the larger market garden (over 1/4 acre). Think of all the options it opens up...

transplanting peas, beans, carrots, etc...

I really like the Terrateck transplanter available from Johnny's, but find the [Small Farm Tools](#) trays much more economical.



PAPERPOT TRANSPLANTER

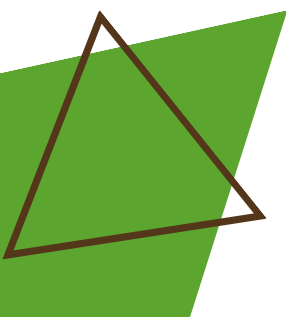


WATER TIMER

Water timer: Under watering (and overwatering because you forgot to shut off the hose) are two huge problems we see crippling production on farms. This \$40 dollar timer will save you hours of work and late night trips to shut off the hose! Set it up and leave it. There are also 4 or more zone ones available. It really comes down to how your farm is set up.



LEATHERMAN CRUNCH

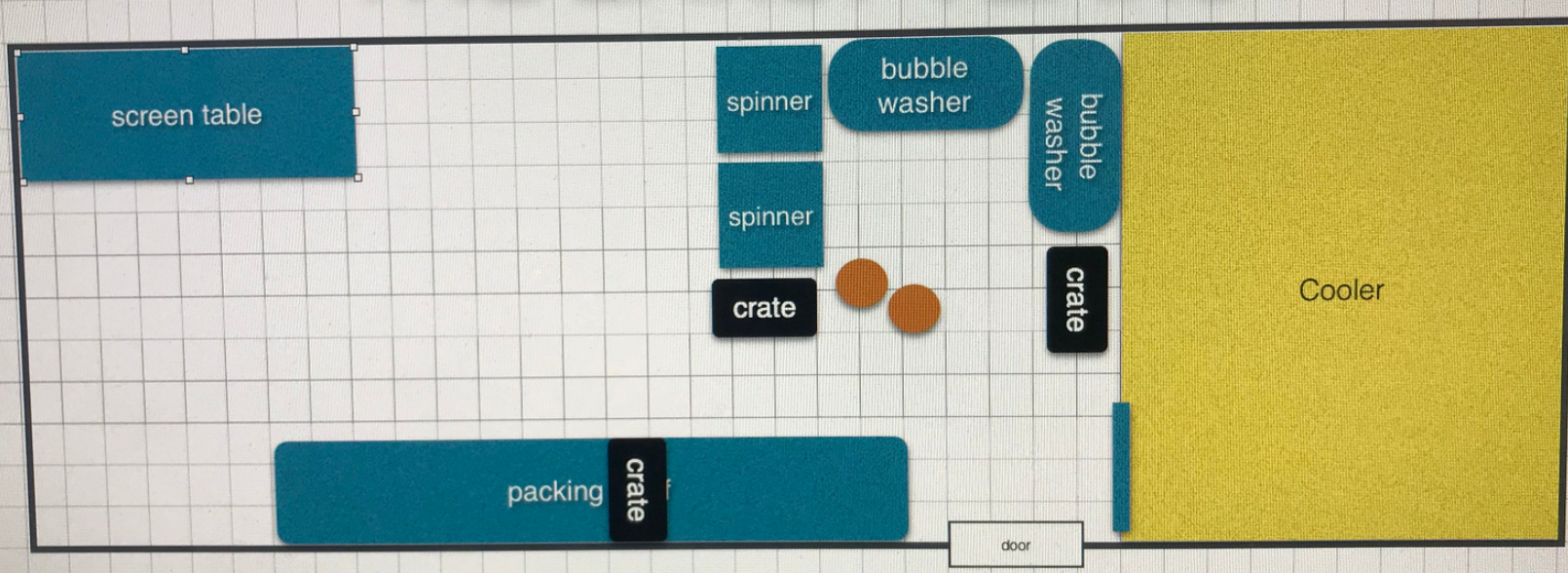


The Leatherman Crunch is one tool I carry with me everywhere. I love the locking pliers feature which has saved my butt so many times with broken down equipment!

Click on the image to be taken to an external page where you can buy the item

WASHING SHED

THE EARLY YEARS



WASHING SHED THE SET UP

When we work with clients, we spend a lot of time here, as there is a lot of repetitive motion and other inefficiencies that can sabotage your effectiveness as a farmer. Here are some ideas that can double or triple your efficiencies.



Having a smooth, cleanable, waterproof surface is so key for a good washing area. When you have concrete, or a similar surface, you can then start using wheels to roll product around instead of carrying it. Saves your back as well. Also, think of using pavers for smaller areas or more temporary situations like this picture.

Weighing product and keeping records of our sales has always been a huge part of our systems. This allows you to dial in what you grow, only harvest what you can sell, and make more money. Here are two scales we recommend.



I like the Torrey price computing scales. They come in either 40 lb or 80 lb. capacity and last up to 100 hours on battery. They are inexpensive, easy to use, and great for the washing shed and farmers market.



A larger, platform scale is also nice to weigh whole stacks of product as well. You can take these into the field and weigh product as it is harvested so you only harvest what you need. Scalesgalore.com has good prices as well.

Click on the image to be taken to an external page where you can buy the item

WASHING SHED TOOLS



“Really,” you say, “how many Apple products do you have?” Well I really didn’t think we would need one until we started running all our farm planning and produce tracking on Google Sheets. Get the one with cellular data so you can connect anywhere. The iPad allows us to manage all our field, packing shed, and market tracking in one place. It allows us to record what came back from market at the end of the day, and makes that info instantly available to the crew who is harvesting for the next market or trying to plan what to do with any extra produce. We love [this case](#) to protect it.

A bubble washer will clean your greens faster, as well as much more gently. We recommend piping the blower motor outside so it’s not as noisy. This is a blower that we have had good luck with. It clamps right to the PVC pipe.



BUBBLER



**OVERFLOW
VALVE**

Ever overflowed your wash tank and flooded your washing shed? A hudson valve allows you to quickly auto-fill a wash tank, and shuts off as soon as the water reaches a predetermined level.

When you want to quickly and efficiently clean in your washing shed, it all comes down to pressure vs. flow.

You need one of them, but both are preferred.

We really like this high-flow gun and have installed it in many washing areas.

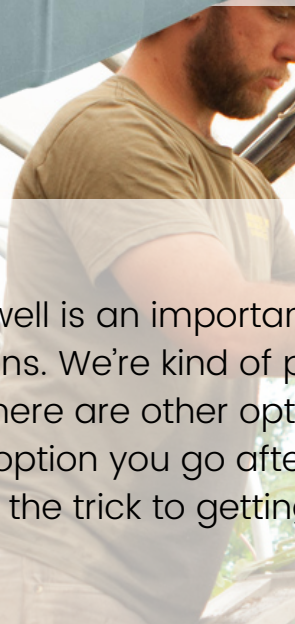


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HARVEST BINS

Harvest bins are a key ingredient to any farm. Our favorite are these Rubbermaid Roughneck containers from Home Depot. We like that they have rounded bottoms that easily slide down the row, a lifetime warranty, and lids that easily clip onto the top.



Drying your greens well is an important aspect in any farm that sells salad greens. We're kind of partial to our Dry Your Greens course, but there are other options out there as well. Make sure that the option you go after is spinning at least 650 RPM's. That's the trick to getting them really dry!

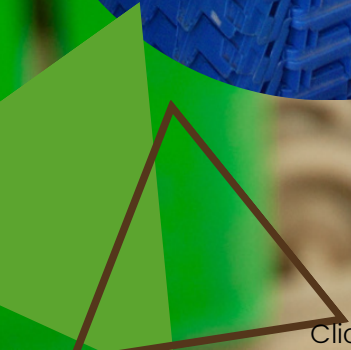


DRY YOUR GREENS



MARKET CONTAINERS

After a few years of farming, we invested in these containers for our markets. You can get cheaper ones at Lowes, but they only last a few seasons where these last 12+ years easily. When we ran the numbers, we figured out that these containers will cost you approximately 3-5 cents per use. Stack that up against a cardboard box! Plus they are food-safe, have integrated lids, and are sturdy enough to stand on.



[Click on the image to be taken to an external page where you can buy the item](#)

FARMER'S MARKET TOOLS

We see good farmers markets as a key marketing avenue for many farms. After doing over 1000 individual markets over the years, here are some things we wouldn't do without.



ECLIPSE ALUMINUM FRAME E-ZUP

We have tried so many E-Z up type canopies and hands down this is our favorite. Check out this video of how one person can easily set one up. It has a great warranty so if a piece breaks just call them and they will send you new parts. White canopies give the best light for your veggies. Other colors can make them look weird. I wish I had known about these Gutters when we were using E-Z Up. This will stop the drips between multiple canopies and keep you, and your produce, dry.



Garden pump Sprayer: These are great to keep on the table to mist down greens so they stay fresh. Much easier to use than simple spray bottles which eventually tire out your hand and don't have that much capacity.



Small chalkboards are also great ways to communicate with your customers, we made several up for our stalls. We really liked liquid chalk markers to write on them.

Tip: these do a great job if the chalk doesn't clean all the way off.

Click on the image to be taken to an external page where you can buy the item



Price signs were something that we struggled with for years. We finally settled on laminating heavy duty paper signs and then leaving the price easily changeable. We would write on it with dry erase markers.



KEEPING YOURSELF DRY

If you are looking for fall/winter/spring insulated, tough as nails, breathable gear, you will love these Carharts. I bought mine over 10 years ago and they look almost new. They are not cheap, but last forever! Don't miss on the pants either!



We've tried a lot of rain gear over the years. For summer, walking around in wet fields from dew, you can't beat the Grundens Weather Watch Bib. They are light, non-insulated, and breathable. We recommend a bright color so you can be seen.

If you are looking for shorter, insulated but still breathable boots, you may want to try the Muck Boot Scrub. One advantage is that you can roll down the top if you get warm wearing them.



Click on the image to be taken to an external page where you can buy the item

PROOF WE USE THE STUFF...



What are we doing?
In this old photo from 08' we
are filling in a trench after
burying radiant heat lines.

A quick note: You may say, "he didn't talk about two way radios, or one of the other tools that I find invaluable on my farm"... Well, several things got axed because I haven't found one that I feel confident in recommending.

If you have a favorite item, email us at hello@growingfarmers.com and we'll make sure to look into it. It might even make it into the next version of this list!



IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO THRIVE

SAY GOODBYE TO THE SLEEPLESS NIGHTS, PROFITLESS SEASONS, AND CONSTANT STRUGGLES. WE'VE HELPED THOUSANDS OF FARMERS GO FROM STRUGGLING TO THRIVING, AND WE CAN HELP YOU, TOO. OUR COACHING, COMMUNITY, AND COURSES WILL HELP YOU NOT ONLY RUN A SUCCESSFUL FARM, BUT ALSO THRIVE IN BUSINESS AND LIFE SO YOU CAN HAVE THE SUCCESS AND FREEDOM YOU ALWAYS WANTED.



COME SEE GROWING
FARMERS FOR YOURSELF