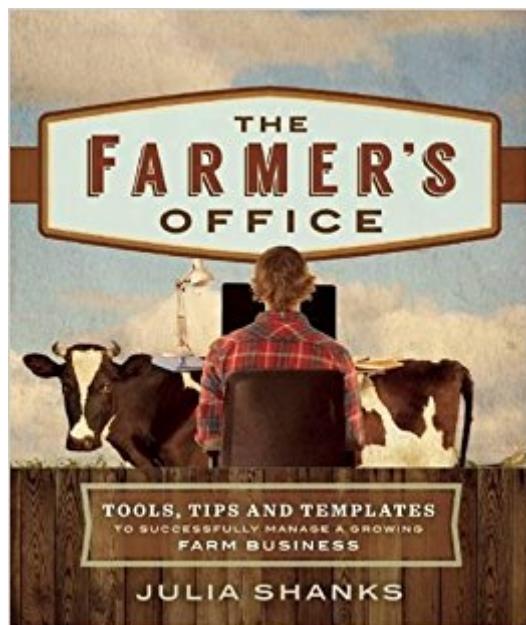


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# The Farmer's Office: Tools, Tips And Templates To Successfully Manage A Growing Farm Business



## **Synopsis**

You decided to become a farmer because you love being outside, working the land and making a difference in the way we eat and farm. And when you decided to become a farmer, you also became an entrepreneur and business person. In order to be ecologically and financially sustainable, you must understand the basics of accounting and bookkeeping, and learn how to manage a growing business. Author Julia Shanks distills years of teaching and business consulting with farmers into this comprehensive, accessible guide. She covers all aspects of launching, running and growing a successful farm business through effective bookkeeping and business management, providing tools to make managerial decisions, apply for a loan or other financing, and offering general business and strategy advice for growing a business. Whether you've been farming for many years or just getting started, *The Farmer's Office* gives you the tools needed to think like an entrepreneur and thoughtfully manage your business for success. Julia Shanks works with food and agricultural entrepreneurs to achieve financial and operational sustainability. She has worked with a range of beginning and established farmers, providing technical assistance and business coaching that has allowed them to launch, stabilize and grow their ventures. A frequent lecturer on sustainable food systems and accounting, she sits on the advisory board of Future Chefs and is the regional leader of Slow Money Boston. Together with Brett Grohsgal, she is also co-author of *The Farmers Market Cookbook*.

## **Book Information**

Paperback: 288 pages

Publisher: New Society Publishers (September 20, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0865718164

ISBN-13: 978-0865718166

Product Dimensions: 7.5 x 0.7 x 8.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars 8 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #161,091 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #61 in Books > Business & Money > Accounting > Bookkeeping #112 in Books > Science & Math > Agricultural Sciences > Sustainable Agriculture #119 in Books > Business & Money > Industries > Agriculture

## **Customer Reviews**

I keep telling people, starting your own small farm is not easy; to make it work, you need -- perhaps

more than anything else -- to learn strong business skills. This is the key element that The Farmer's Office brings to the table; in it Julia Shanks shares solid advice about how to make your farm work financially. A definite must-read for any serious small-scale grower. --Jean-Martin Fortier,Â farmer and author, *The Market Gardener* Managing books and accounts is one of the weakest links I see with farmers today, and The Farmer's Office comes at a perfect time to help. There's so much talk about production and even marketing, but not enough on how to stay organized and manage the books. The Farmer's Office will be a great asset to farmers of all shapes and sizes. --Curtis Stone,Â farmer and author, *The Urban Farmer* The Farmer's Office hits the mark in addressing the business needs of farmers everywhere. Julia Shanks shares her business experience and real world financial training in a meaningful and farmer friendly format. While a farmer's footprints may be the best manure, The Farmer's Office is a key asset to the farm's bottom line. --Richard Wiswall, farmer and author, *The Organic Farmer's Business Handbook* This is the real story of starting and managing a farm, albeit the unsexy one that can lead to long term thrive-ability. Julia Shanks demystifies managing the business of farming one chapter at a time. This book is just what so many of today's new farmers need to face the challenges of agriculture and thrive! -- Sara Dent, co-founder & coordinator, Young AgrariansÂ I don't know anyone who got into farming because they liked business; but anyone who wants to keep farming needs basic business skills, including record keeping. [This book] will help everyone from beginners to experienced growers who need to understand the business of farming. A must-have for anyone running, or thinking of running a farm business. --Andrew Mefferd, Editor, *Growing for Market* magazineÂ You decided to become a farmer because you love being outside, working the land and making a difference in the way we eat and farm. And when you decided to become a farmer, you also became an entrepreneur and business person. In order to be ecologically and financially sustainable, you must understand the basics of accounting and bookkeeping, and learn how to manage a growing business. Author Julia Shanks distills years of teaching and business consulting with farmers into this comprehensive, accessible guide. She covers all aspects of launching, running and growing a successful farm business through effective bookkeeping and business management, providing tools to make managerial decisions, apply for a loan or other financing, and offering general business and strategy advice for growing a business. Whether you've been farming for many years or just getting started, The Farmer's Office gives you the tools needed to think like an entrepreneur and thoughtfully manage your business for success.

Julia Shanks works with food and agricultural entrepreneurs to achieve financial and operational sustainability. She has worked with a range of beginning and established farmers, providing technical assistance and business coaching that has allowed them to launch, stabilize and grow their ventures. A frequent lecturer on sustainable food systems and accounting, she sits on the advisory board of Future Chefs and is the regional leader of Slow Money Boston. In her tiny, urban garden in Cambridge, MA, Julia harvests vegetables seven months out of the year. Together with Brett Grohsgal, she is also coauthor of *The Farmers Market Cookbook*.

This is a MUST HAVE book for anyone beginning or already established in the Market Gardening or Farming industry. No one likes the "book work" that has to be done to run a successful business, but Julia Shanks explains and shows you the best way to streamline this part of your business so it isn't so daunting. I wish I had had this book when I was doing market farming. It would have been a great help for me. Keep in mind that if you purchase this book for your business the price is tax deductible for your Educational Materials. Do yourself a favor and invest in this book. You won't regret doing so. Marilyn Batzel Ison The Farm-to-Table Lady

With her book *The Farmer's Office*, Julia Shanks is transforming the American food system. It's all well and good to understand the problems with the mass corporate takeover of edibles. And it's important to know that local and sustainable sources for nourishment are the way to creating a better ecosystem for our bodies and our planet. It's terrific to have knowledge of the nuts and bolts of how to feed, fertilize, and grow such farms. But none of that matters if these entities can't pay the bills; if they go bankrupt and die. Enter Julia Shanks. Sustainability must also mean financially sustainable. Shanks gets into the down and dirty of spread sheets and numbers and figures that are critical to small and local farmers' success. And she does it in a readable, enjoyable way that is sure to win over even the most number-reluctant of earthy-crunchy do-gooders, who might prefer that capitalism disappear. The early part of the book gives solid, specific tips and techniques for using Quickbooks and other tools to get a farmer's books in order. But it's the second part of *The Farmer's Office* where Shanks really gives the golden eggs. Once the figure's foundation is in order, Shanks demonstrates how good orderly accounting can help shape better decision-making and real farm and food leadership. In her chapters "Digging into the Numbers and Beyond" and "Growing Your Business," Shanks is able to take farm owners to the place they've been longing for: freedom to grow and enjoy the fruits of the freedom provided by a

truly sustainable farm, including financial sustainability. This is the final piece of the food revolution we've all been waiting for farmers and consumers alike. Thank you Julia!

One of the best books I've ever bought. Helped me a lot figure out what I needed to do to set up my farm.

Just changed careers and this book has helped so much. I would recommend this to anyone just starting out or those looking to fine tune operations.

most clear and helpful Accounting 101 I've read: ever! Worth owning for reference. A real find.

Pretty good book. I wish it went into more detail and had more examples of real life farmer stuff

Purchased this as a supplemental book to a Sustainable Farming class I was taking through UMass Stockbridge. Came in very handy and filled in where the required text lacked. Used as a resource for my business plan for the class as well as for our farm. I purchased the actual book which came with a disk of files that have been very helpful. I don't have to reinvent the wheel, just tweak it.

Excellent book. A go-to book for a business resource for farmers. Any farmer will agree that time is limited, but in this book, farmers will find quick and efficient lessons they implement right away.

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