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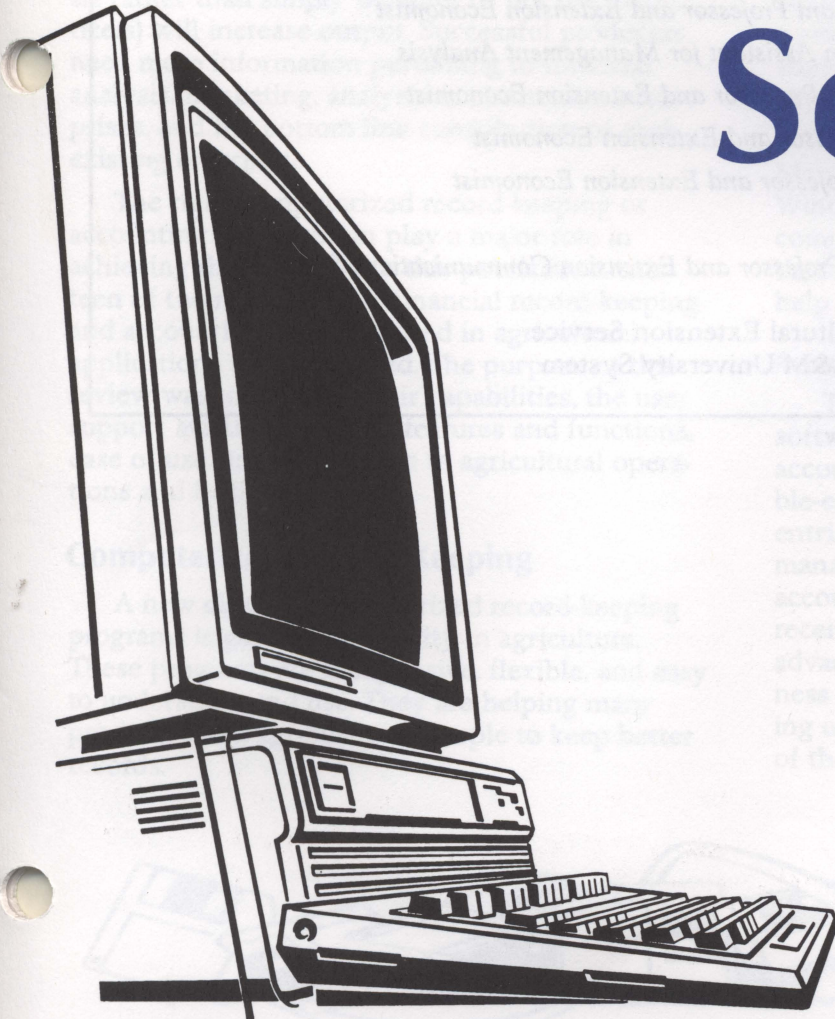


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# Financial Record-Keeping Software Review



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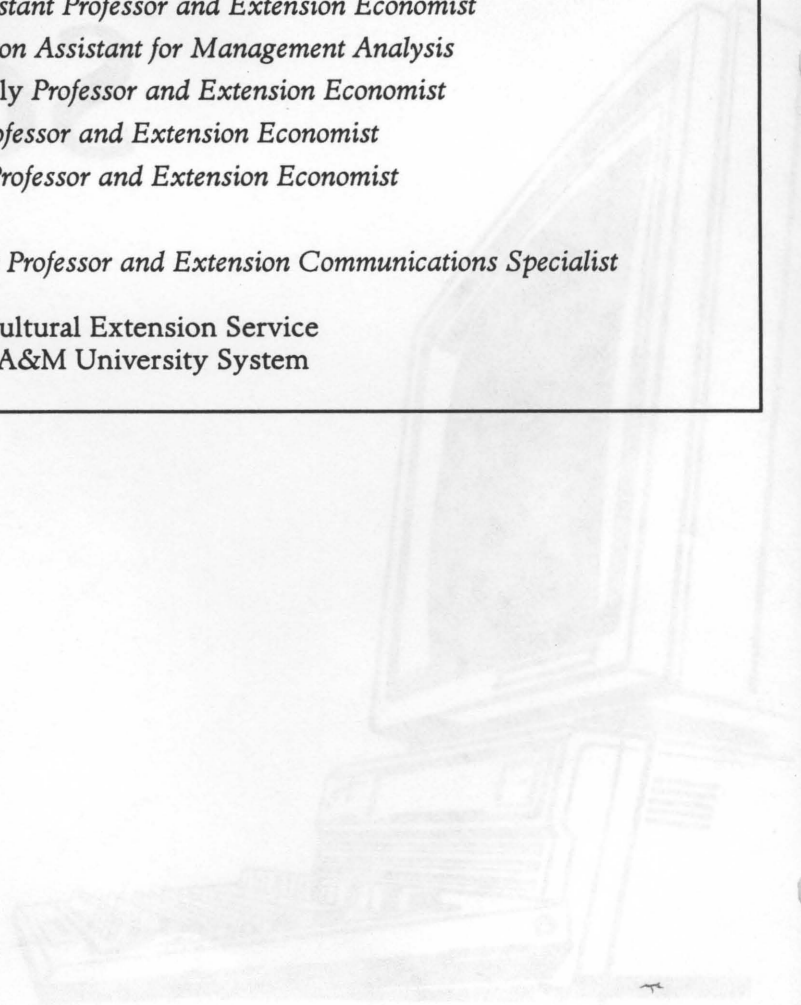
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# Financial Record-Keeping Software Review

Today's farm and ranch managers know that, to stay competitive, they must manage their operations as businesses. They realize that they have to increase their emphasis on record keeping, planning, profitability analysis, repayment-based financing, and better monitoring and controls.

Producers, however, would rather concentrate on production practices to make money than on activities to count and keep track of money. Monotonous as it may be, tracking financial activities is how businesses keep score. Even if you are not interested in detailed financial statements, the IRS, banks, and other financial institutions are vitally interested in these statements.

Placing more emphasis on record keeping and financial management does not mean neglecting the production aspect of your operation; it represents simply a better balance between tracking key performance areas.

More emphasis must be placed on justifying the purchase of inputs based on economic analysis rather than simply whether or not the practice(s) will increase output. Successful producers need more information pertaining to financial analysis, marketing, analysis of alternative enterprises, and the bottom line contribution of each existing enterprise.

The right computerized record-keeping or accounting software can play a major role in achieving these goals. For this publication, thirteen of the most popular financial record-keeping and accounting packages used in agricultural applications were reviewed. The purpose of this review was to identify their capabilities, the user support available, specific features and functions, ease of use, and application to agricultural operations and businesses.

## Computerized Record Keeping

A new class of computerized record-keeping programs is gaining popularity in agriculture. These programs are inexpensive, flexible, and easy to understand and use. They are helping many producers and agribusiness people to keep better records.

The programs were developed for small businesses, but they are flexible enough to adapt to agricultural applications. The price tags for these software packages vary from \$6.95 to \$595.

## Two Types of Programs

About 20 popular, easy-to-use financial record-keeping programs are now on the market. Potential users, however, must carefully keep in mind that this computer record-keeping software is separated into at least two types of applications.

### *Record-Keeping Software*

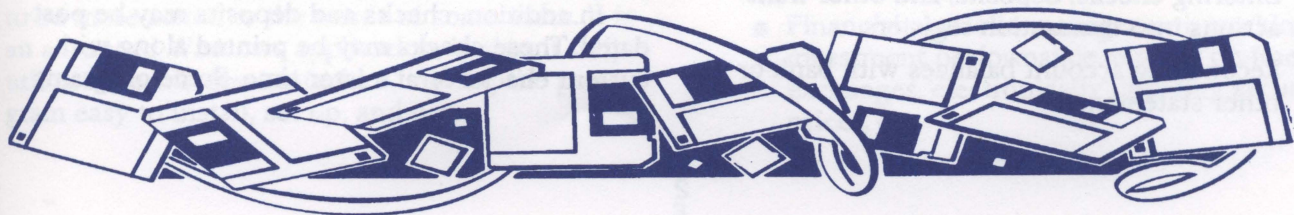
The first type includes what is referred to as record-keeping software. These programs do not profess to be accounting systems. Instead, they are marketed as money managers. They attempt to simplify record keeping through the use of check-book or check register screens which appear as single-entry records, but may mimic double-entry.

Most of these programs automate the check-book process, print checks, record transactions in a general ledger, reconcile bank or credit card statements, and allocate entries to income and expense categories or enterprises.

CA-Simply Money, Managing Your Money, Money, MoneyCounts, Quicken, and Quicken for Windows are six examples of this new series of computerized record-keeping programs. Most of these packages have special add-on modules to help manage payroll activities and income taxes.

### *Accounting Software*

The second type of financial record-keeping software is more closely related to formal accounting packages. In these packages, the double-entry system is generally used to record entries. In addition to the add-on modules to help manage payrolls and income taxes, most of these accounting packages include invoicing, accounts receivable, accounts payable, and other more advanced features needed to operate an agribusiness or commercial business. If you are considering one of these packages, keep in mind that most of them require some knowledge of accounting.





AgChek IV, Dac Easy, Mind Your Own Business, One Write Plus, Pacioli, Peach Tree Accounting, and QuickBooks are examples of this new series of computerized accounting programs.

## The Review

The thirteen software packages mentioned above were reviewed and compared to other programs within each of the two types. In addition to a general overview of the characteristics of each category, a brief description of each package and tables comparing the major features are provided.

## Pre-Selection Advice

Before you choose which software package to buy, you should carefully consider your goals, your computer and accounting knowledge, and the experience of others who are using similar programs. Careful planning at this early stage can ensure that you select a program that is right for you and your operation.

### *Clearly identify goals and objectives*

Based on your goals, you can identify the kinds of information you will need to collect and the reports you desire. Using this information, you can narrow your choices by reviewing the capabilities of each package.

If, for example, invoicing is a high priority for you, then you would need to select an accounting package. If, on the other hand, preparing a current cash flow statement is a priority, a record-keeping package may be a better choice. The primary rea-

son is ease of use: in an accounting package, a cash flow statement can be prepared only after transactions have been posted to the general ledger in a particular cycle.

### *Determine the computer and accounting knowledge required*

Some software packages require only a cursory knowledge of computers, while others require more advanced computer skills. Some programs depend on the Microsoft Windows software program and require an understanding of this program.

If your computer skills are not strong, consider selecting a user-friendly package from the first category, such as the Quicken program. You can also start with an entry-level program and move up to other packages later as your computer skills develop.

The same principles apply to accounting skills. If you have a limited understanding of accounting principles, software packages of the first category may be more appropriate. If you have more accounting knowledge or training, you may want to concentrate on selecting a package from the formal accounting type.

### *Find someone who is using the program*

Ask the software company for the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of producers or agribusiness people in your area who use the program. Then make arrangements to visit these users to gain some additional insights about the program.

## Record-Keeping Programs



These record-keeping software packages simplify the entry of information by using a single-entry general ledger. However, they can emulate a double-entry system if necessary. These programs focus primarily on checking, savings, and credit card accounts, but they can also track other types of asset and liability accounts.

The accounting functions these packages offer include:

- Writing and printing checks.
- Entering checks, deposits, and other transactions into transaction registers.
- Reconciling account balances with bank or other statements.

You may allocate transactions to different income or expense categories (such as fuel, repairs, labor) as well as to enterprises (such as corn, cotton, cattle) for enterprise accounting.

You type check information directly onto a blank check form on the screen. When you print the checks, the transactions are automatically recorded in a check register. Other transactions may be entered directly in the general ledger, which resembles a blank check in some programs or a ledger entry or check register in others.

In addition, checks and deposits may be posted. These checks may be printed along with current checks or at a later time. Some programs



provide reminders that there are postdated checks to be printed as the program starts.

Other features available in some programs include memorizing individual or groups of recurring transactions and customizing report formats.

These programs include a number of report options, including:

- Profit/loss statement.
- Cash flow.
- Balance sheet.
- Enterprise reports.
- Transaction register.
- Taxable deductions.
- Budget reports.

Most of these programs also include utilities to transfer information to computer spreadsheets such as Lotus 1-2-3, to generic ASCII formats, and to other related financial software such as income tax preparation packages.

## General Comparison

The review of the software indicated that Money, Quicken, and Quicken for Windows are almost clones of each other in terms of their capabilities and ease of use. CA Simply Money, Money, and Quicken for Windows require the Microsoft Windows operating system and use some of the Windows features which are not available in the DOS programs.

Managing Your Money and Money Counts are closer to double-entry systems than the other four mentioned above. Enterprise accounting was not available in these two programs except through a chart-of-accounts set-up.

## Kiplinger's CA-Simply Money

One of the newest programs to be evaluated was Kiplinger's CA-Simply Money. CA-Simply Money is written for use with Windows, and it is similar to Quicken for Windows and Microsoft Money. Version 1.0 was used in the evaluation, and the reviewer expects a newer version within months. The programmers and support staff were eager to get input from any users concerning possible corrections or improvements in the software.

Even though it is very much like Quicken for Windows, CA-Simply Money is different enough to be more suited to the needs of some users. It is an advanced Windows application, in that it fully utilizes the Windows interface, making the program easy to install, set up, and use.

CA-Simply Money has two types of accounts not found in Quicken: credit line and payroll. The credit line account could be quite useful to farmers and ranchers. The payroll account gives CA-Simply Money capabilities similar to Quicken with the add-on Quick Pay attached. With the investment accounts, CA-Simply Money users may use a special 900 number to download by modem current security prices from CompuServe to update the prices in their own accounts. CA-Simply Money also allows the user a high degree of flexibility in designing reports and graphs.

CA-Simply Money does have some minor problems compared to Quicken. Farmers often start out using Quicken without any of the pre-loaded categories. In CA-Simply Money, the user has to start out with one or both sets of the pre-loaded categories. The categories can be edited or deleted, and additional categories can be added at any time. The screen gets somewhat cluttered with all the help boxes, reminders, and icons, causing transaction entry to seem slower than in Quicken for Windows or Microsoft Money.

If you have a special need for one of the additional types of accounts not available in Quicken, or for investment accounts that allow for more complete tracking of investments, CA-Simply Money could be the right choice for you.

## Andrew Tobias' Managing Your Money

Based upon the results of a 1992 survey, Managing Your Money was the second most frequently chosen personal finance software package. Managing Your Money (MYM) has been described as "a comprehensive set of financial management and tracking tools that give you complete control over your personal financial life." This simple-to-use personal financial package has much to offer individuals and small businesses in cash financial bookkeeping, budgeting, and decision aids, including:

- Tracking expenses, creating budgets, and comparing the two.
- Accounting for income tax data and estimating taxes.
- Planning for future cash requirements, such as college and retirement.
- Evaluating alternatives, such as mortgage refinancing and lease vs. buy.
- Financial portfolio management: tracking investment performance, trading on-line to exchanges, electronically updating security prices, etc.



- Viewing, customizing, and printing reports, charts, and graphs.
- Other useful features include reminder pad, cardfile, MYM-Write word processor, and calculators.

### *Program Setup*

Recommended steps for the first session with MYM are outlined inside the front cover of the user's guide (including references to the tutorial), with detailed installation instructions in Appendix 1. If you use Quicken, you will find the Managing Your Money Import Capability (MYMIC), a free utility disk, convenient for converting Quicken banking and investment data to MYM.

### *Money: The Hub of MYM*

In the Money part of MYM, you can pay bills, deposit money, track assets and liabilities, develop budgets against which to monitor actual results, print checks and reports, and pay bills electronically. The Quick list, similar to the memorized transactions in Quicken, speeds up the entry of routine, recurring transactions. Checkbook reconciliation appears simple and straight-forward. Since MYM does not have an enterprise classification, it seems that enterprising would have to be accomplished using the MYM categories and sub-categories features.

### *Budgeting*

The MYM Quick Budgeting feature facilitates budgeting for the next year, allowing you to develop projections using either the current year's actual values or budgeted values. Several report choices allow you to print reports that compare actual with projected values.

The program does not seem to provide for a fiscal year other than the calendar year. In the budget area as well as the report generation menu, there seems to be some rigidity as to defining the time period. This obstacle is overcome in the financial reports screen. However, the rigidity remains in the budgeting menu.

A Select Filter option provides choices of report name, date range, filtering of payee and/or memo lines, and selection by categories, accounts, and tax categories for generating reports.

### *Financial and Tax Planning*

One writer notes that MYM "offers more financial and tax planning support" than other similar software. Tax planning includes a calcula-

tion of correct W-4 values, estimated income tax liability, and export and linkage of data with TaxCut and TurboTax.

### *Extras*

MYM contains a potpourri of other features likely to be of value to many individual, family, and business users. Overall, the comprehensiveness of MYM should enhance its appeal to a wide variety of users. However, this same quality might somewhat limit its attractiveness to those seeking a single-entry package that offers great flexibility for whole-farm/ranch and enterprise record keeping.

### *Microsoft Money*

Microsoft Money is Microsoft's entry in the low-cost record keeping field. Since early 1992, many new computers have been sold with a package of software including the Microsoft Windows operating system and various Windows applications, including Money.

Money, which sells for less than \$30, is a true Windows program, using the Microsoft Windows graphical environment. It displays information in ways familiar to everyone: blank checks and a checkbook register. Money also has a separate screen for deposits if you do not want to enter deposits directly into the register.

Because it requires Windows, Money requires much more memory and speed than similar non-Windows programs. For novice Windows users who switch to Money, transaction entry may seem slow and awkward. As computer hardware becomes more powerful and more users move to the Windows environment, more and more users will be opting for Windows applications such as Money.

As with any Windows application, the on-screen and printed output is of very high quality, and you have a high level of flexibility in designing reports. For almost all of the available reports, you can view charts on-screen and print them out. The charting option is available on the screen as you are viewing the report.

The documentation is well written, especially for the first-time user already familiar with other Windows programs. Also available to help the beginner is Money's Transaction Coach. It is an interactive, step-by-step, on-screen tutorial that will lead you through transaction entry with on-screen assistance at each step. This is an option that can be turned on or off at any time.



Overall, Money is very similar to Quicken for Windows. If you are a Quicken user switching to Money, Quicken data can be imported into Money, but it can be a tedious process. Quicken transactions, categories, and subcategories will transfer into Money, but, if you used classes in Quicken, they have to be re-entered in Money. Money uses classes in a completely different way. Once set up, Money appears to allow for more detailed records with less entry time.

In summary, Money is best suited for the newer computers with an abundance of memory and speed and for the user who is already good at using Windows applications. Most computers sold in the past 18 months come ready to run Windows and Money, as will most computers in the future.

## MoneyCounts

MoneyCounts is a double-entry system with a single-entry option mainly for ease of use with household finances. The double-entry mode would probably be the better format for small businesses. Used in the simplest way, MoneyCounts maintains income and expense records and checking account and credit card balances.

The program facilitates entry of the deposits to and withdrawals from a checking account and the charges and payments made on a credit card. The program can also track tax deductions and compare actual income and expenses to budgets. MoneyCounts can also perform bookkeeping tasks for most personal and business assets and liabilities, such as personal investments, business receivables, personal credit lines, mortgages, and business payables. It facilitates the preparation of basic personal and business reports, such as income statements, balance sheets, and cash-flow statements.

The program is fairly simple to install and use. During installation, however, it may require a larger FILE statement in the DOS CONFIG.SYS file if the FILE line does not equal 40 or greater.

The program automatically creates a subdirectory named "personal" to initially store data, but the data directory can be easily changed. The program comes with predefined sets of accounts (chart of accounts) for home, business, farm, church, and rental property. You may select none of the sets, or you may select all or some of the accounts from any of the five sets.

The program uses a relatively easy-to-use transaction entry screen which emulates a check

format for basic entries. Accounts (such as checking, credit card, and asset/liability) may be established in advance or as transactions are entered.

Although the Microsoft Windows operating system is not required, MoneyCounts Version 7 is compatible with Windows. The manual and work screens seem to be designed for use with Windows or at least with a mouse. They are slightly more difficult to use without either of these options.

A major shortcoming of this software package is that enterprising is not available except through the use of a double-entry emulation, i.e., using a credit account as a profit center. This procedure is cumbersome, and, unless you have accounting knowledge, it may make this package impractical if enterprising is important to you.

Other weaknesses of this package include a weak manual, slow telephone support, and non-standard financial statement formats.

In summary, MoneyCounts is a relatively simple-to-use, single- or double-entry financial record keeping program appropriate for entry-level computer users. The absence of relatively simple enterprising functions makes this program more appropriate for home or single-business record keeping applications. The manual and the help screens are weak, and the learning curve is initially fairly steep.

## Quicken

Quicken is a flexible, easy-to-use, low-cost financial record-keeping package. Beginning with the installation, which provides a default directory and the automatic adjustment of CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT files to final printed reports and graphs, Quicken is easy to use. Quicken uses man-on-the-street terminology, which may initially trip up a user with some accounting background, but which makes it easy for the non-accountant to follow.

Quicken provides two input screens. One is a replica of a blank check, and the other is a copy of a check register. Beginning users generally feel almost immediately comfortable with the input screens because these formats are so familiar.

Quicken starts with a menu and has a menu system for changing defaults, creating and switching files, viewing graphs, and performing most other functions. In addition, both the input and the output screens have pull-down menus, allowing quicker access to options and other screens, as well as to previously defined information.



To make Quicken even easier to work with, you can set up quick keys to access the functions you use most frequently. This feature provides a CTRL-Key combination to immediately access many features from anywhere in the program.

Quicken also has a quick-fill feature. As soon as you type the first letter of a transaction, the program searches the memorized transactions and then the transactions for the past 1 to 24 months in an attempt to find and automatically enter a matching transaction. When you are entering frequently used transactions, this can reduce your typing to just one or two characters per entry.

In addition, transactions that occur on a regular basis can be combined into groups or set up to be entered automatically on a preset date without the need for any keystrokes. An easy-to-use pop-up calculator and a pop-up calendar provide additional methods of entering data. Simple calculations can also be done directly at the entry point.

Quicken provides two keys for classifying incoming and outgoing money. Categories are used to keep track of income and expense types (such as crop sales, loan receipts, fuel, fertilizer). Classes give Quicken even more power by allowing you to group transactions into enterprises or cost centers (such as dryland cotton, rental property, shoe store). Having both of these options is invaluable for most managerial analysis.

Combined with the categories and classes, a variety of report formats, filters, and layout options provides Quicken users with a wide array of choices for outputting information. You can switch between cashflow, income statement, balance sheets, or other outputs in a matter of seconds. The last four reports you generated are automatically added to the report menu and can be recalled during your current or subsequent Quicken sessions. You can add columns displaying the percentage of total income and expenses to the reports to provide additional information. You can also generate comparison reports for comparing information between two periods. A column showing the percentage change between periods on a row-by-row basis is also available. A zoom feature allows you to immediately look at the transactions (check register) behind any number in the reports. From the other side, a quick report feature allows you to generate directly from the input screen a report of all transactions that match the highlighted field in the transaction you are working on.

A series of graphs provides an additional way of reviewing data. The quality of the graphics has

improved immensely since they were introduced in version 6, and they can now be printed to any of the printers Quicken supports. The zoom feature (using the same key combination as in reports or a mouse click) provides a quick way to see additional detail in graphic form or to see the numbers behind the individual pieces of each graph.

You can also set up budgets for easy comparison with actual spending. Quicken allows you to extract amounts into the budget from previously entered data for either the entire budget or individual category items. You can also save the budgets, which allows you to set up multiple budgets to compare with different output reports.

Quicken provides a number of financial planning tools including a loan calculator, a retirement planner, a college planner, a mortgage refinancing tool, and an investment planner. You can enter amortized loans (including variable rates and balloon payments) so that Quicken will automatically determine the principal and interest portions and place them in the proper categories.

Quicken includes provisions to pay bills electronically using a modem and the Check Free system. Quicken's manufacturers have also started providing their own VISA card (Intellicharge). You can receive the statement over a modem or on diskette and load it directly into Quicken. You can also enter investment information directly into Quicken using the modem.

Finding weaknesses in Quicken requires going beyond the need for simple checkbook accounting. Quicken does not handle physical quantities. If more than financial information is needed, Quicken falls short. Quicken is also not designed to do invoices or billing, although, with the addition of the QuickPay module, it will do payroll very well.

## Quicken for Windows

Most of the differences between Quicken for Windows and the DOS-based Quicken are the result of the operating environment. So, if you are interested in Quicken for Windows, first read the section on Quicken. If you are using Windows and enjoy that environment, you will probably prefer Quicken for Windows. If you are used to DOS, you will probably not find enough advantages to switch to Windows just for Quicken.

Windows does provide the opportunity to have multiple screens (windows) visible at once and to switch from one to the other with a simple mouse click. This may be two (or more) accounts



open at the same time, or it may include a report or a graphic display which is automatically updated as information is changed.

The current Windows version has fewer graphs than the DOS version. But that is caused mostly by combining the graphs into multiple graph charts (bar and pie in the same graph). The zoom feature is also available with a click of the mouse and works within graphs as well as reports.

The quick-fill feature available in DOS is expanded in Windows to provide a drop-down window with all previous payees listed: this allows you to select the payee immediately without typing. The same type of drop-down window appears when you enter a category as well. One area of weakness is that the same type of window does not appear for classes. In fact, classes seem

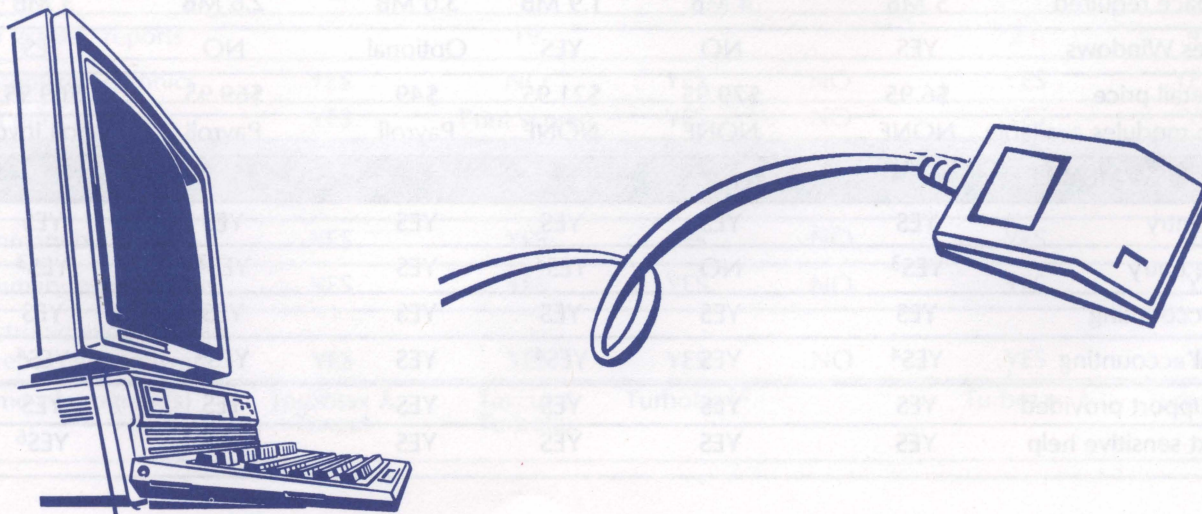
to be mostly ignored by Quicken for Windows. You will have to type in the class or use the quick key, which has been available since version 2.

All the features familiar to Windows users—pull-down menus, side bars, button bar (with user-definable buttons), etc.—are available in the Windows version of Quicken. Some of the options available to DOS users utilize Windows predefined functions (printing and the on-screen calculator are two examples).

Quicken for Windows also has a QuickPay module, and it supports Check Free and Intellicharge. In addition, there is a Quick Invoice module that allows Quicken for Windows to do invoicing and billing. Tracking physical inventories is still not possible in this version of Quicken.

**Table 1. Developers of Selected Financial Recordkeeping Software.**

|                     | Version Number | Software Developer  | Technical Support Phone Number | Address   |
|---------------------|----------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| CA-Simply Money     | 1              | Computer Associates | 516/342-5666                   | 530 N. Wheeler St.<br>St. Paul, MN 55104                |
| Managing Your Money | 9              | MECA Software Inc   | 203/255-7562                   | P.O. Box 912<br>Fairfield, CT 06340                     |
| Money               | 2              | Microsoft           | 205/635-7131                   | One Microsoft Way<br>Redmond, WA 98052                  |
| Money Counts        | 7              | Parsons Technology  | 319/395-7341                   | One Parsons Drive<br>P.O. Box 100<br>Hiawatha, IA 52233 |
| Quicken             | 7              | Intuit              | 415/858-6060                   | P.O. Box 3014<br>Menlo Park, CA 94026                   |
| Quicken for Windows | 3              | Intuit              | 415/858-6050                   | (same as above)   |





**Table 2. Reviewer Evaluations of Key Features.**

|                       | CA- Simply<br>Money | Managing<br>Your Money | Money | Money<br>Counts | Quicken | Quicken for<br>Windows |
|-----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|-------|-----------------|---------|------------------------|
| Ease of Installation  | ★★★★                | ★★★★                   | ★★★★  | ★★              | ★★★★    | ★★★★                   |
| Setting up Books      | ★★★                 | ★★★                    | ★★★★  | ★★★             | ★★★★    | ★★★★                   |
| Ease of Use           | ★★★                 | ★★★                    | ★★★   | ★★★             | ★★★★    | ★★★                    |
| Record Entry          | ★★★                 | ★★★★                   | ★★★   | ★★★             | ★★★★    | ★★★★                   |
| Tracking Revenues     | ★★★★                | ★★★★                   | ★★★★  | ★★★             | ★★★★    | ★★★★                   |
| Tracking Expenses     | ★★★★                | ★★★★                   | ★★★★  | ★★★★            | ★★★★    | ★★★★                   |
| Budgeting             | ★★★                 | ★★                     | ★★★   | ★★              | ★★★     | ★★★                    |
| Enterprise Accounting | ★★★                 | ★                      | ★★★★  | ★               | ★★★★    | ★★★★                   |
| Service and Support   | ★★★                 | ★★★★                   | ★★★★  | ★               | ★★★★    | ★★★★                   |
| Inventory Control     | ○                   | ○                      | ○     | ○               | ○       | ○                      |
| Overall Value         | ★★★                 | ★★★                    | ★★★★  | ★★              | ★★★★    | ★★★★                   |

**Table 3. Features, Functions, and Basic Requirements of Selected Financial Recordkeeping Software.**

Note: This table does not imply the value or usefulness of any program. The features indicated are those which the reviewers noted; others may exist.

|   | CA-Simply<br>Money | Managing<br>Your Money | Money             | Money<br>Counts  | Quicken          | Quicken for<br>Windows |
|---|--------------------|------------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| <b>COMPUTER REQUIREMENTS</b>  |                    |                        |                   |                  |                  |                        |
| DOS version   | 3.0 <sup>1</sup>   |                        | 3.0 <sup>1</sup>  | 3.0 or later     | 3.0 or later     | 3.0 <sup>1</sup>       |
| RAM memory (KB)   | 2000 <sup>1</sup>  | 512                    | 2000 <sup>1</sup> | 512 <sup>2</sup> | 512              | 2000 <sup>1</sup>      |
| <b>Expanded Memory (required or utilized memory above 1 megabyte)</b> |                    |                        |                   |                  |                  |                        |
| Requires  | YES                |                        | YES <sup>1</sup>  |                  |                  | YES <sup>1</sup>       |
| Utilizes  | YES                | YES                    |                   | 2 MB             | YES              |                        |
| Hard disk required  | YES                | YES                    | YES               | YES              | YES              | YES                    |
| Disk space required   | 5 MB               | 4 MB                   | 1.9 MB            | 3.0 MB           | 2.6 MB           | 3 MB                   |
| Requires Windows  | YES                | NO                     | YES               | Optional         | NO               | YES                    |
| Basic retail price  | \$6.95             | \$79.95                | \$21.95           | \$49             | \$69.95          | \$69.95                |
| Add-on modules available  | NONE               | NONE                   | NONE              | Payroll          | Payroll          | Payroll Invoice        |
| <b>FEATURES AVAILABLE</b>   |                    |                        |                   |                  |                  |                        |
| Single entry  | YES                | YES                    | YES               | YES              | YES              | YES                    |
| Double entry  | YES <sup>3</sup>   | NO                     | YES <sup>3</sup>  | YES              | YES <sup>3</sup> | YES <sup>3</sup>       |
| Cash accounting   | YES                | YES                    | YES               | YES              | YES              | YES                    |
| Accrual accounting  | YES <sup>4</sup>   | YES                    | YES <sup>4</sup>  | YES              | YES <sup>4</sup> | YES <sup>4</sup>       |
| User support provided   | YES                | YES                    | YES               | YES              | YES              | YES                    |
| Context sensitive help  | YES                | YES                    | YES               | YES              | YES              | YES <sup>6</sup>       |



|   | CA-Simply<br>Money   | Managing<br>Your Money | Money                  | Money<br>Counts  | Quicken                | Quicken for<br>Windows |
|---|----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>CHECK REGISTER (GENERAL LEDGER)</b>                                      |                      |                        |                        |                  |                        |                        |
| Method of naming  |                      |                        |                        |                  |                        |                        |
| Alpha and numbers   | YES                  | YES                    | YES                    | YES              | YES                    | YES                    |
| Requires posting<br>(monthly/quarterly, etc.)                               | NO                   | Periodic Saving        | NO                     | NO               | NO                     | NO                     |
| Menu driven   | YES                  | YES                    | YES                    | YES              | YES                    | YES                    |
| Uses quick keys   | YES                  | YES                    | YES                    | YES              | YES                    | YES                    |
| Pull down/pop up menus  | YES                  | YES                    | YES                    | YES              | YES                    | YES                    |
| Memorize/recall previous<br>transactions                                    | YES                  | YES                    | YES                    | YES              | YES                    | YES                    |
| Group transactions for<br>periodic execution                                | YES                  |                        | YES                    |                  | YES                    | YES                    |
| Allows splitting transaction  | YES                  | YES                    | YES                    | YES              | YES                    | YES                    |
| By category   | YES                  | YES                    | YES                    | YES              | YES                    | YES                    |
| By enterprise   | YES                  | NO                     | YES                    | NO <sup>7</sup>  | YES                    | YES                    |
| <b>REPORTS AVAILABLE</b>  |                      |                        |                        |                  |                        |                        |
| Profit/loss, cash flow<br>statement, balance sheet,<br>transaction register | YES                  | YES                    | YES                    | YES              | YES                    | YES                    |
| Account balances  | YES                  | YES                    | YES                    | YES              | YES                    | YES                    |
| Enterprise  | YES                  | YES                    | YES                    | N/A <sup>7</sup> | YES                    | YES                    |
| Budgets   | YES                  | YES                    | YES                    | YES              | YES                    | YES                    |
| Payroll   | YES                  | NO                     | YES                    | YES <sup>8</sup> | YES                    | YES                    |
| User customized reports   | YES                  | YES                    | YES                    | YES              | YES                    | YES                    |
| Memorize/recall<br>customized report formats                                | YES                  | YES                    | YES                    | YES              | YES                    | YES                    |
| Accounts payable  | YES <sup>9</sup>     | YES                    | YES <sup>9</sup>       | NO               | YES <sup>9</sup>       | YES <sup>9</sup>       |
| Accounts receivable   | YES <sup>9</sup>     | YES                    | YES <sup>9</sup>       | NO               | YES <sup>9</sup>       | YES <sup>9</sup>       |
| Invoices  | NO                   | YES                    | NO                     | NO               | NO                     | NO <sup>10</sup>       |
| Billing   | NO                   | YES                    | NO                     | NO               | NO                     | NO <sup>10</sup>       |
| Graphics  | YES                  | YES                    | YES                    | YES              | YES                    | YES                    |
| # of graphic reports  |                      | 19                     |                        |                  | 21                     | 4 <sup>11</sup>        |
| Customized graphics   | YES                  | NO                     | YES                    | NO               | YES                    | YES <sup>12</sup>      |
| Can print graphics  | YES                  | Print screen           | YES                    | NO               | YES                    | YES                    |
| <b>INCOME TAX</b>   |                      |                        |                        |                  |                        |                        |
| Summary   | YES                  | YES                    | YES                    | YES              | YES                    | YES                    |
| Summary by form   | YES                  | YES                    | YES                    | NO               | YES                    | YES                    |
| Summary by form line  | YES                  | YES                    | YES                    | NO               | YES                    | YES                    |
| Electronic export to tax<br>preparation software                            | YES                  | YES                    | YES                    | NO               | YES                    | YES                    |
| Name of program(s)  | Turbotax &<br>Taxcut | Taxcut &<br>Turbotax   | Turbotax <sup>13</sup> |                  | Turbotax <sup>13</sup> | Turbotax <sup>13</sup> |



|  | CA-Simply<br>Money                  | Managing<br>Your Money  | Money                  | Money<br>Counts                 | Quicken                         | Quicken for<br>Windows          |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>TYPES OF ACCOUNTS HANDLED</b>           |                                     |                         |                        |                                 |                                 |                                 |
| Asset accounts                             | YES                                 | YES                     | YES                    | YES                             | YES                             | YES                             |
| Liability accounts                         | YES                                 | YES                     | YES                    | YES                             | YES                             | YES                             |
| Credit card accounts                       | YES                                 | YES                     | YES                    | YES                             | YES                             | YES                             |
| Inventory accounts                         | YES                                 | YES                     | YES                    | YES                             | NO                              | NO                              |
| Other                                      | Investment, Payroll,<br>Credit Line | Investment              |                        | Investment                      | Investment                      | Investment                      |
| Enterprise accounting                      | YES                                 | LMTD                    | YES                    | LMTD                            | YES                             | YES                             |
| <b>Inventory</b>                           |                                     |                         |                        |                                 |                                 |                                 |
| Tracks physical inventory<br>amounts       | NO                                  | NO                      | NO                     | NO                              | NO                              | NO                              |
| Amounts/Values integrated                  | NO                                  | NO                      | NO                     | NO                              | NO                              | NO                              |
| <b>OTHER FEATURES</b>                      |                                     |                         |                        |                                 |                                 |                                 |
| Financial ratios                           | NO                                  | YES                     | NO                     | NO                              | NO                              | NO                              |
| Check writing                              | YES                                 | YES                     | YES                    | YES                             | YES                             | YES                             |
| Account reconciliation                     | Bank<br>Credit Card<br>Credit Line  | Bank<br>Credit Card     | Bank<br>Credit Card    | Bank<br>Credit Card             | Bank<br>Credit Card             | Bank<br>Credit Card             |
| Budgeting                                  | YES                                 | YES                     | YES                    | YES                             | YES                             | YES                             |
| Multi-year comparisons                     | YES                                 | YES                     | YES                    | NO                              | YES                             | YES                             |
| <b>Export/Import</b>                       |                                     |                         |                        |                                 |                                 |                                 |
| Export ASCII files                         | YES                                 | YES                     | YES                    | YES                             | YES                             | YES                             |
| Export to spreadsheets                     | YES                                 | YES                     | YES                    | YES                             | YES                             | YES                             |
| Other export                               | Tax Programs<br>Quicken             | Taxes                   | Tax Program<br>Quicken | NO                              | Taxes QIF <sup>14</sup>         | Taxes QIF <sup>15</sup>         |
| Import from other<br>programs              | Quicken                             | Quicken<br>Bill Pay Fox | Quicken                | YES <sup>15</sup><br>Check-Free | Check-Free <sup>16</sup><br>QIF | Check-Free<br>QIF <sup>17</sup> |
| <b>INSTALLATION AND SETUP</b>              |                                     |                         |                        |                                 |                                 |                                 |
| Auto install                               | YES                                 | YES                     | YES                    | YES                             | YES                             | YES                             |
| Requires defining<br>categories before use | NO                                  | NO                      | NO                     | NO                              | NO                              | NO                              |
| Estimated installation<br>time (Hr:Min)    | 0:10 <sup>17</sup>                  | 0:04                    | 0:10 <sup>17</sup>     | 0:10 <sup>18</sup>              | 0:10                            | 0:10                            |

<sup>1</sup>Minimum required for Windows.

<sup>2</sup>640K recommended.

<sup>3</sup>Emulates double entry with category/class.

<sup>4</sup>Not specifically, but can be manipulated.

<sup>5</sup>Limited, requires scrolling through index.

<sup>6</sup>In addition to regular help screens.

<sup>7</sup>No enterprise accounting.

<sup>8</sup>With extra payroll module.

<sup>9</sup>Can do A/P, A/R using standard asset and liability accounts.

<sup>10</sup>Invoices and billing are available through the Quick Invoice add-on.

<sup>11</sup>Each graph displays multiple graphic information: i.e., bar and pie chart together.

<sup>12</sup>Can filter the input and adjust number of items in pie charts, cannot redesign graphs.

<sup>13</sup>Turbotax or TurboTax for Windows is most supported, but several other programs can be exported, too.

<sup>14</sup>Quicken Interchange format.

<sup>15</sup>MoneyCounts includes separate Import and Transfer programs that allow importing from Quicken (2-5), Dollars & Sense (3,3.1), Managing Your Money (8), and Microsoft Money.

<sup>16</sup>Version 3.0 or later.

<sup>17</sup>Installation time assumes Windows is already installed.

<sup>18</sup>Assumes FILES line in DOS CONFIG.SYS file does not have to be corrected.



# Accounting Software

The double-entry system of accounting is used to record entries in the formal accounting type of financial record-keeping programs. These computerized accounting programs were developed recently in answer to the consumer demand for simple-to-use accounting software designed for personal computers. Just a few years ago, the high-end accounting software required a mini-computer and a fairly sophisticated accounting support staff to maintain accounting records. Software developers responded with products which, over the years, have become quite sophisticated, yet have remained relatively easy to use.

Most of these packages are modularized, which allows you to tailor a package to suit your needs by selecting separate, fully integrated modules. Software developers continue to add new modules and features similar to those available in sophisticated accounting packages. For less than \$300, an agribusiness or commercial business can obtain general ledger, accounts payable, accounts receivable, inventory, order entry, payroll, and other modules that support multiple companies. The demands of a multi-user accounting environment, however, may overwhelm these low-end packages. Closely examine the multi-user capabilities of a specific program if this is a requirement for your operation.

Low-cost accounting packages, like those which were reviewed, are usually found at retail or discount software stores and supported via telephone. High-cost systems, on the other hand, are sold by specialty dealers who install the software and provide support and training on-site.

## General Comparison

Most of the packages reviewed do a good job of handling basic accounting needs, including:

- Keeping a general ledger.
- Sending invoices to customers.
- Paying suppliers.
- Preparing financial statements.

Many of the packages also provide inventory and payroll functions, either as part of the basic package or as an add-on module.

While all of the packages reviewed operate under DOS, some have special versions for use within Windows.

Pacioli and DacEasy are very similar to each other. AgChek IV and PeachTree Full Accounting probably have a few more advanced features than the others reviewed. Mind Your Own Business, One Write Plus, and QuickBooks are probably the easiest to use of the programs reviewed.

## AgChek IV

AgChek IV provides a general ledger and an enterprise accounting system specifically designed for agricultural producers and agribusinesses.

The general ledger module allows a company to have a multi-level business structure in which the company manages several businesses. An example is an agricultural producer who owns a farm, a feedlot, and a feed store. Each business is managed separately with its own set of books. The multi-level feature of AgChek IV provides reports for each separate business and consolidated reports for all businesses combined.

The chart of accounts allows three levels of accounting detail, consisting of accounts, sub-accounts, and management accounts. An example of the levels of detail for an account such as fuel might include sub-accounts for gasoline and diesel, with management accounts under diesel for particular tractors such as Tractor 1 and Tractor 2.

A key consideration in setting up accounts is that they cannot be changed after the establishment of sub-accounts or management accounts. To set up an account, the program asks you if sub-accounts are used with this account. If you answer YES, the program will ask more questions to establish a sub-account. The program will then follow the same sequence to set up management accounts. If your response is NO, the account is established without sub- and management accounts. If you answer NO at either of these two levels, you will not be able to return to set up sub- or management accounts later.

The Livestock and Crop modules, which are available at additional charge, allow you to record quantity information, such as pounds of fertilizer and gallons of fuel, and more detailed enterprise accounting than the general ledger alone. The enterprise reports include detailed cost-of-production information. You can also maintain grain and



livestock inventory information and details concerning marketing positions.

Documentation is easy to read, with a manual for each module. The Setup section of the manual addresses each screen and includes procedural checklists for most setup topics. The Reference section also provides relatively easy-to-understand descriptions of each screen. The program includes an excellent tutorial to demonstrate setup and data entry with examples of basic transactions.

AgChek IV provides a start-up chart of accounts and example transactions which may be used with the tutorial during installation.

Routine daily entries with AgChek IV are relatively straightforward after the user has become accustomed to the complexity of the account, profit center, and enterprise structure. Most users develop a coding electronic label system in which invoices are labeled with a user code and then recorded. AgChek IV has pop-up code lists, which allow the user to retrieve accounts, vendors, and invoices to facilitate re-entry of similar records.

AgChek IV requires that monthly as well as annual periods be closed (posted). Late entries, after posting, require special procedures. You must make adjusting entries in the current period in order to change entries in a prior period or month that has been closed, or you can make entries in the prior period and then re-close it.

AgChek IV was designed with the agricultural producer in mind. The design of the three levels of accounting detail, the business units, the profit centers, and the enterprise modules indicate an understanding of agricultural businesses.

That same complexity of design is also the main drawback of this software. The setup procedure can be very confusing and is further complicated by the need to establish different levels of accounts, business units, profit centers, and enterprises. After establishing the system and becoming accustomed to the structure of accounts, profit centers, and enterprises, however, you will find that data entry is relatively easy. You can produce detailed reports, but the rigidity of the system does not allow any customized or user-defined reports.

In summary, even though the design of the accounting system is appealing, the reviewer found the AgChek IV system much too difficult to set up and too unforgiving to easily maintain.

## Dac Easy Accounting Bonus Pack

Dac Easy Accounting Bonus Pack consists of the Dac Easy Accounting Base Package and Dac Easy Payroll. This complete bonus pack system is a very good choice to meet the accounting needs of most small retail and manufacturing businesses. Dac Easy allows records to be kept on multiple entities (companies).

The Dac Easy Accounting Base package includes general ledger, accounts receivable, accounts payable, cash management, inventory, product assembly, purchasing, billing, budgeting, graphics, and a report generator that allows the user to develop reports to suit particular needs. The accounts payable and receivable modules include standard aging and vendor and customer analysis reports. The cash management module is not as flexible and easy to use as single-entry systems because Dac Easy's cash management module uses invoices to initiate record entries. However, Dac Easy makes extensive use of customer, vendor, account, invoice, and receivable lists that can be viewed, updated, and pasted into various fields on the fly, which makes data entry relatively easy.

For record entry, Dac Easy has a very efficient Account Interface scheme that ties the general ledger to the accounts payable, accounts receivable, billing, cash management, inventory, and purchasing modules. With the proper setup, the Account Interface automatically makes the desired general ledger entries from transaction data entered in the different modules.

The Dac Easy Accounting package documentation is clearly written and well organized. The documentation contains sections on system installation, setting up accounts (including what information is required for setting up accounts), how the various modules operate and interact with each other, and detailed posting and closing procedures to be used with the system.

The graphics module was difficult to use. The program gave an error code when the reviewer attempted to access the graphics option and referred the user to an updated README.BAT file on the installation disk.

Dac Easy Accounting is a true accounting package and, therefore, requires a double-entry accounting approach. If the user needs the accounting integrity of a double-entry system, then this system deserves consideration. The pro-



gram requires a basic level of accounting skill. For example, the user needs to know that the accounts payable, accounts receivable, and cash journals should be posted to the general ledger and that all journals should be printed and closed periodically. The Dac Easy Accounting manual does a good job of explaining these procedures and also contains a section on the basics of double-entry accounting.

## Mind Your Own Business

Mind Your Own Business (MYOB) could be described as either the most expensive of the record-keeping packages or the easiest-to-use of the accounting packages. In this study, we have chosen to place it with the accounting software. MYOB is designed with terminology familiar to small business owners rather than accountants. Its most distinctive features are the flowcharts you use to move around the program, instead of multi-level menus.

MYOB provides a number of different input screens. In addition to the register screen (general journal) and the check writing screen, MYOB has a deposit screen, an invoice screen, a sales screen for those who don't need to do invoices, a screen to apply payments, and a similar array of screens on the purchase side.

Once you pass the initial MYOB screen, all of the screens use the standard Windows format and can be moved and sized allowing whatever arrangement you prefer. MYOB allows the user to create links, which speed up the entry of your information. Entries may be linked to the card file, which contains information on customers, vendors, employees, and personal contacts. Names, addresses, and other pertinent information are automatically transferred to an input screen when it is linked to the card file. MYOB also uses links to take much of the day-to-day work out of entering data. Input screens, such as the invoice screen, are linked to the accounts where the amounts will be debited and credited. This allows the program to perform these functions automatically when you complete the invoice. MYOB also simplifies data entry by allowing recurring transactions to be memorized and recalled.

MYOB uses a chart of accounts to classify incoming and outgoing money. Each account must be assigned a five-digit number, and the first digit must be the code for one of the nine account types defined by MYOB. Each of the accounts can be created at four different levels which will be aggregated in the reports. This allows more flexi-

bility in defining how the reports will look. The defined level can be changed as long as there is a section header defined at the level above it. In addition to categorizing the accounts and levels, you can also assign transactions in MYOB to a job. This is probably the easiest way to define enterprises in MYOB.

MYOB has a wide range of defined output reports and allows the user to customize nearly every facet of their appearance. Because of the Windows environment, even the fonts and font sizes can be adjusted, and titles, headers, and other parts of the reports can be adjusted individually. Posting of the old year is required before certain reports can be generated for a new fiscal year. Monthly posting is not required, but months can be locked to avoid accidentally entering data in the wrong month. In addition, none of the entered data are saved until you specify the Save function. This feature allows you to abandon entry mistakes, but it also makes it necessary to regularly save the data. And, once it is saved, reversing transactions are required to change any of the saved transactions.

The ability to filter out any irrelevant data in reports does not appear to be either as easy or as comprehensive as in some other packages. MYOB also allows customization of checks, invoices, statements, purchase orders, and mailing labels.

Other features of MYOB include a very good inventory section that provides for both inventory purchased for use and inventory to be sold and offers an excellent To Do list. The To Do list is created from receivables, payables, recurring transactions, expiring discounts, pending sales and purchase orders, inventory items, and overdue contacts. The manual offers suggestions on how the program can also be used as a point-of-sale system, as a contact reminder pad, as a log for the company car, and in several other creative ways.

When you register your copy of the software, you will receive a free 48-minute video on getting started in the program. The video arrived within about a week after the reviewer sent in the registration, so it is possible for an eager user to wait for the video. The video seems especially designed for a novice user. It provides step-by-step instruction for setting up the program and getting it running with the information you provide. You can watch the keystrokes (mostly mouse clicks) right on the television, so it is difficult to make any mistakes. At registration, you can also purchase a support plan that includes planned upgrades each year for 2 years. The plan costs about what the program costs at a discount store.



Weaknesses in MYOB are mostly in the optional areas. For a system that does as much as MYOB, especially for a small business, it is surprising that no payroll system is included. It also does not include any graphs, which would seem typical in the graphical Windows environment. If you're looking for something easy to start, set up, and learn, you may find MYOB difficult. Set-up is complicated because there are so many things to set up: inventories, receivables, payables, and name and address information. The asset, liability, and equity accounts must balance before MYOB will let you enter data. MYOB claims that many of the features of the program can be ignored if you want just a checkbook accounting system, but the program is probably too expensive for that limited use. The video available with registration may provide an advantage that the other accounting programs reviewed here don't have.

### One-Write Plus Accounting Works

One-Write Plus Accounting Works is an easy-to-use, full-featured accounting program. One-Write Plus looks like the manual pegboard book-keeping system used by many small businesses. Rows and columns simulate a columnar pad of ledger paper. Pop-up lists and simple menus guide you through the program. To record a check, you fill out an on-screen form that resembles its paper counterpart. A payment may be assigned in up to 20 ways. The program calculates a new bank balance after each check. One-Write Plus handles up to 15 checking accounts using either manually completed or computer-printed checks.

Behind the screens, One-Write Plus performs complete double-entry accounting. The program continually calculates the totals for every active account. The general ledger is always up-to-date. Details of individual transactions are available for review until compressed.

The One-Write Plus Master Module can be used in two distinct ways. One way is as a stand-alone, cash-basis accounting system. With this system, you routinely record only checkbook transactions, then the Master Module does the accounting. One-Write Plus takes the checkbook transactions and transforms them into a balanced, double-entry format. You can record end-of-period adjusting entries, such as depreciation, in One-Write Plus's general journal at any time. Making general journal entries is the only procedure that requires an amount in both the debit and the credit sides of the general ledger. All recording of vendor and customer transactions, all monthly

and year-end processing, and all report generation takes place in the Master Module.

The second method is to use the program as an accrual-accounting system. In this method, the Master Module serves as the general ledger. Daily recording of cash and noncash financial transactions takes place in the Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable Modules.

The Accounts Payable Module tracks purchases by recording vendor invoices and processing payments. The A/P Module can handle up to 5,000 vendors with detailed histories, automatically apply one check to several invoices, select invoices due for payment, and allow the user to choose the ones to pay, in whole or in part.

The Accounts Receivable Module tracks sales and other receipts by recording sale invoices and processing receipts. The A/R Module can track detailed histories of 5,000 customers; calculate sales tax, discounts, and finance charges; and apply payments to several invoices. The A/R module can print detailed sales/customer analysis and aging reports. One-Write Plus automatically transfers information from customer cards to invoices. The A/R Module has three different types of invoices: service, professional, and inventory.

The Payroll Module keeps track of employee personal data, tax information, other compensation, and payment history. Payroll automatically computes gross pay; makes deductions; and prints payroll checks, W-2 and 1099 forms, and monthly tax information.

One-Write Plus can be used with up to 99 companies. It can be started with one of the 14 predesigned charts of accounts, such as the one for a farm/agricultural business, or you can use a custom-designed chart of accounts. Additional accounts can be added later. Data entry is fast, using pop-up lists for vendors, customers, accounts, and help.

One-Write Plus can produce more than a dozen journal and financial reports. The reports include disbursement and receipts analysis, trial balance, general ledger, budget vs. actual income statement, and balance sheet.

The SuperTrack Module is used to customize One-Write Plus to specific business needs. SuperTrack allows for tracking inventory, enterprise expenses and receipts, or nearly any other type of information.

The Accounting feature links the data in One-Write Plus to a Lotus-compatible spreadsheet program. After exporting data, existing worksheet



templates can be used to do cash flow analysis, budgets and forecasts, charts and graphs, trends and ratio analysis, and loan analysis.

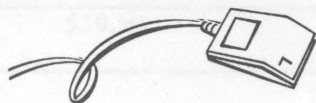
## Pacioli 2000

Pacioli is a double-entry accounting system designed for firms selling services and/or products from inventory. Farmers and ranchers will have problems using this software unless they also have a CPA. However, agribusinesses supplying goods and services to farmers and ranchers should definitely consider this program. The pull-down menus and mouse features make moving around within this program very easy. The only complexities and confusion in this program are those inherent in double-entry accounting. Pacioli has an invoice that can also be used as an on-line point-of-sales receipt. Thus, a feed dealer could use this program for invoicing and monthly billing of phone orders and providing counter receipts at the same time. Additionally, Pacioli tracks physical inventory.

Pacioli has a good set of reports related to purchase orders and invoices. Pacioli has a multiple-use form that can be used for a purchase order, merchandise receipt, invoice, or credit memo. The program can also produce price lists, mailing labels, and other customer/vendor information. It produces standard accounting and financial reports. Pacioli has a report generator, but it is not intuitively easy to use. Pacioli's check writer is tied to the open invoices received, which creates some short cuts.

One disappointment is the number of purely accounting-system-maintenance operations that must be performed by the user. The program does have auditing and budgeting features. Two modules are available for the program: one for payroll, called Payroll, and one to emulate Quicken, called CashBIZ. CashBIZ also contains an address book and note pad. CashBIZ imports Quicken data and can use Quicken checks. Payroll and CashBIZ were not reviewed.

Pacioli can handle 999 different companies at the same time within the program. It can allow 36 months of the transaction register to be open at one time. The chart of accounts does not have to be set up in advance and can be added to over time. This program can be used on a network with passwords set at nine levels. It is easy to set up reference tables for sales terms, discounts, and taxes.



## Peachtree Complete Accounting

Peachtree Complete Accounting is a double-entry, accrual-adjusting accounting package. The program is a very comprehensive package which allows the accounting-proficient user to perform all generally accepted accounting procedures (GAAP). For this reason, the program will not allow a single-entry accounting approach. A Windows version of the program (which was not reviewed) is available for about \$160.

Hardware requirements for the program include a hard disk, 640 kilobytes of RAM, a printer that can print 132 characters per line, and MS-DOS or PC-DOS 3.1 or greater. When all modules are installed on the hard disk, the program takes up approximately 12 megabytes of storage space. You can purchase user support from Peachtree Software.

The base program includes these modules: General Ledger, Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable and Invoicing, Purchase Order, Payroll, Inventory, Job Cost, Fixed Assets, and Peachtree Data Query (PDQ). Each module comes with a manual to facilitate its use. Examples and a tutorial are given in most instances. A separate manual serves as a primer for double-entry accounting and for DOS. Add-ins for bank account tracking, additional reporting, and other functions can be purchased separately.

Entering transactions is relatively easy if you understand double-entry accounting. The total number of transactions to be entered as well as hatch numbers are used for internal audit control. In addition, control reports can be printed each time you make additions or deletions to the files. Each transaction requires at least two account entries: a debit entry and a credit entry. These entries are automatically tied back to the appropriate account on the chart of accounts.

Each module produces a number of useful reports. In addition, the PDQ module allows the user to sort the data files and generate user-defined reports.

For most farmers and ranchers, who currently use cash accounting, this program would be more than what is needed. However, more and more producers are beginning to track true profits and use double-entry accounting—for them, this program would probably be an asset. Small business operations that need invoicing, accounts payable, and accounts receivable would definitely benefit from this package.



## QuickBooks

QuickBooks provides an interesting alternative for small-business accounting. It combines the simplicity of Quicken with basic double-entry accounting to form an easy-to-use software package.

QuickBooks 1 includes most of the features found in Quicken 5, such as Billminder (Bizminder in QuickBooks), financial statements, and extensive help screens. QuickBooks adds invoicing, accounts payable, and customer/vendor lists, which are necessary for small business operation. QuickBooks allows users to add new customers and vendors as you go, which is not a common feature of most accounting packages.

QuickBooks 2 adds some comparative reports and the QuickFill and QuickZoom features found in Quicken 6. QuickFill allows you to type in the first few letters, and the program completes the remainder of the field by matching it with previous entries. QuickFill works with names, prices, products, or basically anything you have recorded earlier, saving time and potentially eliminating data-entry errors.



The incorporation of QuickZoom may be the highlight of the update. QuickZoom allows you to use a single keystroke from the report screen to examine all the transactions that comprise a total in that report.

Two interesting features in QuickBooks are the Quicktrainer and notepad. Quicktrainer is a pop-up window that provides step-by-step advice. It activates automatically (unless turned off) when a screen has been displayed without input for a certain period of time. The notepad feature allows you to attach detailed confidential notes to a customer/vendor file.

Managing expenditures is a problem in QuickBooks. For example, QuickBooks doesn't automatically add interest to overdue invoices, calculate commissions, or keep track of back orders. QuickBooks 2.0 does automatically calculate sales tax on taxable items, and this feature can be attached to a customer's file.

Inventory and other asset accounting remain as cumbersome as in Quicken. These activities must be handled in current or fixed asset accounts. Adjustments in inventory or for asset depreciation must be made manually. This will make QuickBooks unattractive for small businesses that need active inventory control.

**Table 4. Developers of Selected Accounting Software.**

|                                   | Version # | Software Developer          | Technical Support<br>Phone Number <sup>1</sup> | Address  |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------|--|--|
| AgChek                            | IV        | Redwing Business System     | 800/442-2434                                   | P.O. Box 19<br>Red Wing, MN 55066                  |
| Dac Easy                          | 4.3       | DacEasy, Inc                | 214/245-0205                                   | 17950 Preston Rd.<br>Suite 800<br>Dallas, TX 75252 |
| Mind Your Own<br>Business         | 3.0       | Teleware, Inc.              | 201/586-2269                                   | 300 Roundhill Dr.<br>Rockaway, NJ 07866            |
| One-Write Plus                    | 3         | MECA Software, Inc          | 203/259-2070                                   | P.O. Box 912<br>Fairfield CT 06430                 |
| Pacioli 2000M                     | 1.06      | M-USA Business Systems, Inc | 214/490-0100                                   | 15806 Midway Road<br>Dallas, TX 75244              |
| Peach Tree<br>Complete Accounting | 6         | PeachTree Software          | 404/933-4518                                   | 1505-C Pavilion Pl.<br>Norcross, GA 30093          |
| Quick Books                       | 1 & 2     | Intuit                      | 412/858-6030                                   | P.O. Box 3014<br>Menlo Park, CA 94026              |



**Table 5. Reviewer Evaluations of Key Features.**

|                       | AgChek | DacEasy | Mind Your Own Business | One-Write Plus | Pacioli 2000 | Peach Tree | Quick Books       |
|-----------------------|--------|---------|------------------------|----------------|--------------|------------|-------------------|
| Ease of Installation  | ★★★    | ★★★★    | ★★★★                   | ★★★            | ★★★★         | ★★★        | ★★★★              |
| Setting up Books      | ★★     | ★★★     | ★★★★                   | ★★★            | ★★★★         | ★★         | ★★★               |
| Ease of Use           | ★★     | ★★★     | ★★★                    | ★★★★           | ★★★★         | ★★★        | ★★★               |
| Record Entry          | ★★     | ★★★     | ★★★                    | ★★★★           | ★★★          | ★★         | ★★★★              |
| Tracking Revenues     | ★★     | ★★★     | ★★★★                   | ★★             | ★★★          | ★★★★       | ★★ <sup>1/2</sup> |
| Tracking Expenses     | ★★     | ★★★     | ★★★★                   | ★★             | ★★★          | ★★★★       | ★★ <sup>1/2</sup> |
| Budgeting             | ★★     | ★★★     | ★★★                    | ★              | ★★★          | ★★         | ★                 |
| Enterprise Accounting | ★★★★   | ★★      | ★                      | ★              | ★★           | ★          | ★★                |
| Service & Support     | ★★     |         | ★★★                    | ★★             | ★★           | ★★         | ★★★               |
| Inventory Control     | ★★     | ★★      | ★★★★                   | ★              | ★★★          |            | ★                 |
| Overall Value         | ★★     | ★★★     | ★★★                    | ★★★            | ★★★          | ★★★★       | ★★ <sup>1/2</sup> |

**Table 6. Functions and Basic Requirements of Selected Accounting Software.**

Note: The table does not imply the value or usefulness of each program. The features indicated are those which the reviewers noted; others may exist.

|   | Ag Check IV        | Dac Easy | MYOB              | One-Write Plus       | Pacioli 2000M   | Peach Tree III | Quick Books |
|---|--------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------|
| <b>COMPUTER REQUIREMENTS</b>  |                    |          |                   |                      |                 |                |             |
| Minimum DOS version   | 3.0                | 3.0      | 3.0               | 3.0                  | 2.0             | 3.1            | 3.0         |
| RAM memory (KB)   | 640                | 640      | 2000 <sup>1</sup> | 450 <sup>2</sup>     | 640             | 640            | 640         |
| <b>Expanded Memory (required or utilized memory above 1 megabyte)</b> |                    |          |                   |                      |                 |                |             |
| Requires  | NO                 | NO       | YES <sup>1</sup>  | NO                   | NO              | NO             | NO          |
| Utilizes  | NO                 | NO       |                   | NO                   | YES             | NO             | YES         |
| Hard disk required  | YES                | YES      | YES               | YES                  | YES             | YES            | YES         |
| Disk space required   | 1.1 MB             | 4 MB     | 3-5 MB            | 10.8 MB <sup>3</sup> | 3 MB            | 12 MB          | 1.9 MB      |
| Requires Windows  | NO                 | NO       | YES               | NO                   | NO              | NO             | NO          |
| Basic retail price  | \$595              | \$99     | \$249             | \$199.95             | \$49.95         | \$300          | \$85.00     |
| Approx. upgrade costs   | 10% of Retail Cost |          |                   | \$59.95              | \$29.95         |                | —           |
| Modules included at base price  | NO                 | YES      |                   | YES                  | NONE            | YES            | NONE        |
| Add-on modules available  | Crop Livestock     | YES      | NONE              | YES                  | Payroll CashBIZ | YES            | Payroll     |
| Demo available  | \$59.50            |          |                   |                      | NO              | NO             | NO          |



|   | Ag<br>Check IV      | Dac<br>Easy | MYOB | One-<br>Write<br>Plus | Pacioli<br>2000M | Peach<br>Tree III | Quick<br>Books |
|---|---------------------|-------------|------|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| <b>FEATURES AVAILABLE</b>                     |                     |             |      |                       |                  |                   |                |
| Single entry                                  | NO                  | NO          | YES  | YES                   | NO               | NO                | YES            |
| Double entry                                  | YES                 | YES         | YES  | YES                   | YES              | YES               | YES            |
| Cash accounting                               | YES                 | YES         | YES  | YES                   | YES              | NO                | YES            |
| Accrual accounting                            | YES                 | YES         | YES  | YES                   | YES              | YES               | YES            |
| User support provided                         | YES                 | YES         | YES  | YES                   | YES              | YES               | YES            |
| Context sensitive help                        | NO                  | YES         | YES  | YES                   | YES              | YES               | YES            |
| <b>CHECK REGISTER (GENERAL LEDGER)</b>        |                     |             |      |                       |                  |                   |                |
| Number of categories<br>allowed               | NO LIMIT            |             |      | 500                   | 10 mil.          | 999,999           | NO LIMIT       |
| Method of naming                              |                     |             |      |                       |                  |                   |                |
| Number only                                   |                     |             | YES  |                       |                  | YES               |                |
| Both numbers & alpha                          | YES                 | YES         | NO   | YES                   | DOS              |                   | YES            |
| Requires posting<br>(monthly/quarterly, etc.) | YES                 | YES         | YES  | NO                    | YES              | YES               | NO             |
| Menu driven                                   | YES                 | YES         | YES  | YES                   | YES              | YES               | YES            |
| Uses quick keys                               | NO                  | YES         | YES  | YES                   | YES              | YES               | YES            |
| Pull down/pop up menus                        | YES                 | YES         | YES  | YES                   | YES              | YES               | YES            |
| Memorize/recall previous<br>transactions      | NO                  | YES         | YES  | YES                   | From Invoice     | NO                | YES            |
| Group transactions for<br>periodic execution  | NO                  | YES         | NO   | YES                   | NO               | NO                | YES            |
| Allow splitting transaction                   | YES                 | YES         | YES  | YES                   | YES              | YES               | YES            |
| By category                                   | YES                 | YES         | YES  | YES                   | YES              | YES               | YES            |
| By enterprise                                 | YES                 | YES         | YES  | YES <sup>8</sup>      | NO               | YES               | YES            |
| <b>REPORTS AVAILABLE</b>                      |                     |             |      |                       |                  |                   |                |
| Profit/loss                                   | YES                 | YES         | YES  | YES                   | YES              | YES               | YES            |
| Cash flow statement                           | YES                 | YES         | YES  | YES                   | YES              | YES               | YES            |
| Balance sheet                                 | YES                 | YES         | YES  | YES                   | YES              | YES               | YES            |
| Transaction register                          | YES                 | YES         | YES  | YES                   | YES              | YES               | YES            |
| Acct balances                                 | Trial Balance       | YES         | YES  | YES                   | YES              | YES               | YES            |
| Enterprise                                    | W/Add-on<br>Modules | YES         | YES  | YES <sup>8</sup>      | NO               | YES               | YES            |
| Budgets                                       | P & L               | YES         | YES  | YES                   | YES              | YES               | YES            |
| Payroll                                       | NO <sup>10</sup>    | YES         | NO   | YES                   | YES              | YES               | YES            |
| User customized reports                       | Limited             | YES         | YES  | YES                   | YES              | YES               | YES            |
| Memorize/recall<br>customized report formats  | NO                  | YES         | YES  | YES                   | YES              | NO                | YES            |
| Accounts Payable                              | YES                 | YES         | YES  | YES                   | YES              | YES               | YES            |
| Number of standard reports                    |                     | 4           |      | 8                     | 4                | 9                 | 3              |



|   | Ag<br>Check IV                | Dac<br>Easy | MYOB                             | One-<br>Write<br>Plus | Pacioli<br>2000M | Peach<br>Tree III | Quick<br>Books        |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Accounts Receivable                           | YES                           | YES         | YES                              | YES                   | YES              | YES               | YES                   |
| Invoices                                      | NO                            | YES         | YES                              | YES                   | YES              | YES               | YES                   |
| Billing                                       | NO                            | YES         | YES                              | YES                   | YES              | YES               | YES                   |
| Number of standard reports                    |                               | 3           |                                  | 12                    | 5                | 7                 | 3                     |
| "Ship to" address for customer                | NO                            | YES         |                                  | YES                   | YES              | YES               | YES                   |
| "Bill to" address for customer                | NO                            | YES         |                                  | YES                   | YES              | YES               | YES                   |
| Graphics                                      | NO                            | YES         | NO                               | YES <sup>9</sup>      | NO               | YES               | NO                    |
| Number of graphic reports                     |                               |             |                                  |                       |                  | Unlmtd            | —                     |
| Customized graphics                           |                               | YES         |                                  | YES <sup>9</sup>      | NO               | YES               | —                     |
| Can print graphics                            |                               | YES         |                                  | YES <sup>9</sup>      | NO               | YES               | —                     |
| <b>INCOME TAX</b>                             |                               |             |                                  |                       |                  |                   |                       |
| Summary                                       | NO <sup>11</sup>              | NO          | NO                               | NO                    | NO               | YES               | YES                   |
| Summary by form                               | NO                            | NO          | NO                               |                       | NO               | NO                | YES                   |
| Summary by form line                          | NO                            | NO          | NO                               |                       | NO               | NO                | YES                   |
| Electronic export to tax preparation software | NO                            | NO          |                                  |                       | NO               | NO                | YES <sup>12</sup>     |
| Name of program(s)                            |                               |             |                                  |                       |                  |                   |                       |
| <b>TYPES OF ACCOUNTS HANDLED</b>              |                               |             |                                  |                       |                  |                   |                       |
| Asset accounts                                | YES                           | YES         | YES                              | YES                   | YES              | YES               | YES                   |
| Liability accounts                            | YES                           | YES         | YES                              | YES                   | YES              | YES               | YES                   |
| Credit card accounts                          | Liability Accts               | YES         | NO                               | YES                   | YES              | YES               | YES                   |
| Inventory accounts                            | Asset accts                   | YES         | YES                              | YES <sup>8</sup>      | YES              | YES               | YES <sup>13</sup>     |
| Other   |                               |             | Equity, Income,<br>Cost of Sales | YES <sup>8</sup>      | Capital          | YES               |                       |
| Number Accounts allowed                       | No Limit                      | No Limit    |                                  | 500                   | 50 mil.          | 1295              | No Limit <sup>5</sup> |
| Enterprise accounting                         | YES                           | YES         | YES                              | YES <sup>8</sup>      | NO               | YES               | YES                   |
| Number enterprises allowed                    | Unlimited                     | No Limit    |                                  | 5000                  |                  |                   | No Limit <sup>5</sup> |
| Inventory                                     |                               | YES         |                                  | YES <sup>8</sup>      |                  | YES               |                       |
| Tracks physical inventory amounts             | On Crop,<br>Livestock Modules | YES         | YES                              | YES <sup>8</sup>      | YES              | YES               | NO                    |
| Amount/values integrated                      |                               | YES         | YES                              | YES <sup>8</sup>      | YES              | Values            | NO                    |
| <b>OTHER FEATURES</b>                         |                               |             |                                  |                       |                  |                   |                       |
| Financial ratios                              | YES                           |             | NO                               | YES <sup>9</sup>      | YES              | NO                | NO                    |
| Check writing                                 | NO                            | YES         | YES                              | YES                   | YES              | YES               | YES                   |
| Account reconciliation                        | NO                            | YES         | Any<br>Account                   | YES                   | Audit all        | YES               | Bank<br>Credit Card   |
| Budgeting                                     | YES                           | YES         | YES                              | YES                   | YES              | YES               | YES                   |
| Multi-year comparisons                        | YES                           | YES         | YES                              | YES                   | 3                | YES               | NO                    |



|   | Ag<br>Check IV      | Dac<br>Easy | MYOB                   | One-<br>Write<br>Plus | Pacioli<br>2000M | Peach<br>Tree III | Quick<br>Books    |
|---|---------------------|-------------|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Export/Import</b>                    |                     |             |                        |                       |                  |                   |                   |
| Export ASCII files                      | NO                  | YES         | YES                    | NO                    | YES              | YES               | NO                |
| Export to spreadsheets                  | NO                  | NO          | NO                     | YES                   | YES              | YES               | NO                |
| Other export                            | NO                  | NO          |                        | NO                    | Database         | YES               | QIF <sup>15</sup> |
| Import from other programs              | From Doanes Payroll | NO          | Comma or Tab Delimited | NO                    | NO               | NO                | YES               |
| <b>INSTALLATION AND SETUP</b>           |                     |             |                        |                       |                  |                   |                   |
| Auto install                            | YES <sup>16</sup>   | YES         | YES                    | YES                   | YES              | YES               | YES               |
| Requires defining categories before use |                     | NO          | NO                     | NO                    | NO               | NO                | NO                |
| Estimated installation time (Hr:Min)    |                     | 0:15        | 0:10                   | 0:20                  | 0:10             | 0:25              | 0:05              |

<sup>1</sup>Minimum recommended KB required for Windows.

<sup>2</sup>640K recommended.

<sup>3</sup>Disk space required for all modules and features.

<sup>4</sup>User support; 800 number; first 30 days free; \$125 per year.

<sup>5</sup>The maximum number of income/expense accounts, projects, memorized invoices, and groups depends upon the memory your computer has.

<sup>6</sup>The user can re-open the prior period to make entries and then re-close.

<sup>7</sup>Monthly posting is optional, but recommended yearly posting is required before balance sheets for new year can be generated.

<sup>8</sup>With super track.

<sup>9</sup>With @ accounting.

<sup>10</sup>AgCheck has no payroll module. The Doane Payroll module can be used, but it is difficult to execute the file transfer from the Doane Payroll to AgCheck during the posting process.

<sup>11</sup>Financial Analysis allows you to identify business tax expense accounts.

<sup>12</sup>Quickbooks exports data files in a QIF (Quicken Interchange Format). Software must support QIF format. Reports can be exported to ASCII format.

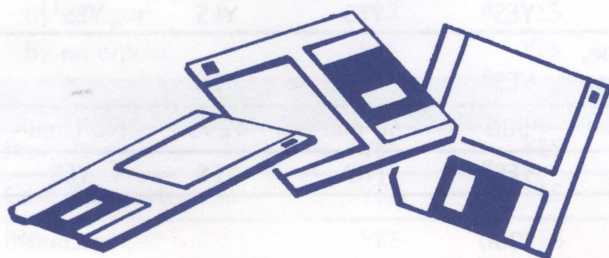
<sup>13</sup>Current asset account can be customized to inventory.

<sup>14</sup>Each account can be budgeted separately.

<sup>15</sup>Quicken Interchange Format.

<sup>16</sup>A tutorial is included in the manual with sample data installed in a SAMPLE sub-directory during the installation process.

<sup>17</sup>Installation time assumes Windows is already installed.



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