

## On The Same Page

This three-family operation made a decision to synchronize their accounting software.



**A**s a high school student, Chris Smith loved accounting. “I would skip ahead of the class to look at what was covered in the next chapter,” she admits.

She didn’t realize that this skill set would be very useful if she married a farmer. Of course, marrying a farmer wasn’t on her radar screen. “I was a city girl,” she says. “I had no clue what was on the other side of the highway from town.”

Today, she farms with her husband, Kevin, near Rochester, Indiana, and handles four sets of books. She even drives a Ford Expedition EL (extra length) partly because of its storage capacity for taking meals to the field.

“We deliver a warm meal to our family and employees at night during planting and harvest seasons,” she says. “So I just open the tail gate and they can eat it there or take it to go.”

### Switching Computer Software

Smith Farms – which includes Kevin’s parents, Dale and Mildred, his brother, Dave, and Dave’s wife, Melana – rents and owns 9,000 acres of corn and soybeans.

Chris and Kevin have three children at home: Ciara, 17, Travis, 15, and Olivia, 9.

“Before we had kids, I learned to run the tractor and other equipment, but now I’m more behind the scenes,” she says.

That means she’s in the office, doing data entry and writing checks. Each family keeps its own books.

One of the biggest business-related decisions the Smiths recently made was converting all three families to the same accounting software.

“When Mom and Dad are traveling, we can access any data we need from their computer more easily,” Kevin says.

Chris adds, “We heard about AgriSolutions Ag Manager from a friend.

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– Kevin Smith, Rochester, Indiana

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We wanted a program that gives us a field-by-field and crop-by-crop analysis. We’re still learning more about it.”

Chris and Kevin maintain an office in their home and an office complex in their new machine shop.

“We have Ag Manager on computers in both offices,” she says. “Before we did that, if Kevin had a question, I often had to go back to the house to look it up.”

Chris handles payroll for the farm’s four full-time employees and several part-time workers during planting and harvesting. She and Kevin own and operate a trucking company, KCS Express.

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“Chris is good with numbers, and I run the reports and do the analysis,” Kevin says. “We’re often not in the office at the same time, but she has a great filing system. I always can find what I need even if she’s not there.”

Chris and Kevin regularly discuss marketing decisions. “The records Chris keeps give us a good handle on our costs and help us know when to lock in a profit if the market goes up,” he says. □