

A woman wearing a straw hat and glasses is looking at a tablet in a field. The background is a blurred landscape with green plants and brown soil.

THE DIRECT FARMER'S

DATA HANDBOOK

What to track, why, and what it means as a direct-market farmer.

YOUR BUSINESS, YOUR DATA

Farming successfully relies on many data inputs. You monitor rain, soil health, and planting schedules. What can often be neglected, though, are the less tangible aspects of your operation.

You can plan, plant, grow, and eventually physically hold a carrot, for instance, but it is tougher to have that tactile connection to business growth, customer acquisition, and even the dollars that flow digitally into your account.

This handbook will give you more meaning to the numbers that farms should be tracking in order to really see what is happening with their business. We will give you the what and why of each metric, along with helpful tips for pushing your numbers in the right direction—up!

Yours in farming,

The Local Line Team

TIP

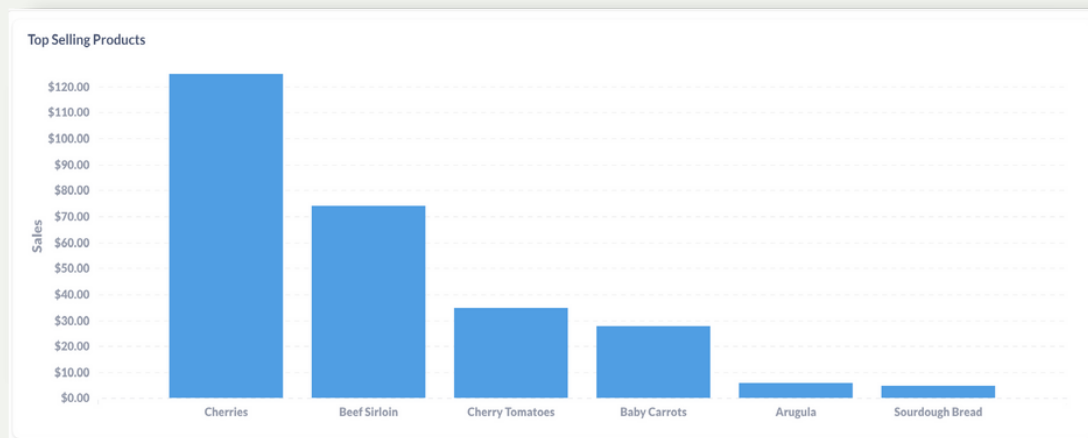
**Before jumping into this handbook, ask yourself:
*where am I tracking my data?***

We recommend using more than just spreadsheets. Local Line has built-in robust reporting. If you're not a customer, go ahead and use our free trial to get an idea of what you need!

PRODUCTS

Tracking your inventory is probably the most basic data point of any small business. You can't sell what you don't have! Within that, we can begin by drilling down into a few more numbers that can help you make informed decisions beyond selling, and can guide what you grow and when.

Top Sellers



At any point in time, knowing your top selling products can answer the following questions:

- What do my customers like best?
- Are my best sellers also my most profitable products?
- What should I grow more (or less) of at my next planting?

Product Sales

The table on the next page shows a more detailed view of your sales, with unit counts and total sales in dollars. This is a "must track" metric for any business wanting to understand their sales better. This is the most basic tally sheet that most businesses keep.

Products Sales - Table View

Product	Sales	Count	Unit Quantity Sold
Cherries	\$124.95	8	10
Beef Sirloin	\$74.38	1	1
Cherry Tomatoes	\$35.00	3	7
Baby Carrots	\$27.93	3	7
Arugula	\$5.98	5	6
Sourdough Bread	\$4.99	1	1
Brie Cheese	\$0.00	0	0

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Beyond simply knowing how much revenue (total amount of money flowing into your business via sales), it can act as your crop projection for next year. Easily export this data to see how many total units of a product were sold the previous year, and understand how much you might need to grow for the next season.

Tracking this kind of data reduces reliance on rough estimates for crop planning, and reduces loss at the end of the day. We all know that growing what you can't sell is a waste of time and money. You work hard! Make sure you're not doing any of it in vain.

TIP

Use last years product sales numbers as the basis for approaching next year's crop plan.

ORDERS

Order tracking can give you so much information about the health of your business. Order data can tell you a story of:

- Are your customers buying piecemeal (1-2 items at most), or have your customers moved towards buying more of their grocery list from you (5-6 items)? How far away from that point are they?
- Who is driving sales? Wholesale? Families? 2-3 larger customers?

Let's take a look at the data points you can rely on to build this larger story.

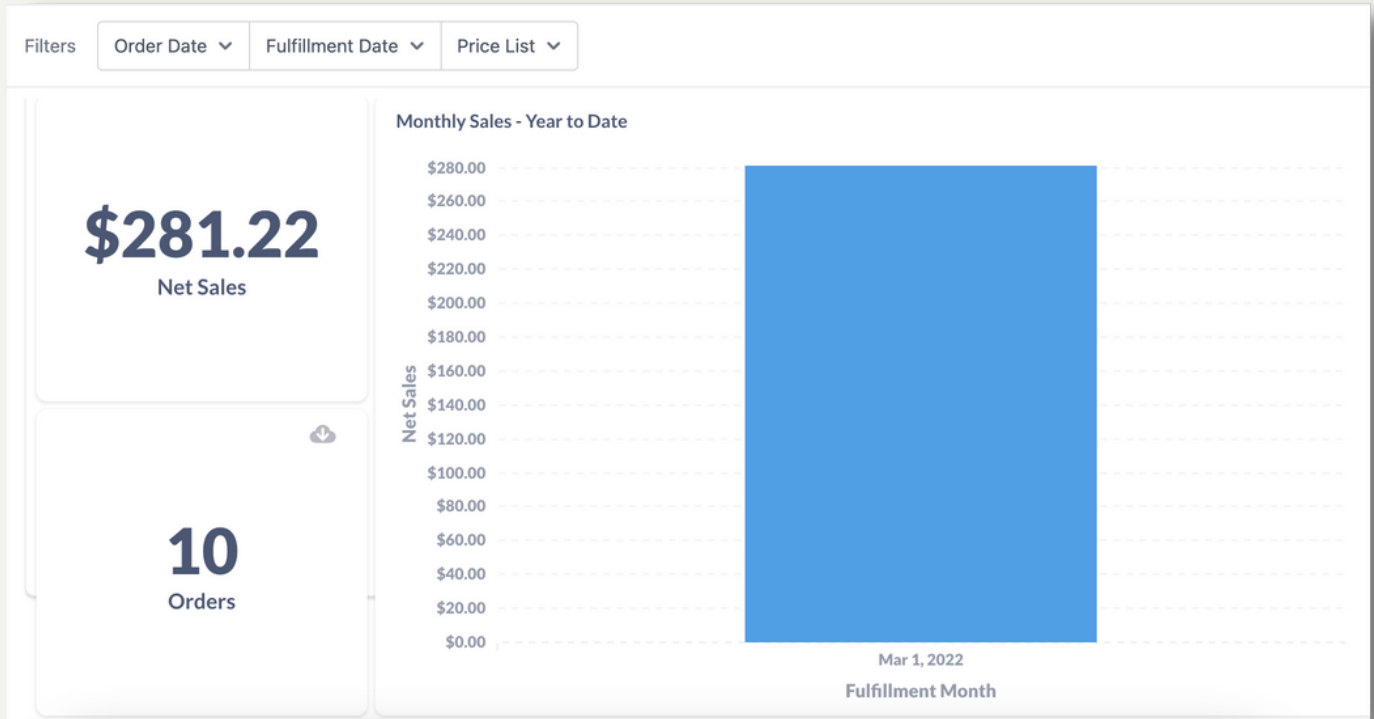
Average Order Size

2.1 Avg # Products / Order	\$28.12 Avg Order Amount	\$0.52 Taxes Collected	\$0.00 Credits Applied
1 Cancelled Orders	9 Overdue Orders	\$265.72 Overdue Amount	\$0.00 Discounts Applied

Apart from total sales, this is probably your second-most informative metric about the growth of your farm business! Average Order Size represents the mean amount your customers are spending in one single order from your store. The higher the amount, so long as your total sales are also climbing in tandem, can demonstrate that your efforts are generating a greater amount of demand from your existing customer base.

If your total number of customers, and your average order size, and your overall sales are climbing at once? Even better.

Number of Orders



Use this metric month over month as a benchmark. If you have last year's data, compare this to it.

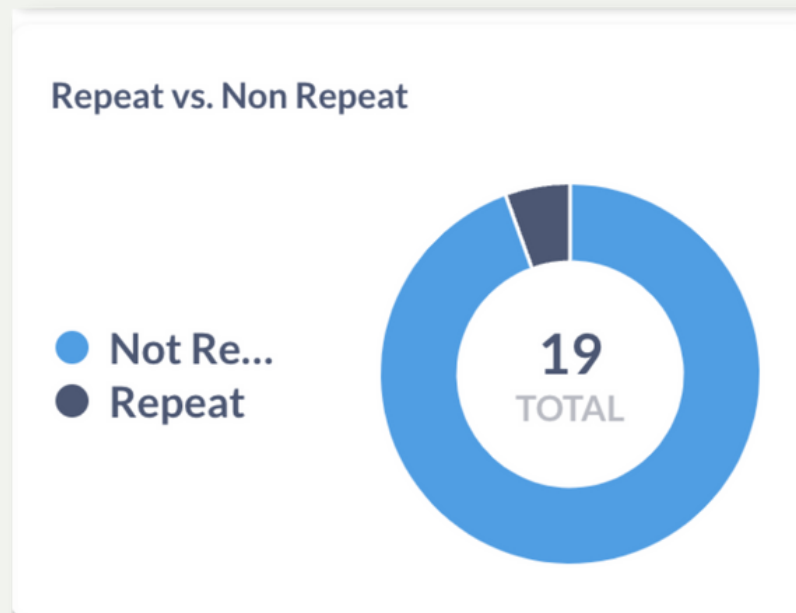
TIP

Are you seeing fewer orders with higher average order size? You're probably seeing your core customer base emerge. More orders, but with less value? Encourage your customers to increase their order value through upsells, or consider developing wholesale relationships to generate more consistent volume.

CUSTOMERS

Your customers are the heart and soul of your business. Not only are they obviously necessary to succeed, but they are a community that can be rich with feedback about what works and what doesn't! **Using customer centred metrics can help you expand your reach and understand who is buying, and how they are buying.**

Repeat vs. Non Repeat



Loyalty is one of the most profitable things you can build amongst your customers. This metric shows how many orders, over a specific period of time, were from repeat vs. non-repeat customers. The goal for any successful direct to customer farmer should be to develop repeat business. This makes your revenue more consistent and predictable!

TIP

Not seeing a lot of repeat customers? Consider where you're selling! If you go to the farmers' market once a week and use a payment terminal or log orders on the spot, the typical "walk by" traffic common at markets is driving a high volume of non-repeat customers. Consider pre-selling or even skipping the market altogether, investing more time into marketing your business online!

Least Active/Most Active

Here is where you can garner some great data to inform your marketing strategy. Notice that you have a group of less active customers? A great way to re-engage them is to prompt them to act via email! Send a quick hello with your latest price list, or use an email marketing platform to send a small campaign ([check out our guide here!](#)).

Least Active Customers			
Customer	Status	Orders	Last Order
Chris Keil	Unregistered	6	Mar 24, 2022
Amelia Watson	Activated	1	Mar 7, 2022
Priya Baines	Activated	1	Mar 7, 2022
	Unregistered	1	Mar 25, 2022
Chris Testing	Unregistered	1	Mar 28, 2022
Trevor Adams	Activated	0	-
Nina G	Unregistered	0	-
Emily B	Unregistered	0	-
Jordan V	Unregistered	0	-

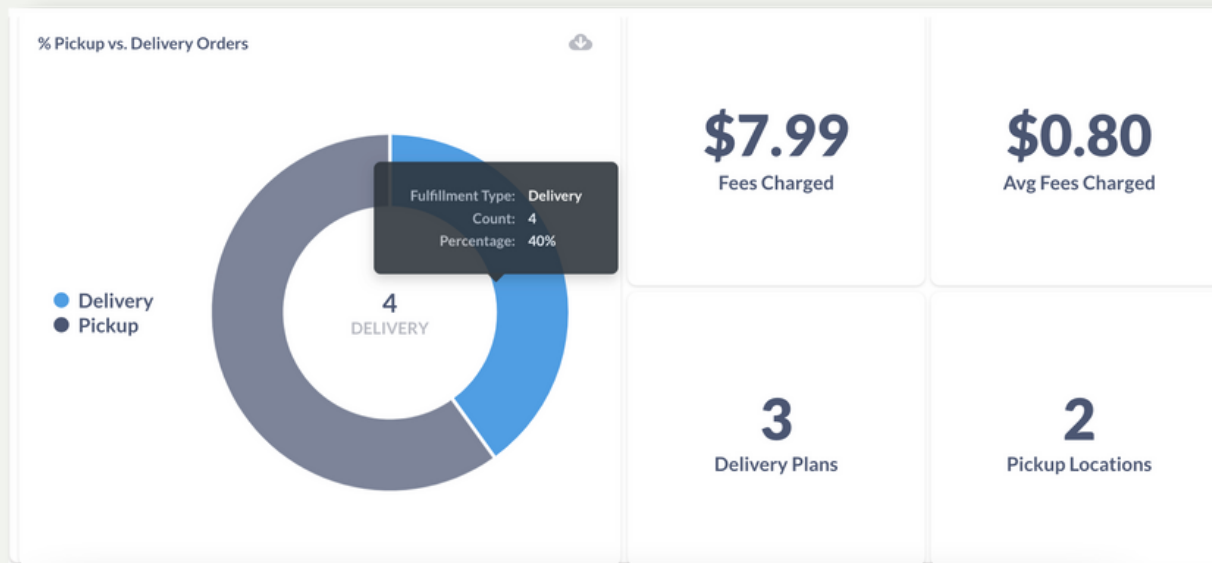
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FULFILLMENT

Fulfillment data really cuts to the heart of the value of your time. It answers the questions:

- What delivery plans drive the most sales?
- Where are most of my buyers?
- Is offering delivery worth it?

Delivery Vs. Pick Up



Seeing this information at a glance can tell you two important things: how do my customers prefer to receive their orders, and is one method or the other simply not needed! It follows that if you consistently see your customers selecting pick up, it might be time to check on another metric, which we cover on the next page.

Average Order Value of Delivery/Pick Up Plans

This is a big one! Tracking average order by delivery area can tell you whether or not offering delivery is really worth your time. Seeing a consistently low AOV in one delivery plan may make you consider if it is more valuable to not offer that service, either to that specific area, or at all!

Conversely, it can show where your highest AOV and total sales is coming from! Have a great AOV/sales number in one area, but a drooping metric in another? Try marketing upsells specifically to the customers on the underperforming route. If it merits canceling that delivery plan altogether, encourage customers to pick up along the route of a more profitable one or at the farm. See the example below.



By taking total sales per delivery plan, and dividing it by the number of orders, you gain the average order value of each plan.

STOREFRONT

It goes without saying that your storefront is, for customers, the centerpiece of your business. It is where you convert window shoppers to cash in your pocket! It makes good sense to track how effective your storefront truly is.

Abandoned Carts



This metric shows you, out of all customers who loaded up items into their cart, what percentage did not end up checking out. For you, this is lost business. A healthy abandoned cart rate is around 30% and below. Depending on what you sell, that can range from as low as 5% to 20% on the low end for non-perishables or retail.

There are many services out there that specialize in helping businesses tackle the problem of cart abandonment. From automatic follow up emails, to personalized text messages, there is a whole host of options for reconvverting these folks into buyers! In the case of the direct farmer, we suggest sending a weekly email to anyone with an abandoned cart! It's as easy as exporting the emails of those customers to your preferred email marketing tool, or sending a personalized note.

Most Active Days/Times

Knowing when your customers are active is a helpful data point in that it can guide your choices around when to open your store (if you have active store hours) or show you when it is prudent to have any updates completed by (if you run a 24/7 store). Your customers' active times can also help you make a few handy assumptions about your customer base. Getting a lot of orders in the evening? You might be seeing a lot of working professionals or families in your customer base. Throughout the day might imply retirees, students, or those working shift work.



Get started today!

If you're feeling a bit overwhelmed, don't worry! Making the switch to selling online isn't a transformational process that takes months to prepare for and months to execute on - you can start in as little as one day. Take it one day at a time and all of a sudden you'll have more sales, better processes, and more control over your life and business! Trust us, it is not as complicated (or time consuming) as it seems.

Farming will always be hard, so lets learn to run our businesses a little smarter and make life a little easier.

Try selling online for **FREE** today with Local Line. We can get you up and selling online within an hour. [Sign up here today!](#)



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