

# impact

University of Idaho Extension programs that are making a difference in Idaho.

## Online QuickBooks for farming and ranching class provides flexibility

### AT A GLANCE

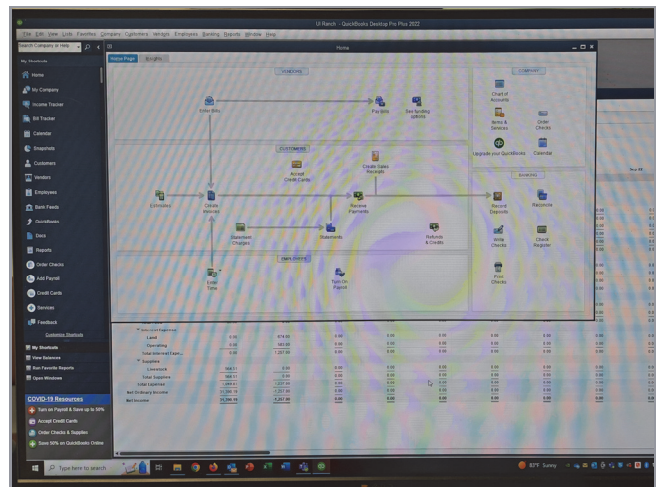
Producers asked for a class on QuickBooks to help them develop useful farm financial records. Online delivery allows them to do most of the classwork on their own schedule.

### The Situation

To make sound farm financial decisions farmers and ranchers need accurate records and a flexible system. As the UI Extension Farm Business Management Team has been teaching farm financial analysis classes it has become apparent many producers find it difficult to put together the financial reports needed to make good business decisions. In addition, class members who are being assisted often asked if there is a QuickBooks class to help them get their financial records into a digital format.

The challenges to providing a specific program such as this include:

- There are usually not enough class members in a geographic area to justify the expense and time of a face-to-face class.
- The best time for these classes is during the winter when travel in Idaho is hazardous.
- The producers who need this information the most are often those who have off-farm employment, making it difficult to attend a face-to-face class and still meet other obligations.



Students learn to build a farm-based chart of accounts and enter traditional farm financial transactions in QuickBooks.

Many of these producers are also Farm Service Agency (FSA) borrowers who need to meet that agency's borrower training requirements.

### Our Response

A sub-team of the farm UI Extension Farm Business Management Team met to determine course objectives and how to best deliver the material in a mostly asynchronous method. We set up the class to have four synchronous meetings to answer questions and present some of the material live. The bulk of the course material would be in a video format that could be accessed any time. This approach allowed the class to span a shorter timeframe and still develop financial records skills.

Several topics were to be covered each week by asynchronous videos that could be watched at the students' leisure. Once a week the class would meet for an hour or two to discuss and clarify any issues. This time was used to answer specific questions.

Application was made to FSA to get the program approved for borrower training. Approval was granted.

## Program Outcomes

The online QuickBooks for Farming and Ranching class has been taught three times — spring 2022, fall 2022, spring 2023 — to a total of 30 farm units from all areas of Idaho.

An evaluation of the spring 2023 class (N=5) indicated there was an improvement in the ability to set up chart of accounts, enter expense and income transactions, set up customers and vendors, enter split transactions, run various reports and reconcile different bank statements. In addition, the class indicated a greater understanding of double entry accounting, income statements, balance sheets, use of reports, budgeting, importance of financial records and accrual adjustments.

Eighteen videos were produced and posted on the University of Idaho College of Agricultural and Life Sciences YouTube channel on an unlisted playlist for asynchronous viewing. The playlist URL was given to each farm unit so they could access the videos at any time.

In addition, each online live class was recorded and added to the playlist so students who were not able to make the class discussion could still benefit from the discussions and material covered in the class. This allowed the students to take care of emergency situations such as calving or lambing issues and still get the benefit of the class discussion.

Skills — ability to do	Before	After
Chart of accounts setup	2.40	4.00
Expense transactions	3.40	4.80
Income transactions	3.20	4.60
Customer/Vendor setup	3.20	4.60
Split transactions	3.00	4.80
Running reports	2.00	3.80
Reconciliation	3.00	4.20
Understanding	Before	After
Double entry accounting	2.60	4.00
Income statements	2.80	4.00
Balance sheets	2.80	4.00
Using reports	2.40	3.80
Budgeting	3.00	4.20
Importance of financial records	3.60	4.60
Accrual adjustments	1.20	3.00

As measured on a one to five Likert scale with one being no ability/understanding and five being complete ability/understanding.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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