

TYPES OF FARM RECORDS

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The importance of keeping farm records was discussed in part I and more emphasis was on understanding the significance of recording in farm business. It is also important for the farmer to always remember that farm planning depends on analyzing **past performance**, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the business and using this knowledge to make both present and future **decisions**. The basis for such analysis is **sound and accurate information**; and this can be obtained only from the good record keeping. Although many types of records can be kept, the farmer must decide what information he requires for his planning and keep those required, records that are never used are a waste of time and effort.

Despite the above mentioned advantage of keeping good farm records, small holder farmers are reluctant to keep farm records. The reasons why farmers dislike to keep records are: its time consuming, it increase tax for higher levels of production, it may lead to failure of the farmer to secure loans, it may be difficult to interpret, some of the records are not useful, errors in compilation may lead to disasters for example ordering little feed or few chemicals and records may fail to show useful trends for example rainfall records which normally vary from season to season. In conclusion, records are perceived by many farmers to add to their general expenses. But does that mean the farmer has to forgo record keeping so as minimize farm expenses? A big NO!

Poor record keeping imply poor enterprise planning and implementation that will eventually lead to poor enterprise take off or expansion in the short and long run. In this article, I therefore want to highlight simplified types of farm records that are a must have for every farmer and worthwhile for the ease of day to day running of every farm enterprise.

Types of farm records

In the animal production sector, farm records are grouped into two broad categories namely physical records and financial records. However, these two categories are not only limited to animal production but also applies to crop production. As a way of minimizing costs for recording and storing useful farm information, it can be kept on cheap material such as paper

and only needs safe keeping. However, sophisticated materials like computers can also be used.

Financial records are monetary and are used to record the money earned (income) or the money used (expenditure) while physical records are made for stock feed, inventory, tools, machinery/ equipment, livestock numbers, climate/weather and infrastructure. The list is neither complete nor exhaustive and more records can be made depending on their intended use. However, it is important for every farmer to know that there are no special rules for setting out farm records but great care needs to be taken to ensure that the records meet the criteria for good farm records. In the meantime, it is wise to concentrate on physical records while financial records will be dealt with later on in part 4 of record keeping.

The type of animal production (physical) records depends on the type of animal being kept. Separate records should be made for different animals. Since animal records are more complicated than crop records, successful livestock farmers usually keep more than one type of production record. There are **five** main types of animal production records and these are: **individual records, stock registers, production registers, input records and inventories.**

Before taking a look on general major records, a look on specific animal record is helpful for more information. Examples of information needed for specific animal records is outlined below though it is only confined to beef and pig enterprises in this article.

Beef herd records	Pig records
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Pedigree records. 2) Record of monthly mass required for: Monitoring the general health of the herd, Feeding, particularly winter feeding, Calculating the 120 and 205 day mass, Performance and progeny testing 3) All sales, deaths, slaughtering and purchases of cattle: For calculating the gross output of the herd, For calculating percentage 4) Service and calving records 5) All variable costs, feed, dips and labour 6) All vaccinations, treatments and injections 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identification records 2. Sow records: Number of sow, Piglets born, Piglets weaned, Birth and weaning mass of litter, Services and farrowing records 4. Records of litter: Days to bacon, Grading returns. 5. Feed records. 6. All stock purchases, sales, births and deaths. 7. All variable costs. 8. Weekly mass. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) To enable pigs to be marketed at the correct mass. (b) For performance and progeny testing.