

# Getting started with a computer

As more and more tasks for farm businesses move online, you might be looking to get set up with your first computer or upgrade your current system. If so, this guide will take you through the options for computer type and features to look out for.

## 1) Identify what type of computer would suit you best. The different types are explained below.

**Tower** – the computer type that has been around the longest. The tower is the driver of the computer and you would link a monitor, keyboard and mouse to create the full equipment setup. This computer type is larger in size so desk space would be vital.



**Compact desktop** – smaller than a tower but not portable. The computer is the size of a shoebox so could easily sit on a desk with a monitor, keyboard and mouse being linked up.

**All in one** – only one thing to sit on top of your desk or table. The mechanism of the computer is stored in a casing within the monitor, so the entire system is in one piece of equipment.



**Laptop** – handy if you want it to be portable or don't have much space to house a larger setup. The screen, keyboard and mouse are all part of the laptop. If you are looking to go for a laptop, look out for the length of battery life and aim for 8+ hours. A 15–16-inch screen would also be the best fit for portability without the screen being too small.

**Tablet** – handheld, touchscreen device. Useful for browsing and checking e-mails but can be restrictive for tasks that require more work and input or for using for a long period of time.



## 2) Decide which operating system you would like the computer to have.

There are two options - Windows or Mac. Windows is most commonly used and familiar for many people. Mac is the Apple operating system so if you have Apple devices for other purposes then this software or look may be more appealing to you.

- 3) Check what level of warranty is being offered with the product and if a longer warranty can be sourced for the same or similar price then this would be a worthwhile option.
- 4) Look for what operating memory capacity the product is offering. This will be listed in the specifications. A computer needs a good operating memory capacity to run at a reasonable speed and be able to open and run various programs. You need at least 8GB of 'RAM'.
- 5) Look for what storage capacity the product is offering. To be able to store spreadsheets or other farm records or programs, sourcing a device with at least 500GB of storage memory would be recommended.
- 6) Shop around – Don't settle for the first price you see online or in a shop. Visit a couple of stores or sites to check that you are getting the best deal possible. If you can coincide your purchase with a sale or promotion within a shop or computer manufacturer then you are likely to secure a discount or better deal.

#### What do you need to know about setting up your device:



- If you are using a laptop, you will need a power cable as the battery will only last so long and the device will then need plugged into the mains. Additionally, you may need a mouse if you don't like the touchpad mouse that comes on the laptop.
- If you opt for a tower or compact desktop, you will need a monitor to act as the screen. Ensure that you also purchase a VGA or DVI cable to link the screen to the brains of the computer. You will also need a separate keyboard and mouse.

- All keyboards and computer mice will have USB connection so look for the USB abbreviation on your device to plug in your keyboard or mouse. The picture shows what a USB connection looks like for reference.

