CHAPTER *2*

GETTING STARTED

The program is supplied in executable code on 3.5-inch disks or CD, with a user's guide. Before running *FARMS*, make sure that your computer system meets the technical requirements for the program. Also perform the installation procedures, and, if you are using floppy disks, make working copies of the program and data disks. Finally, you should familiarise yourself with the overall structure of the program and the mechanics of running it. This chapter will lead you through these activities.

2.1 HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS

The program runs in Windows 95 or later version on an IBM-PC or compatible computer. The minimum requirement is 16 Mb RAM, 10Mb of disk space and an SVGA monitor with 1Mb VGA card. However, 32Mb of RAM and a printer attached to your computer is recommended but optional.

2.2 HOW TO INSTALL FARMS

1. From the Windows START menu choose **RUN**.
2. Select Setup from the CD drive or from the first stiffy disk and press Enter or click on OK.
3. By default *FARMS* will be placed within a directory called *FARMS* on the hard disk, usually the C drive. Change the disk and directory name if required and click on OK.
4. The installation program will ask for your name or company name. Enter your name and click on OK to proceed.
5. The install program will copy and expand all the files on the installation Disk and ask for the next Disk, if installing from the stiffies.
6. On completion, the installation program will create the Windows program items in the program folder which contains the *FARMS* folder.

2.3 HOW TO RUN FARMS

The use of the program is discussed in detail in Chapters 3 to 9. The main steps to follow are indicated in Figure 2.1 by numerical values. *The steps are:*

1. Left click on the **Start** button and point to **Programs**, a submenu will appear. Move the mouse cursor to the *FARMS* group, again a submenu will open. Left click on *FARMS*.
2. The introductory screen is displayed while *FARMS* is being loaded.
3. The Main menu will then appear with only the **File**, **General** and **Help** components highlighted. Commands shown in grey are inactive.
4. The **General** menu can then be updated for data that is relevant for farmers in the same region.
5. Left click on the **File** menu, and then again on **Open database**. Then highlight the farmer's record in the table you want to work with, and click on the OK button. The farmer's data set in the database is now active. Alternatively, the user can create a new record by clicking on the insert record button. Subsequently enter an identification number and description. Today's date automatically appears in the starting date of the 12-month analysis column. This date can be changed by clicking on the date and down arrow. Click on the year and move up or down with the arrows. Select a month by clicking on it. Lastly click on a day.
6. Next use the **Data** option on the Main menu. Start at the top with Starting date setup through to Livestock enterprise. Change the data to suit your farm information.
7. After all the data has been entered, go to **Run** on the Main menu and edit the crop rotation to suit your needs. Also indicate what you want to do with the credit and cash flow closing balances and run the program.
8. Go to **Reports** and **Graphs** to evaluate the results after the program has finished running.
9. Use the **Close database** option on the **File** menu to close a farmer's database.
10. By using the **Exit** option under the **File** menu, the user can exit the *FARMS* program.

2.4 TERMINOLOGY AND GENERAL CONTROL KEYS

LINK TYPE

The following link types are supplied for a shortcut to other datasets:

IrriCost	Irrigation system cost calculation model
Machinery	Mechanisation system
Irrigation	Irrigation system
Operation	Operation database

ALT AND MENU CHARACTERS

Menu and submenu access is available by holding the **Alt** key down and pressing the underlined character. Alternatively press the **Alt** key and move with the left and right arrows in

the main menu. Access a submenu with the aid of the down arrow. Use the arrows to highlight the desired option and enter to make a selection.
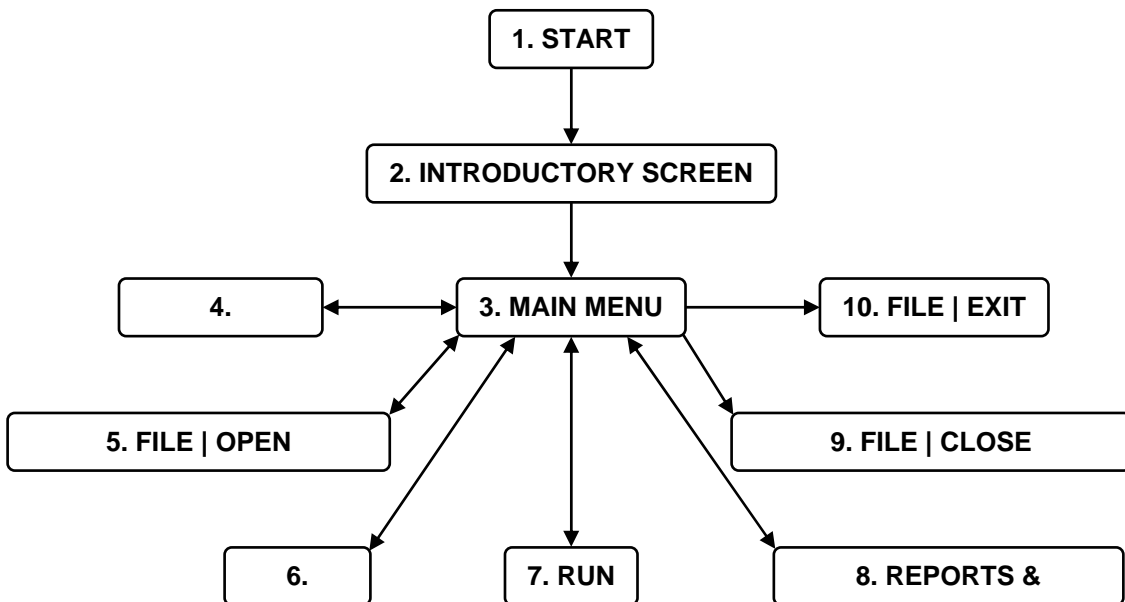

FIGURE 2.1   PROGRAM FLOW DIAGRAM OF *FARMS*

ESC

The **Esc** key may be used at any time to exit a table editing function, an active data set or lookup list or to exit the form.

TAB

The **Tab** key may be used to advance the cursor in a grid (table).

SHIFT TAB

Hold the **Shift** key down and press **Tab** to move the cursor back in a grid.

GREEN FIELDS

These fields are calculated by the program; hence it need not be completed or updated by the user.

GRID

A grid control enables you to view and edit records in a dataset in a tabular grid format.

SCROLL

Scroll is the term used to describe the down- or upwards movement within a grid. Either click on the arrows of the scroll bar, below the up or above the down arrow or click on the box. Keep the mouse's left button in and drag the box.

LEFT MOUSE BUTTON

The mouse is used to perform a number of different tasks within *FARMS.* The Left Button is used to:

1. Select Menu items: *The left mouse button activates the Main menu, which displays lists of functions or command windows.*
2. Access Pick lists by double-clicking in the appropriate field. *Open the pick list and select item.*
3. Scroll Grids by holding the pointer against the right margin. If the left mouse button is held down as the pointer is placed against any margin, the table will scroll until the button is reached.
4. Select Dataset Functions (if some fields are double-clicked a pick list appears from which an item can be picked and it is placed in the field).
- If the user double-clicks in the field with this button, a pick list will appear for the user to choose from.
- A dropdown list will appear when the user clicks on this arrow or in the case of dates, a calendar will appear.

APPARENT MOUSE FAILURE

On occasion, it may appear as if the mouse is failing to respond. The reason for this apparent failure is that the window on which the icon is displayed is not the active or top window.

*Solution*: Close the windows on top of the window you want to work on.

2.5 DATA ENTRY AND EDITING PROCEDURES

As you enter data, you can edit your current entry or a previous entry. Use the keyboard's arrows after clicking in a grid, to the cell that needs editing. Subsequently use the <**BACKSPACE**>, <**DEL**>, <←> and <→> keys to make corrections.

Use of the function and editing keys is the same for all data entry screens in *FARMS*. Whenever possible, the program also checks your entries to see if they fall within the allowable range. When a data item is out of range, an error message appears and you can make a new entry.

A database navigator is used to move through the data in a dataset and perform operations on the data, such as inserting a blank record or posting a record. When the user chooses one of the navigator buttons, the appropriate action occurs on the dataset the navigator is linked to. For example, if the user clicks the Insert button, a blank record is inserted in the dataset.

Each table has a navigation bar across the top. If the user pauses for a moment over a button, a hint with the buttons function will be visible for a few seconds. A navigation bar comprises a few or all of the following buttons:

◄	Sets the current record to the first record in the dataset, disables the First and Prior buttons, and enables the Next and Last buttons if they are disabled.
◄	Sets the current record to the previous record and enables the Last and Next buttons if they are disabled.
►	Sets the current record to the next record and enables the First and Prior buttons if they are disabled.
►I	Sets the current record to the last record in the dataset, disables the Last and Next buttons, and enables the First and Prior buttons if they are disabled.
+	Inserts a new record before the current record, and sets the dataset into Insert and Edit states.
–	Deletes the current record and makes the next record the current record.
▲	Puts the dataset into Edit state so that the current record can be modified.
✓	Writes changes in the current record to the database.
✕	Cancels edits to the current record, restores the record display to its condition prior to editing, and turns off Insert and Edit states if they are active.

The use of the navigation buttons is the same for all database entries.