

2021

Minnesota FFA and Minnesota Farm Bureau Discussion Meet Contest



Advisor's Guide

Scripts and Instructions for Structuring a Discussion Meet Competition

For information regarding this contest contact:

Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation
651-768-2151

MEMO

November 13, 2020

TO: FFA Advisors and Contest Organizers

RE: FFA Discussion Meet

Minnesota Farm Bureau Foundation is proud to sponsor the FFA Discussion Meet Competition. Our organization is excited about the prospect of working with FFA students. Many of our members are FFA alumni and are enthusiastic about assisting with this contest. Volunteers from across the state are eager to help coach contestants and help organize and implement regional competitions.

This guide, along with the Discussion Meet manual, provides the information you need to organize a Discussion Meet competition. Included in this packet is a list of Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation area program directors who can assist in implementing all phases of a Discussion Meet. Our experienced staff and volunteers can help simplify and individualize a contest for a region. **Please note that the registration and information sheets for the first and second place winners in each region must be mailed to the Minnesota Farm Bureau office no later than April 1, 2021. This ensures that each of the contests have a spot at the state competition.**

Minnesota Farm Bureau is committed to make this contest a success. Our members are anxious to grow from this contest and assist FFA members gain the skills and valuable experiences this competition affords. Please contact me, or any of the Farm Bureau's staff members listed in the publication, for assistance with your Discussion Meet efforts.

AWARDS

COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP OR SCHOLARSHIP FOR WASHINGTON D.C. LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

The Minnesota Farm Bureau Foundation will sponsor scholarships for the top two state FFA/Farm Bureau Discussion Meet contestants (\$750/person registration cost) to attend the National FFA Washington D.C. Leadership or to use for their college education.

Winners will be determined at the Discussion Meet competition held at the 2021 Minnesota FFA State Convention.

CONTEST STRUCTURE

Each FFA region is eligible to send two participants to the state FFA/Farm Bureau Discussion Meet. The contest will operate with one or more rounds in which all contestants will compete and from which four finalists will be selected. Topics will be drawn at the orientation period and announced.

Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation staff and local Farm Bureau members may be available to organize and assist with regional Discussion Meet competitions.

1. State Contest

“Sweet Sixteen” – There will be up to four panels of four to six contestants (depending on the total number of contestants). The top four contestants will proceed to the Finals round.

“Finals” – There will be one panel of four contestants in the Finals contest.

**Note: The host FFA Advisor of regional contests may change the number of preliminary rounds based on the number of participants.*

Contest Structure

One orientation session may be held to accommodate all participants, judges and workers.

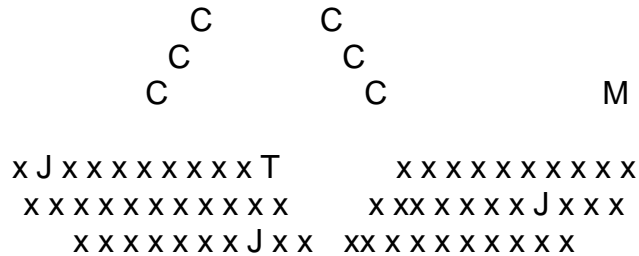
1. Discussion Meet Orientation
 - a. All contestants are required to attend.
 - b. Roll call of contestants.
 - c. Release of Discussion Meet and topic and time schedule.
 - d. Distribute contest room locations.
2. Judges Orientation
 - a. Review judge’s duties in **Roles and Responsibilities of Contest Facilitators** along with any announcements.
 - b. Review timing sequences.
 - c. Allow time for questions.
 - d. Roll call of judges.
 - e. Distribute contest room locations.
3. Volunteer Orientation
 - a. Roll call of timekeepers.
 - b. Distribution of time schedule.
 - c. Distribution of timecards.
 - d. Distribute contest room locations and Round Robin bracket sheets.

Contest

1. All contestants will compete in two rounds of the contest, known as "Round Robins." Round Robins will have four to six contestants. The scores will then be tabulated, and the four highest scoring individuals will be announced. The four finalists will compete in the "Final Four" round to determine the winner.

2. The physical arrangements of the Discussion Meet rooms should provide for two tables at the front of the room facing each other and the audience. Half the participants should be seated at each table with the moderator in the center. Name cards identifying contestants should be visible to both the moderator and audience. Cards should show only the contestant's name.

Room Layout



M = Moderator C = Contestant J = Judge T = Timer X = Audience

Roles and Responsibilities of Contest Facilitators

1. Contest Chairman's Duties

- a. Familiarize yourself with the Discussion Meet Contest Manual.
- b. Conduct Discussion Meet Orientation Session prior to the contest for contestants, judges and timekeepers.
- c. Make introductions.
- d. Give brief explanation of Discussion Meet contest procedures.
- e. Distribute contest room locations.
- f. Allow time for questions.
- g. Draw and announce topics to determine sequence to be used for the contest.
- h. Announce first round topic during Orientation.
- i. Settle any and all disputes during the competition.

2. Room Chairman's Duties

- a. Familiarize yourself with the Discussion Meet Contest Manual.
- b. Review Tally Sheet (**Appendix A & B**).
- c. Ensure all judges are present.
- d. Meet in the contest room with contestants, judges, moderator and timekeeper to answer any questions they may have.
- e. Call the contest to order at the appointed time. Introduce the timekeeper and moderator. Announce topic to be discussed. (Script included in this guide.)
- f. Introduce and thank judges.
- g. Escort judges to the judges tabulating room at the end of the contest and allow them to finish tabulating and ranking the contestants. Assist judges in final ranking of contestants.
- h. Ensure each contestant has been ranked in all sections of the rating sheet.
- i. Supervise tiebreakers (See **Scoring**).

3. Moderator's Duties

- a. Familiarize yourself with the Discussion Meet Contest Manual.
- b. Become acquainted with contestants.
- c. Open the contest with the following to ensure that all understand the format. Script included in this guide.
- d. Welcome the audience.
- e. Introduce contestants from left to right by name.
- f. Announce topic to be discussed.
- g. Ask for contestants to make a 30-second opening statement in voluntary order.
- h. After the last opening statement, say "You have heard the opening statements. You may proceed with the discussion."
- i. When alerted by timekeeper, set up five- or 10-minute table tent and ensure each contestant has seen it before taking it down.
- j. End discussion at timekeeper's signal.
- k. Call for one-minute quiet time used to prepare closing statements.
- l. Call for one-minute closing statement, in a voluntary order.
- m. Thank contestants.
- n. Dismiss room chairman and judges for tabulation.

- o. Announce topic for next round.
- p. Give contestants the opportunity to introduce themselves and describe their SAE. (Supervised Agricultural Experience).
- q. Announce time of next contest.

Note: The moderator should not comment on the topic or encourage discussion. This is the responsibility of the contestants. However, if the discussion seems to really be lagging, the moderator should use their best judgement to end the discussion early.

4. Timekeeper's Duties

- a. Familiarize yourself with the Discussion Meet Contest Manual.
- b. Go to assigned contest room 10 minutes prior to schedule starting time.
- c. Meet with room chairman, moderator and contestants for last minute questions.
- d. Indicate timing points to the moderator and contestants as follows. Script included in this guide.

Round Robins and Final Four

- 1. The end of each 30-second opening statement. (Time elapsed - red card)
- 2. Warning at 10 minutes of open discussion. (Five minutes remaining - yellow card)
- 3. The end of 15 minutes of open discussion. (Time elapsed - red card)
- 4. The end of one-minute quiet time. (Time elapsed - red card)
- 5. The end of each contestant's one-minute closing statement. (Time elapsed - red card)

5. Judges' Duties

- a. Familiarize yourself with the Discussion Meet Contest Manual.
- b. Review discussion topics.
- c. Review rating sheet.
- d. Attend the Discussion Meet Judges Orientation Session.
- e. Go to assigned contest room ten minutes prior to schedule starting time.
- f. Meet with room chairman, moderator and contestants for last minute questions.
- g. Judges should:
 - 1. List contestants on rating sheet from left to right for ease in identification.
 - 2. Score contestants using the rating sheet.
 - 3. Total the scores.
 - 4. Determine and record ranking.
 - 5. Sign rating sheet.
- h. Remain seated until your room chairman calls for you to leave the room to complete the final tabulating of your score sheet.
- i. Select winners. (See **Scoring**)
- j. Judges should not:
 - 1. Sit near a fellow judge.
 - 2. Judge by applause.
 - 3. Confer with each other until all scores are tabulated.

Scoring

The room chairman will supervise the final tabulation by the judges. Judges will use the point system indicated on the score sheet to assist in selecting their winners. Each judge will be instructed to total his/her score sheet and rank the contestants. Each judge is to break ties that occur on his/her own score sheet. The room chairman will assist the judges in determining the final ranking of the contest.

1. The winner will be determined by judges' ranking, and ties will be resolved before the judges are dismissed. Ties will be broken at the end of each of the Round Robin contests and the Final Four by an automatic procedure using Cooperative Attitude as the first tie breaker, followed by Problem Solving and Delivery, respectfully. In the event of an unresolvable tie between all three categories, total points from judges' score sheets will be used to resolve the tie. The room chairman will assist with this process.
2. When possible, the above procedure should be conducted in a private room, with only the judges, room chairman and Discussion Meet chairman present.

Final Four

After competing in two Round Robin contests, each contestant will be ranked according to his/her scores. From this final determination, the Final Four contestants will be chosen.

THE DISCUSSION MEET ITSELF

The same procedure will be followed at every level of the contest.

1. All contest officials and contestants will be in the proper room and at their stations at the appointed hour.
2. The room chair will call the meeting to order and announce the topic to be discussed and then introduce the timekeeper and moderator.
3. The moderator will introduce the contestants, re-announce the topic to be discussed and call on the contestants in voluntary order to make a 30-second opening statement.
4. The timekeeper will stand at 30 seconds and remain standing. Judges may subtract points, at their discretion, for contestants abusing the time limit.
5. The moderator will then indicate the opportunity for open discussion that will run for a total of 15 minutes. The moderator, if necessary, will give "directed discussion" by encouraging contestants to consider other aspects of the topic under consideration.
6. The timekeeper will indicate to the moderator when 10 minutes have elapsed, and the moderator will interrupt discussion to announce the remaining time and may close the discussion if the discussion is lagging.
7. The timekeeper will indicate to the moderator when a total of 15 minutes has elapsed.
8. The moderator will call for a minute of quiet time allowing the contestants to consider a closing statement.
9. The moderator will call upon the contestants, in voluntary order, to make a one-minute closing statement.
10. Moderator will recognize the judges and request them to leave the room to finalize the tabulation of their score sheets. Judges will not be permitted to confer with each other prior to the completion of their tabulation.
11. The moderator will thank the panel and ask the audience to recognize their efforts. He/She will then request the contestants to each discuss their Supervised Agricultural Experience for the benefit of the audience.
12. The room chair, with the assistance of the timekeeper, will supervise the final tabulation by the judges. Judges will use a point system indicated on the score sheet to assist in selecting the winners. Each judge will be instructed to break all tie scores.
13. The Discussion Meet Chairman will rank the panel winners, based on the total scoring given by each judge; i.e. 1 point for 1st, 2 for 2nd, 3 for 3rd, 4 for 4th, 5 for 5th, 6 for 6th. The contestants with the best ranking scores (lowest rank) will be determined the winners.

Note: Contestants may bring one, one-sided 4x6-note card into each round of the Discussion Meet. Blank paper and pencils will be provided for the purpose of making notes during the actual meet.

2020-2021 FFA Discussion Meet Questions

1. 2020 provided a unique market situation for farmers, how can FFA and Farm Bureau work together to promote market stability and the value of our food chain to consumers in the future?
2. With many in-person activities, conferences and events being held online, how can FFA and Farm Bureau work together to promote agriculture on an online platform?
3. In today's agriculture the idea of a "family farm" is changing. While multi-generational farms are growing bigger, it is becoming more difficult financially for beginning farmers to enter agriculture. What can FFA and Farm Bureau do to help all types of farms succeed? How can we support beginning farmers and the transition of farms to the next generation?

**2020 DISCUSSION MEET
REGISTRATION AND INFORMATION SHEET**

Contestant's Name: _____
(As it should appear in a program)

Phonetic Pronunciation: _____

Address: _____
(Street or Rural Route) (City & State) (Zip Code)

Phone Number: () _____ County: _____

E-mail: _____

Age: _____ Date of Birth: _____
Month Day Year

FFA Chapter: _____

Local Media Contacts: _____

Parent's Names: _____

FFA Discussion Meet participants must return this form to their advisor before their regional contest.

Contest organizers should send the Registration and Information Sheets of first and second place winners to the Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation at the address listed below.

*Information sheets must be postmarked by **April 1, 2021** for the applicant to be eligible for the competition at the MN FFA State Convention.*

**Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation
Attn: FFA Discussion Meet
P.O. Box 64370
St. Paul, MN 55164
Fax: 651-768-2159**

Minnesota Farm Bureau Area Program Directors

Please utilize Minnesota Farm Bureau's Area Program Directors when organizing and planning for your Regional FFA Discussion Meet.

New Contact in 2021

Please contact Rachael.peterson@fbmn.org for updates

FFA Region 1 & 3

James Dodds

FFA Region 2

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218-556-4667

Dennis Sabel

FFA Region 4

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612-756-1230

Amanda Revier

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320-894-2600

Virginia Maygar

FFA Region 7&8

virginia.maygar@fbmn.org

952-250-7809

ROOM CHAIRMAN AND MODERATOR SCRIPTS

Prior to each round:

1. Ensure room is set properly.
2. Assure timer has stopwatch.
3. Confirm pronunciation of names.
4. Contestants should remain seated in the audience (Name tents may be placed on the table prior to round beginning).

DISCUSSION MEET PODIUM SCRIPT FOR ROUNDS

ROOM CHAIRMAN:

Welcome to Round (One or Two) of the Minnesota FFA/Farm Bureau Discussion Meet. I am _____ of the (county) _____ Farm Bureau or (FFA chapter) _____. I will be serving as room chairman of this round.

Serving as moderator for this round is _____ of _____.

Serving as timer for this round is _____, from (city) _____.

The topic for this round is:

(see attached topics sheet)

The judges, timer and contestants have been briefed as to the rules of the contest. I yield control of this contest to your moderator, _____.

MODERATOR:

Thank you _____ (room chairman). We appreciate you for taking time to attend this contest. Contestants have been briefed on the contest. In my role as moderator, I will not attempt to control or direct this discussion. Remember, the discussion is meant to simulate a committee meeting, not a panel discussion with point/counterpoint and an active moderator. With that in mind, the burden is on the contestants to "moderate" themselves and conduct themselves in a cooperative and congenial manner. I will not intervene unless or until disparaging or inappropriate remarks are made.

The contestants for this round are: (know how to pronounce names).

We will begin this discussion with 30-second opening statements from each contestant. Following the opening statements will be 15 minutes of open discussion followed by one minute of quiet time for the contestants to prepare their one-minute closing statement. Official time is kept by the timekeeper.

Contestants, you may now, in voluntary order, make your 30-second opening statements. Please stand and direct your opening statements to the audience. The timekeeper will indicate when your 30 seconds have elapsed by standing up.

(Opening Statements Given: Timer Will Signal)

You have heard the opening statements. The contestants may now proceed with the discussion. Contestants, please direct your discussion to your fellow panel members.

(15 Minutes of Open Discussion Begins: Timer Will Stand.

Sometimes changes when the group is small, in that case it will be 10 minutes of open discussion)

Contestants, you have five minutes of open discussion remaining.

(Five Minutes of Open Discussion Remaining: Timer Will Stand)

Time has been called. Please prepare your closing statements. I ask that the audience remain silent for one minute to aid the contestants in their preparation.

(One Minute Preparation Time: Timer Will Stand)

Please put down your pencils and in voluntary order please stand and give your one-minute closing statement.

(Closing Statements Given: Timer Will Stand)

Let's show these contestants our appreciation for a job well done. At this time I will return control of this contest to the room chairman:

ROOM CHAIRMAN:

Thank you, _____, (moderator) for a well-run contest.

The judges for today's contest are:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Now I would ask the judges to report with me to the tabulation room.

Mr/Ms _____ (moderator)

MODERATOR:

Thank you, judges and contestants. The tabulation of rankings from each of the judges will be used to determine the top four finalists. The contestants for the Final Round will be announced after the completion of the second round.

The topic for the next round is:_____.

We would now like each contestant to make a brief statement about him or herself and their Supervised Agricultural Experience.

Contestants take your name cards with you. Thank you all for being such a good audience. We appreciate your interest in the contest and for your support of your contestant.

(The next round begins at _____)

TIMEKEEPERS SCRIPT

Report for duty 15 minutes prior to discussion round and introduce yourself to contest organizers.

Must have a watch with a second hand or a stopwatch.

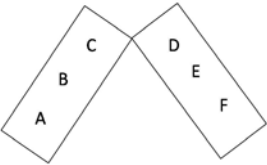
Please sit in the front row so all judges can plainly see when you stand up.

Make sure timekeepers know when to stand:

- ✓ At 30 seconds of Opening Statement - stand up
- ✓ At 10 minute mark of open discussion - stand up
- ✓ At 15 minute mark of open discussion - stand up
- ✓ After 1 minute of quiet time has elapsed after the close of open discussion, - stand up
- ✓ At 1 minute of Closing Statement - stand up

The judges will determine how much the contestant will be deducted for using extra time.

Discussion Meet Rating Sheet

| Comp A Name: | Comp B Name: | Comp C Name: | In these columns, put the first and last name of the competitors according to where they are sitting using this diagram: <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;">  </div> | Comp D Name: | Comp E Name: | Comp F Name: |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (1) COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE: (200 points) Listening, asking pertinent questions, airing all points of view, securing major agreement, minimizing major differences. Courtesy to other participants, encourage discussion from other participants. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (2) PROBLEM SOLVING AND IMPLEMENTATION: (200 points) Ability and judgment in seeking answers and solutions, planning and organizational understanding, and the inclusion of Farm Bureau in implementing action programs. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (3) DELIVERY: (100 points) Voice quality, loudness, clear enunciation, communication skills, desirable sentence structure and interesting choice of words. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (4) ANALYSIS OF TOPIC OR PROBLEM: (100 points) Does contestant attempt to identify problem causes and remain on topic? Knowledge, extent and accuracy of facts. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (5) OPENING STATEMENT: (50 points) Definition of problem, importance, causes, effects, relevancy of problem. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (6) CLOSING STATEMENT: (100 points) Ability to summarize discussion and formulate direction for the future. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | | Total score for each contestant is to be tabulated by Judge. ← TOTAL Any tie scores are to be broken by Judge. TOTAL → Total of 750 points possible. | | | |
| | | | ← RANK Rank contestants: 1(highest) – 6(lowest) RANK → | | | |

Signed: _____

Room Chair

Signed: _____

Judge