

2021

Minnesota FFA and Minnesota Farm Bureau Discussion Meet Contest

Participant's Guide



For information regarding this contest contact:

Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation
651-768-2151

MINNESOTA FFA/FARM BUREAU FOUNDATION DISCUSSION MEET

The Minnesota FFA and Minnesota Farm Bureau Foundation are pleased to announce the 2020-2021 FFA/Farm Bureau Discussion Meet Contest. This program gives FFA members throughout the state the opportunity to take part in an educational and resume building experience.

WHAT IS A DISCUSSION MEET?

A grassroots organization's strength depends on its members' ability to analyze problems and decide on solutions that best meet their needs. The Discussion Meet is an activity designed to build these crucial skills. By participating, students build basic discussion skills, develop a keen understanding of important agricultural issues and explore how groups can pool knowledge to reach consensus and solve problems.

As a leadership training and self-improvement activity, the Discussion Meet experience will:

1. Stimulate logical thinking and a desire for accurate information.
 2. Develop a concise and direct manner of speaking.
 3. Improve the ability to listen.
 4. Aid the participant in overcoming timidity or stage fright.
 5. Assist the individual in the practice of giving and receiving criticism in a helpful manner.
 6. Teach the value of compromise.
 7. Develop leaders for effective problem solving through group discussion.
- The Discussion Meet is designed to simulate a committee meeting where discussion and active participation are expected from each committee member.
 - The contestants discuss a pre-selected topic.
 - The four fundamental bases of general discussion are:
 - * Constructive Criticism
 - * Cooperation
 - * Communication
 - * Problem Solving
 - The discussion should not be "conversation" or aimless talk, nor should the participant take the role of a persuasive speaker. The participant should try to cooperatively shed light on the problem and tentatively retain a flexible position.
 - A successful participant is a productive thinker rather than an emotional persuader. Sometimes it's reasonable to change positions whenever new information and ideas are presented.
 - This is not a panel symposium wherein each participant, in turn, makes a presentation, with the moderator ending the session with a summary. Rather, it is an exercise in cooperative problem solving, with the questions, answers and statements coming from any person at any time.

- **Generally speaking, the discussion should follow these steps:**

1. State problem or need.
2. Explore, define, understand problem or need.
3. Identify causes of problem or need.
4. Elaborate all possible alternative solutions.
5. Evaluate and compare alternatives.
6. Test and project what appears to be the best solution.
7. Arrive at ways to implement the solution.

DISCUSSION MEET RULES

QUALIFICATIONS OF PARTICIPANTS

1. Contestants must be current FFA members.
2. Past state Discussion Meet winners are not eligible to compete in following years unless they were unable to accept the award the year they won.
3. All participants in the Discussion Meet must attend a brief orientation meeting prior to the contest during the FFA Convention in 2021.
4. Each FFA Region may send two contestants to the state FFA/Farm Bureau Discussion Meet competition.
5. All participants in the state contest must have competed at a regional competition.
6. Contest organizers must submit the information sheets for the top two regional competitors by Friday, **April 1, 2021**. Information sheets received after that date may not be eligible for competition at the MN FFA State Convention.

Contestants will address the problems and concerns faced by the rural communities in Minnesota and throughout the country. Through a structured, well-disciplined evaluation and analysis, constructive thoughts and ideas can be surfaced, studied and offered for implementation.

Participants are invited to study each area in depth, seeking factual, as well as personal answers and opinions to the topic area. Each topic area has great potential for constructive thinking while yet relating to each other. Identifying possible solutions and action plans for each topic area will help build the FFA's and Farm Bureau's efforts in the future.

AWARDS

COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP OR WASHINGTON D.C. LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE SCHOLARSHIP

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

Winners will be determined at the Discussion Meet competition held at the 2019 Minnesota FFA State Convention.

MINNESOTA FFA/MINNESOTA FARM BUREAU DISCUSSION MEET PROCEDURE

HOW TO ENTER - Make the decision early.

1. Contact your chapter FFA advisor.
2. Complete the enclosed entry form and mail to your regional FFA advisor.
3. Study the topics, be informed and be prepared to win the contest.

ORIENTATION

An orientation of all judges, moderators, room chairmen and contestants will be conducted prior to the competition. Scripts and detailed information about organizing a competition can be found in the Discussion Meet Advisor's Guide.

Only those contestants attending the orientation at the appointed time will be eligible for participation in the Discussion Meet at the state FFA convention. This rule will continue to be enforced in 2021. Chapters are asked to have their contestant present at the correct time and to make necessary travel schedules to accommodate this.

HELPFUL HINTS FOR CONTESTANTS

- Study as much material as possible relating to the overall topic. Sources: library, newspapers, web sites, magazines, Farm Bureau policies, county, state and American Farm Bureau publications and conversations with experts or knowledgeable people.
- Farm Bureau policy books should be available from your county Farm Bureau office. If you need assistance obtaining policy books, contact the Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation office listed on the front page of this publication.
- The Discussion Meet should be a conflict of ideas, not personalities. **Remember this is a discussion, not a debate.** Including everyone in the discussion is critical.
- Be prepared to ask questions, state facts and opinions and urge others to be specific.
- Be aware of the audience, but generally address the panel. Speak loud enough to be heard by the whole audience.
- Participate whenever your contribution will further the discussion. Do not monopolize the discussion.
- Make notes of key points as the discussion proceeds for use in summary statement.
- Use the one minute of quiet time to organize your summary statement.
- Stand and make your closing statement to the audience. Use accepted speech techniques. Stay within the time limit.

THE DISCUSSION MEET

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 have 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 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. This will be checked and enforced.

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?

2021 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: _____

Region: _____

Local Media Contacts: _____

Parent's Names: _____

Return this completed form to your FFA Advisor before your regional contest.

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

Information sheets must be received by Friday, **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**

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:
			(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.			
			(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.			
			(3) DELIVERY: (100 points) Voice quality, loudness, clear enunciation, communication skills, desirable sentence structure and interesting choice of words.			
			(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.			
			(5) OPENING STATEMENT: (50 points) Definition of problem, importance, causes, effects, relevancy of problem.			
			(6) CLOSING STATEMENT: (100 points) Ability to summarize discussion and formulate direction for the future.			
			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