

Agricultural Issues Forum Team Leadership Development Event

I. Purpose and objectives of Ag Issues Forum

A. Purpose

The purpose of the FFA Agricultural Issues forum is:

- 1) To stimulate the study of the interest in agricultural issues among agricultural students and the “non-agricultural” public.
- 2) To encourage local efforts by providing recognition skills and competencies as a result of instruction in issues analysis.

B. Objectives

This event will provide the participant with the ability to:

- Investigate a variety of local, state, national and international issues facing agriculture through classroom instruction.
- Engage students in the selection, research, planning and presentation of a local, state, national or international agricultural issue with relevance to the local community.
- Demonstrate through the portfolio, presentation and questioning an understanding of the principles and fundamentals of agricultural issue analysis.
- Connect agriculture students with professionals in the industry as they research and present their forum.
- Increase the awareness of an agricultural issue at the local, state or national level through presentations of the forum.
- Apply teamwork, leadership and communication skills for career success.

II. Event Rules

A team should be composed of a minimum of three and a maximum of seven students who are actively participating, orally presenting and available to answer the judges’ questions. To score points, each student must take an active role in the presentation. This includes active participation in the presentation and making themselves available for questions from the judges.

Only the certified team members can take an active role in the presentation of materials and use of technology during the presentation. Presentations may include official FFA dress, costumes, props, skits and other creative paraphernalia. Costumes, props, skits and other paraphernalia must be professional in nature and used to showcase respect of all cultures.

The event chairs reserves the right to remove any team whose presentation, props, skits or other actions are disrespectful of others or shows lack of good judgement.

A. USE OF TECHNOLOGY AND PROPS

Teams are encouraged to be creative in the approach used to develop their team presentations including the use of technology and other props. Teams are cautioned that the use or over use of any technology or prop that reduces the focus on the content provided by the team and team’s presentation of the content can result in a lower presentation score.

B. SHOWCASE RESPECT OF ALL CULTURES

The agricultural Issues LDE respects and promotes the practice of one’s first amendment rights; however, respect should always be demonstrated to cultures different from the speaker. In no manner should a team provide a forum that could be considered offensive to a culture different from themselves. Answers to questions should be answered with facts rather than opinions or stereotypes. The definition of culture is broadly defined, therefore, it is recommended to consider all cultures as professionals. It is further recommended that teams present their forums to diverse audiences, including the dynamic of cultures represented in the presentation. By completing this task, written and verbal feedback should provide a quality measure on the cultural sensitivity of the forum.

The state agricultural issues event will be limited to up to eight participating chapters. The competition will be held on the Tuesday morning of the Minnesota FFA convention. If more than eight chapters preregister to the MN FFA Coordinator before March 1, all preregistered chapters will submit their portfolios in a PDF to be judged by April 1. The top eight scoring portfolios that will compete at State Convention will be announced after the portfolios are judged before April 10.

A minimum of three competent and unbiased judges will judge the competition. They will be instructed not to take sides on the issue(s). Professors and industry representatives are recommended. The Faculty Chair of this LDE will adequately prepare the judges before the event.

III. Event Format

Each team will conduct a presentation on the issue developed and presented at the local level.

A front projection screen will be provided. Other equipment is allowed, but the presenting team must provide any other equipment they may need.

The agricultural issue could come from one of the following eight agricultural issue topic areas as listed in the Focusing on Agricultural Issues Instructional Materials (www.FFA.org/resources/ag-issues)

- Environmental Issues
- Agricultural Technology Issues
- Animal Issues
- Agricultural Career Issues
- Economy and Trade Issues
- Agricultural Policy Issues
- Food Safety Issues
- Biotechnology Issues

The same general agricultural issue topic, based on categories listed above, will not be used in the following three years by the same chapter and/or advisor.

Research on the topic must be current and students must be involved in all the research of the topic and development of the portfolio.

IV. Portfolio

The portfolio will be limited to ten single-sided pages or five double-sided 8 ½ x 11 pages maximum, not including cover page. Margins are to be set at a minimum of 1" top and bottom. A maximum of ten points will be deducted for exceeding the maximum amount of pages and/or for not including the cover page containing required information.

Agricultural issues portfolios must be sent to the CDE coordinator in a PDF by the April 1 deadline.

A. COVER

Required information on the cover to avoid score deductions:

- Title of the issue stated as a question
- Date of the state qualifying event
- Name, address, state and phone number of the chapter

B. SUMMARY

A maximum of two pages of the portfolio will include a summary of the issue.

- The summary pages should be written using a font no smaller than Times New Roman 10.
- The purposes of the summary are to provide an overview of the issue and to demonstrate understanding of the principles and fundamentals of agricultural issue analysis.
- The summary needs to include the course(s) in which instruction occurred and the number of students involved in the instruction on agricultural issues.
- Summary must include in text citations where appropriate.

- Citations to conform to most current edition of the American Physiological Association (APA) publication manual.
- The summary may also include, but is not limited to, responses to the following questions:
 - Why is this issue important now?
 - What is the nature of the issue?
 - Who is involved in the issue?
 - How can the issue be defined?
 - What is the historical background of the issue?
 - What caused the issue?
 - What are the risks?
 - What are the benefits?

For additional background on these questions, refer to the resource “Focusing on Agricultural Issues Instructional Materials” and review the PowerPoint “Agricultural Issues Analysis” in the Teaching Materials section at: FFA.org/resources/ag-issues

- A bibliography of all resources and references cited which should include personal interviews, when appropriate, and any other supporting material. Bibliography to conform to most current edition of the American Physiological Association (APA) publication manual.

C. DOCUMENTATION

In order for a forum to be awarded points, it must have occurred prior to the state qualifying event, and there must be independent verification of the forum presentation date. “Independent” means that verification needs to be provided by someone in the organization or the group to whom the presentation was made. The independent documentation needs to state when, where and to whom the forum was presented.

Documentation can include:

- Letters from organizations
- News articles, that also include the date of the presentation and/or the date the article is printed
- Photos showing attendance at forums, but also need independent documentation of the date of the forum presentation
- If more than one forum is held on the same day, the starting times of the multiple forums held on the same day also must be independently documented

D. FORUM PRESENTATIONS

A chapter must have a minimum of five high quality public forums presentations prior to their state qualifying event in order to receive the maximum of 15 points. All forum presentations would need to be completed before April 1 to be included in the documentation.

Forum presentations given after the April 1 deadline are encouraged, but will not count toward the portfolio score.

- Multiple organizations attending the same forum will count as one forum.
- Portfolio judges may take into consideration the quality and quantity of presentations made to audiences outside of the school.

No points will be awarded for presenting to other classes or teachers at the schools or neighboring schools. In addition, no points will be awarded for forums presented as any part of a local or state FFA competition.

- High quality forums are those presentations made to community groups that would have an interest in the issue. Suggested procedures for setting up these presentations and examples of community groups have been provided in the Agricultural Issues Forum Presenter’s Guide. High quality forums can also be with smaller numbers of individuals who hold elected, appointed or some other official position that will be making decisions on the issue.

- Examples of low quality forums would be dropping in at a local business and giving a presentation to the workers or going to the home of one of the parents to make a presentation. Low quality forums will receive zero or minimal points.

E. TIME LIMITS

- Three minutes will be allowed for set-up.
- The presentation will be a maximum of 15 minutes in length.
- The presenters will receive a signal at 10 minutes and 14 minutes.
- At 15 minutes the timekeeper will announce that time is up, and the presentation will end.
- Five minutes for questions and answers will be allotted after the presentation. Questions and answers will terminate at the end of allotted time.
- Two minutes will be allowed for take-down.
- The presentations will be designed to be viewed by the judges.
- The audience at-large will not be of concern to the presenters.
- The judges may ask questions of all individuals of the presenting team.
- Each individual is encouraged to respond to at least one question from the judges.

V. Scoring

A. PORTFOLIO

THE PORTFOLIO IS LIMITED TO TEN SINGLE-SIDED PAGES OR FIVE DOUBLE-SIDED PAGES MAXIMUM. THE PORTFOLIO WILL BE JUDGED ON THREE CRITERIA, (25 POINTS TOTAL)

- 1. Summary of the issue, two pages maximum (5 points).**
- 2. Bibliography (5 points).**
- 3. Documentation of local forums (15 points).**

- All forums, require independent verification of when, where and to whom forums were presented, and independent verification of presentation times if more than one forum is held on the same day. Maximum of ten points will be deducted for exceeding the maximum number of pages and/or not including cover page containing required information.
- Prior to the event, the portfolios will be judged and scored by qualified individuals using the portfolio scorecard. Portfolio scores will be averaged and supplied to the presentation judges after they have scored the presentation. Portfolio comment cards will be provided. Comments will be available after the event results have been announced.
- Proper grammar, correct spelling and proper editing of text are important. The most current edition of The American Psychological Association (APA) style guide should be used for all research citations. Adherence to these editorial guidelines is expected to receive maximum points for the portfolio score.

B. TEAM PRESENTATION

THE PRESENTATION WILL BE SCORED AS FOLLOWS:

INTRODUCTION (20 POINTS) Statement of the issue, Why the issue is important.

PRO VIEW POINT (20 POINTS) Relevant identification of positive points.

CON VIEW POINT (20 POINTS) Relevant identification of negative points.

SUMMARY OF PRO AND CON VIEW POINTS (20 POINTS)

EFFECTIVENESS OF PRESENTATION (20 POINTS)

- Participation of each team member.
- Creative in how main points are made. (It makes no difference, for the “creativity” score, if team is in costume or official FFA dress.)

- Quality and power of the presentations.
- Speaks at the right pace to be clear.
- Pronunciation of words is clear and intent apparent.
- No distracting mannerisms that affect effectiveness.
- Gestures are purposeful and effective.
- Well poised with good stage presence.
- Use or overuse of any technology or prop that reduces the focus on the content provided by the team and team's presentation of the content can result in a lower presentation score.

C. QUESTIONS (25 POINTS)

- Appropriate response and knowledge of the issue will be evaluated from team members' responses.
- There will be a five point deduction from the scorecard of any team that draws a conclusion supporting a pro or con viewpoint during the formal presentation. During the question period, students may draw a conclusion supporting a pro or con viewpoint if asked to do so by a judge.
- Presentation comment cards will be completed by presentation judges and sent to the teams after the awards program.

D. RANKING

Judges' ranking will be used to place teams. Teams will be ranked in numerical order on the basis of the final score to be determined by each judge without consultation. The judges' ranking of each team then shall be added, and the winner will be that team whose total ranking is the lowest. (Low rank method of selection where a rank of "1" is assigned to the highest place team, "2" to the second place team, etc.)

E. TIEBREAKERS

Ties will be broken based on the greatest number of low ranks. Teams' low ranks will be counted and the team with the greatest number of low ranks will be declared the winner. If a tie still exists, then the faculty chair will rank the team's response to questions. The team with the greatest number of low ranks from the response to questions will be declared the winner. If a tie still exists then the team's raw scores will be totaled. The team with the greatest total of raw points will be declared the winner.

Awards will be presented to teams based upon their rankings at the Tuesday afternoon awards program.

VI. References

This list of references is not intended to be all-inclusive.

Other sources may be utilized, and teachers are encouraged to make use of the very best instructional materials available.

The following list contains references that may prove helpful during event preparation.

- National FFA Core Catalog—Past CDE Material (www.shop.FFA.org)
- National FFA Core Catalog—Power of Demonstration DVD (www.shop.FFA.org)
- Updated Focusing on Agricultural Issues Instructional Materials (FFA.org/resources/ag-issues)
- "Helpful hints to give your students the best opportunity to do well in the Agricultural Issues Forum Career Development Event at the State and National FFA Conventions" can be found on the Agricultural Issues Instructional Materials website listed above and the National FFA website (FFA.org/documents/cde_agissues_resources.pdf)

Agricultural Issues Forum Official Score Card

Chapter Name _____ Presentation Number _____

	Possible Points	25-21	20-15	14-10	9-5	4-0
Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement of the issue • Why issue is important 	20					
Pro view point <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of positive points • Points addressed are relevant 	20					
Con view point <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of negative points • Points addressed are relevant points 	20					
Summary of pro/con view points	20					
Effectiveness of presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation, creativity, quality and power, clear with right pace and word pronunciation, no distractions, appropriate gestures, poised 	20					
Questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate response • Knowledge of issue 	25					
Subtotal _____						
Portfolio Scorecard	Possible Points	15-11	10-6	5-1		
Summary of the issue	5					
Bibliography	5					
Documentation of local forms	15					
Portfolio Score _____						
Deduction for presenting a conclusion during the 15 minute presentation (-5 pts) - _____						
Total _____						

Team Ranking _____