East Texas State Fair
2026 Public Speaking Contest

Dates and Deadlines

2026 Contest Date:	Saturday, Sept. 19
Registration Deadline:	Friday, Sept. 1

Documentation

Documentation for the 2026 contest will include:

- Completed Statement of Originality, submitted either to denise@etstatefair.com or dylanbacon11@gmail.com
- No abstract or manuscript will be required for the 2026 contest

Contest Rules

1. To enter: Enter online at ETStateFair.com via Showman. The following link will take you directly to the public speaking webpage: TBL

2. Eligibility: The contest is open to students enrolled in public, private, or homeschool, and students in specialty groups including FFA, 4H, and FCCLA. All contestants must be academically eligible for competition per the Texas Education Agency's "No Pass No Play" regulations.

3. Age Groups: Students will be broken into two age divisions:

- Junior: 8-13
- Senior: 14-18

Ages as of July 31, 2026

4. Contest Format:

- The contest will be held over a one-day period with preliminary contests beginning at 9:30 am.
- Each participant in their respective age divisions will compose a speech covering one of the following agricultural topics: Animal Science, Plant Science, Agribusiness, Agriculture Policy, Natural Resources, Ag Innovation & Communication.
- Speeches will be judged in either junior or senior age division.

A. Junior Division speakers will be divided equally among the available rooms.
    i. If there are more than one Junior Division rooms, the top two Juniors in each room will compete for Junior Finals.
    ii. In the event there is only one Junior speaking room, there will be no Junior finals.
B. Senior Division participants will be divided into preliminary Sections based on the topic of their speech.
    i. If a Section contains less than 8 participants but more than 3, the section will continue with one student advancing to the Finals.
    ii. Sections with 3 or less participants will be consolidated into a miscellaneous topic section.
C. When there are 16 participants in a Section, it will be divided into two subsections with the top two in each room advancing to a Section Semi-Final round. The top two in the Section Semi-Final will advance to the Finals.

5. Schedule: The contest day schedule will follow as close to this format as possible but may be adjusted based on registration numbers, contest participation, or any extenuating circumstances.

- 8:00 am – 9:15 am: Contestant Check In
- 9:15 am – 9:30 am: Contestant Orientation
- 9:30 am: Preliminary Rounds Begin

The Finals round will follow the completion of the tabulation of preliminary contests. Awards will follow the completion of the Finals round.

6. Dress Attire: Business professional attire is strongly recommended and may include FFA Official Dress or Official 4H attire. Failure to dress appropriately may result in a loss of points in competition.

7. Time of Speeches: The minimum and maximum time of speeches for each age division are as follows. Judges will deduct 1 point per second a contestant is over or under time.

- Junior Division: 5 to 8 minutes
- Senior Division: 6 to 8 minutes
- Question and Answer period: maximum of 5 minutes following each contestant's speech presentation; for all age divisions.

8. Props: The use of props of any kind is prohibited. Notecards are permitted, but only as a reference tool for the speaker.

9. Speech Categories: Each contestant will enter their speech in one of six agricultural topics, or categories. Categories must be declared at time of entry. A contestant may only enter 1 speech into 1 category. The contestant will be responsible for selecting the category that best fits their speech.

Agribusiness: Any current or future subject that deals with topics such as, cooperatives, sales, service, communications, entrepreneurship, marketing, finance, commodities, hedging, advertising, etc.

Agriculture Policy: Any current or future subject that deals with topics such as domestic farm issues, international trade, international competition, rural economic development, legal issues, animal rights, subsidies, price supports, etc.

Ag Innovation & Communications: Any current or future subject that deals with topics such as biotechnology, biogenetics, bioengineering, mechanical engineering, new agriculture technology applications, GPS, etc. AND the communication and/or advocacy of these and other agricultural issues.

Animal Science: Any current or future topic that deals with any production aspects of the dairy, equine, poultry, sheep, goat, swine, beef, or specialty animal industries.

Natural Resources: Any current or future subject that deals with topics such as soil, water, air, water quality, wildlife, forestry, aquaculture, conservation, recreation, recycling, energy, environmental issues, etc.

Plant Science: Any current or future subject that deals with any production aspects of horticulture and/or agronomy including floriculture, fruit and/or vegetable production, nursery operations, turf and landscape management, crop production, specialty crop production, etc.

10. Awards

- Finalists from each section will receive a Finalist ribbon
- Section winners will receive a Section Winner banner
- 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place in the Finals will receive a Plaque and a Buckle