Agricultural Issues Forum

Purpose

The purpose of the agricultural issues forum is to present a current issue to a public audience; therefore, professional ethics and standards are to be considered. Ignoring truthful information, falsifying needed information, using unreliable sources and plagiarism are violation examples that could result in disqualification.

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.

Event Rules

The complete rules, policies and procedures relevant to all National FFA Career and Leadership Development Events may be found in the [Guide to CDE and LDE Policies and Procedures](#).

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 be eligible for awards, 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 in all rounds of competition. 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 committee reserves the right to remove any team whose presentation, props, skits or other actions are disrespectful of others or shows lack of good judgement.

If there is not a state qualifying event, the date on which the state appoints the team to be the representative to the National FFA Agricultural Issues Forum will be considered as the state qualifying date. This must be substantiated by the state FFA advisor or other authorized individual from the state FFA association.

A minimum of three competent and unbiased judges will be provided. They will be instructed not to take sides on the issue(s). Professors and industry representatives are recommended. The superintendent of this LDE will adequately prepare the judges before the event. Teams should refrain from having contact with the judges throughout the competition, i.e., no samples may be left with the judges.

Seeding of teams in the preliminary rounds will be determined based on portfolio scores.

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.

Showcase Respect of all Cultures

The agricultural issues leadership development event respects and promotes the practice of one's first amendment rights; however, respect should always be demonstrated to cultures different from the speaker. A team should not 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.

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.

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.

Portfolio

The portfolio will be limited to 10 single-sided pages or five double-sided 8 ½ x 11-inch pages maximum, not including the cover page. Margins are to be set at a minimum of 1 inch top and bottom.

A maximum of 10 points will be deducted for exceeding the maximum amount of pages and/or for not including the cover page containing the required information.

Agricultural issues portfolios must be uploaded to the certification page on or before the annual designated deadline. See the agricultural issues CDE/LDE website for specific upload instruction.

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.

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.
- The summary must include in-text citations where appropriate.
- Citations must conform to the most current edition of the American Psychological 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?
- A bibliography of all resources and references cited, which should include personal interviews, when appropriate, and any other supporting material. Bibliography must conform to the most current edition of the American Psychological Association (APA) publication manual.

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.

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 the following:

- 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.

Forum Presentations

A chapter must have a minimum of five high-quality public forum presentations prior to their state qualifying event in order to receive the maximum of 15 points. In most cases, the date of the state competition is the date of the qualifying event.

- 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.

- A team may submit up to two live virtual forums as part of their five community forums . Documentation will remain the same for the forums. If a team were to utilize virtual forums, they must adhere to the existing forum rules for documentation as well as the following: a) clearly identify a section in the portfolio for virtual forums conducted; b) the virtual forum is mentioned in the independent verification, and c) virtual forums must include a live interactive audience where live participation is included.

Time Limits

- Five minutes will be allowed for setup.
- 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.
- Seven minutes for questions and answers will be allotted in both the preliminary and semifinal rounds.
- Eight minutes for questions and answers will be allotted in the final round. Questions and answers will terminate at the end of the allotted time.
- Three 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.

Scoring

Portfolio

Ten single-sided pages or five double-sided pages maximum (Three parts, 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.

A maximum of 10 points will be deducted for exceeding the maximum number of pages and/or not including a cover page containing the 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.

Team Presentation

Introduction, Pro, Con, and Summary of Pro and Con (20 points each, 80 points total)

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

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 presented to the teams at the awards function.

Ranking

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

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 event superintendent 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

Awards will be presented at the awards ceremony to teams based upon their rankings.

Corporate partners help grow the next generation of leaders through supporting AFNR pathways awards.

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.

- Past CDE Material – Past top portfolios and videos
- Updated Focusing on Agricultural Issues Instructional Materials
- "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)

Portfolio Scorecard

25 POINTS

Chapter		State	Team Number

The portfolio should include items described in the event format guidelines and is limited to 10 single-sided pages or five double-sided pages maximum.

The agricultural issues portfolio must be uploaded to the declaration/certification site by the designated deadline prior to the National FFA Convention & Expo at which the issue is to be presented.

	Very Strong evidence of skills is present 5-4 Points	Moderate evidence of skills is present 3-2 Points	Very Strong evidence of skills is not present 1-0 Point	x factor	Possible Points	Total Score
Summary of the issue (two pages maximum)				1	5	
Bibliography				1	5	
Documentation of local forums				3	15	
# of High-Quality				0	0	
# of Low-Quality Forums				0	0	
				Subtotal		
Deductions						
Late submission to the National FFA Organization		-2.5 points			( )	
For exceeding maximum number of pages, excluding cover page (-1 pt./page for each page exceeding 10 pages)					( )	
Summary pages exceed 2 pages (-1 pt./page for each page exceeding 2 pages)					( )	
Cover page not stating title in form of a question		-1 point			( )	
Cover page — missing date of state qualifying event		-1 point			( )	
Cover page — missing Name of chapter		-1 point			( )	
Cover page — missing Address of chapter		-1 point			( )	
Cover page — missing State of chapter		-1 point			( )	
Cover page — missing Phone number of chapter		-1 point			( )	
TOTAL POINTS EARNED OUT OF 25 POSSIBLE						

Judge's Name	Judge's Signature	Date

Team Presentation Scorecard

150 POINTS

| Chapter | State | Team Number |

Circle One: Preliminaries   Semifinals   Finals

	Possible Points	25–21 points	20–15 points	14–10 points	9–5 points	4–0 points	Total Score
Introduction Statement of the issue Why issue is important	20						
Pro viewpoint Identification of positive points Points addressed are relevant	20						
Con viewpoint Identification of negative points Points addressed are relevant	20						
Summary of pro/con viewpoints	20						
Effectiveness of presentation Participation, creativity, quality and power, clear with right pace and word pronunciation, no distractions, appropriate gestures, poised	20						
Questions Appropriate responses Knowledge of issue	25						
						Subtotal	
Portfolio Score							
Deduction for presenting a conclusion during the 15-minute presentation (-5 points)							( )
						TOTAL POINTS EARNED OUT OF 150 POSSIBLE	

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.

| Judge's Name | Judge's Signature | Date |

Agricultural, Food and Natural Resources Content Standards

Measurements Assessed	Event Activities Addressing Measurements	Related Academic Standards
CS.01.01. Performance Indicator: Examine issues and trends that impact AFNR systems on local, state, national and global levels.		
CS.01.01.01.c. Evaluate and explain AFNR issues and their impacts to audiences with limited AFNR knowledge.	Portfolio Presentation	
CRP.01.01. Performance Indicator: Model personal responsibility in the workplace and community.		
CRP.01.01.02.c. Model personal responsibility in workplace and community situations.	Presentation	
CRP.01.02.01.b. Assess the pros and cons of personal decisions based on their anticipated impact on self and others.	Presentation	
CRP.01.02 Performance Indicator: Evaluate and consider the near-term and long-term impacts of personal and professional decisions on employers and community before taking action.		
CRP.01.02.01.b. Assess the pros and cons of personal decisions based on their anticipated impact on self and others.	Presentation	
CRP.01.02.02.b. Analyze the pros and cons of professional decisions based upon impact on employers and community.	Presentation	
CRP.04.01. Performance Indicator: Speak using strategies that ensure clarity, logic, purpose and professionalism in formal and informal settings.		
CRP.04.01.02.b. Apply strategies for speaking with clarity, logic, purpose and professionalism in a variety of situations in formal and informal settings.	Presentation	
CRP.05.01. Performance Indicator: Assess, identify, and synthesize the information and resources needed to make decisions that positively impact the workplace and community.		
CRP.05.01.03.c. Synthesize information and resources and apply to workplace and community situations to make positive decisions.	Portfolio Presentation	

CRP.06.01. Performance Indicator: Synthesize information, knowledge, and experience to generate original ideas and challenge assumptions in the workplace and community.

CRP.06.01.01.b. Synthesize information, knowledge and experiences to generate ideas for workplace and community situations.	Portfolio	
CRP.06.01.02.b. Analyze how assumptions can impact outcomes in a variety of workplace and community situations.	Portfolio Presentation	

CRP.06.03. Performance Indicator: Create and execute a plan of action to act upon new ideas and introduce innovations to workplace and community organizations.

CRP.06.03.01.b. Assess and communicate the risks and benefits of applying new ideas and innovations to the workplace and community.	Portfolio Presentation	

CRP.07.02. Performance Indicator: Evaluate the validity of sources and data used when considering the adoption of new technologies, practices and ideas in the workplace and community.

CRP.07.02.01.c. Propose valid and reliable data sources to use when considering the adoption of new technologies, practices and ideas	Portfolio Presentation	

CRP.08.02. Performance Indicator: Investigate, prioritize and select solutions to solve problems in the workplace and community.

CRP.08.02.01.b. Assimilate and prioritize potential solutions to solve problems in the workplace and community.	Portfolio Presentation	
CRP.08.02.02.b. Apply decision-making processes to generate possible solutions to solve workplace and community problems.	Portfolio	