



VF YOUNGFARMER Discussion Meet **2020 CONTEST GUIDE**



ADVOCATE
for agriculture



NETWORK
across Michigan



BUILD
leadership skills

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What is a Discussion Meet?

The Discussion Meet is a contest sponsored by the MFB State Young Farmer Committee at the District and State level. The Discussion Meet Contest is sponsored by the AFBF Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee at the National Level.

The contest itself involves a moderator and contestants. The moderator's responsibility is to introduce the topic and the contestants, start the discussion, keep it on track and see that no one monopolizes the time. The contestants discuss a pre-selected topic.

The three fundamental basics of general discussion are constructive criticism, cooperation and communication. With this in mind, the participant's responsibility is to exchange ideas and information in an effort to solve a problem. The discussion should not be "conversation" or aimless talk nor should the participant take the role of a persuasive speaker. The participant should attempt to cooperatively shed further light on the problem and tentatively retain a flexible position. A successful participant is a productive thinker, rather than an emotional persuader, who is free to state beliefs and change positions whenever new information and ideas make that a reasonable thing to do.

Finally, this is not a panel symposium where 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 participant at any time.

The discussion should follow these steps:

1. State the problem or need.
2. Explore, define and understand the 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.
8. Teach the value of compromise.
9. Develop leaders.

Purpose of a Discussion Meet

The strength of Farm Bureau is largely in its ability to involve members in analyzing their agricultural problems and deciding on solutions which best fit their needs. Experience has proven the Discussion Meet will provide an opportunity for greater participation on the part of young, active farmers. It will help them develop a greater command of basic discussion skills. They will acquire a better understanding of how people can think in groups for the sake of better understanding solutions to problems.

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

1. Stimulate logical thinking and a desire for accurate information.
2. Develop a concise and convenient manner of speaking.
3. Develop the ability to listen.
4. Help the participant overcome timidity or stage fright.
5. Assist the individual in learning to give and receive criticism in a gainful manner.
6. Teach the value of compromise.
7. Develop leaders for effective problem-solving through group discussion.

Parts of a Discussion Meet

There are three parts to a discussion meet contest: the opening statement, body of discussion, and the closing statement.

- A. The opening statement is 30 seconds in length. The statement should be broad in scope, show relevancy, and importance of the topic.
- B. The body of the discussion will last 20 minutes in length (30 at the state finals). During the body of the discussion, you will want to first background the topic, discuss why it is an issue, come up with solutions to the issue, and be sure to bring Farm Bureau into the discussion.
- C. The closing statement is given at the end of the body of the discussion. Contestants will be given one minute of quiet time to put their closing statements together. Closing statements should summarize the discussion that took place during the body. The closing statement are one minute or less and should not be "canned".

Scoring

Contestants will be scored in six areas:

1. Opening statement (50 points)
2. Closing statement (100 points)
3. Delivery (100 points)
4. Problem solving and implementation (200 points)
5. Analysis of the topic or problem (150 points)
6. Cooperative attitude (100 points)

A sample score sheet is on page 10. Contestants should remember that this is a discussion...not a debate.

Prizes

Some district contests will have special prizes awarded to those who place in the discussion meet. A sample of these prizes is shown below. Winners will receive their district prize once they attend and compete at the state level competition.

- Yeti Rambler Colster
- Yeti Tumbler Mug
- Bluetooth Speaker
- Leatherman Mini Multitool
- Lands' End Tote

Official Rules

1. Contestants must be at least 18 years of age and not have reached their 36th birthday before January 31, 2021.
2. Contestants must be classified as regular Farm Bureau members. If contestant is under 21 years of age, contestants or parents must be regular Farm Bureau members.
3. Each county Farm Bureau may enter an unlimited number of contestants in the district contest.
4. Participation in a county contest is not required for participation in a district contest.
5. The three (or four, if a district has 10 or more contestants) top participants from each district contest will compete in the state contest.
6. All former contestants, with the exception of previous state winners, are eligible for the contest.
7. A contestant may not compete in the Young Farmer and Collegiate Discussion Meets in the same year.
8. Members of the State Young Farmer Committee, and State Board of Directors and their spouses are ineligible.
9. Employees of MFB and their spouses are ineligible to compete.
10. Individuals may compete in only one state level contest.
11. In the event that one of the three district finalists is unable to attend the state contest, alternates will be given the opportunity. Selection will be in the order ranked by the judges.
12. Contestants cannot compete if they have received an honorarium (set their own speaking fees).



Suggestions for Contestants

1. Make the decision to enter the Discussion Meet as far in advance of the actual meet as possible.
2. Learn as much as possible about the procedure of the Discussion Meet.
3. Acquaint yourself with the topics that will be used.
4. Study as much material as possible relating to the topics.
5. At the time of the contest, be a little early for an orientation or instruction meeting.
 - a. Become acquainted with the other contestants and moderator.
 - b. Ask questions to clarify any instructions that are not clear.
 - c. Listen carefully to the moderator as they outline the procedures you will follow.
6. During the contest:
 - a. Listen carefully to the moderator as they familiarize the audience with what is about to take place.
 - b. Listen carefully to the other contestants as they make their opening statements.
 - c. Keep within the time limit of your opening statement.
 - d. There may be a conflict of ideas, but not of personalities. **Remember, this is a discussion, not a debate.**
 - e. Be prepared to ask questions, state facts and opinions, and urge others to be specific.
 - f. Be aware of the audience, but not to the exclusion of other contestants.
 - g. Participate whenever it will contribute to furthering the discussion without monopolizing the time. Be enthusiastic and, in general, use logic rather than emotion.
 - h. Make **notes of key points as the discussion proceeds**; you will use them to develop your summary statement.
 - i. Use your one minute of time to organize your summary statement.
 - j. Stand and make your closing statement to the audience - use accepted speech techniques - stay within the time limit.

District-Level Topics:

1. The decline in rural populations is accelerated by a poor farm economy. What solutions would enhance the vibrancy and economic sustainability of agriculture and rural communities?
2. Is big data a big solution or big exposure? Technology tools are often cited as a method of increasing productivity and profitability, but there are liabilities that go along with technology. As young farmers and ranchers we are often first adopters. How do we ensure clear understanding of the risks and rewards of big data and smart farming?

State-Level Topics:

1. International trade is important to agriculture. We must continue working to build strong relations with existing customers while seeking out new trade partners to strengthen market stability. How can we enhance existing, and establish new and diverse foreign trading partners?
2. The increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters creates additional risk for farmers and ranchers. What tools and production practices can be engaged to reduce climate and weather risks?

TOPIC: _____

		PARTICIPANTS, LISTED LEFT TO RIGHT.									
PARTICIPANT'S NAME:											
1. OPENING STATEMENT: (50 points) a. Definition of problem, importance, causes, effects, relevancy of problem.											
2. PROBLEM SOLVING AND IMPLEMENTATION: (200 points) a. Ability and judgment in seeking answers and solutions, planning and organizational understanding and inclusion of Farm Bureau in implementing action programs.											
3. ANALYSIS OR TOPIC OR PROBLEM: (150 points) a. Does contestant attempt to identify problem causes and remain on topic? Knowledge, extent and accuracy of facts.											
4. COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE: (100 points) a. Listening, asking pertinent questions, airing all points of view, securing major agreement, minimizing major differences. b. Courtesy to other participants, encourage discussion from other participants.											
5. DELIVERY: (100 points) a. Voice quality, loudness, clear enunciation, communication skills, desirable sentence structure and interesting choice of words.											
6. CLOSING STATEMENT: (100 points) a. Ability to summarize discussion and formulate direction for the future.											
<i>Total score for each contestant is to be tabulated by Judge. Any tie scores are to be broken by Judge. 700 points possible</i>		TOTAL									
<i>Rank contestants: highest score = 1; second highest = 2, etc.</i>		RANK									

JUDGE'S SIGNATURE: _____