

# 2019 CONTEST GUIDE

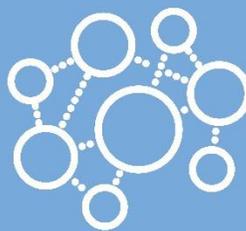


## VF YOUTH

Discussion Meet



**ADVOCATE**  
for agriculture



**NETWORK**  
across organizations



**BUILD**  
your resumé

# What is a Discussion Meet?

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The Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) Youth Discussion Meet is a contest sponsored by the MFB Young Farmer program.

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 bases of general discussion are constructive criticism, cooperation and communication. With this in mind, the participant's responsibility is to exchange ideas and information 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 quarter 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

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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 students interested in agriculture. 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 to 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

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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 (25 at the state finals). During the body of the discussion, participants will 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 silence to put their closing statements together. Closing statements should summarize the body's discussion. The closing statement should not be "canned" and is one minute or less.



# Who Can Compete?

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All high school students interested in agriculture, except past Michigan Farm Bureau Youth Discussion Meet state winners, are eligible to compete. While the regional contests are based on FFA boundaries and hosted by FFA chapters, competitions are open to ALL high school youth. Each FFA chapter, 4-H club and county Farm Bureau can send up to three contestants to compete in the regional contest. Contestants may only compete in one regional contest per year. Competitors should wear business casual attire (khakis/dress pants, polo shirts, button-up shirts, blouses, business dresses, etc.) Competitors SHOULD NOT wear FFA official dress, and will be asked to remove their FFA jacket for the competition.

## Scoring

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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 attached. Contestants should remember that this is a discussion, not a debate.

## When Are Regional Contests and How Do I Sign Up?

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Six regional competitions are scheduled from the end of September through mid-November. A list of competition dates is included on the Michigan Farm Bureau website, Michigan FFA website's calendar, and MSU Extension's Calendar. All dates are also listed below. One FFA advisor in each region has been selected to act as a regional contest coordinator for the Michigan Farm Bureau Youth Discussion Meet.

To register, complete this Google form at <http://bit.ly/youthdmregional>.

All registration forms must be completed one week prior to the date of the contest. **Late entries will not be accepted!** Refer questions to Michigan Farm Bureau High School & Collegiate Specialist Katie Eisenberger at [keisen1@michfb.com](mailto:keisen1@michfb.com) or 517-679-5444.



Region	Date	Registration Due	Time	Location	Host Contact Information	Counties in Region
I	Oct. 15	Oct. 8	5:00 pm	Vicksburg	<b>Noreen Heikes</b> <a href="mailto:nheikes@vicksburgschools.org">nheikes@vicksburgschools.org</a> 269-321-1232 <b>Angie First</b> 269-321-1132	Allegan, Barry, Berrien, Branch, Cass, Calhoun, Eaton, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph, and Van Buren
II	Nov. 13	Nov. 6	6:00 pm	Milan	<b>Tom Stahl</b> <a href="mailto:stahl@milanareaschools.org">stahl@milanareaschools.org</a> (734) 439-5081	Hillsdale, Jackson, Lenawee, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, Washtenaw, and Wayne
III	Nov. 12	Nov. 5	11:00 am	Delta College	<b>Leslie Siefka (Delta College)</b> <a href="mailto:siefka@msu.edu">siefka@msu.edu</a> (989) 686-9350	Bay, Gratiot, Huron, Midland, Saginaw, Sanilac, and Tuscola
IV	Sept. 28	Sept. 20	9:00 am	Durand	<b>Torey Birchmeier</b> <a href="mailto:birchmeier@durand.k12.mi.us">birchmeier@durand.k12.mi.us</a> (989)288-8710 <b>Beth Wilson</b> <a href="mailto:hager@durand.k12.mi.us">hager@durand.k12.mi.us</a>	Clinton, Genesee, Ingham, Lapeer, Livingston, Shiawassee, and St. Clair
V	Nov. 13	Nov. 6	6:00 pm	Ravenna	<b>Melanie Block</b> <a href="mailto:mblock@ravennaschools.org">mblock@ravennaschools.org</a> (231) 853-2218 ext 1427	Clare, Ionia, Isabella, Kent, Lake, Mason, Mecosta, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceania, Osceola, and Ottawa
VI	Oct. 16	Oct. 9	5:00 pm	Whittemore -Prescott	<b>Matt Jakubik</b> <a href="mailto:jakubikm@wpas.net">jakubikm@wpas.net</a> (989) 756-2500 Ext 523	Alcona, Alger, Alpena, Antrim, Arenac, Baraga, Benzie, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Chippewa, Crawford, Delta, Dickinson, Emmet, Gladwin, Gogebic, Grand Traverse, Houghton, Iosco, Iron, Kalkaska, Keweenaw, Leelanau, Luce, Mackinac, Manistee, Marquette, Menominee, Missaukee, Montmorency, Ogemaw, Ontonagon, Oscoda, Ostego, Presque Isle, Roscommon, Schoolcraft, and Wexford

# Who selects the winners?

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A panel of two to three judges will score each contestant using the scorecard provided. Judges may be (but are not limited to) Michigan Farm Bureau staff, county Farm Bureau board members, State Young Farmer Committee members, Young Farmer county chairs, retired agriscience educators, MSU Extension staff or agribusiness professionals.

Contestants will be scored in six areas: opening statement, closing statement, delivery, problem solving, analysis of the topic and cooperative attitude. A sample score sheet is attached. Contestants should remember **this is a discussion, not a debate**.

## Suggestions for Contestants

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1. Decide to enter as far in advance of the actual meet as possible.
2. Learn as much as possible about the procedure of the Discussion Meet. Check out state and national contest examples on Michigan Farm Bureau's YouTube channel.
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 the orientation and instructions.
  - a. Become acquainted with the other contestants and moderator.
  - b. Ask questions to clarify any unclear instructions.
  - c. Listen carefully to the moderator as he or she outlines the procedures.
6. During the contest:
  - a. Listen carefully to the moderator as he or she familiarizes the audience with what is about to take place.
  - b. Listen carefully as other contestants make their opening statements.
  - c. Keep within the time limit of your opening statement.
  - d. There should be a conflict of ideas, but not of personalities. **Remember, this is a discussion, not a debate.**
  - e. 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 when it will contribute to furthering the discussion without monopolizing time. Be enthusiastic and 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.



# Regional Discussion Meet Procedures

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Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) regional representatives and Michigan Farm Bureau staff will work in tandem with the host agriscience educators to prepare and execute the contest. The Michigan Farm Bureau High School & Collegiate Programs Department will take the lead on preparing for the event, gathering registrations and making copies. MFB regional representatives will assist in securing judges and lead the program the day-of the contest. FFA advisors will handle the room setup and secure time keepers and moderators.

## 2019 Regional Discussion Meet Questions

Three questions are available to be used at the Regional Level. MFB Regional Reps will work with the host agriscience educator to decide which questions will be utilized and in what round. Those regions with more than one room per round MUST use the same question in each room. Each question should only be used once at the Regional Level. If your registered participant numbers create enough rounds to exhaust all three questions, you may repeat a question for the finals.

- High schoolers face bullying, peer-pressure, and stress of life as a teenager. Farmers also face unique stressors such as pricing, weather, activist groups, etc. How can youth organizations, Michigan Farm Bureau and other partners work to promote positive health and wellbeing habits youth can build upon as they become the next generation of agriculturalists?
- From natural to man-made disasters our world can be quickly impacted by tragedy on both small and large scale. Discuss your role in assisting with aid, what barriers hinder your participation and what opportunities are out there for teenagers to make an impact?
- How do you as young agriculturalists work to break the stigma between us versus them? Examples include organic versus non-organic, small versus large traditional versus non-traditional direct marketing versus retail producer versus consumer?



# Regional Step-By-Step Planning Guide:

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## One to Two Months Prior to Discussion Meet

- MFB High School & Collegiate Programs Department introduces each FFA region's host advisor to the MFB regional representative covering the territory where the contest will take place via email.
- MFB High School & Collegiate Programs Department reaches out to FFA host advisor to:
  - Confirm date, location and facility needs
  - Explore historical participation to determine number of judges needed and relay to the regional representative
  - Exchange contact information
  - Plan future calls/meetings to plan event

## One Month Prior to Discussion Meet

MFB regional rep begins confirming judges. Each round will need two to three judges. The same judges can serve in both the semi and final rounds. Judges should be familiar with the contest and should not be related to or employ any of the contestants. Agriscience educators, 4-H organizational leaders, and MSUE 4-H county coordinators with students competing cannot serve as judges. Judges could include:

1. Michigan Farm Bureau District directors
2. District State Young Farmer and/or Promotion & Education Committee members
3. Surrounding county Young Farmer chairs/committee members
4. Surrounding county board members
5. Local farmers/agribusiness people with discussion meet experience
6. Retired agriscience teachers
7. Local/retired MSU Extension staff members
8. Michigan Farm Bureau staff
9. Michigan Farm Bureau Collegiate advisors and/or members

## Three Weeks Prior to Discussion Meet

MFB High School & Collegiate Department sends an email to FFA advisors, 4-H coordinators, and MFB County Administrators in the region as a reminder registration forms are due one week prior to the contest.



## One Week Prior to Discussion Meet

- MFB High School & Collegiate Programs Department combines the on-line registration forms to create a sign-in sheet.
- MFB High School & Collegiate Programs Department contacts FFA host advisor and regional representative to confirm number and names of participants and, therefore, the number of judges. Other items to discuss:
  - number of rooms needed
  - setup requirements
  - timing
  - supplies
- MFB High School & Collegiate Programs Department emails the following to the host advisor and regional representative:
  - Setup instructions
  - Script
  - Name tent (need copies for all competitors and moderators)
  - Topic sheet (need copies for competitors, moderators and judges along with extras for interested spectators)
  - Scorecard (need copies for each judge in each round)
  - Timecards (need copies for designated number of timekeepers)
- MFB High School & Collegiate Programs Department mails regional Discussion Meet prizes and copies to MFB regional reps based on number of students competing.
- MFB regional representative:
  - randomly splits participants into semi-finals rounds, splitting up chapter members as much as possible
  - confirms judge availability and timing (Judges should arrive 30 minutes prior to the contest start time for introductions and orientation.)
  - contacts MFB High School & Collegiate Programs Department with any questions, needs, etc.

## Day of Discussion Meet

- MFB regional rep will bring: setup instructions, judge listing and contact information, scripts, name tents, topic sheets, judge score sheets, time cards, sign-in sheet, contestant prizes and contestant/judge room breakouts.
- Host advisors will provide: blank notebook paper (5 sheets for each contestant/round), pens (2 per contestant) and stopwatches (one for each semi-final round).
- MFB regional rep arrives 1 hour prior to contest start time to touch base with FFA host advisor and setup rooms.
  - Contestants should be seated behind long tables angled in the front of the room, with a moderator seated in the middle seat.
  - Participants should be able to easily see all of the other contestants.



- Two pens and five sheets of blank notebook paper should be in front of each seat.
- A timekeeper's chair should be in the front row and should be equipped with timecards and a stopwatch.
- Host advisor provides a timekeeper for each room and prepares each timekeeper for his/her duties. (Timekeepers could include FFA advisors & 4-H coordinators who do not have students competing.)
- Host advisor provides a moderator and chair for each room and prepares each moderator for his/her duties. (Moderators/Chairs could include FFA advisors & 4-H coordinators who do not have students competing or State FFA Officers.)
- MFB regional representatives greet judges when they arrive 30 minutes prior to the contest and review the scorecard and major points in the contest guide (rules, goals, etc.)
- As participants arrive, MFB regional representative checks them in, helps them complete a name tent and directs them to their contest room. (Name tents should only include participants' first name.)
- Additions & substitutions on the day of regional competition will not be allowed.
- Five minutes before the contest, Host advisor ensures:
  - all contestants are seated in the proper rooms with the necessary supplies
  - timekeeper is seated and ready
  - moderator is seated and ready
  - judges are seated and ready
- MFB regional rep (and advisor depending on the number of rounds) begins the program using the emailed script and turns the program over to the moderator.
- After semi-final rounds, MFB regional rep and Host advisor tally judges' scorecards and announce the students moving to the final round (eight maximum). The same number of students should advance to the final round from each prelim.
- Final round commences in the same fashion as the prelims.
- MFB regional rep announces the regional competitors moving on to the state contest. **(NEW BREAK DOWN FOR 2019)**
  - 0-39 regional pre-registered & participants who competed at the regional competition: three state qualifiers and up to three alternates.
  - 40+ regional pre-registered & participants who competed at the regional competition: four state qualifiers and up to three alternates.
  - Additions & substitutions on the day of regional competition will not be allowed.
- MFB regional rep and Host advisor complete the enclosed state discussion meet registration form and sends scanned or hard copies to MFB High School & Collegiate Programs Department.
- MFB High School & Collegiate Programs Department will send a final state competitor list to the State FFA Office, MSUE/4-H State Office, and County Farm Bureaus.



# State Discussion Meet Overview

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Michigan Farm Bureau High School & Collegiate Programs Department staff will contact the FFA advisor, 4-H leader/county coordinator, or the County Farm Bureau of all state competitors to prepare for State Level competition.

Here's a generalized overview:

## Prior to State Discussion Meet

- MFB High School & Collegiate Programs Department emails each state youth participants' adult leader with a State Competition Registration Link. Please fill this link out with a due date dependent on when your regional competition was held to assist with a quick turnaround between regionals and state competitions.
- If a student does not register by the deadline or is unable to attend, the first alternate within the same region will be contacted by the MFB High School & Collegiate Programs Department. MFB staff will continue down the regional alternate list until all (three or four) spots are secured. Alternates from another region will not be allowed to fill a region's open spot.
- Each student will be provided two lunch tickets – one for the student and one for an adult chaperone. Those who register prior to October 25<sup>th</sup>, have the option to purchase additional meal tickets. Meal tickets WILL NOT be for purchase the day of the event.

## Day of Discussion Meet

- The State Discussion Meet is held at the Devos Place Convention Center connected to the Amway Grand Plaza in Grand Rapids on Tuesday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>. The event is free for all spectators, though you may need to pay for parking in one of the parking structures.
- State Discussion Meet Schedule (**PLEASE NOTICE NEW SCHEDULE**)
  - 8:15 am Registration
  - 8:45 Mandatory Contestant Briefing (BE ON TIME!)
  - 9:15-10:15 DM Round One
  - In between rounds Group Contestant Photo
  - 10:15-11:15 DM Round Two
  - 11:30 MFB State Annual Luncheon & Finalists Announcement
  - 1:30-2:30 DM Finals (Final Six - one room)
  - 3:00 Winner Announcement in Discussion Meet Finals Room
  - 4:00 (approx.) Winner & Runner Up Recognized at the State Annual Delegate Floor. Must attend to receive prizes.



- At Registration, contestants will receive their name card and room assignments. NOTE: Discussion Meet Registration is NOT at the MFB State Annual Meeting Registration. It's a separate registration located outside Discussion Meet rooms in Devos Place Convention Center – reference location map.
  - Arrive ON TIME to the Contestant Briefing. If you are not in the Contestant Briefing, you will be disqualified. No Exceptions. This is a rule for all Youth, Collegiate, and Young Farmer State Discussion Meet contests.
  - MFB staff will be photographing and shooting video in the various Discussion Meet rooms. These images and videos maybe used in MFB member publications, on social media, and to promote the contest.
  - The top six overall average scores between Round One and Round Two will determine the top six finalists.
  - The top six finalists will be announced during the MFB State Annual Meeting Luncheon.
  - Those students not competing in the final round are free to leave after lunch but are encouraged to watch the Discussion Meet Finals and step into the State Annual Meeting Delegate Session.
  - State Winner and Runner Up will be announced at 3 p.m. in the Finals Room. The State Winner and Runner Up must stay to be recognized on the Delegate Floor at the MFB State Annual Delegate Session – approx. at 4 p.m.
  - The winner and runner-up earn a cash prize and personalized plaque to be delivered after the first of the year. The winner and runner-up will be required to fill out a W-9 and attend the MFB State Annual Delegate Session Announcement to receive their prizes.
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## 2019 Regional & State Discussion Meet Topics

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### REGIONAL TOPICS (One to Three Topics will be used)

- High schoolers face bullying, peer-pressure, and stress of life as a teenager. Farmers also face unique stressors such as pricing, weather, activist groups, etc. How can youth organizations, Michigan Farm Bureau and other partners work to promote positive health and wellbeing habits youth can build upon as they become the next generation of agriculturalists?
- From natural to man-made disasters our world can be quickly impacted by tragedy on both small and large scale. Discuss your role in assisting with aid, what barriers hinder your participation and what opportunities are out there for teenagers to make an impact?
- How do you as young agriculturalists work to break the stigma between us versus them? Examples include organic versus non-organic, small versus large traditional versus non-traditional direct marketing versus retail producer versus consumer?

### STATE TOPICS

**Round One Question:** High schoolers face bullying, peer-pressure, and stress of life as a teenager. Farmers also face unique stressors such as pricing, weather, activist groups, etc. How can youth organizations, Michigan Farm Bureau and other partners work to promote positive health and wellbeing habits youth can build upon as they become the next generation of agriculturalists?

**State Round Two Question:** From natural to man-made disasters our world can be quickly impacted by tragedy on both small and large scale. Discuss your role in assisting with aid, what barriers hinder your participation and what opportunities are out there for teenagers to make an impact?

**State Final Question:** Realizing, not every school system can simply add an agriscience education department or every county has funds to increase Michigan State University Extension staff, how could your youth organization reach students who do not have access to agricultural opportunities for them to understand the depth of ag careers?



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TOPIC: \_\_\_\_\_

Superior = 100% of points available | Excellent = 80% | Good = 60% | Fair = 40% | Poor = 20%

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

JUDGE'S SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_