



# COLLEGIATE

## Discussion Meet

### 2020 GUIDEBOOK



**ADVOCATE**  
for agriculture



**NETWORK**  
with Farm Bureau



**BUILD**  
your resumé

With the onset of COVID-19 and the continued necessity for in-person events to pivot to virtual, Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) has made the decision to provide a virtual Discussion Meet experience for the 2020 contest year. This packet includes all necessary information a collegiate advisor, a collegiate Farm Bureau participant, and a discussion meet judge would need to be successful in their role.

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For questions or clarification, please contact Katie Eisenberger, MFB High School & Collegiate Programs Specialist at [keisen1@michfb.com](mailto:keisen1@michfb.com)



# What is a Discussion Meet?

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The Discussion Meet is a contest sponsored by the MFB State Young Farmer Committee.

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 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.

This is not a panel symposium where each participant, makes a presentation. Rather, it is an exercise in cooperative problem solving, with the questions, answers and statements coming from any participant at any time.

Finally, the contest itself involves a moderator and contestants. The moderator's responsibility is to introduce the topic, the contestants, start the discussion, keep it on track and see that no one person monopolizes the time. The contestants discuss a pre-selected topic over the course of approx. 30 minutes.

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 solutions.
5. Evaluate and compare solutions.
6. Test and project what appears to be the best solution.
7. Arrive at ways to implement the solution.

## **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 within the agriculture industry on the part of young, active collegiate leaders 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 all potential solutions.

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 listening skills.
4. Help the participant overcome timidity or stage fright.
5. Learn how to give and receive constructive criticism.
6. Teach the value of compromise.
7. Develop leaders with problem-solving skills while successfully collaborating with others.

## **Parts of a Virtual Discussion Meet**

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There are three rounds to the 2020 Michigan Farm Bureau Collegiate Virtual Discussion Meet.

1. Opening Round: All registered Collegiate Farm Bureau members may submit an unedited 3-5-minute response to a provided agricultural issue question. Collegiate Chapters may host chapter contests but competing and/or winning at the chapter level is NOT a pre-requisite to compete at the state level.
2. Top Ten: The ten highest scores from the Opening Round will move on to compete in the Top Ten Virtual Round held over a private Zoom link. Two

rooms of no more than five contestants will participate in a virtual discussion meet. Each competitor is allowed one guest.

3. Final Four: The top two competitors from each Top Ten room will move on to the Final Four Virtual Round. Each competitor is allowed one guest. This round will be also be livestreamed.

At each level of competition, competitors will address a selected agricultural issue providing. Though the Opening Round does not provide for direct interaction, the basis of the response should include the traditional discussion meet components listed below all within the five-minute time limit. Please note, the time limits below are strictly enforced and only applicable during the Top Ten and Final Four rounds.

A discussion meet contest has three components - 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 be **20 minutes** in length. During the body of the discussion, 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 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 should not be "canned" and is one minute or less.



# Logistics of a Virtual Discussion Meet

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## Opening Round: Record Thesis Statement & Supporting Argument

- The Opening Round question posted by October 1st at 10:00 a.m. ET via social media and emailed directly to Collegiate Farm Bureau Advisors as well as registered Collegiate Farm Bureau members.
- Competitors must submit a YouTube video link via email to [keisen1@michfb.com](mailto:keisen1@michfb.com) by October 15<sup>th</sup> at midnight with the subject line, "Competitor last name – COLFBDM Video."
- The video link must meet the following requirements:
  - Three to five minutes – unedited.
  - Includes opening statement, analysis of agricultural issue, suggested solution and ways Farm Bureau can be a part of that solution.
- Video file name should read, "CompetitorLastName\_COLFBDM" (i.e. Eisenberger\_COLFBDM)
- Confirmation email will be sent to competitors once videos have been processed by MFB staff.
- Video clips will be sent in groups of four to judges to evaluate based on a provided rubric. Scores will be inputted by the MFB staff.
- Top ten competitors will be identified based on judges' ranking and scores. Those individuals will advance to the Top Ten round of competition.
- Those advancing to the next round will be announced Friday, November 6.

## Top Ten: Zoom Discussion Rooms

- Question for the Top Ten Round will be shared during the announcement of the Top Ten Competitors on November 6 and emailed to all Top Ten Competitors and Advisors.



- Top Ten competitors, room chairs, room moderators, room timekeepers and judges will enter Zoom video conference for brief virtual orientation one hour in advance.
- During the virtual orientation, the room chair/moderator will draw for opening statement order. This same order will be followed for closing statements.
- Zoom call will be split into preassigned Breakout Rooms – five competitors, three judges, one room chair/moderator and timekeeper each.
- Each competitor is allowed one guest and must provide the guest's email as well as first and last name to [keisen1@michfb.com](mailto:keisen1@michfb.com) no later than 24 hours prior to the event.
- Discussion Meet competitive event will ensue in virtual fashion.
- All guests will have their video and audio muted. Judges will introduce themselves with their videos on at the beginning of the event and then turn their video and mic off. The room chair/moderator will turn off his/her video and mic after officially starting opening statements. Competitors will have their video and audio on the entire duration of the discussion.
- Judges will evaluate and score competitors using a provided rubric and tally sheet and submit scores to MFB Staff for inputting into scoring system.
- Top two competitors from each Competition Room will advance to the Final Four round.
- Competitors advancing will be announced via Facebook Live Tuesday, November 10<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m.

### **Final Four: Zoom Discussion Room – Livestreamed**

1. Question for the Final Four round will be shared during the Final Four live announcement.

2. Final Four competitors, room chair, room moderator, room timekeeper and judges enter Zoom video conference for brief video conferencing etiquette/orientation thirty minutes in advance.
3. Video conference will go live by connecting to Facebook or YouTube. Same video and audio guidelines from the Top Ten round will be applied.
4. Collegiate Discussion Meet competitive event will ensue in virtual fashion as outlined in the Top Ten round.
5. Judges will evaluate and score competitors using a provided rubric and tally sheet and submit scores to Collegiate Discussion Meet Subcommittee and MFB staff for inputting into scoring system.
6. Winners will be announced via Facebook Live Wednesday, November 18<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m.

## Timeline

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- Thursday, October 15                      Opening Round Question Shared
- Friday, October 30                        Opening Round Videos Due by Noon
- Friday, October 30- Nov 5                Opening Round Judging
- Friday, Nov. 6                                Top Ten Announcement at Noon via Facebook Live
  
- Tuesday, November 10                    Top Ten Virtual Competition at 3:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, November 10                    Final Four Announcement at 7 p.m. via Facebook Live
  
- Wednesday, November 18                Final Four Competition at Noon
- Wednesday, November 18                Winner Announcement at 7 p.m. via Facebook Live

# Discussion Meet Questions

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- **Opening Round:** 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?
- **Top Ten:** Connectivity underpins the modern economy. What mix of investment and policy initiatives can provide reliable broadband access to farmers, ranchers and rural America?
- **Final Four:** 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?

## Scoring & Rubric

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### Opening Round Scoring:

1. Thesis Statement (10 points)
2. Problem solving and implementation (45 points)
3. Analysis of the topic or problem (30 points)
4. Delivery (15 points)

### Top Ten & Final Four Scoring & Rubric:

Will follow the traditional discussion meet rubric. 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)

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

JUDGE: \_\_\_\_\_

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

	Insert competitor's name in each individual column. Each competitor is judged independently.				
<b>1. THESIS STATEMENT: (10 points)</b> Contestant clearly defines the problem (5 points) and relays the importance and relevancy of problem (5 points).					
<b>2. PROBLEM SOLVING AND IMPLEMENTATION: (45 points)</b> Contestant develops solutions (15 points) & plans actions to resolve the issue (15 points) while including Farm Bureau in the action plan (15 points).					
<b>3. ANALYSIS OR TOPIC OR PROBLEM: (30 points)</b> Contestant identifies causes of the problem (10 points), remains on topic (10 points), while sharing an accurate, working knowledge of the topic (10 points).					
<b>4. DELIVERY: (15 points)</b> Contestant speaks at an audible volume and pace (5 points), forms clear sentences (4 points), and conveys thoughts and viewpoints clearly and confidently (5 points).					

*Each contestant is judged by at least two judges. Total score for each contestant is to be tabulated by each Judge, combined, and then averaged for the contestant's final score. Remember, each contestant is judged independently. No ranking or placing is necessary. Contestants may have the same score.*

<b>TOTAL (100 points)</b>					
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TOPIC: \_\_\_\_\_

JUDGE: \_\_\_\_\_

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

	Insert competitor's name in each individual column				
<b>1. OPENING STATEMENT: (50 points)</b> a. Definition of problem, importance, causes, effects, relevancy of problem.					
<b>2. PROBLEM SOLVING AND IMPLEMENTATION: (200 points)</b> a. Ability and judgment in seeking answers and solutions, planning and organizational understanding and inclusion of Farm Bureau in implementing action programs.					
<b>3. ANALYSIS OR TOPIC OR PROBLEM: (150 points)</b> a. Does contestant attempt to identify problem causes and remain on topic? Knowledge, extent and accuracy of facts.					
<b>4. COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE: (100 points)</b> 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.					
<b>5. DELIVERY: (100 points)</b> a. Voice quality, loudness, clear enunciation, communication skills, desirable sentence structure and interesting choice of words.					
<b>6. CLOSING STATEMENT: (100 points)</b> 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.</i> 700 points possible <span style="float: right;">TOTAL</span>					
<i>Rank contestants: highest score = 1; second highest = 2, etc.</i> <span style="float: right;">RANK</span>					

# Official Rules

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1. Contestant shall be a member of a recognized Collegiate Farm Bureau chapter as set up by Michigan Farm Bureau and be between the ages of 18 and 35. The individual shall have reached his/her 18th birthday and shall not have reached his/her 36th birthday by the last day of **February 2021**.
2. Contestant must be an undergraduate college student. Undergraduate status is determined at the time of the state competition.
3. Contestant shall not be enrolled in a graduate-level program at the time of the state Collegiate Discussion Meet competition.
4. Contestant must display a sincere interest in the agricultural industry.
5. Contestant may only compete in one national Young Farmer and Rancher Competition per year.
6. A student cannot win both the Collegiate and Young Farmer Discussion Meet in the same year. However, they may compete in both.
7. Members of the State Young Farmer Committee, state board of directors and/or their spouse/spousal-equivalent are not eligible to compete.
8. Past state Collegiate Discussion Meet winners and/or previous AFBF Collegiate Discussion Meet competitors are not eligible to compete.
9. Past state Young Farmer Discussion Meet winners and/or previous AFBF Discussion Meet competitors are not eligible to compete.
10. Current employees of county, state and/or American Farm Bureaus and their affiliates are not eligible to compete.
11. Professional speakers are not eligible to compete. Professional speakers are those who have received a fee, royalty or honorarium for speaking (i.e., paid speaking appearances or speaking engagements) within 24 months prior to



this annual competition. This excludes reimbursement for travel or expenses for the appearance.

12. Each Collegiate Farm Bureau member may submit one, unedited Opening Round video to Michigan Farm Bureau by **October 30 at Noon**. Registration and video submissions must be completed online at <http://bit.ly/COLFBDM>.
13. Props, slide shows, or any additional items are prohibited. Your video should resemble the simple set up of a traditional, in person discussion meet.
14. For 2020, Collegiate Farm Bureau chapter level discussion meets are NOT REQUIRED. The Opening Round is open to any registered Collegiate Farm Bureau member.

## **Best Practices for Competitors**

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### **Opening Round:**

- Dress should be business professional.
- Find a location with strong Wi-Fi signal
  - If possible, plug in to a wired internet source.
  - Ensure that others on your connection are not streaming at the same time as the competitive event to avoid lagging.
  - If you are having trouble finding a location with a strong signal, reach out to your Collegiate Farm Bureau advisor.
- Pay attention to your background. Though you will not be evaluated on your background, find a solid or subtle colored background to not distract the judges.
- Position your light source in front of you rather than behind or to the side of you. Judges should clearly see your face.

- Be prepared to film the video in one take. Videos must be unedited and five minutes or less. You may practice several times before achieving the video you wish to use.
- Set up a timer where you can see it to ensure you do not go over your five-minute time limit.
- Find a quiet location to prevent interruptions and background noise. Headphones/earbuds are acceptable if they help minimize distractions and interruptions.

### **Structuring Your Opening Round Response:**

- Introduce yourself and the chapter you represent.
- Clearly present your thesis statement regarding the question.
- Provide context and understanding of the topic by sharing your research, personal experience, and background knowledge.
- Address possible conflict or obstacles, while sharing realistic solutions and implementation steps. Consider how you and other collegiate Farm Bureau students can be incorporated into solution.
- Validate why you believe your solutions are viable.
- Thank the judge for watching your video.

### **Top Ten & Final Four:**

- Dress should be business professional.
- Have a strong wi-fi signal.
  - If possible, plug in to a wired internet source.
  - Ensure that others on your connection are not streaming at the same time as the competitive event to avoid lagging.
  - If you are having trouble finding a location with a strong signal, reach out to your Collegiate Farm Bureau advisor.

- Pay attention to your background. Though you will not be evaluated on your background, find a solid or subtle colored background to not distract the judges.
- Position your light source in front of you rather than behind or to the side of you. Judges should clearly see your face.
- Find a quiet location to prevent interruptions and background noise. Headphones/earbuds are acceptable if they help minimize distractions and interruptions.
- Practice using Zoom prior to the competition.
  - Download the Zoom app on BOTH your desktop or phone – determine which device is most professional for the call to take place and use the other for backup.
  - Become familiar with Zoom capabilities through a test call. If you wish to set up a test call please contact Katie Eisenberger at [keisen1@michfb.com](mailto:keisen1@michfb.com) by Monday, November 9<sup>th</sup> at 9 a.m.
  - Decide which audio source works best for you –phone or computer
  - Considering connecting to Audio using your phone to avoid interruptions in the audio even if video buffers
    - Click “^” next to microphone (bottom left)
    - Click “Switch to Phone Audio...”
    - Dial phone number from phone. When prompted, give Meeting ID and Participant ID
    - Connect to Computer Audio to have both video and audio come through computer or device.
    - Practice muting and unmuting yourself
  - Practice switching from speaker view to gallery view
  - Make sure your display name is correct. If not, click the “...” on your video, select “Rename” and adjust to your full name. This can also be

done by clicking "Participants," hovering over your name, selecting "More," clicking on "Rename" and adjusting from there.

- Acquaint yourself with the topics that will be used. Study as much material as possible related to the topics. Watch the discussion meet topic focused on during the [MFB's Hitching Post YouTube video](#) series and review the notes provided in each video's description.

### **During the Virtual Discussion Meet Competition:**

- Opening Statements:
  - Listen carefully to the other contestants as they make their opening statements.
  - Keep within the time limit of your opening statement. Time will be called by the moderator if you exceed the time.
- During the Discussion:
  - Pre-written notes are prohibited.
  - There should be a conflict of ideas, but not of personalities. Remember, this is a discussion, not a debate.
  - Ask questions, state facts and opinions and urge others to be specific.
  - Address your fellow contestants by their first name.
  - Participate whenever it will contribute to furthering the discussion without monopolizing the time.
  - Be enthusiastic and, in general, use logic rather than emotion.
  - Consider providing your personal connection to the topic.
  - Provide examples or opportunities within Collegiate Farm Bureau, your county Farm Bureau, and Michigan Farm Bureau.



- Make notes of key points as the discussion proceeds; you will use them to develop your summary statement.
- Closing Statement:
  - Use your one minute of silence to organize your summary statement.
  - This should be a summary of the discussion. Considering address the other contestants' input as well as your own.
  - New content should NOT be brought up in your closing statement.
  - Stay within your one-minute time limit. Time will be called by the moderator if you exceed the time.



# Discussion Meet Worksheet

To help organize the background, your research, and possible solutions, consider filling out the following worksheet.

  


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TIME TO GET READY FOR YOUR  
**Discussion Meet**

Pick a topic and share why the issue is important to you.

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Explain the background of the issue.

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Why is this an issue? Think about why it's important to you, your family, your school, your county, our world etc.

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Share two to three solutions for the issue and how to apply the solutions.

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How can you partner with organizations like Farm Bureau, MSU Extension, FFA Alumni groups, etc. to address the issue?

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**Ready to really prep yourself?? Go back and REPEAT the process for each question!!**

## MFB Hitching Post Series

As you begin your research, consider watching the Michigan Farm Bureau's Hitching Post YouTube Series. The goal of the Hitching Post is to bring MFB staff, industry professionals, and members together and allow the viewer to hear background, current situations, and what is developing firsthand with policy, commodities, markets, etc.



**Grassroots Beginnings:** Listen in as Michigan Farm Bureau members Ashley Kennedy of Huron County Farm Bureau and David Dreves of Northwest Michigan County Farm Bureau chat about their experiences digging into policy development at their local county Farm Bureau level. From tips on getting brave with your ideas to where they source reputable information, these young farmers will get you excited about working to create change for Michigan agriculture. Watch it here: <https://bit.ly/HP-Grassroots>

**Local Economic Stability:** Catch up with Rebecca Park, Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) Legislative Counsel; Matt Kapp, MFB Government Relations Specialist; and Brad Neumann, Michigan State University Senior Extension Educator, in a dynamic conversation on local economic stability. What makes a community thrive and have a sense of place? How can we as citizens better our communities through involvement and self-improvement. Watch it here: <https://bit.ly/HP-LocalEconomy>

**Climate & Weather:** How do farmers combat an ever-changing climate landscape? Laura Campbell, manager of Michigan Farm Bureau's Agriculture Ecology Department; Theresa Sisung, MFB Field Crops & Advisory Team Specialist; Huron County Farm Bureau member Rita Herford; and Isaiah Wunsch of the Northwest Michigan Farm Bureau member discuss the many facets of climate shifts and the challenges farmers face. Watch it here: <http://bit.ly/HP-ClimateWeather>

**Big Data & Technology:** What are the risks and rewards of utilizing new technology? What's on the horizon? Theresa Sisung, Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) Field Crops & Advisory Team Specialist; Theresa Sisung, MFB Assistant Legal Counsel; and Mike Houghtaling, President and General Manager of P&C Ag Solutions discuss how farmers can wisely engage with service providers to embrace technology and data. Watch it here: <http://bit.ly/HP-BigData>

**International Trade:** How does Michigan agriculture fit into the international trade landscape? Join MFB National Legislative Counsel John Kran; AFBF International Trade Economist Veronica Nigh; and MSUE Economist Aleks Schaefer for a discussion on trends, trade barriers and foreign market impacts. Watch it here: <http://bit.ly/HP-InternationalTrade>

# Competitor Excusal Letter

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To Whom It May Concern:

One of your students has been selected to represent your institution in the Michigan Farm Bureau Collegiate Discussion Meet hosted by the Michigan Farm Bureau Young Farmers program. I'm writing to ask you to excuse them from a conflict to enable them to participate.

Farm Bureau's strength depends on its members' ability to analyze agricultural issues and decide on solutions that best meet their needs. The Collegiate Discussion Meet is an activity designed to build these crucial skills in young, active farmers and ranchers. By participating, members build basic discussion skills, develop a keen understanding of important agricultural issues, and explore how groups can pool knowledge to reach consensus and solve problems.

Competitors representing 14 collegiate chapters have prepared to compete in this event and vie for scholarship monies as well as a chance to compete at the American Farm Bureau Federation's national Collegiate Discussion Meet in the state of Washington. This online event consists of three rounds: one opening round including all competitors and the Top Ten and Final Four rounds for finalists.

While the opening round of competition give the competitors some flexibility in how they participate, the final two rounds will be held live; participation may coincide with a class or exam. If the competitor in your class advances to the final rounds, please excuse them for the following dates and times:

- Tuesday, November 10, 2020 at 3:30 p.m.: Top Ten Round
- Wednesday, November 18, 2020 at Noon: Final Four Round

Thank you for your consideration and flexibility as we execute this valuable experience for our Collegiate Farm Bureau members. We are excited for your student and hope they will continue to develop as leaders with effective problem-solving skills for use in their future careers. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at [email address]

Sincerely,

