

2017 Collegiate Discussion Meet Contest Guide



MICHIGAN'S VOICE OF AGRICULTURE

Table of contents

WHAT IS A DISCUSSION MEET?	3
PURPOSE OF A DISCUSSION MEET	4
PARTS OF A DISCUSSION MEET	5
SCORING.....	5
OFFICIAL RULES	6
SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION MEET CONTESTANTS.....	7
CHAPTER TOPICS	8
STATE TOPICS.....	8
DISCUSSION MEET CONTEST RATING SHEET	9

What is a Discussion Meet?

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

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 (25 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 should not be "canned" and are one minute or less.

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 scoresheet is attached. Contestants should remember this is a discussion.... not a debate.

Official Rules

1. Applicant shall be a member of a recognized collegiate Farm Bureau chapter or club 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 2018.
2. Applicant must be an undergraduate college student. Undergraduate status is determined at the time of the state competition.
3. Applicant shall not be enrolled in a graduate-level program at the time of the state Collegiate Discussion Meet competition.
4. Applicant must display a sincere interest in the agricultural industry.
5. Applicant may only compete in one national YF&R Competition per year.
6. Members of the State Young Farmer Committee, state board of directors and/or their spouse/spousal-equivalent are not eligible to compete.
7. Past state Collegiate Discussion Meet winners and/or previous AFBF Collegiate Discussion Meet competitors are not eligible to compete.
8. Past state Young Farmer Discussion Meet winners and/or previous AFBF Discussion Meet competitors are not eligible to compete.
9. Current employees of county, state and/or American Farm Bureaus and their affiliates are not eligible to compete.
10. 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.
11. Each Collegiate Farm Bureau chapter may submit two entries to be considered for state recognition and must report these entrants using the official collegiate winner report, emailing the report to Michigan Farm Bureau by November 1, 2017.
12. In the event one of a chapter's Discussion Meet applicants is unable to attend the state contest, alternates will be given the opportunity. Selection will be in the order ranked by the judges.

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 he/she outlines the procedures you will follow.
6. During the contest:
 - a. Listen carefully to the moderator as he/she familiarizes 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 should 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 silence to organize your summary statement.
 - j. Stand and make your closing statement to the audience - use accepted speech techniques - stay within the time limit.

2017 Discussion Meet Topics

Chapter-Level Topics:

1. Farmers are a shrinking percentage of the population. How can Farm Bureau help first-generation farmers and ranchers get started in agriculture?
2. With a growing demand for US farm products abroad, how can agriculture overcome public skepticism of foreign trade to negotiate new trade agreements and open new world markets?

State-Level Topics:

1. Formation of family farm corporations is common practice. How can Farm Bureau work to ensure that the public's positive perception of the family farm is not lost?
2. How can Farm Bureau help members with increasing legal and regulatory obstacles so they can focus on farming and ranching?

DISCUSSION MEET CONTEST RATING SHEET

Circle One: District Semi-Final District Finals State Round 1 State Round 2 State Sweet 16 State Finals

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				
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> <i>TOTAL</i>											
<i>Rank contestants: highest score = 1; second highest = 2, etc.</i> <i>RANK</i>											

Judge's Name: _____

Judge's Signature: _____