

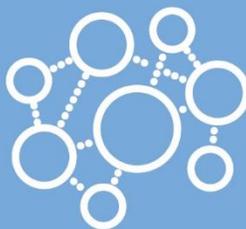
2018 CONTEST GUIDE



YOUTH Discussion Meet



ADVOCATE
for agriculture



NETWORK
across organizations



BUILD
your resumé

What is a Discussion Meet?

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

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

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 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.



Who Can Compete?

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. The top three individuals from each regional contest will move on to the state contest at the Michigan Farm Bureau Annual Meeting on **Tuesday, November 27**.

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

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?

Six regional competitions are scheduled from the end of September through mid-November. A list of competition dates is included on the Michigan FFA website's calendar and is 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. A list of coordinators is included below.

To register, complete this Google form: <https://goo.gl/forms/neM4krgL21vqPnBn1>.

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 Young Farmer Program Coordinator Justin Hein at jhein@michfb.com or 517-679-5658.



Region	Date	Registration Due	Time	Location	Host Contact Information	Counties in Region
I	Nov. 13	Nov. 6	5:00 pm	Calhoun Area Tech Center	Katie Sollman sollmank@calhounisd.org (269) 968-2271	Allegan, Barry, Berrien, Branch, Cass, Calhoun, Eaton, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph, and Van Buren
II	Oct. 15	Oct. 8	6:00 pm	Milan	Tom Stahl stahl@milanareaschools.org (734) 439-5081	Hillsdale, Jackson, Lenawee, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, Washtenaw, and Wayne
III	Nov. 13	Nov. 6	11:00 am	Delta College	Leslie Siefka (Delta College) siefka@msu.edu (989) 686-9350 Haley Schultz (Laker FFA) hschulz@lakerschools.org (989) 453-4600	Bay, Gratiot, Huron, Midland, Saginaw, Sanilac, and Tuscola
IV	Sept. 29	Sept. 21	9:00 am	Perry	Juliana Forbush forbushj@perry.k12.mi.us (517) 625-0030	Clinton, Genesee, Ingham, Lapeer, Livingston, Shiawassee, and St. Clair
V	Nov. 7	Oct. 31	6:00 pm	Ravenna	Melanie Block mblock@ravennaschools.org (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	Matt Jakubik jakubikm@wpas.net (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?

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, local farmers 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**.

Prizes will be awarded to the 18 state contestants and certificates will be awarded to the top six contestants. The winner and runner-up will earn a cash prize.

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. Check out state and national contest on YouTube.
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 or she outlines the procedures you will follow.
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 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 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.

Discussion Meet Procedures (for MFB staff and host advisors)

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 Young Farmer Department will take the lead on preparing for the event, gathering registrations and making copies. MFB regional representatives will secure judges and lead the program the day-of the contest. FFA advisors will handle the room setup and secure time keepers and moderators.

Here's a step-by-step planning guide:

Two Months Prior to Discussion Meet

- Young Farmer Department introduces each FFA region's host advisor to the MFB regional representative covering the territory where the contest will take place via email.
- Young Farmer 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 (of no more than 10 contestants) 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 with students competing cannot serve as judges. Judges could include:

1. District director
2. District's State Young Farmer 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. Michigan Farm Bureau staff



Three Weeks Prior to Discussion Meet

MFB Young Farmer Department sends an email to other advisors in the region as a reminder registration forms are due one week prior to the contest.

One Week Prior to Discussion Meet

- MFB Young Farmer Department combines the chapter registration forms to create a sign-in sheet.
- MFB Young Farmer 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
- Young Farmer 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)
- Young Farmer 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 Young Farmer 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.
- FFA 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.
 - FFA advisor provides a timekeeper for each room and prepares each timekeeper for his/her duties. (Timekeepers could include FFA advisors who do not have students competing.)
 - FFA advisor provides a moderator and chair for each room and prepares each moderator for his/her duties. (Moderators/Chairs could include FFA advisors 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.)
 - Five minutes before the contest, FFA 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 FFA 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 three regional competitors moving on to the state contest and up to three alternates.
 - MFB regional rep and FFA advisor complete the enclosed state discussion meet registration form and sends scanned or hard copies to:
 - Michigan FFA state executive secretary
 - MFB Young Farmer Department
 - MFB regional representative and FFA advisor send any feedback to improve the following year's contest to MFB Young Farmer Department.
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2018 Discussion Meet Topics

Below are the 2018 Discussion Meet Topics as well as some potential resources for research regarding the topic.

Regional Topic 1: It is predicted that over the next five years, 60,000 high-skilled agriculture related jobs will be open annually across the United States. However, only approximately 35,000 will be filled with graduates equipped with agriculture-related degrees or certificates. Discuss what obstacles are preventing students from pursuing these opportunities. What programs encourage young people to pursue a degree, certificate or career in agriculture?

- Ag Careers: <http://www.agcareers.com/>
- **USDA Employment Research:** <https://www.purdue.edu/usda/employment/>
- The Council for Agricultural Education: <https://www.ffa.org/thecouncil>

Regional Topic 2: Michigan's Great Lakes hold 20 percent of the world's freshwater supply. Discuss the current issues associated with these freshwater basins, and how it is affecting the nation's agriculture and natural resource industries. What current resources and initiatives are addressing these issues?

- Michigan Department of Natural Resources: <https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/>
- Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program: <http://www.maeap.org/>
- Great Lakes Basin Compact: <https://www.glc.org/>

State Topic: Progress in agriculture is often driven by organizations which contribute to the industry. In 2019, Michigan Farm Bureau is celebrating its 100th anniversary. Discuss the progress that has been made in agriculture via organizations such as Farm Bureau. How will Michigan Farm Bureau remain relevant into the next century and what role will FFA and 4-H play?

- Michigan Farm Bureau: <https://www.michfb.com/mi/>
- American Farm Bureau Federation: <https://www.fb.org/>
- Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development: <https://www.michigan.gov/mdard/>



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				
CONTESTANT NAMES											
COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE: (200 points) 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)											
DELIVERY: (100 points) Voice quality, loudness, clear enunciation, communicativeness, desirable sentence structure and interesting choice of words.											
PROBLEM SOLVING AND IMPLEMENTATION: (200 points) Ability and judgment in seeking answers and solutions, planning and organizational understanding, including Farm Bureau in implementing action programs.											
ANALYSIS OF TOPIC OR PROBLEM: (100 points) Does contestant attempt to identify problem causes and remain on topic? Knowledge, extent, and accuracy of facts.											
OPENING STATEMENT: (100 points) Definition of problem, importance, causes, effects, relevancy of problem.											
CLOSING STATEMENT: (100 points) 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. TOTAL											
Rank contestants: highest score = 1; second highest = 2, etc. RANK											

JUDGE'S SIGNATURE: _____