



COLLEGIATE

Discussion Meet

2024 COMPETITION GUIDE



ADVOCATE
for agriculture



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What is a Discussion Meet?

The Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) Collegiate Discussion Meet is a competition hosted by the MFB Young Farmer program held each fall in conjunction with MFB's High School and Young Farmer level discussion meets.

The Discussion Meet, at any level, is designed to replicate a committee meeting where participants explore an agricultural topic and ways to address it.

This competition is evaluated on an exchange of ideas and information on a pre-determined topic. Participants 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.

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 on 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.

Purpose of a Discussion Meet

The strength of Farm Bureau is largely in its ability to involve members in analyzing their 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 competition: 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. One page, front only of prepared notes is allowed.
- C. The closing statement is given at the end of the discussion. Competitors 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?

1. Competitor 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 2025**.
2. Competitor must be an undergraduate college student. Undergraduate status is determined at the time of the state competition.
3. Competitor shall not be enrolled in a graduate-level program at the time of the state Collegiate Discussion Meet competition.
4. Competitor must display a sincere interest in the agricultural industry.
5. Competitor 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 chapter may submit up to five competitors by **November 15th**.



Scoring

Competitors will be scored in six areas:

1. OPENING STATEMENT (10 points): Defines problem; conveys importance and relevance; sets the stage for an interesting discussion; clear point of view; uses time wisely.
2. ANALYSIS OR TOPIC OR PROBLEM (20 points): Has thoroughly researched topic; builds on the ideas of others to help achieve coherent analysis; asks relevant questions; helps ensure thorough analysis before problem solving; aware of relevant FB policy.
3. PROBLEM SOLVING AND IMPLEMENTATION (25 points): Leader in guiding the conversation to specific and relevant solutions; has achievable and specific plan of action; clearly defines how FB is part of the action plan.
4. COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE (15 points): Active listener; comments on specific ideas mentioned by others and ties them back to the bigger conversation; shows grace, courtesy and respect to others; shows integrity especially when they do not agree.
5. DELIVERY (15 points): Interesting to listen to; animated; appropriate volume and tone; poised; uses gestures and eye contact; confident and clear.
6. CLOSING STATEMENT (15 points): Shows that they have listened to the conversation; develops relevant and realistic plans; memorable; inspires confidence.

A sample score sheet is attached. Competitors should remember this is a discussion, not a debate.

Chapter Level Engagement

Each chapter is encouraged to offer a chapter level discussion meet or informational event. For those chapters who can verify they held an event, a \$100 cash prize will be sent to the chapter to utilize for reimbursement of event supplies, expenses incurred in preparation for the State Discussion Meet, or other chapter programming at the discretion of the Collegiate Chapter Advisor.

State Level Prizes

Third Place will receive a \$200 cash prize and plaque. The state runner-up will receive a \$300 cash prize and plaque. The state winner will receive \$500, a Collegiate Farm Bureau polo, plaque and an all-expenses paid trip for them and a guest to the 2025 American Farm Bureau FUSION Conference March 7-11th in Denver, Colorado to represent Michigan at the AFBF Collegiate Discussion Meet Competition. All prizes are courtesy of DTE Energy and the Michigan Foundation for Agriculture.

Suggestions for Competitors

1. Familiarize yourself with the Discussion Meet structure.
2. Study as much material as possible relating to the topics.
3. During the competition:
 - a. Listen carefully to the other competitors as they make their opening statements.
 - b. Keep within the time limit of your opening statement.
 - c. There should be a conflict of ideas, but not of personalities. **Remember, this is a discussion, not a debate.**
 - d. Be prepared to ask questions, state facts and opinions and urge others to be specific.
 - e. Be aware of the audience, but not to the exclusion of other competitors.
 - f. Participate whenever it will contribute to furthering the discussion without monopolizing the time. Be enthusiastic and, in general, use logic rather than emotion.
 - g. Make **notes of key points as the discussion proceeds;** you will use them to develop your closing statement.
 - h. Use your one minute of time to organize your closing statement.
 - i. Stand and make your closing statement to the audience. Use accepted speech techniques. Stay within the time limit.

All competitors will participate in Opening Round One and Opening Round Two. The top six combined scores from the opening rounds will move on to the Final Round. All questions are provided by the American Farm Bureau Federation Young Farmer and Rancher National Committee and are used in both the Young Farmer and Collegiate Discussion Meets at the state and national level.

Opening Round One: The landscape of American agriculture and the picture of the "typical" American farm continues to change. Meanwhile, Farm Bureau will need to continue to recruit and retain members in order to be a vibrant and effective organization into the future. How can Farm Bureau continue to provide value and opportunity to welcome members from across the broad diversity of modern agriculture and American farmers and ranchers?

Opening Round Two: Many young farmers wanting to return to the farm are finding they need to diversify their farm portfolio to remain profitable and have a role on the farm. What are ways young farmers can utilize diversification to find new revenue sources? How can Farm Bureau support young farmers as they explore options and opportunities?

Final Round: Farmers and ranchers are reliant on multiple energy sources to run equipment, heat livestock barns and power storage and maintenance facilities. How can Farm Bureau work with energy companies, local governments, and rural communities to increase U.S. energy production, minimize loss of agricultural land and protect private property rights?

Competitors are encouraged to review the following resources as they prepare:

- Michigan Farm Bureau: <https://new.michfb.com>
- American Farm Bureau Federation: www.fb.org
- Past Discussion Meet Competitions: <https://bit.ly/MFBDMVideos>
- Michigan Farm News: www.michiganfarmnews.com
- United State Department of Agriculture: <https://www.usda.gov/>
- Michigan Department of Agriculture: <https://www.michigan.gov/mdard/>
- Michigan State University Extension: <https://www.canr.msu.edu/outreach/>

TOPIC: Membership

Farm Portfolio

Energy Production

	COMPETITORS, LISTED LEFT TO RIGHT							
COMPETITOR'S NAME:								
(1) OPENING STATEMENT: (10 points) Defines problem; conveys importance and relevance; sets the stage for an interesting discussion; clear point of view; uses time wisely.								
(2) ANALYSIS OR TOPIC OR PROBLEM: (20 points) Has thoroughly researched topic; builds on the ideas of others to help achieve coherent analysis; asks relevant questions; helps ensure thorough analysis before problem solving; aware of relevant FB policy.								
(3) PROBLEM SOLVING AND IMPLEMENTATION: (25 points) Leader in guiding the conversation to specific and relevant solutions; has achievable plan of action; clearly defines how FB is part of the action plan.								
(4) COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE: (15 points) Active listener; comments on specific ideas mentioned by others and ties them back to the bigger Conversation; shows grace, courtesy and respect to others; shows integrity especially when they do not agree.								
(5) DELIVERY: (15 points) Interesting to listen to; animated; appropriate volume and tone; poised; uses gestures and eye contact; confident and clear.								
(6) CLOSING STATEMENT: (15 points) Shows that they have listened to the conversation; develops relevant and realistic plans; memorable; inspires confidence.								
<i>Total score for each competitor is to be tabulated by the judge. Any tie scores are to be broken by the judge.</i> Total of 100 points possible.	TOTAL							
<i>Rank competitors: highest score = 1; second highest = 2, etc.</i>	RANK							

JUDGE'S NAME (PLEASE PRINT): _____



(1) OPENING STATEMENT 10 PTS

Competitor...

- Clearly defines the problem.
- Conveys the importance and relevancy of the problem.
- Makes an “open” statement that leaves room for further conversation.
- Sets the stage for an interesting conversation with a very clear point of view.
- Uses their time very wisely and stays in the given time.

Award 7-10 points

Competitor...

- Defines the problem.
- Sets the problem in context.
- Makes a statement that leaves some room for further conversation but could be more open.
- Has a general point of view.
- Stays in the given time.

Award 4-6 points

Competitor...

- Does not address the problem – is off topic.
- Does not address the importance or relevancy of the problem.
- Makes a “closed” statement that does not allow room for further conversation.
- Does not seem to have a point of view.
- Does not finish in the allotted time.

Award 0-3 points

(2) ANALYSIS OF TOPIC OR PROBLEM: 20 PTS

Competitor...

- Identifies and addresses the causes of the problem and remains on topic.
- Has thoroughly researched the topic.
- Confidently builds on the ideas of others to contribute to a coherent analysis
- Asks relevant questions to vet the ideas of others.
- Shares relevant personal examples that add to the conversation.
- Helps ensure thorough analysis before moving to problem solving.
- Is aware of current and relevant FB policy.

Award 13-20 points

Competitor...

- Identifies the causes of the problem, does not directly address them, but remains on topic.
- Has done research.
- Addresses the ideas of others but does not build upon them – or only drops in information they learned without connecting it to previous ideas and moving the conversation forward.
- Asks some questions to help vet the ideas of others.
- Shares relevant personal examples – maybe slightly off topic.
- Demonstrates knowledge of this problem but not why it exists.
- Is aware of current FB policy.

Award 6-12 points

Competitor...

- Does not address the problem or does not remain on topic/wanders/distracts.
- Hasn't done much research or lacks quality facts.
- Doesn't build on other's ideas, only pushes their own.
- Doesn't ask questions to clarify other's ideas.
- Doesn't share relevant personal examples.
- Misinterprets the issue or does not display competency and therefore does not help with problem solving.
- Is unaware of FB policy.

Award 0-5 points

(3) PROBLEM SOLVING AND IMPLEMENTATION 25 PTS

Competitor...

- Is a leader in guiding the group and the conversation to specific and relevant solutions.
- Generates ideas that contribute to an achievable and specific plan of action to resolve the issue.
- Clearly defines how Farm Bureau is part of the action plan.

Award 17-25 points

Competitor...

- Tries to help lead the conversation to address a solution but misses opportunities to collaborate with the group.
- Has a plan but is missing specificity.
- Farm Bureau is mentioned but is not a crucial piece of the solution.

Award 7-16 points

Competitor...

- Instead of helping to guide the conversation to a solution, just data drops.
- Offers no plan for a solution or a generic plan like “tell our story” or “educate consumers.”
- Does not identify how Farm Bureau is involved.

Award 0-6 points



(4) COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE: 15 PTS		
<p>Competitor...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is an active listener and comments on references or specific ideas mentioned by others tying them back to the bigger conversation? • Clearly shows grace, courtesy and respect to other participants. • Shows integrity especially when they do not agree with others. <p>Award 10-15 points</p>	<p>Competitor...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competitor listens to others but does not comment specifically on their ideas or tie ideas back to the bigger conversation. • Is respectful of others. • Is not rude or defensive when they disagree with others. <p>Award 5-9 points</p>	<p>Competitor...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not listen to others – just waits for their turn to talk. • Cuts others off or simply repeats what others have already said. • Is rude, defensive or combative when they do not agree with others. <p>Award 0-4 points</p>
(5) DELIVERY: 15 PTS		
<p>Competitor...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is interesting to listen to, animated and lively, speaks at an appropriate volume and with a professional and courteous tone. • Is poised and uses gestures and eye contact that merit respect and professionalism. • Confidently conveys thoughts and viewpoints clearly. <p>Award 10-15 points</p>	<p>Competitor...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaks at an appropriate volume and pace with appropriate tone. • Uses effective posture, gestures and eye contact. • Conveys thoughts and viewpoints but could seem overly rehearsed. <p>Award 5-9 points</p>	<p>Competitor...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is boring/ mumbling/ monotoned. • Slouches, does not use appropriate gestures or have eye contact • Ideas are difficult to understand, or they are not confident in speaking. <p>Award 0-4 points</p>
(6) CLOSING STATEMENT: 15 PTS		
<p>Competitor...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows that they have actively listened to the conversation in their summary. • Uses take away points from the discussion to develop relevant, realistic and specific action items and plans for the future. • Closing statement is memorable and inspires confidence in their ability to work toward a solution. <p>Award 10-15 points</p>	<p>Competitor...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarizes the conversation that happened. • Uses take-away points from the discussion to help develop a plan. • Closing statement is memorable. <p>Award 5-9 points</p>	<p>Competitor...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not accurately summarize the conversation. • Uses memorized speech that doesn't reflect the content of the conversation. • Closing statement is forgettable. <p>Award 0-4 points</p>