Agricultural Issues Forum

Nebraska Career Development Event

Handbook and Rules for 2024-2028

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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the agricultural issues forum is for a team of students to present a current issue to a public audience by developing a written portfolio that includes research and an understanding of an issue relevant to the local community and then preparing an oral presentation that examines both sides of an issue. Professional ethics and standards are emphasized in this event.

2. OBJECTVIES

A. Investigate a variety of local, state, national, and international issues facing agriculture.

B. Select an issue of focus from the topic areas as listed in the Focus on National FFA Agricultural Issues Instructional Materials (*www.FFA.org/resources/ag-issues*):

   a. Environmental Issues

   b. Agricultural Technology Issues

   c. Animal Issues

   d. Agricultural Career Issues

   e. Economy and Trade Issues

   f. Agricultural Policy Issues

   g. Food Safety Issues

   h. Biotechnology

C. Research the issue of focus, relevant to their local community, and develop talking points for both the pro and con side of the issue. **Research on the topic must be current and students must be involved in all the research of the topic.

D. Prepare an oral presentation, detailing both sides of the issue (see scoring for detailed information about the presentation).

E. Produce a written portfolio that presents an understanding of agricultural issue analysis (see scoring for detailed information about the portfolio).

F. Connect with professionals in the industry as they research and present their forum.

G. Increase the awareness of the agricultural issue by presenting a minimum of five high quality forums within their community (see scoring for detailed information about the forum).

3. ELIGIBILITY

This event is open students in grades 9-12. Any school with a complete agricultural education program may send a team to the state CDE. Teams shall consist of 3-7 students. This is a national-qualifying event.

4. RECOMMENDED ATTIRE

Presentations may include official FFA dress, costumes, props, skits and other creative paraphernalia.

5. REQUIRED SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT

A. Tables, chairs, extension cords, and access to a smart cart (includes Windows computer with PowerPoint and internet access, projector and screen) will be provided.
B. All additional materials or equipment need to be supplied by the team.
   a. If a team is bringing their own laptop or other device, it is recommended that they provide their own projector in the case that the provided projector is incompatible with team's device.
   b. If internet is required on a team's device, follow the guest internet procedure found on the Nebraska CDE webpage at least 30 minutes in advance of the team's scheduled presentation time.

6. EVENT SCHEDULE

Portfolios must be submitted to the submission link provided down below or at the ALEC CDE Website under the the Ag Issues Forum. (No hard copies will be accepted.)
Submission Link for the Ag Issues Portfolio: https://go.unl.edu/rtsx

- Teachers must register their teams by the posted CDE registration deadline.
- Following registration, the order of team presentations will be posted. Email or call the CDE superintendent as soon as possible with changes or cancellations.
- Time Limits: Thirty (30) minutes will be allowed for set up. The presentation will be a maximum of 15 minutes in length. The presenters will receive a signal at 10 minutes and 14 minutes. At 15 minutes the timekeeper will announce that time is up, and the presentation will end. A maximum of seven (7) minutes for questions and answers will be allotted. Questions and answers will terminate at the end of seven (7) minutes. Thirty (30) minutes will be allowed for take down and the next team to set up.

7. ANNUAL THEME

There is no theme or annual topic for this CDE. Individual schools/teams may choose their own agricultural issue.

The same general agricultural issues topics may not be used in the following three years by the same school and/or teacher.

8. EVENT FORMAT

The Agricultural Issues CDE consists of three team components.

A. Portfolio Development (see scoring)
   a. Teams will develop a 10-page portfolio that summarizes the chosen issue and highlights to public forums.
   b. The portfolio shall be developed locally and emailed as a single PDF document to the Nebraska Agricultural Issues CDE Superintendent to the address and by the date identified on the Nebraska CDE website.
   c. **Note: The National CDE portfolio has more stringent requirements, possible national qualifying teams will need to give attention to the requirements prior to the National CDE.**
B. Local Forums (see scoring)
   a. Teams will present and document five high quality local forums.
   b. Forums must be completed before the state CDE to be considered for National FFA scoring.
C. Team Presentation (see scoring)
   a. Teams will develop a 15-minute presentation that presents the pros and cons of the issue.
   b. Teams will make deliver this presentation at the state event.
   c. Flight Procedures
      i. Presentation times will be assigned by random drawing. Each team will have 30 minutes to set-up/prepare. There will be two rooms available and the judges will move from room A to room B etc.
      ii. **Note: Flight assignments will be adjusted in the event that more than 12 teams register for the Ag Issues contest. The contest will follow the method implemented at the National Contest level; two rooms of**

presentations for preliminaries, followed by a final round. Teams will be placed into rooms based upon portfolio scores.

    iii. Video Recording

        1. Only teachers are allowed to video their <u>own team</u> during the state event.

        2. By participating in this event, videos of winning and runner up teams may be used for future training purposes. Video recording for this purpose may only be done with approval from the CDE Superintendent before the scheduled presentation time.

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9. SCORING

A. Portfolio Development

    a. The portfolio shall consist of ten single-sided pages or five double-sided pages maximum (three parts, 25 points total). It shall include:

        i. Cover Page (not included in the 10-page limit).

            1. The cover page will include the title "stated as a question" of the issue, the date of the state qualifying event, name, address and phone number of the chapter.

            2. A maximum of 10 points will be deducted for exceeding the maximum number of pages and/or not including cover page containing required information.

        ii. Summary of the issue, maximum of two pages, that answers the questions most relevant to the chosen issue (5 points).

            1. List course(s) in which instruction occurred including the number of students involved in the instruction of the issue. (See Objective E)

            2. Why is this issue important now?

            3. What is the nature of the issue?

            4. Who is involved in the issue?

            5. How can the issue be defined?

            6. What is the historical background of the issue?

            7. What caused the issue?

8. What are the risks?

9. What are the benefits?

10. Is there strong disagreement on the issue?

   iii. Bibliography (5 points).

     1. A bibliography of all resources and references cited which may include personal interviews and any other supporting material.

   iii. Documentation of local forums (15 points).

     1. The final pages of the portfolio will reserved for documentation of forums. See the forums section below for information related to documentation.

b. A maximum of ten (10) points will be deducted for exceeding the maximum amount of pages and/or for not including the cover page containing required information.

c. Proper grammar, correct spelling and proper editing of text are important. The most current edition of The American Psychological Association (APA) style guide should be used for all research citations. Adherence to these editorial guidelines is expected to receive maximum points for the portfolio score.

d. Prior to the event, the portfolios will be judged and scored by qualified individuals using the portfolio scorecard (see Appendix A, originally from National FFA Agricultural Issues Handbook). Portfolio scores will be averaged and supplied to the presentation judges after they have scored the presentation. Portfolio comment cards will be provided. Comments will be available after the event results have been announced.

e. **Portfolios must be submitted to the submission link provided down below or at the ALEC CDE Website under the the Ag Issues Forum.** (No hard copies will be accepted.) **Submission Link for the Ag Issues Portfolio:** https://go.unl.edu/rtsx A penalty of 10% (2.5 points) will be assessed for documents received after the email deadline. If document is not received seven days after postmark deadline, the team may be subject to disqualification.

f. Professional ethics and standards are to be considered. Ignoring truthful information, falsifying needed information, using unreliable sources and plagiarism are violation examples which could result in disqualification.

B. Local Forums

a. Local forums should be completed prior to submission of the portfolios if possible. However, if you must schedule a forum after portfolios are submitted, (but before

the event) be sure you either email the additional forum pages to the superintendent (see Nebraska CDE website for email address) ASAP, or bring FOUR copies of the forum summary page(s) with you the day of the event so that the judges can have access to those pages. There will be no point penalty in this case. It would also be advisable to send a note in each portfolio that one or more forums are scheduled and that you plan to submit that information by your event time so that the judges can plan for the later submission. Note that the forums conducted by the state-winning team after state event will <u>not</u> be eligible as part of the competition at the National FFA CDE.

b. Each forum must be documented independently, meaning that teams must separate the forum documentation and times even if they are held on the same day.

c. Multiple organizations attending the same forum will count as one forum. If more than one forum is held on the same day, the starting time of each forum must be independently documented. Portfolio judges may take into consideration the quality and quantity of presentations made to audiences outside of the school. No points will be awarded for school presentations to teachers and students. In addition, no points shall be awarded for forums presented as any part of a local or state FFA competition.

d. Provide documentation that local forum(s) occurred prior to state qualifying event such as:

    i. Letters from organizations

    ii. News articles

    iii. Photos showing attendance at forums

e. State when, where and to whom the forum(s) were presented and indicate how many community members were in attendance at each of the forum(s).

f. A chapter must have a minimum of five high quality public forums prior to their state qualifying event in order to receive the maximum of 15 points.

g. High quality forums include those presentations made to community groups that would have an interest in the issue. High quality forums can also be with smaller numbers of individuals who hold elected, appointed or some other official position that will be making decisions on the issue.

h. Examples of low quality forums would be dropping in at a local business and giving your presentation to the workers or going to the home of one of the parents to make a presentation. Low quality forums will receive zero or minimal points.

C. Team Presentation

    a. Refer to Appendix B (taken from National FFA Agricultural Issues Forum CDE Manual) for the rubric/scorecard.

        i. Introduction, Pro, Con and Summary of Pro and Con (20 points each, 80 points total)

        ii. Effectiveness of Presentation (20 points)

D. Ranking

1. Participation of each team member.

2. Creative in how main points are made. (It makes no difference, for the "creativity" score, if team is in costume or official ffa dress.)

3. Quality and power of the presentations.

4. Speaks at the right pace to be clear.

5. Pronunciation of words is clear and intent apparent.

6. No distracting mannerisms that affect effectiveness.

7. Gestures are purposeful and effective.

8. Well poised with good stage presence.

9. Use or overuse of any technology or prop that reduces the focus on the content provided by the team and team's presentation of the content can result in a lower presentation score.

iii. Questions (25 points)

1. Appropriate response and knowledge of the issue will be evaluated from team members' responses.

2. There will be a five point deduction from the scorecard of any team that draws a conclusion supporting a pro or con viewpoint during the formal presentation. During the question period, students may draw a conclusion supporting a pro or con viewpoint if asked to do so by a judge.

3. The judges may ask questions of all individuals of the presenting team. Each individual is encouraged to respond to at least one question from the judges.

iv. The presentations will be designed to be viewed by the judges. The audience at-large should not be of concern to the presenters.

    a. Judges' ranking will be used to place teams. Teams will be ranked in numerical order on the basis of the final score to be determined by each judge without consultation. The judges' ranking of each team then shall be added, and the winner

will be that team whose total ranking is the lowest. (Low rank method of selection where a rank of "1" is assigned to the highest place team, "2" to the second place team, etc.)

10. TIEBREAKER

Ties will be broken based on the greatest number of low ranks. Teams' low ranks will be counted, and the team with the greatest number of low ranks will be declared the winner. If a tie still exists, then the event superintendent will rank the teams' response to questions. The team with the greatest number of low ranks from the response to question will be declared the winner. If a tie still exists, then the team's raw scores will be totaled. The team with the greatest total of raw points will be declared the winner.

11. RESOURCE MATERIALS

It is recommended that students study from the following materials in preparation for the event:

- Focusing on Agricultural Issues Instructional Materials
  https://www.ffa.org/resources/ag-issues

- Agricultural Issues Finals Hall Videos

  https://www.ffa.org/ffa-video-center?m=agricultural+issues+forum

- Helpful Hints
  https://www.ffa.org/SiteCollectionDocuments/cde_agissues_resources.pdf

- Example of a past national qualifying portfolio (See Appendix C.)

- Past state champion video: http://go.unl.edu/agissuesvideo

12. PAST EXAMS

A. See Appendix 3 for an example of a portfolio.
B. Video of a past state champion team: http://go.unl.edu/agissuesvideo

13. POST-CDE DEBRIEFING OPPORTUNITY

All rubrics with judges' comments from the competition will be provided to the team with convention medals/ribbons. There is not a planned in-person review of the portfolio by the Superintendent. The nature of the CDE does not allow a walk through.

APPENDIX

Appendix 1. Portfolio Scorecard

Portfolio Scorecard
25 POINTS

The portfolio should include items described in the event format guidelines and is limited to 10 single-sided pages or five double-sided pages maximum.

The agricultural issues portfolio must be uploaded to the declaration/certification site by the designated deadline prior to the State FFA Convention at which the issue is to be presented.

Chapter _____ Team Number _____

	Very Strong evidence of skills is present 5-4 Points	Moderate evidence of skills is present 3-2 Points	Very Strong evidence of skills is not present 1-0 Point	x factor	Possible Points	Total Score
Summary of the issue (two pages maximum)				1	5	
Bibliography				1	5	
Documentation of local forums				3	15	
# of High-Quality				0	0	
# of Low-Quality Forums				0	0	
					Subtotal	
Deductions						
Late submission			-2.5 points			
For exceeding maximum number of pages, excluding cover page (-1 pt./page for each page exceeding 10 pages)						
Summary pages exceed 2 pages (-1 pt./page for each page exceeding 2 pages)						
Cover page not stating title in form of a question			-1 point			
Cover page — missing date of state qualifying event			-1 point			
Cover page — missing Name of chapter			-1 point			
Cover page — missing Address of chapter			-1 point			
Cover page — missing State of chapter			-1 point			
Cover page — missing Phone number of chapter			-1 point			
TOTAL POINTS EARNED OUT OF 25 POSSIBLE						

Judge's Name _____ Judge's Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix 2. Team Presentation Scorecard

Team Presentation Scorecard
150 POINTS

Chapter   Team Number

	Possible Points	25–21 points	20–15 points	14–10 points	9–5 points	4–0 points	Total Score
Introduction Statement of the issue Why issue is important	20						
Pro viewpoint Identification of positive points. Points addressed are relevant	20						
Con viewpoint Identification of negative points. Points addressed are relevant	20						
Summary of pro/con viewpoints	20						
Effectiveness of presentation Participation, creativity, quality and power, clear with right pace and word pronunciation, no distractions, appropriate gestures, poised	20						
Questions Appropriate responses Knowledge of issue	25						
Subtotal (125 points possible)							
Portfolio Score (25 points possible)							
Deduction for presenting a conclusion during the 15-minute presentation (-5 points)							
Use or overuse of any technology or prop that reduces the focus on the content provided by the team and team's presentation of the content can result in a lower presentation score.	**TOTAL POINTS EARNED OUT OF 150 POSSIBLE**						

Judge's Name   Judge's Signature