



10.002
2/26

Agricultural Issues Forum

Purpose

The agricultural issues forum aims to present a current issue to a public audience; therefore, professional ethics and standards are to be considered. Ignoring truthful information, falsifying needed information, using unreliable sources, and plagiarism are examples of violations that could result in disqualification.

Objectives

This event will provide the participant with the ability to:

- Investigate a variety of local, state, national and international issues facing agriculture through classroom instruction.
- Engage students in selecting, researching, planning, and presenting a local, state, national, or international agricultural issue relevant to the local community.
- Demonstrate through the portfolio, presentation, and questioning an understanding of the principles and fundamentals of agricultural issue analysis.
- Connect agriculture students with professionals in the industry as they research and present their forum.
- Increase awareness of local, state, and national agricultural issues through forum presentations.
- Apply teamwork, leadership and communication skills for career success.

Event Rules

The complete rules, policies and procedures relevant to all New Jersey FFA Career and Leadership Development Events may be found in the CDE & LDE Event Participation Policy:

https://nj.gov/agriculture/ag_ed/ffa/activity/CDE_LDE_Policy.pdf

- A student may not compete in more than one event scheduled during the same time frame at the New Jersey FFA State Convention Career/Leadership Development Events.
- All student participants in New Jersey FFA events (CDEs/LDEs, Leadership Conference, State Convention, etc.) are **required** to complete the **Release Form, Student Agreement, and Emergency Information** in AET.
- Teams will consist of a minimum of three (3) members and a maximum of seven (7) actively participating students, orally presenting and available to answer the judges' questions. Each student must actively participate in the presentation to be eligible for awards. This includes active participation in the presentation and making themselves available for questions from the judges in all rounds of competition. Only the certified team members can take an active role in the presentation of materials and technology during the presentation.
- The team score is comprised of the combined scores of the portfolio and the team activity in which all team members will participate.
- Official Dress is required for this event.
- Business cards are not permitted and will not contribute to the individual or team scores.
- Any communication between participants during the event will be sufficient cause to eliminate the team from the event.
- Any participant caught cheating during the event will be expelled from the event.
- Participants are NOT allowed to use (or have visible) electronic devices during the event, unless for medical reasons or a portion of the event requires usage. This includes cell phones, tablets,

etc. Participants will be allowed to use calculators, if specified for that event; however, cell phone calculators and graphing calculators are not permitted! **Failure to adhere to these rules will result in disqualification.**

- All individuals participating will judge in a cooperative manner following the rules set forth by the event coordinator.
- No school/chapter will use Rutgers University or Delaware Valley University or Mercer County Community College facilities or locations for the training of teams. Contact with University faculty and staff is permissible. **Penalty will be disqualification.**
- There will be no separate alternate teams.
- The State level competition fee of \$11 per contestant will be paid by the competing school. If a chapter is at least **blue** affiliated, registration to state FFA career development events is waived.
- Only the certified team members can take an active role in the presentation of materials and use of technology during the presentation.
- Presentations may include official FFA dress, costumes, props, skits and other creative paraphernalia. Costumes, props, skits and other paraphernalia must be professional in nature and used to showcase respect of all cultures. The event committee reserves the right to remove any team whose presentation, props, skits or other actions are disrespectful of others or shows lack of good judgement.
- Materials submitted by the team must reflect their skills and efforts. Any sources used must be cited appropriately.
- Once the team presentation begins, no non-team member can assist in the delivery. If a non-team member were to interject in assisting the team, the team would not advance to the next round.
- A minimum of three competent and unbiased judges will be provided. Teams should refrain from having contact with the judges throughout the competition, i.e., no samples may be left with the judges.
- Seeding of teams in the preliminary rounds will be determined based on portfolio scores.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY AND PROPS

Teams are encouraged to be creative in the approach used to develop their team presentations including the use of technology and other props. Teams are cautioned that the 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.

SHOWCASE RESPECT OF ALL CULTURES

The Agricultural Issues Forum LDE respects and promotes the practice of one's First Amendment rights; however, respect should always be demonstrated to cultures different from the speaker. In no manner should a team provide a forum that could be considered offensive to a culture different from themselves. Questions should be answered with facts rather than opinions or stereotypes. The definition of culture is broadly defined, therefore, it is recommended to consider all cultures as professionals. It is further recommended that teams present their forums to diverse audiences, including the dynamic of cultures represented in the presentation. By completing this task, written and verbal feedback should provide a quality measure on the cultural sensitivity of the forum. Judges will be instructed not to take sides on the issue(s). Judges will receive the portfolios to review prior to the event. The coordinator of this LDE will prepare the judges before the event.

Event Format

Each team will conduct a presentation on the issue developed and presented at the local level.

A front projection screen will be provided. Other equipment is allowed, but the presenting team must provide any other equipment they may need. Although each room is equipped with a computer, it is strongly encouraged that individuals bring their own laptop with HDMI connection or a Mac adaptor for projection. Additional audio/visual equipment may not be used.

In the event of equipment failure, the team will be required to move forward with the demonstration. A back-plan is recommended. Technology issues are not the responsibility of the New Jersey FFA Association.

The agricultural issue could come from one of the following eight agricultural issue topic areas as listed in the Focusing on Agricultural Issues Instructional Materials (www.FFA.org/resources/ag-issues)

- Environmental Issues
- Agricultural Technology Issues
- Animal Issues
- Agricultural Career Issues
- Economy and Trade Issues
- Agricultural Policy Issues
- Food Safety Issues
- Biotechnology Issues

Based on categories listed above, the same general agricultural issue topic will not be used by the same chapter and/or advisor in the following three years. Research on the topic must be current, and students must be involved in all the research of the topic and development of the portfolio.

Portfolio

The portfolio will be limited to 10 single-sided pages or five double-sided 8 ½ x 11-inch pages maximum, not including cover page. Margins are to be set at a minimum of 1 inch on top and bottom.

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

Agricultural Issues portfolios must be uploaded with State Convention Registration on April 10, or as outlined in the calendar of events. See Ag Education Bulletin Board for registration instructions.

COVER

Required information on the cover to avoid score deductions:

- The title of the issue stated as a question.
- Date of the state qualifying event.
- Name, address, chapter and phone number of the chapter.

SUMMARY

A maximum of two pages of the portfolio will include a summary of the issue.

- The summary pages should be written using a font no smaller than Times New Roman 10.
- The purposes of the summary are to provide an overview of the issue and to demonstrate understanding of the principles and fundamentals of agricultural issue analysis.
- The summary needs to include the course(s) in which instruction occurred, and the number of students involved in the instruction on agricultural issues.
- Summary must include in text citations where appropriate.
- Citations to conform to most current edition of the American Physiological Association (APA) publication manual.
- The summary may also include, but is not limited to, responses to the following questions:
 - Why is this issue important now?

- What is the nature of the issue?
- Who is involved in the issue?
- How can the issue be defined?
- What is the historical background of the issue?
- What caused the issue?
- What are the risks?
- What are the benefits?

For additional background on these questions, refer to resource “Focusing on Agricultural Issues Instructional Materials” and review the PowerPoint “Agricultural Issues Analysis” in the Teaching Materials section at : <http://www.ffa.org/resources/ag-issues>

DOCUMENTATION

In order for a forum to be awarded points, it must have occurred prior to the state qualifying event, and there must be independent verification of the forum presentation date. “Independent” means that verification needs to be provided by someone in the organization or the group to whom the presentation was made. The independent documentation needs to state when, where and to whom the forum was presented.

Documentation can include:

- Letters from organizations.
- News articles that also include the date of the presentation and/or the date the article is printed.
- Photos showing attendance at forums, but also need independent documentation of the date of the forum presentation is required.
- If more than one forum is held on the same day, the starting times of the multiple forums held on the same day also must be independently documented

FORUM PRESENTATIONS

A chapter must have a minimum of five high quality public forums presentations prior to their state qualifying event in order to receive the maximum of 15 points. The date of the state competition is the date of the qualifying event. Forum presentations given after the state convention registration deadline are encouraged, but will not count toward the portfolio score.

- Multiple organizations attending the same forum will count as one forum.
- Portfolio judges may consider the quality and quantity of presentations made to audiences outside of the school. No points will be awarded for presenting to other classes or teachers at the schools or neighboring schools. In addition, no points will be awarded for forums presented as any part of a local or state FFA competition.
- High quality forums are 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. Suggested procedures for setting up these presentations and examples of community groups have been provided in the Agricultural Issues Forum Presenter’s Guide.

For example, presenting a water quality issue to a water district board of 6 is still high-quality, and presenting your presentation to the governor of 1 is still high-quality as long as they play a role in the issue.

- Examples of low quality forums would be quickly visiting a local business and giving a presentation to the workers or going to the home of one of the parents to deliver the information, presenting the forum at the chapter’s FFA banquet, and presenting the forum to a class in the school. Low quality forums will receive zero or minimal points.

- A team may submit up to two virtual forums as part of their five community forums. Documentation will remain the same for the forums. If a team were to utilize virtual forums, they must adhere to the existing forum rules for documentation as well as the following: a) clearly identify a section in the portfolio for virtual forums conducted; and b) the virtual forum is mentioned in the independent verification, and c) virtual forums must include a live interactive audience where live participation is included.
- The team should seek to provide numerous angles for documenting a high-quality forum. Examples of high-quality forum documentation with a variety of angles would be the display of photos, letters, narratives, timestamps, and attendance numbers/sheets.

TIME LIMITS

- Five 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.
- Seven minutes for questions and answers will be allotted.
- Questions and answers will terminate at the end of allotted time.
- Three minutes will be allowed for take-down.
- The presentations will be designed to be viewed by the judges.
- The audience at-large will not be of concern to the presenters.
- 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.

Scoring

PORTFOLIO

TEN SINGLE-SIDED PAGES OR FIVE DOUBLE-SIDED PAGES MAXIMUM (THREE PARTS, 25 POINTS TOTAL)

1. Summary of the issue, two pages maximum (5 points).
2. Bibliography (5 points).
3. Documentation of local forums (15 points).
 - All forums, require independent verification of when, where and to whom forums were presented, and independent verification of presentation times if more than one forum is held on the same day.

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

Prior to the event, judges will score the portfolios using the portfolio scorecard. Portfolio scores will be added to the presentation score on the day of the event.

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.

TEAM PRESENTATION

INTRODUCTION, PRO, CON AND SUMMARY OF PRO AND CON (20 POINTS EACH, 80 POINTS TOTAL)

EFFECTIVENESS OF PRESENTATION (20 POINTS)

- Participation of each team member.
- Creative in how main points are made. (It makes no difference, for the “creativity” score, if team is in costume or official FFA dress.)
- Quality and power of the presentations.
- Speaks at the right pace to be clear.
- Pronunciation of words is clear and intent apparent.
- No distracting mannerisms that affect effectiveness.
- Gestures are purposeful and effective.
- Well poised with good stage presence.
- 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.

QUESTIONS (25 POINTS)

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

RANKING

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. (Use the low rank method of selection where a rank of “1” is assigned to the highest place team, “2” to the second place team, etc.)

TIEBREAKERS

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 coordinator will rank the team's response to questions. The team with the greatest number of low ranks from the response to questions 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.

Awards

Awards will be presented to teams based upon their rankings at the 3rd general session of the New Jersey State FFA Convention. Awards are sponsored by the National FFA Foundation and New Jersey Farm Bureau.

Team

- 1st – \$300.00, pins & plaque sponsored by the National FFA Foundation and the NJ Farm Bureau
- 2nd – \$225.00, pins & plaque sponsored by the NJ Farm Bureau
- 3rd – \$150.00, pins & plaque sponsored by the NJ Farm Bureau

The 1st place team will represent New Jersey at the Big E in September and the National FFA Convention in October.

References

This list of references is not intended to be all inclusive.

Other sources may be utilized, and teachers are encouraged to make use of the very best instructional materials available. The following list contains references that may prove helpful during event preparation.

- Past CDE Material – Past top portfolios and videos
- Updated Focusing on Agricultural Issues Instructional Materials,
<https://web.ics.purdue.edu/~peters/HTML/ag-issues-forum/ag-issues-forum.html>
- “Helpful hints to give your students the best opportunity to do well in the Agricultural Issues Forum Career Development Event at the State and National FFA Conventions” can be found on the Agricultural Issues Instructional Materials website listed above and the National FFA website ([FFA.org/documents/cde_agissues_resources.pdf](https://www.ffa.org/documents/cde_agissues_resources.pdf))
- Agilities.org helps people discover their strengths and interests, build confidence, explore career options, and plan their future. Provided for free by The DeBruce Foundation, Agilities.org features interactive tools for career exploration and development:
 - Agile Work Profiler©: A 15-minute assessment to identify work strengths and interests.
 - Career Explorer Tools©: Interactive tools to explore the income, preparation, work activities and demand for each career.
 - K-12 Career Literacy Resources: 90+ lessons, ready to embed in classrooms.
 - Agile Work Profiler© <https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/6706869/FFA>

Request for Reasonable Accommodations

The New Jersey FFA Association is committed to providing equal access to our events and activities for all people. Use this form to request a reasonable accommodation or assistance at least 3 weeks before any state-level events: <https://form.jotform.com/NJFFA/accommodations-request>. A new form will need to be submitted for each event in which a reasonable accommodation is being requested. This information will be kept confidential and will be used only to process the request. Our staff will review the request upon receipt and contact the requestor with additional information. The association cannot guarantee accommodations or assistance if a form is received less than 3 weeks before an event. Accommodations being requested that require the assistance of another person (nurse, interpreter, scribe, reader, etc.) is the responsibility of the school/requestor. It is also the school/requestor's responsibility to provide any approved equipment to aide in the accommodation process, if applicable.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy and Guidelines

The standard operative procedures allow FFA members to use AI tools to assist them in their learning. Appropriate uses of AI may include generating ideas for any FFA-related assignment, project, contest and award application; checking facts of a phenomenon; or checking for and correcting grammatical errors in a paper written by a member. Specific guidelines for appropriate use, including examples, is provided in the policy. To ensure clarity, a statement outlining ethical AI utilization will be added to program handbooks. Non-compliance with this policy represents plagiarism and will automatically disqualify a member.

Please visit the State Activity Guide, [Artificial Intelligence \(AI\) Policy 1.007](#) to view the full guidelines and best practices.

Professional Integrity

FFA members participating in New Jersey FFA programs and events understand and agree that all work must result from their own effort and ability, created, and completed alone (except for partner or chapter applications). When outside sources (direct quotes or phrases, specific dates, figures, or other materials) are used for a project, document, or application, the required reference citation must be completed according to the rules specified by the applicable handbook.

While participating in National FFA programs, FFA members are prohibited from:

- Plagiarizing
- Violating copyright
- Cheating
- Falsifying information
- Using another person's results or thoughts as their own, even with this person's permission. This includes work done by a family member or a mentor.
- Using information or data obtained from the internet without proper citation.

Any attempt to gain an unfair advantage will not be tolerated. Non-compliance represents plagiarism and will automatically disqualify a member.

Portfolio Scorecard

25 POINTS

CHAPTER

The portfolio should include items described in the event format guidelines and is limited to a 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 before State Convention at which the issue will be presented.

	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				0	0	
Subtotal						
Deductions						
Late Submission to New Jersey FFA Association			-2.5 points		()	
For exceeding maximum number of pages, excluding the cover page (-1 pt./page for each page exceeding 10 pages)					()	
Summary pages exceed 2 pages (-1 pts./page for each page exceeding 2 pages)					()	
Cover page not stating the 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						

JUDGE'S NAME

JUDGE'S SIGNATURE

DATE

Team Presentation Scorecard

150 POINTS

CHAPTER

	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							
Portfolio Score							
Deduction for presenting a conclusion during the 15-minute presentation (-5 points)							()
Total 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.

JUDGE'S NAME

JUDGE'S SIGNATURE

DATE