Agricultural Issues Forum

Revised 6/2015

Introduction

**Purpose**

The purpose of the agricultural issues forum is 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 violation examples which could result in disqualification.

**Objectives**

* To provide an opportunity to expose a wide variety of students to the selection, research, planning and presentation of an agricultural issue.
* To acquire knowledge and skills in community leadership for present and future use.
* To become knowledgeable of, and familiar with a variety of local, state, national and international issues facing agriculture.
* To understand the principles and fundamentals of agricultural issue analysis.
* To further the awareness of agricultural issues in the local community.
* To promote integration of agricultural issue analysis in local school academic subject matter areas.
* To promote career choices by providing an opportunity for individuals to become acquainted with professionals in the industry.
* To foster teamwork, leadership and communication skills.

Contestants

The contest it is intended as a competitive activity involving a team of three-seven members, but any number of students may assist with the primary and secondary research.

Classes

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Class** | **Team Points** |
| Presentation | 100 |
| Questions | 50 |
| Portfolio | 50 |
| TOTAL | 200 |

Tiebreakers

Ties will be broken based on the greatest number of low ranks. Team’s 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 contest advisor will rank the team’s 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 participant with the greatest total of raw points will be declared the winner.

Sub-contest Awards

Sub-contest awards will be given for high teams in the following areas: Presentation, Questions, and Portfolio.

Requirements of the Host Institution

See Event Format, Equipment Provided.

Event Rules

1. The issue is determined by the chapter and can be a local, state, national and international issues facing agriculture.
2. Each student must take an active role in the presentation to be eligible for awards. This includes active participation in the presentation and making themselves available for questions from the judges.
3. Presentations may include official FFA dress, costumes, props, skits and other creative paraphernalia.
4. A minimum of three competent and unbiased judges will be provided. They will be instructed not to take sides on the issue(s). Professors and industry representatives are recommended. The judges will be adequately prepared before the event competition.

Event Format

1. Equipment Provided - The following equipment will be provided at the event site:
   1. Two tripod easel (24"x 36")
   2. One overhead projector and screen
   3. One podium
   4. Table and three chairs
2. Any other items needed in order to conduct the presentation must be brought by the competing team. Five (5) minutes will be allowed for set up and three (3) minutes will be allowed for take down.
3. Each team will conduct a presentation on the issue developed and presented at the local level.
4. The issue will come from one of the following eight agricultural issue topic areas as listed in the Focusing on Agricultural Issues instructional materials:
   1. Environmental Issues
   2. Agricultural Technology Issues
   3. Animal Issues
   4. Agricultural Career Issues
   5. Economy and Trade Issues
   6. Agricultural Policy Issues
   7. Food Safety Issues
   8. Biotechnology
5. The same agricultural issue presentation and portfolio will not be used in subsequent years by the same chapter and/or advisor.
6. Research on the topic must be current and students must be involved in all the research of the topic and development of the portfolio.
7. The portfolio should include items described in a, b and c below, and will be limited to ten pages single sided or five pages double sided maximum not including cover page. The cover page will include the title of the issue, the chapter name, address and phone number of the chapter. 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. Three copies of the portfolio must be received by the contest site on the Friday, one week prior to the State Finals. A penalty of 50% (25 points) will be assessed for documents received after the postmark deadline. Zero (0) points will be given for portfolios that arrive less than one day before the event.
   1. A maximum of two pages of the portfolio will include a summary of the issue, answering the questions that are most relevant to your topic:
      1. List course(s) in which instruction occurred including the number of students involved in the instruction of the issue. (See Objectives)
      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 how the issue should be solved?
   2. A bibliography of all resources and references cited which may include personal interviews and any other supporting material.
   3. Provide documentation that local forum(s) occurred prior to the State Finals such as:
      1. Letters from organizations
      2. News articles
      3. Photos showing attendance at forums (3 x 5 or 4 x 6)
      4. Scrapbook
   4. Please 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). This must include the name, signature and contact phone number of the name of the President/Chairperson and/or his/her designee of where the forum was presented.
   5. A chapter must have a minimum of five high quality public forums prior to competing at the State Finals in to receive the maximum of 30 points.
      1. 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.
      2. 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.
   6. **High quality forums** are those presentations made to community groups that would have an interest in 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*. 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.
   7. **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.
8. 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. 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. Three (3) minutes will be allowed for take down.
9. If there is an equipment failure during the presentation, the team will be allowed five minutes to set up again.
10. The presentations will be designed to be viewed by the judges. The audience at-large will not be of concern to the presenters.
11. 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

1. Team Presentation:
   1. (1) Introduction, (2) Pro, (3) Con and (4) Summary of Pro and Con (20 points each, 80 points total) There will be a 5-point deduction from the scorecard of any team that draws a conclusion supporting a pro or con viewpoint during the formal presentation.
   2. Overall Presentation (participation of each member of the team, quality and power of the presentations, creativity, stage presence and memorization) ( 20 points)
   3. Questions (50 points)
2. Portfolio: 10 single sided pages maximum or 5 double sided pages. (Three parts, 50 points total)
   1. Summary of the Issue, 2 pages maximum (10 points).
   2. Bibliography (10 points).
   3. Documentation of local forums (30 points).
      1. Please state when, (date and time) where, and to whom the local forums were presented to. If you indicate that more than one forum was held on the same date, independent documentation of the time of day the forums were held must be provided. This must include the name, signature and contact phone number of the name of the President/Chairperson and/or his/her designee of where the forum was presented.
      2. Maximum of 10 points will be deducted for exceeding the maximum number of pages and/or not including cover page containing required information.
   4. Prior to the event, the portfolios will be judged and scored by qualified individuals using the portfolio scorecard. Portfolio scores will be averaged and supplied to the presentation judges after they have scored the presentation. Portfolio comment cards will be completed by portfolio judges and presented to the teams in their results packet. Presentation judges will be furnished with copies of the team portfolio, which they will use to formulate questions.
3. Judges’ ranking will be used to place teams.
4. Teams shall 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 participant then shall be added, and the winner will be that participant whose total ranking is the lowest. Other placings will be determined in the same manner (low rank method of selection).

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REFERENCES

This list of references is not intended to be 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.

Updated Focusing on Agricultural Issues

Instructional Materials located at:

http://web.ics.purdue.edu/~peters/

Global Vision Instructional Materials,

Agricultural Education Resources Catalog,

National FFA Organization

Agricultural Issues: Food Safety Video,

Agricultural Education Resources Catalog,

National FFA Organization

Agricultural Issues: Ground Water Safety Video,

Agricultural Education Resources Catalog,

National FFA Organization

Score Cards

**PORTFOLIO**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Portfolio (50 points)** |  | Above  Average | | Average | | Below  Average | |
|  | Points Possible | 10-8 | | 7-5 | | 4-1 | |
| **Summary of the Issue** | **10 points** |  | |  | |  | |
|  | Points Possible | 10-8 | | 7-5 | | 4-1 | |
| **Bibliography** (should represent a minimum of 5 sources) | **10 points** |  | |  | |  | |
|  | Points  Possible | 30-26 | 25-21 | 20-16 | 15-11 | 10-6 | 5-1 |
| **Documentation from Local Forum**  (6 points/high quality forum) | **30 points** |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Team Sub Total \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| * Deduction for exceeding the maximum number of pages and incomplete cover page (10 pts. Max). | Deduction | ( ) |
| * Deduction for portfolios received after postmark deadline (25 pts.). | Deduction | ( ) |

Total Score \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Judge’s Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**TEAM PRESENTATION**

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| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  |  | Superior | Above Average | Average | Below Average | Inferior | |  | Points  Possible | 20-17 | 16-13 | 12-9 | 8-5 | 4-0 | | 1. Introduction - Statement of the issue and its importance | 20 |  |  |  |  |  | | 1. Pro View Point | 20 |  |  |  |  |  | | 1. Con View Point | 20 |  |  |  |  |  | | 1. Summary of Pro & Con | 20 |  |  |  |  |  | | 1. Overall Presentation | 20 |  |  |  |  |  | |  | Possible Points | 50-41 | 40-31 | 30-21 | 20-11 | 10-1 | | 1. Questions | 50 |  |  |  |  |  | | 1. Portfolio | 50 |  |  |  |  |  | | Total | 200 |  |  |  |  |  | |

Judge’s Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_