

# 2024

## Collegiate Farm Bureau Discussion Meet Manual



**ADVOCATE**  
for agriculture



**NETWORK**  
with Farm Bureau



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your resume

## **What is a Discussion Meet?**

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The Wisconsin Farm Bureau Collegiate Discussion Meet is a competition sponsored by the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Foundation and held in conjunction with the WFB Young Farmer and Agriculturist contests.

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 predetermined 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 give background on 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 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. The WFBF Collegiate Discussion Meet contest is for undergraduate UW-Madison, UW-Platteville and UW-River Falls Collegiate Farm Bureau club members.
2. Competitors shall be an enrolled undergraduate student at UW-Madison, UW-Platteville or UW-River Falls and a member of the UW-Madison, UW-Platteville or UW-River Falls Collegiate Farm Bureau club and be between the ages of 18-35. They shall not have reached their 36<sup>th</sup> birthday by February 28 of the year in which they will compete at the AFBF YF&R Leadership Conference.
3. Individuals who have been a WFBF Discussion Meet state winner or Collegiate Discussion Meet state winner are ineligible.
4. Competitors must display a sincere interest in the agricultural industry.
5. 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 attendant to the appearance.
6. County, state and American Farm Bureau employees are not eligible; this also includes affiliated companies. Competitors shall not be enrolled in a graduate level program at the time of their state Collegiate Discussion Meet competitive event.

## **Suggestions for competitors**

- Study as much material as possible relating to the overall topic. Sources: internet, library, newspapers, magazines, Farm Bureau policies, county, state and American Farm Bureau publications and conversations with experts or knowledgeable people.
- **Remember this is a discussion, not a debate.**
- Be prepared to ask questions, state facts and opinions, and urge others to be specific.
- Be aware of the audience, but generally address the panel. Speak loud enough to be heard by the whole audience.
- Participate whenever your contribution will further the discussion. Do not monopolize the discussion.
- Make notes of key points as the discussion proceeds for use in summary statement.
- Use the one minute of quiet time to organize your closing statement.
- Stand and make your closing statement to the audience. Use accepted speech techniques. Stay within the time limit.

## **Scoring**

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Competitors will be scored in six areas:

1. **Opening Statement** (10 points): Defines the problem, conveys importance and relevance, sets the stage for an interesting discussion, clear point of view, uses time wisely.
2. **Analysis of 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 Farm Bureau 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 Farm Bureau is a 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 scoresheet and scoring rubric is included in this manual.

## **Prizes**

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This program gives Collegiate Farm Bureau members the opportunity to take part in an educational discussion experience.

### **Scholarships**

The winner of the WFBF Collegiate Discussion Meet will receive a \$1,500 scholarship from GROWMARK, Inc.

### **AFBF YF&R Conference in Omaha, NE**

The winner will be awarded transportation, lodging and registration costs toward competing in the AFBF Young Farmers & Ranchers Collegiate Discussion Meet contest in Denver, March 7-10, 2025.

### **WFBF YFA Washington, D.C. Fly-In**

The Collegiate Discussion Meet winner qualifies to take part in the WFBF YFA Washington, D.C. Fly-In. The trip includes round trip airfare, lodging, sightseeing tours and some meals. Participants will have the opportunity to see our nation's capital, learn about legislative issues, advocate for agriculture on Capitol Hill, and enhance their leadership skills while networking with peers.

## 2024 Topics

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Collegiate chapters will use question #4 for local and state contests.

1. Young farmers and ranchers are finding they need to diversify their farm portfolio. What are some ways that young farmers and ranchers can utilize diversification to explore new revenue sources? How can Farm Bureau support YF&R members as they strengthen their farm and ranch businesses?
2. Increases in the price of agricultural land make access and ownership of land one of the biggest hurdles for young farmers and ranchers looking to start or expand farms and ranches. How can young farmers and ranchers position themselves to react to competition for agricultural land?
3. 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?
4. **Succession planning is often a tough subject not only for individual farms and ranches but also within county Farm Bureaus. Some younger members may find it challenging to become involved in their county Farm Bureau beyond the YF&R committee. What are some ways that county Farm Bureaus can encourage involvement from young members and how can actively engaged young board members help their county Farm Bureaus plan for the future?**
5. 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 domestic energy production, minimize loss of agricultural land and protect private property rights?

**2024 Collegiate Discussion Meet  
Semi-Final Winner  
Application and Information Sheet**

Contestant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Phonetic Pronunciation: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Collegiate Farm Bureau: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you or your parents Farm Bureau members? If so, in what county and in what name is your membership?

County Farm Bureau: \_\_\_\_\_ Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:**

Please write a 5-7 line biographical sketch written in third person (education, ag-related career, size of operation, list major crops, type and number of livestock, off-farm activities, own or rent farm, etc.)

**PHOTOS:**

WFBF reserves the right to use your photos and/or any video footage for use in promoting Farm Bureau. The photos and/or video footage of undersigned competitor may also be available to sponsors of WFBF events.

Competitor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

If you have questions or need more information, please contact Melissa Jacobson at 608.574.9884 or [mjacobson@wfbf.com](mailto:mjacobson@wfbf.com).

Please return completed application form to Melissa Jacobson by **OCTOBER 31, 2024**.