



**Updated 11/2021*

Ag Issues Forum

The event will follow the structure of the National Ag Issues Forum LDE.

Event Rules

- A team should be composed of a minimum of three and a maximum of seven students who are actively participating, orally presenting and available to answer the judges' questions. To be eligible for awards, each student must take an active role in the presentation. This includes active participation in the presentation and making themselves available for questions from the judges in all rounds of the competition. 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.

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 over use 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 leadership development event 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. Answers to 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.

- The date on which the state appoints the team to be the representative to the National FFA Agricultural Issues Forum will be considered as the state qualifying date. This will be substantiated by the state FFA association.
- A minimum of three competent and unbiased judges will be provided. They will be instructed not to take sides on the issues. Professors and industry representatives are recommended. The superintendent of this LDE will adequately 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 projector screen will be provided. Other equipment is allowed, but the presenting team must provide any other equipment they may need.
- 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 (<http://web.ics.purdue.edu/~peters/HTML/issue-analysis/teaching-materials.html>)
 - Agricultural Career Issues
 - Agricultural Policy Issues
 - Agricultural Technology Issues
 - Animal Issues
 - Biotechnology Issues
 - Economy and Trade Issues
 - Environmental Issues
 - Food Safety Issues
- The same agricultural issue topic, based on categories listed above, will not be used in the following three years by the same chapter and/or advisor.
- 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 pages double-sided 8 ½ x 11-inch pages maximum, not including cover page. Margins are to be set at a minimum of 1 inch top and bottom.
- A maximum of 10 points will be deducted for exceeding the maximum amount of pages and/or for not including the cover page containing required information. Uploads may be done any time from initial entry to the designated deadline published on the State FFA Calendar of Events. Late submissions will automatically be penalized with a 10% deduction and after 7 days may be subject to disqualification. Event coordinator and local advisor will receive a confirmation email that an upload with a listing of it has been completed/deleted upon each occurrence.

COVER

Required information on the cover to avoid score deductions:

- Title of the issue stated as a question.
- Date of the state qualifying event.
- Name, address, state 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.
- The summary must include in-text citations where appropriate.
- Citations must conform to the most current edition of the American Psychological Association (APA) publication manual. The summary may also include, but is not limited to, responses to the following questions:
 1. Why is this issue important now?
 2. What is the nature of the issue?
 3. Who is involved in the issue?
 4. How can the issue be defined?
 5. What is the historical background of the issue?
 6. What caused the issue?
 7. What are the risks?
 8. What are the benefits?

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

- A bibliography of all resources and references cited which may include personal interviews, when appropriate, and any other supporting material. Bibliography must conform to the most current edition of the American Psychological Association (APA) publication manual.

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 the following:

- 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.
- 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 prior to the 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 qualifying event are encouraged but will not count toward the portfolio score.

- Multiple organizations attending the same forum will count as one forum.
- 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 at the schools or neighboring schools. In addition, no points shall 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. 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.
- Examples of low-quality forums would be dropping in at a local business and giving a 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.
- A team can submit up to two virtual forums as part of their five community forums. If a team were to utilize two 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; 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.

TIME LIMITS

- Five minutes will be allowed for setup.
- 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 in both the preliminary and semifinal rounds (if held).
- Eight minutes for questions and answers will be allotted in the final round. Questions and answers will terminate at the end of the 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 the forums were presented and independent documentation of the time of day the forums were held must be provided.

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

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 provided. Comments will be available after the event results have been announced.

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 state 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.
- Presentation comment cards will be completed by presentation judges and presented to teams following the announcement of the results.

RANKING

Judges’ ranking will be used to place teams. Teams will be ranked in numerical order based on 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 the team whose total ranking is the lowest. (Use the low-rank method of selection where 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 superintendent 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 team with the greatest total of raw points will be declared the winner.

Awards

Awards will be presented on stage during a session of State FFA Convention based upon their rankings.

- The first through fourth place teams will each be awarded a plaque.
- Members of the first-place team will each receive a medal.

Awards are sponsored by cooperating industry sponsors as a special project and/or by the general fund of the Kansas FFA Foundation.

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.

- Past CDE Material – Past top portfolios and videos

- Updated [Focusing on Agricultural Issues Instructional Materials](#)
- “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))