

# **American Farm Bureau Federation Young Farmers & Ranchers Discussion Meet Manual**



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## **Competition Objectives**

As a leadership training and self-improvement activity, the Discussion Meet experience will:

- Develop leaders for effective problem solving through group discussion.

## **Background Information**

The Discussion Meet is a competition promoted by the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) Young Farmers & Ranchers (YF&R) Committee.

Farm Bureau's strength depends on its members' ability to analyze agricultural issues and decide on solutions that best meet their needs. The competition is designed to simulate a committee meeting where discussion and active participation are expected from each committee member.

Applicants 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.

A successful applicant is a productive thinker rather than an emotional persuader. He/she will assist the group in creating ways to implement the solutions discussed and highlight Farm Bureau's involvement in those actions/steps.

The applicants will discuss pre-selected topics using four bases for the general discussion:

- Cooperation
- Constructive Criticism
- Problem Solving
- Communication

It is recommended that state Farm Bureaus provide, as part of the state recognition award, an expenses-paid trip to the AFBF Annual Convention held in 2020 in Austin, Texas. Appropriate recognition will be given to all the national competitors in attendance at the AFBF Annual Convention.

The AFBF YF&R Committee and the AFBF Leadership, Education and Engagement Department will coordinate the program at the national level.

## Eligibility

- Applicant shall be a Farm Bureau member between the ages of 18 and 35 in good standing with his/her county Farm Bureau. The individual shall have reached his/her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday at the time he/she qualifies for the national competition and shall not have reached his/her 36<sup>th</sup> birthday by Jan. 31, 2020.
- Applicant must be actively engaged in agriculture.
- Applicant may only compete in one national YF&R competition per year.
- Past and present members of the AFBF Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee and/or their spouse are not eligible to compete.
- Previous AFBF Discussion Meet competitors are not eligible to compete. Past state YF&R Discussion Meet winners are eligible if they have not previously competed at the national level.
- Current employees or agents of county, state and/or the American Farm Bureau organizations and their affiliates are not eligible to compete. An affiliate is defined as an entity owned or controlled in whole or in part by another entity through, for example, ownership (including partial ownership) or positions on the board of directors.
- 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.
- Each state may submit one entry to be considered for national recognition and must use the AFBF entry form and application.

## **Helpful Hints 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 loudly enough to be heard by the whole audience.
- Participate whenever your contribution will further the discussion. Do not monopolize the discussion.
- The discussion should not be “conversation” or aimless talk, nor should you take the role of a persuasive speaker. Try to cooperatively shed light on the problem and tentatively retain a flexible position.
- This is not a panel symposium wherein 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 person at any time. The moderator plays an inactive role during the discussion.
- Make notes of key points as the discussion proceeds for use in your 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 and stay within the time limit.

## Competition Format

1. All competition facilitators and competitors will meet in the pre-assigned competition room 15 minutes prior to the start of the competition to receive last-minute comments by the room chair. At this time competitors will also draw for order for placement of their name tent/chair. Competitors not present at the time of the drawing will select from the remaining positions. The competition facilitators are AFBF-designated room chairs and moderators.
2. Competitors may not take prepared notes in any form with them to the competition table. After all competitors have been introduced, notes may be written on the paper provided. If a note is brought to the table and is noticed by the competition facilitator, there will be a disqualification called at the end of the round by the Discussion Meet chair, the AFBF YF&R Committee chair and/or the AFBF coordinator.
3. Discussion Meet questions will not be provided at the competition table during national level rounds of competition.
4. The room chair will call the meeting to order, announce the topic to be discussed and introduce the timekeeper and moderator. Any competitor not present at this time will be disqualified.
5. The moderator will introduce the competitors and re-announce the topic to be discussed. He/she will give each of the competitors, in voluntary order, the opportunity to make a 30-second opening statement directed to the audience.
6. The timekeeper will flash a red time card indicating when 30 seconds have elapsed and announce "time". Judges may subtract points at their discretion for competitors who abuse the time limit.
7. The moderator will then indicate the opportunity for open discussion, which will continue for a total of 25 minutes during the opening rounds and Sweet Sixteen round and 30 minutes during the Final Four round. The discussion should be directed to the fellow competitors.
8. The timekeeper will indicate to the moderator when five minutes of open discussion time remains. If the discussion is lagging, the moderator may close the discussion at this time.
9. The timekeeper will indicate to the moderator when 25 minutes in the opening rounds and Sweet Sixteen rounds and 30 minutes in the Final Four round have elapsed with a red time card. The moderator will call for open discussion to stop for one minute of quiet time, allowing the competitors to compose a closing statement.
10. The moderator will give each of the competitors, in voluntary order, the opportunity to make a one-minute closing statement directed to the audience. The time keeper will flash a red time card and announce "time" when the one-minute have elapsed.
11. The moderator will recognize the judges and request them to leave the room with the room chair to finalize the tabulation of their score sheets. Judges are not to confer with each other until the room chair has collected their tabulated score sheets.
12. The next round topic to be discussed will be announced (with the exception of the Final Four question). The Final Four question will be announced at the official Final Four Announcement.
13. The moderator will thank the panel and ask the audience to recognize their efforts. He/she will then ask the competitors to share their personal agricultural background with the audience.

## Competition Structure

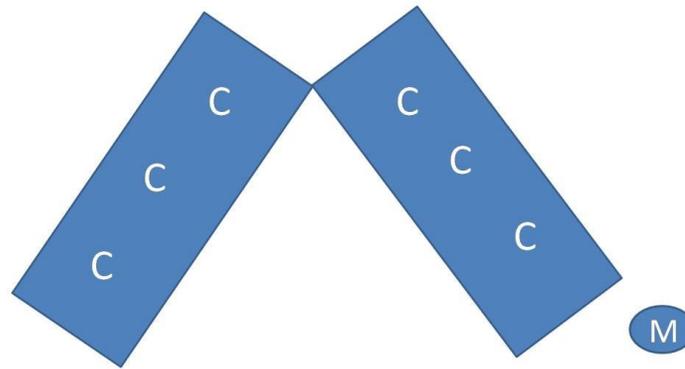
### Orientations

- Discussion Meet Competitor Orientation
  - a) Orientation will be held prior to the opening round of competition.
  - b) All participants are required to attend; roll call will be taken.
  - c) The opening round topic will be announced.
    - The first round topic will be announced now, and again in the competition room.
    - Each subsequent round topic will be announced at the close of the prior round, with the exception of the final question. The Final Four question will be announced at the official Final Four Announcement.
  - d) Opening round room assignments and locations will be distributed.
  
- Judge Orientation
  - a) Orientation will be held prior to the opening round of competition.
  - b) All judges are required to attend; roll call will be taken.
  - c) Judges' duties will be reviewed (see **Judge Duties**) and any announcements will be made.
  - d) Competition timing sequences will be reviewed.
  - e) There will be time for judges to ask questions.
  - f) Opening round room assignments and locations will be distributed.
  
- Timekeeper Orientation
  - a) Orientation will be held prior to the opening round of competition.
  - b) All timekeepers are required to attend; roll call will be taken.
  - c) Opening round room assignments and locations will be distributed.
  - d) Timekeeper duties will be reviewed (see **Timekeeper Duties**) and any announcements will be made.

### Competition

- All participants will compete in the first two rounds of the competition. Each of the first two rounds will include rooms with four to six competitors. The top 16 competitors based on judges' rankings and scores from the first two rounds will be put into a Sweet Sixteen round. The Sweet Sixteen round will have four rooms with four competitors each, with the top competitor in each room moving on to the final round. The four finalists will compete in the Final Four round to determine the winner.
  
- The physical arrangements of the Discussion Meet rooms should provide for two tables at the front of the room facing each other and the audience. Half the participants should be seated at each table with the moderator on the side. Name cards identifying competitors should be easily visible. Cards should show only the competitor's name, not his or her state. Placement of name cards will be determined by a drawing for order 15 minutes prior to the start of the round. Competitors not present at the time of the drawing will select from the remaining positions.

## Room Layout



```
  x J x x x x x x x x T  x x x x x x x x x
x x x x x x x x x x x  x x x x x x J x x x
  x x x x x x J x x    x x x x x x x x x
```

M = Moderator

C = Competitor

J = Judge

T = Timer

X = Audience

## Competition Flow

Generally speaking, 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 the problem or need.
4. Elaborate all possible alternative solutions.
5. Evaluate and compare alternatives.
6. Test and project what appears to be the best solution(s).
7. Create ways to implement the solution(s) discussed and highlight Farm Bureau's involvement in those actions/steps.

## **Roles and Responsibilities of Competition Facilitators**

### **1. Discussion Meet Chair Duties**

- a) Familiarize yourself with the AFBF YF&R Discussion Meet Manual.
- b) Prior to orientations, determine the sequence of topics to be used for the competition.
- c) Conduct the Discussion Meet Competitor Orientation session.
  1. Make introductions.
  2. Give a brief explanation of Discussion Meet competition procedures.
  3. Distribute room assignments and locations.
  4. Allow time for questions.
  5. Announce the first round topic during orientation.
- d) Settle any and all disputes during the competition.

### **2. Room Chair Duties**

- a) Familiarize yourself with the AFBF YF&R Discussion Meet Manual.
- b) Review the Tally Sheet. (see **Appendix A & B**)
- c) Ensure all judges are present and report any changes to the moderator.
- d) Meet in the assigned room with competitors, judges, moderator and timekeeper to answer any questions they may have.
- e) Facilitate the drawing for order and placement of name tents, fifteen minutes prior to the start of the competition.
- f) Call the competition to order at the appointed time. Introduce the moderator and announce the topic to be discussed.
- g) Following the discussion, introduce and thank the judges.
- h) Escort the judges to the judges' tabulating room at the end of the competition and allow them to finish tabulating and ranking the participants. Assist with the final ranking if necessary.
- i) Ensure each competitor has been ranked in all sections of the rating sheet.
- j) Supervise tiebreakers. (see **Scoring**)

### **3. Moderator Duties**

- a) Familiarize yourself with the AFBF YF&R Discussion Meet Manual.
- b) Become acquainted with the competitors.
- c) Open the competition with the following to ensure that all understand the format:
  1. Welcome the audience.
  2. Announce the topic to be discussed.
  3. Ask for the competitors to make a 30-second opening statement, in voluntary order.
  4. After the last opening statement, say, "You have heard the opening statements. You may proceed with the discussion."
  5. End the discussion at timekeeper's signal.
  6. Call for one minute of quiet time for the competitors to prepare their closing statements.
  7. Ask for the competitors to make a one-minute closing statement, in a voluntary order.
  8. Thank the competitors.
  9. Dismiss the room chair and judges for tabulation.
  10. Announce the topic for the next round (with the exception of the Final Four question).
  11. Give the competitors the opportunity to introduce themselves and share their agriculture background.
  12. Announce the time and location(s) for the next round.

**Note: The moderator should not comment on the topic or encourage discussion. This is the responsibility of the competitors. However, if the discussion seems to stall, the moderator should use his/her best judgment to end the discussion when the timekeeper indicates five minutes remain in open discussion.**

#### 4. Timekeeper Duties

- a) Familiarize yourself with the AFBF YF&R Discussion Meet Manual.
- b) Go to your assigned competition room 15 minutes prior to the scheduled starting time.
- c) Meet with the room chair, moderator and competitors for last-minute questions.
- d) Make sure to be seated in the front row near the center.
- e) Indicate the following timing points to the moderator and competitors:

##### Two Opening Rounds and Sweet Sixteen

- The end of each 30-second opening statement (Time Elapsed – Red Card) and announce “time”
- Warning at 20 minutes of open discussion, holding the card up until all competitors have noted the warning (Five Minutes Remaining – Yellow Card)
- The end of 25 minutes of open discussion (Time Elapsed – Red Card)
- The end of one minute of quiet time (Time Elapsed – Red Card)
- The end of each competitor’s one-minute closing statement (Time Elapsed – Red Card) and announce “time”

##### Final Four

- The end of each 30-second opening statement (Time Elapsed – Red Card) and announce “time”
- Warning at 25 minutes of open discussion, holding the card up until all competitors have noted the warning (Five Minutes Remaining – Yellow Card)
- The end of 30 minutes of open discussion (Time Elapsed – Red Card)
- The end of one minute of quiet time (Time Elapsed – Red Card)
- The end of each competitor’s one-minute closing statement (Time Elapsed – Red Card) and announce “time”

#### 5. Judge Duties

- a) Familiarize yourself with the AFBF YF&R Discussion Meet Manual.
- b) Review the discussion topics.
- c) Review the Judges Sheet. (see page 11)
- d) Attend the Judge Orientation session.
- e) Go to your assigned room 15 minutes prior to the scheduled starting time.
  - Final Four judges are not permitted to attend any preceding rounds.
- f) Meet with the room chair and moderator to receive a list of competitors in your room.
- g) Remain seated until your room chair calls for you to leave the room to do the final tabulating of your score sheet.
- h) Select winners. (see **Scoring**)
- i) Judges should:
  - List competitors on your Judges Sheet from left-to-right for ease in identification.
  - Score competitors using the Judges Sheet.
  - Total the scores.
    - There is a total of 700 possible points.
  - Determine and record competitor ranking and ensure there are no ties in raw score or rank.
  - Sign your Judges Sheet.
  - Provide feedback to each competitor.
- j) Judges should not:
  - Sit near a fellow judge.
  - Judge by applause.
  - Confer with each other until all scores are tabulated.

## Scoring

The room chair will supervise the final tabulation by the judges. Judges will use the point system indicated on the Judges Sheet to assist in selecting the winners. Each judge will be instructed to total his/her Judges Sheet and rank the competitors. Each judge is to break ties that occur on his/her own score sheet. The room chair will assist the judges in determining the final ranking of each round and the final competition.

- The winner will be determined by judges' ranking, and ties will be resolved before the judges are dismissed.
  - Ties will be broken at the end of each round by an automatic procedure using Problem Solving and Implementation as the first tiebreaker, followed by Analysis of Topic and Cooperative Attitude. (see **Appendix A**)
  - In the event of an unresolvable tie between all three categories, total points from the judge's sheets will be used to resolve the tie. The room chair will assist with this process.
- When possible, the above procedure should be conducted in a private room, with only the judges, room chair and Discussion Meet chair present.

The ranking system that was debuted at the 2016 YF&R Leadership Conference and used in both the Discussion Meet and Collegiate Discussion Meet in 2017 will again be used this year. The committee feels the system allows for quality discussions and for the best participants to advance on to the Sweet 16 and Final Four rounds.

## Opening Rounds

The contestants will compete in round one as they have in the past. Prior to the competition, competitors will be randomly placed in rooms using a software program. After round one, competitors' scores will be tallied, and they will be given new room assignments according to their rank. For round two, each room will have a 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th ranked competitor (this number will vary based on available rooms and participation numbers). Contestants will compete in the second round, and their scores will be tallied again.

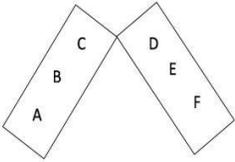
## Sweet Sixteen

The top 16 competitors will compete in the Sweet 16 round and will be placed into room assignments in the same manner as round two. The winning contestant in each of the four Sweet 16 rooms will advance to the Final Four where the final topic will be discussed.

## Discussion Meet Judges Sheet

### Discussion Meet Judges Sheet

Room Name: \_\_\_\_\_

<p>In these columns, put the first and last name of the competitors according to where they are sitting using this diagram:</p> 	Comp A Name:	Comp B Name:	Comp C Name:	Comp D Name:	Comp E Name:	Comp F Name:
<p>(1) <b>PROBLEM SOLVING AND IMPLEMENTATION:</b> (200 points) Ability and judgment in seeking answers and solutions, planning and organizational understanding, and the inclusion of Farm Bureau in implementing action programs.</p>						
<p>(2) <b>ANALYSIS OF TOPIC OR PROBLEM:</b> (150 points) Does contestant attempt to identify problem causes and remain on topic? Knowledge, extent and accuracy of facts.</p>						
<p>(3) <b>COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE:</b> (100 points) Listening, asking pertinent questions, airing all points of view, securing major agreement, minimizing major differences. Courtesy to other participants, encourage discussion from other participants.</p>						
<p>(4) <b>DELIVERY:</b> (100 points) Voice quality, loudness, clear enunciation, communication skills, desirable sentence structure and interesting choice of words.</p>						
<p>(5) <b>OPENING STATEMENT:</b> (50 points) Definition of problem, importance, causes, effects, relevancy of problem.</p>						
<p>(6) <b>CLOSING STATEMENT:</b> (100 points) Ability to summarize discussion and formulate direction for the future.</p>						
<p><b>Total score for each contestant is to be tabulated by Judge.</b> <b>Any tie scores are to be broken by Judge. TOTAL →</b> <b>Total of 700 points possible.</b></p>						
<p><b>Rank contestants: 1(highest) – 6(lowest) RANK →</b></p>						



**Tie Breaker****Appendix B**

**AFBF Discussion Meet  
Official Tally Sheet**  
Round 1 ( )      Round 2 ( )

**Competitors Final Ranking**

<b>(In Seating Order)</b>	<b>Judge 1</b>	<b>Judge 2</b>	<b>Judge 3</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Final Rank</b>
Clark Kent	2	3	2	7	2
Peter Parker	3	2	4	9	3
Bruce Wayne	1	1	1	3	1
Tony Stark	4	4	3	11	4

*\*Technically, you do not need to go any further since you have a rank, but please fill out the entire form.*

**Competitors****Tie Breaker #1 – Problem Solving and Implementation**

<b>(In Seating Order)</b>	<b>Judge 1</b>	<b>Judge 2</b>	<b>Judge 3</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Final Rank</b>
Clark Kent	2	1	2	5	2
Peter Parker	4	3	3	10	3
Bruce Wayne	1	2	1	4	1
Tony Stark	3	4	4	11	4

**Competitors****Tie Breaker #2 – Analysis of Topic**

<b>(In Seating Order)</b>	<b>Judge 1</b>	<b>Judge 2</b>	<b>Judge 3</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Final Rank</b>
Clark Kent	1	4	3	8	3
Peter Parker	4	3	4	11	4
Bruce Wayne	3	1	1	5	1
Tony Stark	2	2	2	6	2

*\*Even though the rank is different from the official rank, it does not change the official rank.*

**Competitors****Tie Breaker #3 – Cooperative Attitude**

<b>(In Seating Order)</b>	<b>Judge 1</b>	<b>Judge 2</b>	<b>Judge 3</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Final Rank</b>
Clark Kent	1	2	2	5	2
Peter Parker	3	4	3	10	3
Bruce Wayne	2	1	1	4	1
Tony Stark	4	3	4	11	4