

## **Collegiate Discussion Meet**

### **VIRTUAL Best Practices for Competitors 2020**

Virtual Collegiate Discussion Meet will look similar to what the in-person competition would have. Competitors will be placed within a Zoom meeting with judges, a room chair and timekeeper. All will be muted upon entry. The room chair will draw for the order in which Opening and Closing Statements will be delivered. The room chair will have further specifics about how discussion will progress virtually. To minimize distraction, once discussion commences, the only individuals with video and audio on will be the competitors in the room and the room chair.

#### Zoom Best Practices:

- Download the Zoom app on your desktop or phone – determine which device is most professional for the call to take place
- Become familiar with Zoom capabilities through a test call
  - o Decide which audio source works best for you – via phone or computer
    - Connect to Phone Audio to avoid interruptions in the audio even if video buffers
      - Click “^” next to microphone (bottom left)
      - Click “Switch to Phone Audio...”
      - Dial phone number from phone. When prompted, give Meeting ID and Participant ID
    - Connect to Computer Audio to have both video and audio come through computer or device.
  - o Practice muting and unmuting yourself
  - o Practice switching from speaker view to gallery view
  - o Make sure your display name is correct. If not,
    - Click the “...” on your video, select “Rename” and adjust to your full name, OR
    - Click “Participants,” hovering over your name, selecting “More,” clicking on “Rename” and adjusting from there.

#### General Virtual Best Practices:

- Dress: Business Professional
- Pick an appropriate location
  - o Strong Wi-Fi signal
    - If possible, plug in to a wired internet source.
    - Ensure that others on your connection are not streaming at the same time as the competitive event to avoid lagging.
    - If you are having trouble finding a location with a strong signal, reach out to your state coordinator and/or Collegiate Farm Bureau advisor.
  - o Pay attention to your background
    - Will not be evaluated, but minimize distractions
  - o Good lighting
  - o Quiet – prevent interruptions
  - o Headphones/earbuds are acceptable if they help minimize distractions and interruptions.



## Discussion Meet and Collegiate Discussion Meet Best Practices – 2021

- **Training calls.** All competitors are encouraged to join the training calls hosted by the AFBF YF&R committee in the fall. Specific dates and times will be announced in late summer/early fall. There will be a total of three calls. The first call will cover the Discussion Meet format and tips for success; the other two calls will focus on the Farm Bureau policy related to the Discussion Meet questions. Often the calls include industry experts, who share their expertise and provide additional resources.
- **Utilize government research.** Search government agency websites and databases for strong statistics and data to use in your discussions. This information is reliable and well-researched.
- **Learn from the best.** Reach out to former Discussion Meet and Collegiate Discussion Meet participants. Even though the discussion questions change each year, former competitors can provide valuable insight and tips on the nature of the contest. Also, reach out to YF&R staff and committee members who have familiarity with the competition to get clarification.
- **Pros and Cons.** Review each question and create discussion points from both sides of the issue. This will not only give you greater understanding of how an issue developed, but it will prepare you to discuss potential obstacles when working to find a solution.
- **Diversify written sources.** Besides the internet, gather resources and information from the library, newspapers, magazines, Farm Bureau policies and other agriculture publications.
- **Real talk.** Engage in conversations with your local county Farm Bureau members, state and national representatives, lobbyists and agriculture industry employees to gather information and examples. Seek conversations with those who are not familiar with the issue to gain their perspective. Explaining the topic helps provide practice articulating what you know. As you speak, address all angles to gather additional points and as many ideas as possible.
- **Farm Bureau history and policy.** Take time to review county, state and American Farm Bureau history and policy on the topic. What are our standing policies with the questions?
- **Expert opinion.** If you don't have a personal relationship with the content of the question, find a credible source who does and get their opinion. Be prepared to cite and properly establish your source as an expert in their field.

## General Resources and Websites

### Farm Bureau:

- [American Farm Bureau Federation](#)
  - o [Issue Backgrounders](#)
  - o [Farm Bureau Advocacy Action Center](#)
- [American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture](#)

### Government:

- [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#)
  - o [National Institute of Food and Agriculture \(NIFA\)](#)
  - o [Cooperative Extension Service](#)
- [U.S. Department of Labor](#)
- [U.S. Department of Education](#)
- [Environmental Protection Agency - Agriculture](#)
- [National Association of State Departments of Agriculture](#)
- [Selected Federal Agencies with a Role in Food Safety](#)
- [GovTrack.us](#)
- [Farmers.gov](#)

### Media:

- [Farm Journal Media](#)
- [AgDaily](#)

### Other:

- [American Farmland Trust](#)
- [American Lands Council](#)
- [Animal Agriculture Alliance](#)
- [Beginning Farmers](#)
- [National Agriculture in the Classroom](#)
- [U.S. Farmers and Ranchers in ACTION](#)