

# 2024

## Minnesota FFA and Minnesota Farm Bureau Discussion Meet Contest

### Participant's Guide



For information regarding this contest contact:

*Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation*  
651-768-2151

## **MINNESOTA FARM BUREAU FFA DISCUSSION MEET**

The Minnesota FFA and Minnesota Farm Bureau Foundation are pleased to announce the 2023-2024 Farm Bureau FFA Discussion Meet Contest. This program gives FFA members throughout the state the opportunity to take part in an educational and resume building experience.

### **WHAT IS A DISCUSSION MEET?**

A grassroots organization's strength depends on its members' ability to analyze problems and decide on solutions that best meet their needs. The Discussion Meet is an activity designed to build these crucial skills. By participating, students 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.

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

1. Stimulate logical thinking and a desire for accurate information.
2. Develop a concise and direct manner of speaking.
3. Improve the ability to listen.
4. Aid the participant in overcoming timidity or stage fright.
5. Assist the individual in the practice of giving and receiving criticism in a helpful manner.
6. Teach the value of compromise.
7. Develop leaders for effective problem solving through group discussion.

The Discussion Meet is designed to simulate a committee meeting where discussion and active participation are expected from each committee member.

The contestants discuss a pre-selected topic.

The four fundamental bases of general discussion are:

- Constructive Criticism
- Cooperation
- Communication
- Problem Solving

The discussion should not be "conversation" or aimless talk, nor should the participant take the role of a persuasive speaker. The participant should try to cooperatively shed light on the problem and tentatively retain a flexible position.

A successful participant is a productive thinker rather than an emotional persuader. Sometimes it's reasonable to change positions whenever new information and ideas are presented.

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 discussion should follow these steps:**

1. State problem or need.
2. Explore, define, understand problem or need.
3. Identify causes of 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.
7. Arrive at ways to implement the solution.

## **DISCUSSION MEET RULES**

### **QUALIFICATIONS OF PARTICIPANTS**

1. Contestants must be current FFA members.
2. Past state Discussion Meet winners are not eligible to compete in following years unless they were unable to accept the award the year they won.
3. All participants in the Discussion Meet must attend a brief orientation meeting prior to the contest during the State FFA Convention in 2024.
4. Each FFA Region may send two contestants to the state Farm Bureau FFA Discussion Meet competition.
5. All participants in the state contest must have competed at a regional competition.
6. Contest organizers must submit the information sheets for the top two regional competitors by **Monday April 1, 2024**. Information sheets received after that date may not be eligible for competition at the MN FFA State Convention.

Contestants will address the problems and concerns faced by the rural communities in Minnesota and throughout the country. Through a structured, well-disciplined evaluation and analysis, constructive thoughts and ideas can be surfaced, studied, and offered for implementation.

Participants are invited to study each area in depth, seeking factual, as well as personal answers and opinions to the topic area. Each topic area has great potential for constructive thinking while relating to each other. Identifying possible solutions and action plans for each topic area will help build the FFA's and Farm Bureau's efforts in the future.

## **AWARDS**

### **COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP OR WASHINGTON D.C. LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE SCHOLARSHIP**

The Minnesota Farm Bureau Foundation will sponsor scholarships for the top two FFA/Farm Bureau Discussion Meet contestants (\$750/person registration cost) to attend the National FFA Washington D.C. Leadership Conference or to use for their college education.

Winners will be determined at the Discussion Meet competition held at the 2024 Minnesota FFA State Convention.

All contestants that compete during the MN FFA State Convention will receive a complementary Minnesota Farm Bureau Membership for the upcoming year.

### **MINNESOTA FFA/MINNESOTA FARM BUREAU DISCUSSION MEET PROCEDURE**

**HOW TO ENTER** - Make the decision early.

1. Contact your chapter FFA advisor.
2. Complete the enclosed entry form and mail to your regional FFA advisor.
3. Study the topics, be informed, and be prepared to win the contest!

### **ORIENTATION**

An orientation of all judges, moderators, room chairmen and contestants will be conducted prior to the competition. Scripts and detailed information about organizing a competition can be found in the Discussion Meet Advisor's Guide.

Only those contestants attending the orientation at the appointed time will be eligible for participation in the Discussion Meet at the state FFA convention. This rule will continue to be enforced in 2024. Chapters are asked to have their contestant present at the correct time and to make necessary travel schedules to accommodate this.

## HELPFUL HINTS FOR CONTESTANTS

- Study as much material as possible relating to the overall topic. Sources: library, newspapers, web sites, magazines, Farm Bureau policies, county, state and American Farm Bureau publications and conversations with experts or knowledgeable people.
- Farm Bureau policy books should be available from your county Farm Bureau office. If you need assistance obtaining policy books, contact the Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation office listed on the front page of this publication.
- The Discussion Meet should be a conflict of ideas, not personalities. **Remember this is a discussion, not a debate.** Including everyone in the discussion is critical.
- 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 summary statement.
- Stand and make your closing statement to the audience. Use accepted speech techniques. Stay within the time limit.

## THE DISCUSSION MEET

The same procedure will be followed at every level of the contest.

1. All contest officials and contestants will be in the proper room and at their stations at the appointed hour.
2. The room chair will call the meeting to order and announce the topic to be discussed and then introduce the timekeeper and moderator.
3. The moderator will introduce the contestants, re-announce the topic to be discussed and call on the contestants in voluntary order to make a 30-second opening statement.
4. The timekeeper will stand at 30 seconds and remain standing. Judges may subtract points, at their discretion, for contestants abusing the time limit.
5. The moderator will then indicate the opportunity for open discussion that will run for a total of 15 minutes. The moderator, if necessary, will give "directed discussion" by encouraging contestants to consider other aspects of the topic under consideration.
6. The timekeeper will indicate to the moderator when 10 minutes have elapsed, and the moderator will interrupt discussion to announce the remaining time and may close the discussion if the discussion is lagging.
7. The timekeeper will indicate to the moderator when a total of 15 minutes has elapsed.
8. The moderator will call for a minute of quiet time allowing the contestants to consider a closing statement.
9. The moderator will call upon the contestants, in voluntary order, to make a one-minute closing statement.
10. Moderator will recognize the judges and request them to leave the room to finalize the tabulation of their score sheets. Judges will not be permitted to confer with each other prior to the completion of their tabulation.
11. The moderator will thank the panel and ask the audience to recognize their efforts. He will then request the contestants to each discuss their Supervised Agricultural Experience for the benefit of the audience.
12. The room chair, with the assistance of the timekeeper, will supervise the final tabulation by the judges. Judges will use a point system indicated on the score sheet to assist in selecting the winners. Each judge will be instructed to break all tie scores.
13. The Discussion Meet Chairman will rank the panel winners, based on the total scoring given by each judge; i.e. 1 point for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2 for 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3 for 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4 for 4<sup>th</sup>, 5 for 5<sup>th</sup>, 6 for 6<sup>th</sup>. The contestants with the best ranking scores (lowest rank) will be determined the winners.

**Note: Contestants may bring one, one-sided 4x6 note card into each round of the Discussion Meet. Blank paper and pencils will be provided for the purpose of making notes during the actual meet. This will be checked and enforced.**

## **2023-2024 FFA Discussion Meet Questions**

1. Whether a farm hires seasonal employees, or has full-time, year-round help, skilled labor has become hard to find. What can the Minnesota Farm Bureau and Minnesota FFA do to help promote careers in farming and ranching to help alleviate the labor shortage in the agriculture industry?
2. Minnesota farmers and ranchers are diverse in not only the goods they produce, but also in the ways they raise and market them. How can the Minnesota Farm Bureau and Minnesota FFA organizations further welcome and engage diverse agricultural communities and cultivate dynamic future agriculture leaders?
3. FFA members are the future of innovation in agriculture. How can Minnesota Farm Bureau and Minnesota FFA better equip students to take their innovations to the next level of being practical on the farm and ranch scale?

**2024 DISCUSSION MEET - REGISTRATION AND INFORMATION SHEET**

Contestant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(As it should appear in a program)

Phonetic Pronunciation: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Street or Rural Route) (City & State) (Zip Code)

Phone Number: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
Month Day Year

FFA Chapter: \_\_\_\_\_

Region: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Names: \_\_\_\_\_

**Return this completed form to your FFA Advisor before your regional contest.**

**Contest organizers should send Information Sheets of first and second place winners to the Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation at the address listed below.**

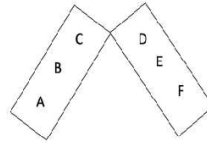
Information sheets must be received by Monday, April 1, 2024 for the applicant to be eligible for the competition at the MN FFA State Convention.

**Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation  
Attn: FFA Discussion Meet  
P.O. Box 64370  
St. Paul, MN 55164  
Rachael.peterson@fbmn.org**



# Discussion Meet Scoresheet

Room Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Round # \_\_\_\_\_



In the first column, you will find the point values and descriptions. See rubric for additional detail. The total point value for each row is available for each contestant. You are not dividing the total points among contestants. **No ties.**

Judge's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Columns to the right each represent a different contestant. Please fill in the first and last name of each competitor according to their seat location. Refer to the diagram for help. Put scores in the larger spaces and rank in the smaller boxes.

	Comp A Name:	Comp B Name:	Comp C Name:	Comp D Name:	Comp E Name:	Comp F Name:
(1) <b>OPENING STATEMENT:</b> <b>10 pts.</b> Defines problem; conveys importance and relevance; sets the stage for an interesting discussion; clear point of view; uses time wisely						
(2) <b>ANALYSIS OF TOPIC OR PROBLEM:</b> <b>20 pts.</b> 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 FB policy	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
(3) <b>PROBLEM SOLVING AND IMPLEMENTATION:</b> <b>25 pts.</b> Leader in guiding the conversation to specific and relevant solutions; has achievable and specific plan of action; clearly defines how FB is part of the action plan.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
(4) <b>COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE:</b> <b>15 pts.</b> 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	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
(5) <b>DELIVERY:</b> <b>15 pts.</b> Interesting to listen to; animated; appropriate volume and tone; poised; uses gestures and eye contact; confident and clear						
(6) <b>CLOSING STATEMENT:</b> <b>15 pts.</b> Shows that they have listened to the conversation; develops relevant and realistic plans; memorable; inspires confidence						
Total score for each contestant is to be tabulated by Judge. Any tie scores are to be broken by Judge. Total of 100 points possible. <b>TOTAL</b>						
Rank contestants: 1 (highest) through (6 lowest). <b>RANK</b>						

Judge's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Room Chair's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

# Discussion Meet Scoring Rubric

<p>(1) OPENING STATEMENT <b>10 pts.</b></p>	<p><b>Contestant...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not address the problem – is off topic.</li> <li>• Does not address the importance or relevancy of the problem.</li> <li>• Makes a “closed” statement that does not allow room for further conversation.</li> <li>• Does not seem to have a point of view.</li> <li>• Does not finish in the allotted time.</li> </ul> <p><b>Award 0-3 points</b></p>	<p><b>Contestant...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defines the problem.</li> <li>• Sets the problem in context.</li> <li>• Makes a statement that leaves some room for further conversation but could be more open.</li> <li>• Has a general point of view.</li> <li>• Stays in the given time.</li> </ul> <p><b>Award 4-6 points</b></p>	<p><b>Contestant...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearly defines the problem.</li> <li>• Conveys the importance and relevancy of the problem.</li> <li>• Makes an “open” statement that leaves room for further conversation.</li> <li>• Sets the stage for an interesting conversation with a very clear point of view.</li> <li>• Uses their time very wisely and stays in the given time.</li> </ul> <p><b>Award 7-10 points</b></p>
<p>(2) ANALYSIS OF TOPIC OR PROBLEM: <b>20 pts.</b></p>	<p><b>Contestant...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not address the problem or does not remain on topic/wanders/distracts.</li> <li>• Hasn’t done much research or lacks quality facts.</li> <li>• Doesn’t build on other’s ideas, only pushes their own.</li> <li>• Doesn’t ask questions to clarify other’s ideas.</li> <li>• Doesn’t share relevant personal examples.</li> <li>• Misinterprets the issue or does not display competency and therefore does not help with problem solving.</li> <li>• Is unaware of FB policy.</li> </ul> <p><b>Award 0-5 points</b></p>	<p><b>Contestant...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies the causes of the problem, does not directly address them, but remains on topic.</li> <li>• Has done research.</li> <li>• Addresses the ideas of others but does not build upon them – or only drops in information they learned without connecting it to previous ideas and moving the conversation forward.</li> <li>• Asks some questions to help vet the ideas of others.</li> <li>• Shares relevant personal examples – may be slightly off topic.</li> <li>• Demonstrates knowledge of this problem but not why it exists.</li> <li>• Is aware of current FB policy.</li> </ul> <p><b>Award 6-12 points</b></p>	<p><b>Contestant...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies and addresses the causes of the problem and remains on topic.</li> <li>• Has thoroughly researched the topic.</li> <li>• Confidently builds on the ideas of others to contribute to a coherent analysis</li> <li>• Asks relevant questions to vet the ideas of others.</li> <li>• Shares relevant personal examples that add to the conversation.</li> <li>• Helps ensure thorough analysis before moving to problem solving.</li> <li>• Is aware of current and relevant FB policy.</li> </ul> <p><b>Award 13-20 points</b></p>

## Discussion Meet Scoring Rubric *(continued)*

<p>(3) PROBLEM SOLVING AND IMPLEMENTATION <b>25 pts.</b></p>	<p><b>Contestant...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instead of helping to guide the conversation to a solution, just data drops.</li> <li>• Offers no plan for a solution or a generic plan like “tell our story” or “educate consumers.”</li> <li>• Does not identify how Farm Bureau is involved.</li> </ul> <p><b>Award 0-6 points</b></p>	<p><b>Contestant...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tries to help lead the conversation to address a solution but misses opportunities to collaborate with the group.</li> <li>• Has a plan but is missing specificity.</li> <li>• Farm Bureau is mentioned but is not a crucial piece of the solution.</li> </ul> <p><b>Award 7-16 points</b></p>	<p><b>Contestant...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is a leader in guiding the group and the conversation to specific and relevant solutions.</li> <li>• Generates ideas that contribute to an achievable and specific plan of action to resolve the issue.</li> <li>• Clearly defines how Farm Bureau is part of the action plan.</li> </ul> <p><b>Award 17-25 points</b></p>
<p>(4) COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE: <b>15 pts.</b></p>	<p><b>Contestant...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not listen to others – just waits for their turn to talk.</li> <li>• Cuts others off or simply repeats what others have already said.</li> <li>• Is rude, defensive or combative when they do not agree with others.</li> </ul> <p><b>Award 0-4 points</b></p>	<p><b>Contestant...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contestant listens to others but does not comment specifically on their ideas or tie ideas back to the bigger conversation.</li> <li>• Is respectful of others.</li> <li>• Is not rude or defensive when they disagree with others.</li> </ul> <p><b>Award 5-9 points</b></p>	<p><b>Contestant...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is an active listener and comments on references or specific ideas mentioned by others tying them back to the bigger conversation.</li> <li>• Clearly shows grace, courtesy and respect to other participants.</li> <li>• Shows integrity especially when they do not agree with others.</li> </ul> <p><b>Award 10-15 points</b></p>
<p>(5) DELIVERY: <b>15 pts.</b></p>	<p><b>Contestant...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is boring/ mumbling/ monotoned.</li> <li>• Slouches, does not use appropriate gestures or have eye contact</li> <li>• Ideas are difficult to understand, or they are not confident in speaking.</li> </ul> <p><b>Award 0-4 points</b></p>	<p><b>Contestant...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speaks at an appropriate volume and pace with appropriate tone.</li> <li>• Uses effective posture, gestures and eye contact.</li> <li>• Conveys thoughts and viewpoints but could seem overly rehearsed.</li> </ul> <p><b>Award 5-9 points</b></p>	<p><b>Contestant...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is interesting to listen to, animated and lively, speaks at an appropriate volume and with a professional and courteous tone.</li> <li>• Is poised and uses gestures and eye contact that emit respect and professionalism.</li> <li>• Confidently conveys thoughts and viewpoints clearly.</li> </ul> <p><b>Award 10-15 points</b></p>
<p>(6) CLOSING STATEMENT: <b>15 pts.</b></p>	<p><b>Contestant...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not accurately summarize the conversation.</li> <li>• Uses memorized speech that doesn’t reflect the content of the conversation.</li> <li>• Closing statement is forgettable.</li> </ul> <p><b>Award 0-4 points</b></p>	<p><b>Contestant...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summarizes the conversation that happened.</li> <li>• Uses take-away points from the discussion to help develop a plan.</li> <li>• Closing statement is memorable.</li> </ul> <p><b>Award 5-9 points</b></p>	<p><b>Contestant...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shows that they have actively listened to the conversation in their summary.</li> <li>• Uses take away points from the discussion to develop relevant, realistic and specific action items and plans for the future.</li> <li>• Closing statement is memorable and inspires confidence in their ability to work toward a solution.</li> </ul> <p><b>Award 10-15 points</b></p>