

# **GENERAL FORMAT FOR MAINE FFA STATE CONVENTION DISCUSSION MEET**

## **HIGH SCHOOL DISCUSSION MEET MANUAL MAINE FARM BUREAU ASSOCIATION**

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## Contest Objectives

Farm Bureau's strength depends on its members' ability to analyze agricultural problems and decide on solutions that best meet their needs. The Discussion Meet is an activity designed to build these crucial skills in young, active farmers and ranchers. By participating, members 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.

## **Background Information**

- The High School Discussion Meet is a contest promoted by the Maine Farm Bureau Association Young Farmer & Rancher Committee.
- The High School 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.

## **Contestant Qualifications**

1. Contestants shall be High School students from Farm Bureau members, FFA participants or 4-H participants.

## Helpful Hints For Contestants

- Study as much material as possible relating to the overall topic. Sources: library, newspapers, magazines, web sites.
- The High School Discussion Meet should be a conflict of ideas, not personalities. **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 summary statement.
- Stand and make your closing statement to the audience. Use accepted speech techniques. Stay within the time limit.

## Contest Format

1. All contest facilitators and contestants will meet in the pre-assigned contest room ten minutes prior to the start of the contest to receive last minute comments by the room chairman.
2. No contestant notes are allowed at the table prior to the moderator starting the meet.
3. The room chairman will call the meeting to order, announce the topic to be discussed, and introduce the timekeeper and moderator.
4. The moderator will introduce the contestants and re-announce the topic to be discussed. He/she will give each of the contestants, in voluntary order, the opportunity to make a 30-second opening statement directed to the audience.
5. The timekeeper may stand or otherwise indicate when 30 seconds has elapsed. Judges may subtract points at their discretion for contestants who abuse the time limit.
6. The moderator will then indicate the opportunity for open discussion, which will continue for a total of 25 minutes in the Round Robins and Sweet Sixteen contests and 35 minutes in the Final Four contest. The discussion should be directed to the fellow contestants during open discussion.
7. The timekeeper will indicate to the moderator when five minutes of open discussion time remains in the Round Robins and Sweet Sixteen and ten minutes in the Final Four. The moderator will indicate to contestants the time remaining by raising a table tent. He/She will ensure each contestant has seen the table tent before it is removed.
8. 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 Round Robin and Sweet Sixteen contests and 35 minutes in the Final Four contest have elapsed.
10. The moderator will call for open discussion to stop and for one minute of quiet time allowing the contestants to consider a closing statement.
11. The moderator will give each of the contestants, in voluntary order, the opportunity to make a one-minute closing statement directed to the audience.
12. The moderator will recognize the judges and request them to leave the room with the room chairman to finalize the tabulation of their score sheets. Judges are not to confer with each other until the room chairman has collected their tabulated score sheets.
13. The next round topic to be discussed will be announced.
14. The moderator will thank the panel and ask the audience to recognize their efforts. The moderator may then request the contestants to each discuss their personal farming/ranching operations for the audience.

## Contest Flow

Generally speaking, 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.

## Roles and Responsibilities Judges

### 1. Judges' Duties

- a. Familiarize yourself with the High School Discussion Meet Contest..
- b. Review discussion topics.
- c. Review Rating Sheet.
- d. Judges should:
  1. List contestants on Rating Sheet from left to right for ease in identification.
  2. Score contestants using the Rating Sheet.
  3. Total the scores.  
**Note: There are 700 points available: 200 points for Cooperative Attitude and 100 points each for the other categories.**
  4. Determine and record ranking.
  5. Sign Rating Sheet.
- e. Judges should not:
  1. Sit near a fellow judge.
  2. Judge by applause.
  3. Confer with each other until all scores are tabulated.
- f. Remain seated until your room chairman calls for you to leave the room to do the final tabulating of your score sheet.
- g. Select winners. (See **Scoring**)

## Scoring

Judges will use the point system indicated on the score sheet to assist in selecting their winners. Each judge will be instructed to total his/her score sheet and rank the contestants. Each judge is to break ties that occur on his/her own score sheet. The room chairman will assist the judges in determining the final ranking of the contest.

1. The winner will be determined by judges' ranking, and ties will be resolved before the judges are dismissed.
  - a. Ties will be broken at the end of each of the Round Robin contest, the Sweet Sixteen and the Final Four by an automatic procedure using Cooperative Attitude as the first tie breaker, followed by Problem Solving and Delivery, respectfully. (See **Appendix A**). In the event of an unresolvable tie between all three categories, total points from judges' score sheets will be used to resolve the tie. The room chairman will assist with this process.
2. When possible, the above procedure should be conducted in a private room, with only the judges, room chairman, and Discussion Meet chairman present.

## Round Robins

Sample rankings for the two Round Robin contests follow. (see **Appendix A & B**).

# High School Discussion Meet Rating Sheet

Participants' Names  
(Left of Moderator)

Participants' Names  
(Right of Moderator)

				Superior - 100			
			_____	Excellent - 80			
			_____	Good - 60			
			Total of 700 points possible.	Fair - 40			
			(1) COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE: (200 points)	Poor - 20			
			A. Listening, asking pertinent questions, airing all points of view, securing major agreement, minimizing major differences. (100 points)				
			B. Courtesy to other participants, encourage discussion from other participants. (100 points)				
			(2) PROBLEM SOLVING AND IMPLEMENTATION: (100 points)				
			Ability and judgement in seeking answers and solutions, planning and organizational understanding, implementing action programs.				
			(3) DELIVERY: (100 points)				
			Voice quality, loudness, clear enunciation, communication skills, desirable sentence structure and interesting choice of words.				
			(4) ANALYSIS OF TOPIC OR PROBLEM: (100 points)				
			Does contestant attempt to identify problem causes and remain on topic? Knowledge, extent and accuracy of facts.				
			(5) OPENING STATEMENT: (100 points)				
			Definition of problem, importance, causes, effects, relevancy of problem.				
			(6) CLOSING STATEMENT: (100 points)				
			Ability to summarize discussion and formulate direction for the future.				
			Total score for each contestant is to be tabulated by Judge.				
			<b>← TOTAL</b> Any tie scores are to be broken by Judge.	<b>TOTAL →</b>			
			<b>← RANK</b> Rank contestants: 1(highest) – 4(lowest)	<b>RANK →</b>			

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Room Chairman)

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Judge)

# High School Discussion Meet Application –

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

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

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization Sponsor: \_\_\_\_\_

Biographical Information: (Please give a three line biographical sketch and attach a photo.)

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Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Application Deadline is April 12, 2010.

**Official Tally Sheet**

Round 1 ( )      Round 2 ( )

Competitors (In seating order)	Final Ranking			Total	Final Rank
	judge 1	judge 2	judge 3		
Ali McBeal	1	2	1	4	1
George Clooney	2	3	2	7	
Julie Roberts	3	1	3	7	
Fran Dresher	4	4	4	12	4

\*You have a 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> place, but a tie for 2<sup>nd</sup>, move to the 1<sup>st</sup> tie breaker.

Competitors (In seating order)	Tie Breaker #1 - Cooperative Attitude			Total	Final Rank
	judge 1	judge 2	judge 3		
Ali McBeal	1	2	1	4	1
George Clooney	2	3	2	7	
Julie Roberts	3	1	3	7	
Fran Dresher	4	4	4	12	4

\*You still have a tie. Move to 2<sup>nd</sup> tie breaker.

Competitors (In seating order)	Tie Breaker #2 - Problem Solving			Total	Final Rank
	judge 1	judge 2	judge 3		
Ali McBeal	1	2	1	4	1
George Clooney	3	1	3	7	
Julie Roberts	2	3	2	7	
Fran Dresher	4	4	4	12	4

\*You still have a tie. Move to 3<sup>rd</sup> tie breaker.

Competitors (In seating order)	Tie Breaker #3 - Delivery			Total	Final Rank
	judge 1	judge 2	judge 3		
Ali McBeal	2	1	1	4	1
George Clooney	1	2	3	6	2
Julie Roberts	3	3	2	8	3
Fran Dresher	4	4	4	12	4

**\*THERE IS FINALLY A FINAL RANK. YOU NOW HAVE A 2<sup>ND</sup> & 3<sup>RD</sup>. REMEMBER THE RANKINGS THAT ARE CLEAR IN THE 1<sup>ST</sup> BOX DO NOT EVER CHANGE, EVEN IF THEY WERE TO FALL FROM THAT RANK IN ONE OF THE TIE BREAKER BOXES.**

**SAMPLE RANK**

AFBF DISCUSSION MEET

APPENDIX B

**Official Tally Sheet**

Competitors (In seating order)	Final Ranking			Total	Final Rank
	judge 1	judge 2	judge 3		
Garth Brooks	2	3	2	7	2 .....
Shania Twain	3	2	4	9	3 .....
George Strait	1	1	1	3	1 .....
Reba McEntire	4	4	3	11	4 .....

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

Competitors (In seating order)	<u>Tie Breaker #1 - Cooperative Attitude</u>			Total	Final Rank
	judge 1	judge 2	judge 3		
Garth Brooks	2	1	2	5	2 .....
Shania Twain	4	3	3	10	3 .....
George Strait	1	2	1	4	1 .....
Reba McEntire	3	4	4	11	4 .....

Competitors (In seating order)	<u>Tie Breaker #2 - Problem Solving</u>			Total	Final Rank
	judge 1	judge 2	judge 3		
Garth Brooks	1	4	3	8	3 .....
Shania Twain	4	3	4	11	4 .....
George Strait	3	1	1	5	1 .....
Reba McEntire	2	2	2	6	2 .....

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

Competitors (In seating order)	<u>Tie Breaker #3 - Delivery</u>			Total	Final Rank
	judge 1	judge 2	judge 3		
Garth Brooks	1	2	2	5	2 .....
Shania Twain	3	4	3	10	3 .....
George Strait	2	1	1	4	1 .....
Reba McEntire	4	3	4	11	4 .....