

**Discussion Meet**

**Purpose:** Applicants build basic discussion skills, develop 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. They will assist the group in creating ways to implement the solutions discussed and highlight 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

**Resources:**

* [2024-DM-Competitors-Manual-FINAL.pdf (pfb.com)](https://pfb.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/2024-DM-Competitors-Manual-FINAL.pdf)
* <https://www.fb.org/program/young-farmers-ranchers>

**How to Prepare:**

1. Research Topics – review the five topics you may be asked to discuss. Use the topic resources, your own research, your advisor, local farmers and community experts to help you understand the issues and potential solutions for each topic.

2. Talking Points – while the discussion should happen without agenda, come up with two or three talking points you feel comfortable initiating and expanding on to help drive the conversation.

3. Opening Statement – develop and memorize a 30 second opening statement. Having confidence in how you’ll start the competition will allow you to feel at ease through the rest of the competition. You **can’t bring notes to the table,** but you can prepare your statement ahead of time and be ready to shine.

4. Have Conversations – ask your peers, county Farm Bureau members or other knowledgeable people in your community to spend time discussing the topics, or other issues with you so you can practice active listening, accurate summarization of the conversation and cooperative behavior.

5. Have Fun & Learn – no matter the result of the competition, remember that learning about issues in agriculture and developing an ability to effectively converse with others will ultimately be more valuable than a medal.

**During Event:**

• Listen carefully to the moderator as he/she orients the audience and clarifies the questions.

• Listen carefully to other contestants as they make their opening statements. • Keep within the time limit on your opening statement.

• There can be a conflict of ideas, but not of personalities. Remember, this is a discussion, not a debate.

• Be prepared to ask questions, state facts and offer opinions. Urge others to be specific.

• Be aware of the audience but not to the exclusion of the panel. (Talk loudly enough to be heard by the audience.)

• Participate whenever it will contribute to furthering the discussion without monopolizing the time. Be enthusiastic and, in general, use logic rather than emotion.

• Make notes of key points as the discussion proceeds for use in summary statement.

• Use your one-minute time to organize your summary statement.

• Stand and make your closing and opening statements to the audience, use accepted speech techniques, and stay within the time limit. Make Farm Bureau a part of the solution.

**2024 Topics (Taken Directly from Farm Bureau)**

1. Production agriculture requires a lot of capital. Young farmers and ranchers face challenges gaining access to the capital they need to start or grow their operations. What tools are currently available, and what new programs could be introduced, to help young people access financial resources—and make sound financial decisions—to run their farms and ranches?

2. Working with elected officials, in all levels of government, is critical to advancing public policy that supports farmers and ranchers. How can we help elected leaders better understand the challenges of the agriculture sector and the importance of supporting the financial viability of America’s family farms?

3. What is sustainable agriculture and how can we help farmers and ranchers access market-based solutions that advance sustainability goals without restricting their ability to stock America’s pantries, help feed a growing population and maintain farm profitability?

4. Farmers and ranchers across the country are diverse in not only the goods they produce, but also in the ways they raise and market them. How can our organization further welcome and engage diverse agricultural communities and cultivate dynamic future leaders?

5. Agriculture uses water for everything from growing crops, raising livestock and moving products to and from farms and ranches. Water issues are often hotly debated, are unique to each region and can pose significant challenges to growers. How can Farm Bureau help address water management challenges and seek long term solutions?

