

# **Wisconsin Association of FFA Leadership Development Events**

## **FFA Discussion Meet**

**District Level**

**Sectional Level**

**State Level**

**Wisconsin FFA Center**

Revised December 2018

## Wisconsin Association of FFA Leadership Development Events

The Wisconsin Association of FFA makes available seven events for Wisconsin FFA members to participate in. These seven competitions include Creed Speaking, Prepared Public Speaking, Extemporaneous Public Speaking, Parliamentary Procedure, Discussion Meet, Quiz Bowl and Employment Skills.

### Levels of Competition

**Local Competitions:** Leadership Development Events begin at the local level. All local competitions are under the direction of the local FFA advisors who set local policy for how members are selected to represent their FFA chapter. Each local chapter is allowed to send two competitors/teams to the district competition except for Parliamentary Procedure where only one team is allowed.

**District Competitions:** District competitions should be held between January 20 and February 20 at the school of the designated district host. There will be 30 district competitions held. District competitions are typically held immediately after school at the host chapter's school. These competitions depending on the number competitors and efficiency of the competition may last until 6:30 - 7:00 p.m. All competitors must follow the rules in each of the specific speaking competitions as set forth by the Wisconsin Association of FFA. Two individuals/teams will be selected to advance to the sectional competition for each of the events.

**Sectional Competitions:** Sectional competitions are held during the month of March at the school of the State Officer from the corresponding section. There will be 10 sectional competitions held. Sectional competitions are typically held immediately after school at the host chapter's school. These competitions depending on the number of competitors and efficiency of the competition may last until 6:30 - 7:00 p.m.

All competitions must follow the rules in each of the specific speaking competitions as set forth by the Wisconsin Association of FFA. One individual/team will advance in each event to the state level of competition.

**State Level Competitions:** State level competition is held in conjunction with the State FFA Convention. The state competitions will be coordinated by the State FFA Executive Director with the help of event managers and the state FFA president. All competitors must follow the rules in each of the specific speaking competitions as set for by the Wisconsin Association of FFA. Each competitor will begin at the semi-final level. There will be one representative from each section. From the semi-finals, four individuals/teams will be selected to advance to the final round.

At the state level, it is determined on a rotational basis of which sections compete against each other. One year the even and odd sections will be grouped together. The following year Section 1-5 and Section 6-10 will compete in the semi final round. Thus the next year it would rotate back to the even and odd sections competing in the semi-final round.

**National Level Competitions:** The following competitions advance to national competition at the National FFA Convention - Creed Speaking, Prepared Public Speaking, Extemporaneous Public Speaking, Parliamentary Procedure and Employment Skills. Individuals/teams selected as State Winners will advance to the National Competitions. All rules set forth by the National FFA Organization must be followed at this level. All competitors must be certified by the State FFA Executive Director by July 1. If an individual is unable to compete at Nationals, the State Runner-Up would be offered the opportunity to compete.

It is the responsibility of the state winner to coordinate their travel to the National FFA Convention and the national competition. Each state winner will receive a packet of information with the national competition details after they are fully certified to compete through the National FFA office.

### **Hosting District and Sectional Leadership Development Events**

All FFA chapters are expected to host a district event when it becomes their turn in alphabetical rotation (by Post Office Box Town/City) within their district. If, for any reason, a chapter feels that they cannot host when it is their turn, a chapter may request to the State FFA Executive Director and State FFA Board of Directors to be skipped in the rotation. If a school who is scheduled to host a district competition has a new instructor, that chapter would automatically be skipped over, so a new instructor does not have this responsibility placed on their shoulders during their first year of teaching.

The underlined chapter in each district on the annual list of updated chapters is the host school and in charge of the district event. The event may be held at an alternate location if mutually agreed upon by the chapters in that district, but the underlined chapter is still in charge of the event. State officers will be available to assist district hosts as long as their schedule works out with the scheduled event date.

It is the responsibility of the district host to determine the date of the event, notify chapters in their district, select judges for each competition and coordinate all material provided to them in the District Speaking Event Host materials posted on the Wisconsin FFA website and provided by the Wisconsin FFA Center.

The sectional speaking competition is hosted by the current state FFA officer and their advisor in each of the 10 sections. It is the responsibility of the state FFA officers and their advisor to select a date, notify chapters in their sections, select judges and coordinate all material provided to them in the Sectional Speaking Event Host materials posted on the Wisconsin FFA website and provided by the Wisconsin FFA Center.

### **Philosophy of National FFA Career and Leadership Development Events**

The National FFA Organization is dedicated to organizing experiences that will meet the future needs of students while accomplishing the current purposes of agricultural education. The primary goal of career development events is to develop individual responsibilities, foster teamwork and promote communication while recognizing the value of ethical competition and individual achievement.

The activities in each career development event:

- include problem solving, critical thinking and teamwork skills, where appropriate.
- encourage appreciation for diversity by reducing barriers to participation among members.
- develop general leadership and recognize individual and team achievement.
- promote concentrated focus on future needs of members and society.

The National FFA Organization assumes the leadership role in developing and continuously improving relevant FFA career development events. National career development events should reflect instruction that currently takes place in the entire agricultural education program, including classroom instruction, laboratory instruction, individualized instruction and/or supervised agricultural experience. Career development events and awards are intended to be an outgrowth of instruction. Also, it is appropriate for the national organization to develop career development events and awards that stimulate instruction in emerging areas that reflect both current and future community, national and global work force needs. National FFA Career Development Events should be developed with significant input from FFA members, teachers, partners, respective industry sponsors and others involved in agricultural education. The National FFA Organization continues to encourage accessibility and provide opportunities for

achievement and recognition for students with diverse backgrounds.

Career development events that include team activities should be based on cooperation and teamwork while recognizing the value of competition and individual achievement. Where appropriate, team activities will be included that require two or more members from one chapter working cooperatively.

### **Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (AFNR) Career Cluster Content Standards**

Agriculture is a highly technical and ever-changing industry upon which everyone is dependent. In order to maintain agriculture as the nation's number one industry, it is crucial to understand the importance of agrisciences, marketing strategies, safe food production and continuous research. Strong, relevant agriscience programs are one way to maintain the nation's agricultural edge.

The National AFNR Career Cluster Content Standards were developed as part of the National FFA 10 x 15 project to provide state agricultural education leaders and teachers with a forward thinking guide for what students should know and be able to do through the study of agriculture. The National AFNR Career Cluster Content Standards should be used as a guide to develop well-planned curriculum in agriscience education to be delivered to students throughout the country. For a complete copy of the AFNR Career Cluster Content Standards please visit [www.agedlearning.org](http://www.agedlearning.org).

National FFA Organization has adopted the AFNR Career Cluster Content Standards and integrated them into all national award and recognition programs for the benefit of the members, school administration and agriculture as a whole. Details outlining the incorporation of the standards in career development events can be found at the end of each event chapter in the National FFA CDE handbook.

### **Eligibility of Participants**

A. Each participant must be a current, bona fide, dues paying FFA member in good standing with the local chapter, state FFA association and the National FFA Organization during the school year in which the participant is competing.

B. The participant in FFA Leadership Development Events must:

1. Be a high school FFA member; high school refers to grades 9-12. (A graduating senior is considered eligible to compete in state and national career development events up to and including his/her first national convention following graduation.)
2. Be a middle school FFA member; middle school refers to grades 7 and 8 for those competitions indicated as eligible for middle school participation.
3. Have qualified as a 7th, 8th or 9th grade member to participate in the Creed speaking event.
4. While in high school, be enrolled in at least one agricultural education course during the school year and/or follow a planned course of study; either course must include a supervised agricultural experience program, the objective of which is preparation for an agricultural career.

The National FFA Constitution provides flexibility to meet the needs of students enrolled in non-traditional programs. For this purpose a student needs to be enrolled in at least one agricultural education course during the year they participant in an event.

5. If a student moves to a different chapter or a different state once a he/she has qualified to move to the next level of competition in a career development event, that student may be allowed to compete in the event with the school he/she qualified with during the qualifying year.

- C. A chapter is allowed to have 2 members from their chapter participate in all individuals competitions as well as 2 teams in the quiz bowl competition. Only 1 team per chapter is allowed to participate in the Parliamentary Procedure competition.
- D. FFA members are allowed to compete in no more than **two** individual events and **one** team event at the District level of competition during the current school year. Once a member has won a State Level Competition in a particular event, they cannot compete in that event again. No student may participate in more than one National level FFA Career Development Event each year if they advance to that level.
- E. A state speaking competition winner may not compete again in the same speaking event in succeeding years. A student may not participate more than once in the same official National FFA Career Development Event if they participate in the National Level Competition.
- F. Members of the state winning team may not participate in any team parliamentary procedure event in subsequent years. However, a team's secretary may serve as a demonstrator, or a demonstrator may serve as the team secretary in one subsequent year.
- G. Members cannot compete in other district or sectional competitions other than their own. If a member cannot attend a scheduled district or sectional event, the member cannot go to another district or section to compete. District and sectional hosts can do whatever possible to accommodate members who may have a conflict with the event date, but the host is not required to hold a separate competition for those individuals. Due to the nature of this competition, inclement weather, illness or other events could interfere with the event date. However, to readjust the scheduled competition is very difficult and the competition will go forth as scheduled, unless all the schools in that district or section agree to accommodate these individuals.

### **Disqualification**

- A. Participating in more than 2 individual and/or more than 1 team event. Breaking of this rule will also disqualify the entire team if the infraction occurs with the team event.
- B. Not submitting the proper bibliography for a prepared manuscript.
- C. Proof that plagiarism has occurred.
- D. Any communication, verbal or non-verbal, between participants during a career development event will be sufficient cause to eliminate the team member involved from the career development event. This includes sharing questions asked during competition or other information that would give someone a distinct advantage in the event. The only exception to this would be communications between team members during the team activity portion of a given career development event.
- E. Any assistance given to a team member from any source other than the career development event officials or assistants will be sufficient cause to eliminate the team from the career development event.
- F. Event superintendents may stop any participant if they deem their manner to be hazardous either to themselves or others. Such action shall deem the individuals disqualified for that section of the career development event.
- G. Participants who start an event and do not complete the event without notifying event officials at the time of departure will be disqualified. This can affect the overall team rank and position. In some events this will also disqualify the entire team.
- H. Participants will not be allowed to utilize personal electronic communication devices, other than those approved by the event officials, during the entire course of the event. Participants who access personal electronic communication devices without prior approval of the event officials will be disqualified.

I. No participant shall gain access to real materials that will be utilized by the event committee during competition. Any team, participant, advisor or coach reported and proven to do so will be disqualified from the national event.

### **Confidential Information**

Labeled as Confidential Information is the necessary information to complete the various speaking events which only the judges can view. This information includes Creed questions, Extemporaneous Speaking topics, Parliamentary Procedure items of business, abilities and questions, selected Discussion Meet topics and Quiz Bowl questions.

This Confidential Information is generated from the office of the Wisconsin FFA Executive Director and provided to district and sectional hosts as well as the state FFA convention event managers and superintendents. Once a competition is completed ALL Confidential Information must be returned to the Wisconsin FFA Center. Advisors and competitors are not allowed to reproduce this information.

If a host, advisor, member or other individual is found copying or using this information for any other purpose than the actual competition, further action will be taken by the Wisconsin FFA Board of Directors. Disqualification of the individual or the chapter of the individual in question may occur if confidential information is abused and not properly handled as is ethically appropriate and as requested by the Wisconsin FFA Center.

### **Awards**

The State FFA Association will provide awards for district winners and runners-up funded through the Wisconsin FFA Foundation, Inc. as funding is available. Awards will also be provided to sectional and state winners. More award plaques, pins and money can be provided to contestants as more sponsors are found through the Wisconsin FFA Foundation, Inc. Speaking competition projects are currently available for funding.

### **Advancement to Next Level of Competition**

In order for an individual and/or team to advance to the next level of competition (ie. from district to sectional; from sectional to state), an individual and/or team must be present at the qualifying competition in order to advance even if there is only one or two individuals or teams entered to compete. They must technically “qualify” onsite to advance to the next level. When qualifying as a team, the team must have the minimum number of participants on the representing team at the competition in order to qualify to advance.

A team is allowed to make the necessary substitutions throughout the various levels of competition, however, they must always have at least the minimum number of team members and not exceed the maximum number of members on a team in order to advance.

If either the first or second place individual/team depending upon the level of competition cannot compete in the next level of competition, the next individual/team in line will be asked to compete.

Contestants will advance from their respective districts to the Sectional Event. If a district does not produce two contestants eligible to send on to the sectional event in any event, those spots will be given to contestants from another district who did not receive first or second place. If there is one spot open to fill and two contestants from different districts both in third place, both 3<sup>rd</sup> place contestants/teams from the different districts would advance resulting in 7 contestants/teams in the Sectional Event.

- **Example 1:** District 1 had only one creed speaker. District 2 had two creed speakers and District 3 had three creed speakers. The third place

contestant from District 3 would now have the chance to participate in the sectional event because District 1 left a spot vacant.

• **Example 2:** District 1 had only one creed speaker. District 2 had three creed speakers and District 3 had four creed speakers. Both third place contestants from District 2 and 3 would now have a chance to participate in the sectional speaking event and the event will have a seventh contestant. **\*\*Should one of these 7 creed speakers cancel the sectional creed speaking event would revert to 6 participants. If a 2<sup>nd</sup> creed speaker cancels the 4<sup>th</sup> creed speaker from District 3 could then advance (provided deadline had not passed). The Sectional Creed Speaking Event would still have 6 participants.\*\***

Vacancies can be filled from other Districts up to one week prior to the Sectional Speaking Event date. Vacancies can be filled from within the same district up to the Sectional Speaking Event date.

It is the responsibility of the District Host Chapter to provide the necessary materials to the FFA Center for this to become a reality at their Sectional Event.

District Host chapters need to make sure the following judges' materials are returned to the FFA Center as quickly as possible:

1. Final ranking (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, etc.) of each participant in every event
2. Sum of the Rank for each contestant/team that participated in Creed, Prepared, Extemporaneous, Discussion Meet, Employment Skills and Parliamentary Procedure events
3. For Quiz Bowl the Chapter Head-to-Head Tally Score Sheets for all brackets that were used

If these materials are not returned to the FFA Center, members in your district that placed 3<sup>rd</sup> and possibly even 4<sup>th</sup> will not be given the opportunity to fill the vacant 2<sup>nd</sup> and/or 1<sup>st</sup> place individual/team speaking events advancing to the Sectional level.

### **Substitutions**

Substitutions are allowed on the quiz bowl and parliamentary procedure teams when moving from one event level to the next. Students can be replaced or added on a team with students who may have not have competed at preceding levels of competitions. However there must always be the number of students that fall within the eligibility requirements of that team (3-5 members for quiz bowl and 5-7 for parliamentary procedure).

If an individual in an individual speaking event is unable to advance to the next level of competition, the student must inform the Wisconsin FFA Center and the next student that was ranked in the competition will be invited to participate in the next level of competition. No substitutions from a chapter are allowed in individual events.

### **Proper Official Dress**

Participants are expected to observe the National FFA Code of Ethics and the proper use of the FFA jacket during career development events. (Please reference the latest edition of the Official FFA Manual.) Proper Official Dress is required for all speaking competitions with an exception in the Junior High Quiz Bowl Competition at the District and Section Levels.

#### **Proper Official Dress consists of the following:**

**Males:** Official FFA Jacket zipped to the top, black slacks, black socks, black dress shoes, a white collared-shirt with official FFA tie.

**Females:** Official FFA Jacket zipped to the top, black skirts or pants are acceptable, white-collared blouse with official FFA blue scarf, black dress shoes with a closed heel and toe, black nylon hosiery. The skirt is to be at least knee length, hemmed evenly across the bottom, with a slit no longer than two inches above the knee, excluding the kick pleat. (Taken from the FFA Official Manual page 21).

In looking proper in the Official FFA dress, a member should:

- Look neat in their appearance with shirts tucked in and ties and scarves tied properly.

Policy has been updated that an “open door” to those who want to view competitions is allowed. However, no one can enter or leave the room during a participant’s performance. If an open door procedure is used at the event site, there **MUST** be a holding room for competitors in the Creed and Quiz Bowl competitions as the same questions are used for all participants.

If a district event wishes to have a more closed door policy that would have to be decided by the advisors in attendance at that event. What this would mean is that for individuals who wish to watch a member/team compete, that once the person watching enters the room to listen to a competitor, they must stay in the room for the entire competition. No one is to leave the room once they have heard a competitor except for the contestant themselves or no audience is allowed.

### **Accessibility for All Students**

All special needs requests must be made to the District, Sectional and State level hosts/coordinators so that appropriate documentation and arrangements may be considered. Last minute notification may cause problems for the host to provide the needed arrangements. Students needing an interpreter or other professional service are asked to have their home school provide such an individual who would accompany the participant to the competition.

### **Rules and Procedures Review**

State FFA rules for speaking competitions will be reviewed annually by the State FFA Executive Director to keep current with any changes forwarded from the National FFA Organization. Rules and procedures may be revised to address concerns or changes in the various events.

Every five years, a group of FFA advisors will review all speaking events for any changes to the current speaking events. These recommendations will be presented to the State FFA Board of Directors for acceptance or rejection. The State FFA Board of Directors has the right to forward any rule changes to the delegates at the State FFA Convention for a final vote.

The State FFA Board of Directors will give final approval of the addition of any new speaking competitions either forwarded from the National FFA Organization or recommended from FFA state officers and/or advisors. They will also give final approval for any major changes recommended in rules or procedures.

<b>Event</b>	<b>Official Dress</b>	<b>Participants Per Team</b>	<b>Participants Per Chapter at Districts</b>	<b>State Winner Advances to Nationals</b>
Creed	Yes	1	2	Yes
Discussion Meet	Yes	1	2	No
Extemporaneous				

Speaking	Yes	1	2	Yes
Employment Skills	Yes	1	2	Yes
Parliamentary Procedure	Yes	5-7	1 team	Yes
Prepared Speaking	Yes	1	2	Yes
Quiz Bowl	Not required at Districts; Recommended at Sectionals; Required at State	3-5	2 teams	No

# DISCUSSION MEET LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT EVENT

## I. Purpose

The Discussion Meet Leadership Development Event allows participants to exchange ideas and information in an effort to solve a problem. It is an exercise in problem-solving using techniques of letting the participants discuss subjects, with the questions, answers and statements.

## II. Event Rules

- A. An FFA member must be in good standing with the local chapter, the state FFA association and the national organization. The member cannot have graduated from high school at the time of the district event for the given competition year. A State FFA Discussion Meet winner may not compete again in any FFA Discussion Meet event in succeeding years.
- B. An FFA chapter may have **two** entries for the Discussion Meet at the district event in a given year. **Two** district winners will advance to the sectional event. These may be from the same school, if so selected by the judges. One sectional winner per section will advance to the state event.
- C. The Official FFA dress must be worn by all contestants participating. Deductions for deviations from Official FFA dress will be at the discretion of the judges who will consider special situations when presented prior to the contestant's presentation.
- D. Any participant in possession of an electronic device during the competition is subject to disqualification.

## II. Event Format

- A. Three judges, one or two timekeepers and a moderator are needed for the event and it is a good idea to have a door monitor so that no one enters or leaves the room during an event. No one may leave the event room once a round starts, until that round is over. Persons may leave between rounds of the event, in any event where more than one round occurs.
- B. Contestants should be seated at two tables set at approximately a 90 degree angle to another. This allows them to see each other and to see judges and timekeeper. Host school must provide name tents on the tables with names on both sides for identification during discussion.
- C. All event officials and contestants will be in the competition room at the appointed time, as directed by the event manager. Important: Contestants may **not** bring research information into any of the Discussion Meet rooms! They may have only a blank paper and pen/pencil with them for the purpose of making notes during the actual event. The event host will provide paper for each contestants.
- D. The moderator is to introduce contestants and the topic, start the discussion, keep the event on track and see that no one monopolizes the time. This is the first time that the contestants will know the exact topic for the session. They should be given two minutes to gather thoughts after the announcing of the topic. The object of the event is for participants to exchange ideas and information in an effort to solve a problem.
- E. A time keeper must be provided for this event. Possibly using a state officer who is familiar with

timing this event.

- F. There are 3 to 7 contestants in an event session. If more than 7 contestants are present at a district event, the event may be split into two sessions, and the top two from each session will go on to the finals, using the second topic provided. If there are not at least 3 people to conduct Discussion Meet event, the host advisor would be allowed to ask for extra participants with the consent of the discussion meet participants at the event site to just sit in and discuss the topic. These people would not be judged, they would simply be used to enhance the event for those competing and give the contestants some experience in the discussion event before competing at the sectional level. At Sectional and State Events, the maximum number of contestants will be 6 and 5 respectively, so no need for split sessions will occur.
- G. The moderator will call the event session to order and announce the topic to be discussed and introduce the timekeepers(s) and contestants. The FFA member would be able to begin writing on their blank sheet of paper immediately following the announcement of the Discussion Meet topic. No writing is allowed before that time.
- H. The moderator will then call on the contestants to make a 30-second opening statement (Statements will be made in voluntary order of the contestants). The timekeeper will stand at 30 seconds during each contestant's opening remarks and remain standing until that contestant finished their remarks. Judges may subtract points at their discretion for contestants abusing the time limit.
- I. The moderator will then indicate the opportunity for open discussion which will run for a total of 12 minutes for 3 contestants, 15 minutes for 4 contestants, 18 minutes for 5 contestants, 21 minutes for 6 events, or 24 minutes for 7 contestants. The moderator will, at their discretion, give "directed discussion" by encouraging contestants to consider other aspects of the topic under consideration, should they feel that the contestants are missing some aspect of the problem or are stuck on one small facet of the problem. The contestants are encouraged to bring up a point and work on that point until they agree on a solution and a course of action, if one is possible, before moving on to another point. The timekeeper will indicate to the moderator when the total time for the open discussion phase of the event has elapsed
- J. The moderator will call for a minute of quiet time allowing the contestants to consider a closing statement. The moderator will call upon each contestant (again in voluntary order) to make up to a one-minute closing statement. The timekeeper will stand at one minute into each contestant's closing statements and again remain standing until that contestant is completed. Judges may, at their discretion, penalize contestants for abuse of time limit.
- K. The moderator will recognize the judges and request contestants to leave the room to allow the judges to finalize the tabulation of their score sheets.

### **III. Group Discussion Topics**

Topics for the Discussion Meet will be released for each year's competition by no later than December 1 for the January/February events. Each year there will be 7 topics. Three topics will be indicated for the district competitions and four topics for sectional and state competitions. A specific topic will only be used once during a given competition year.

**Suggested Sources for Information/Study:** Your local school, college or public library; All FFA publications-both state and national; Any agriculture publication; American, Wisconsin and County Farm Bureau Federation ([www.fb.com](http://www.fb.com)) ; Popular News Media; Legislative personnel; Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection; Department of Public Instruction.

#### IV. Scoring

Judges will not be permitted to confer with each other prior to the completion of their tabulation. The moderator, with the assistance of the timekeeper, will supervise the final tabulation by the judges, and report results to the group. Judges will use a point system indicated on the score sheet to assist in selecting their winners. Each judge will be instructed to break all tie scores. The moderator and timekeeper will rank the panel winners, based on the total scoring given by each judge; i.e., 1 point for first, 2 second, etc. The contestant with the lowest ranking score will be judged the winner and announced to the audience. The decision of the judges is final.

## Keys For A Successful FFA Discussion Meet Contestant

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### 1. Know how to play the game:

**Background:** The FFA Discussion Meet event mirrors an FFA Chapter committee meeting. Thus, the FFA Discussion Meet event judges are looking for cooperative and constructive discussion of the topic which leads to workable and actionable solutions – not a debate of the topic. The judges are looking for the person or persons who stand out as the committee chair.

- a. **Be recognized as the committee chair:** A good committee chair is able to solve problems and implement solutions by being very cooperative. There are seven criteria on the judge's score card: 1) Opening Statement, 2) Analysis of Topic or Problem, 3) Problem Solving and Implementation, 4) Delivery, 5) Cooperative Attitude, 6) FFA Impact, and 7) Closing Statement. Problems Solving and Implementation and Cooperative Attitude are both worth up to 20 points each, while the other five are worth up to 10 points each.

To be successful in this event, you must score as the top 1 or 2 in Problem Solving and Implementation and Cooperative Attitude. You do that by being seen as an effective committee chair. An effective committee chair is the person who cooperatively leads the discussion. The person who endeavors to make sure all sides of the issue are explored, even a side they may not agree with, and all committee members (contestants) have their voices heard. A good committee chair will introduce a point to be discussed, make a strong statement concerning that point (Problem Solving and Implementation) and then hand off the discussion to a fellow contestant by asking that person a question using that person's name. Remember, this is a cooperative and constructive discussion, so the questions you ask a fellow contestant should help move the discussion forward.

A good committee chair works to get the best ideas out of their fellow committee members. A good committee chair makes sure each committee member shares their thoughts and opinions. If a fellow contestant is being quiet or has been left out of the conversation, a good committee chair asks that person a question and gets them involved in the conversation. A good committee chair keeps the discussion on topic. A good committee chair doesn't interrupt or talk over others while they are speaking. A good committee chair will attempt to bring the group to consensus on workable and actionable solutions to the topic being discussed. Do this by stating at least one action you will take to make a difference as it relates to the topic and then ask your fellow contestants what they are going to do to make a difference.

2. **Understand the event structure:** The event has an opening (opening statement), a body (open discussion), and a closing (closing statement). A good model of logic to follow is: In the opening, tell them what you are going to tell them. In the body, tell them. In the closing, tell them what you told them.
- a. **Opening statement:** It is critical you grab the attention of the judges in your opening statement. You may do that by using a quote from a famous person that relates to the topic being discussed or by telling a quick personal story that makes an emotional connection with the judges. After your strong opening sentence, tell us what you are going to tell us. Quickly outline the main points you would like to discuss during the open discussion.
  - b. **Discussion:** It is critical to be seen as the committee chair. Lead the discussion using the sub-topics for each event topic. Make your points and hand off the discussion by asking a question using your fellow contestant's name. Try to come at the topic from a unique point of view and make sure many points of view are discussed. At the 5 minute warning, the timekeeper will stand, make sure you try to bring the group to consensus by developing workable and actionable solutions for the topic being discussed.
  - c. **Closing statement:** It is critical you finish strong. Do this by quickly summarizing one main point each of your fellow contestants made during the discussion. Don't use the closing statement to bring up a new point in the discussion that wasn't covered before. State what you believe are the solutions the discussion produced and the action you will take to make a difference in your FFA Chapter and/or Wisconsin, national, or global agriculture. With your closing, you are figuratively putting a bow on the package, the one you began wrapping with your opening statement, for the judges. Make sure your final sentence is powerful and memorable - plant your flag!

3. **General pointers:**

- a. **This is a FFA event:** As an FFA member, **YOU are FFA!** So, when mentioning FFA, make sure you personalize your statements. "We as FFA members should..." or "As an FFA member, I suggest..." Make sure you know how the topic relates to your FFA Chapter, the Wisconsin FFA Association, and National FFA. Visit the Wisconsin FFA website at [www.wisconsinffa.org](http://www.wisconsinffa.org) and the National FFA website at [www.ffa.org](http://www.ffa.org). Check them out on facebook and twitter. How can you work within FFA to help solve the challenges arising from the topic being discussed?
- b. **Speaking style:** The opening and closing statements are given standing and directed to the audience. Make sure you stand up with confidence and move behind your chair, push your chair in under the table, pause a beat to prepare yourself and the audience and then start your statement. Make good eye contact with members of the audience. Finish your statement, pause a beat, pull out your chair and be seated. Do not talk yourself out of your chair as you begin to speak or talk yourself down into your chair as you finish.

Most people talk faster than they think they do. This is especially true when nerves kick in during a speaking event. Concentrate on slowing down and speaking clearly. Use a strong, clear, confident voice. Be aware of your facial expressions and body language. Always keep a smile on your face and maintain a confident body posture.

During open discussion, sit confidently in your chair – not too stiff but not a relaxed slouch either, make good eye contact with your fellow contestants, actually listen to what they have to say – don't get focused in on the next point you want to make, think "yes, and..." to build on their points and the discussion.

- c. **Opening and closing statement strategy:** The opening and closing statements are given in voluntary order determined by the contestants. Most people believe the judges' best remember the first person to speak and the last person to speak. Those speaking in the middle may get lost in the shuffle.

Going first shows you are very confident. Just make sure you are mentally prepared to deliver a strong opening statement.

Sometimes there is gamesmanship among experienced contestants in an attempt to be the last person to speak. Remember, Cooperative Attitude is critical, so be careful not to be seen as uncooperative in an effort to secure the final speaking position. If you go last for the opening and/or closing statement, you better nail it because your statement will be remembered!

- d. Use of personal stories and facts:** Everyone loves a story. Tell personal stories that relate to the topic and make an emotional connection to your audience (the judges). Tell us about your home farm or your experience as a high school student and FFA member, a lesson learned from your grandfather, your greatest challenge working with family...etc. Make it personal and make sure it relates to the topic.

Do a good job of researching the topic. Find some facts and figures you can cite to bring credibility to your thoughts. Don't go overboard on facts and figures – a few sprinkled into the discussion go a long way. Using too many facts and figures will bore your audience (the judges).

- e. Stay on topic:** You will only get 4-6 times to speak during open discussion. When you speak, you must make strong points directly related to the topic. Don't get off topic and don't allow another contestant to lead the group off topic. A good committee chair keeps the discussion on topic!
- f. Think outside the box and propose unique solutions:** Research the topics from all points of view. Really think about all sides and perspectives of the topic. Can you tackle this challenge from a direction no one else will consider? Having a unique perspective on solving the challenge will serve you well. Don't just take the farmer, ag professional, or FFA point of view. How will this affect consumers, suppliers, senior citizens, young people, ag educators, land grant universities, those who don't understand farming and ag, those trying to vilify farming and ag...etc?

Avoid the "education" trap. Almost every topic lends itself to the solution of "We just need to educate...". Most judges roll their eyes when they hear, "more education" for the 99<sup>th</sup> time. If you are going to suggest, "We need to educate...", you better come up with a very unique way of delivering that education because the judges have heard all the usual ways, and they are not going to be excited to hear it again.

- g. Be very careful about using acronyms or farm/ag terms your audience (the judges) may not know or understand:** If you mention HSUS and PETA, you must first say, "The Humane Society of the United States, known as HSUS." or "The People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, known as PETA." Once you've said the complete name, then you may use the acronym from that point forward. Don't expect all judges will know what a gilt or a gelding is. If you use ag terms such as those, you need to give a brief explanation of what you are talking about.
- h. Use proper English:** Watch your use of "umm", "like", "you know", "ya", "nope", "cuz", "ta", "I think" (if you are speaking, we know you think that. Stating the obvious weakens what you are saying.)

- i. Attire: Proper FFA Official Dress is a MUST!** This is a event and every detail can and will make a difference in the judges' scores.

**Female Official Dress:**

- Black skirt *Skirt is to be at least knee length, hemmed evenly across the bottom, with a slit no longer than 2 inches above the knee, excluding the kick pleat. Black slacks may be appropriate for traveling and outdoor activities (Note: In most cases, a speaking event is neither done in the process of traveling nor is it an outdoor activity. Thus, females should wear a black skirt for a FFA speaking event).*
- White collared blouse and official FFA blue scarf.
- Black dress shoes with a closed heel and toe (No boots, sandals, open-toed shoes, or tennis shoes.)
- Black nylon hosiery.
- Official FFA jacket zipped to the top.

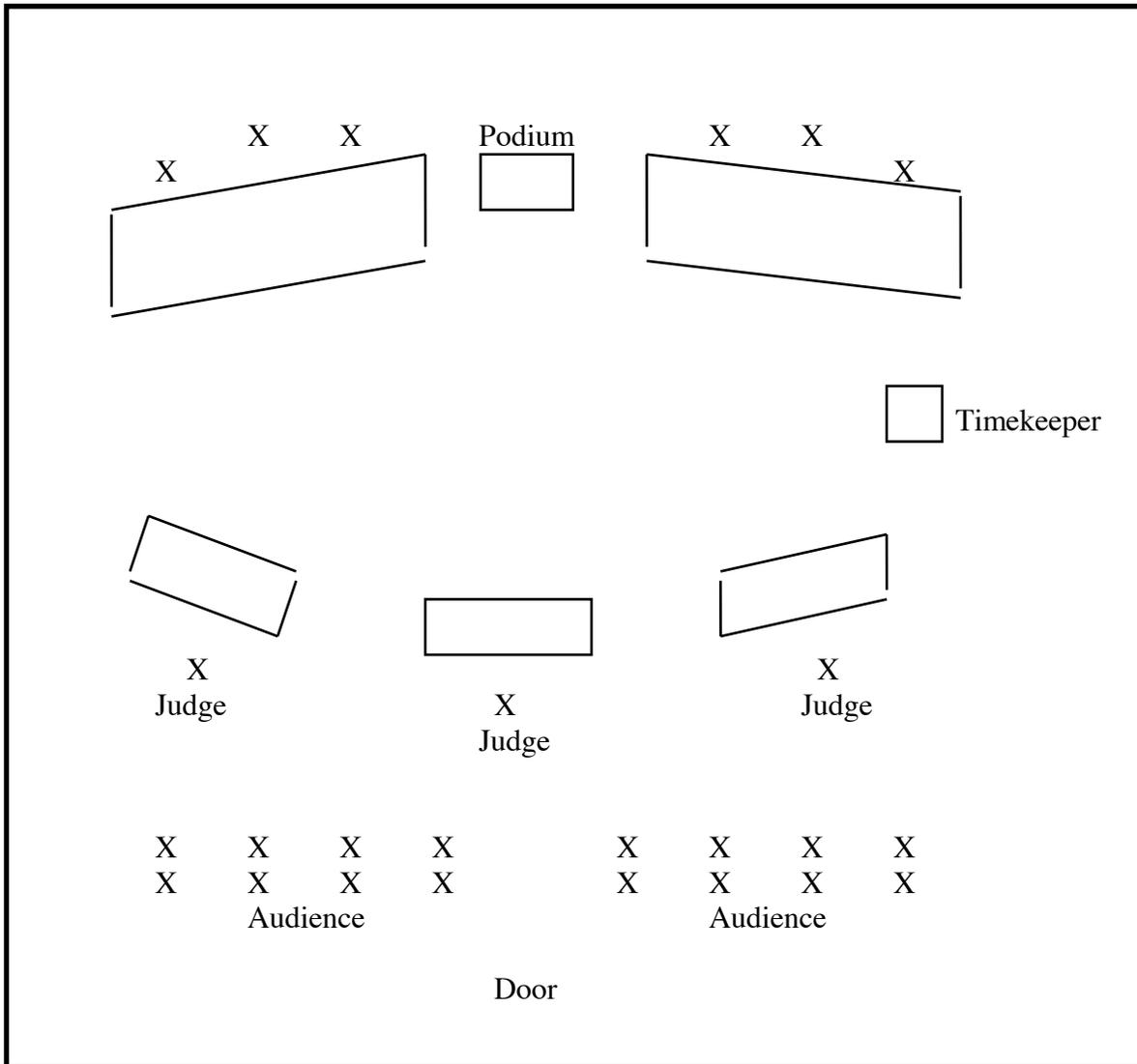
**Male Official Dress**

- Black dress pants. (No jeans - blue or black, leather, pleather, etc.)
- White dress shirt and official FFA tie
- Black dress shoes with a closed heel and toe. (No boots, sandals, open-toed shoes, tennis shoes.)

- Black socks.
- Official FFA jacket zipped to the top.

## ROOM DIAGRAM FOR DISCUSSION MEET

Contestants should be seated at two tables set at approximately a 90 degree angle to one another. This allows them to see each other and to see the judges and time keepers. Each contestant should have a card visible in front of them on the discussion table that includes their name, and is visible by judges and fellow contestants. The contestants will also have a name badge on their jacket in order that their name is clearly seen. A podium should be placed between these two tables for the moderator.



## DISCUSSION MEET LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT EVENT SCORE CARD

**PARTICIPANT'S NAMES  
(LEFT OF MODERATOR)**

**TOPIC**

**PARTICIPANT'S NAMES  
(RIGHT OF MODERATOR)**

			<b>Opening Statement:</b> Definition of topic or problem – Importance, causes, effects, relevancy of problem <b>10 points possible</b>				
			<b>Analysis of topic or problem:</b> Does contestant attempt to identify problem causes and remain on topic? Knowledge, extent and accuracy of facts. <b>20 points possible</b>				
			<b>Problem Solving and Implementation:</b> Ability and judgment in seeking answers and solutions, planning and organizational understanding in implementing action programs. <b>20 points possible</b>				
			<b>Delivery:</b> Voice quality, loudness, clear enunciation, communicativeness, desirable sentence structure and interesting choice of words. <b>10 points possible</b>				
			<b>Cooperative attitude:</b> Listening, asking pertinent questions, airing all points of view, securing major agreement, minimizing major differences, courtesy to other participants. <b>20 points possible</b>				
			<b>FFA Impact:</b> Possible impact FFA could have on the resolution of the topic, effect of various points on FFA, etc. How is FFA affected by this issue. <b>10 points possible</b>				
			<b>Closing Statement:</b> Total effectiveness. A general evaluation of overall problem solving performance by the contestants. <b>10 points possible</b>				
			<b>Total</b> (Total score for each contestant is to be tabulated by judge. Any tie scores are to be broken by judge.				
			<b>Rank of each contestant (1 through 7)</b>				

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