

# MICHIGAN FFA

## AGRICULTURE COMMUNICATIONS

### CAREER DEVELOPMENT EVENT

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#### Objectives

- The purpose of the Agriculture Communications CDE is to provide individuals with practical communications skills necessary to pursue career opportunities in agricultural communications.

#### Team makeup/eligibility

- **Number of Students**
  - Agriculture Communications teams must comprise of 3 or 4 members. Teams will split into three events. A minimum of one member must be in all three areas.
    - Writing
    - Design
    - Electronic Media
  - All participants must be members in good standing with the Michigan FFA Association and on the official roster.
  - The highest scores in each practicum will be counted. The same person's scores will be used for the editing and AP tests.
- **Equipment needed by students/provided by contest**
  - Students are to bring their own pens and pencils
  - Students will be provided with the following:
    - Loose-leafed paper
    - Dictionaries and style manuals (may be used during practicum)
    - Computers installed with:
      - Adobe Dreamweaver 6
      - Photoshop, Indesign, Illustrator
      - Microsoft Word, Publisher, Excel
      - Access to Word Press
      - Audacity
- **Official Dress**
  - Official dress is required for this contest.
  - Official Dress for an FFA member includes:
    - An official FFA jacket zipped to the top
    - Black slacks and black socks/nylons or black skirt and black nylons
      - Skirt should be a minimum of knee length
      - Slacks should be full length
    - White collared blouse or white collared shirt
    - Official FFA tie or official FFA scarf
    - Black dress shoes with closed heel and toe

Note: Medical or cultural adjustments to required official dress may be made with prior approval of contest/event chair. Also, appropriate personal

protective equipment may be used with Official Dress. Junior high FFA members are allowed to wear FFA jackets, but it is optional. Participants in junior high contests should not be judged differently for wearing or not wearing a jacket.

### **Contest Personnel**

- **Judges**
  - Judges will be selected by the contest superintendent.
- **Superintendent**
  - The superintendent will monitor the contest room and assist the judges as they compile their final placing.
  - The superintendent will adequately prepare the judges before the event competition.

### **Procedure**

- **Step by step makeup**
  - All teams will meet in a central location for an orientation and press conference.
    1. Teams will be divided such that writing, design and electronic media members sit together.
    2. All team members will be given an orientation at the beginning of the press conference that will last no more than ten minutes.
    3. Following the orientation, the press conference will be held.
      - a) Each team member will receive a press packet with background information on the agricultural topic and is expected to use this information during the event.
      - b) An expert will speak on a timely agricultural or environmental topic for about 20 minutes.
      - c) Students will be provided with paper to take notes if they wish.
      - d) After the presentation a ten-minute question and answer period with the expert (speaker) will be held.
      - e) Writers will receive preference when asking questions.
      - f) Upon completion of the ten-minute question and answer session, all participants will be released to their practicum locations.
  - Judge identified plagiarism will be cause for disqualification.

## Scores

- **Specific sections with points**

- Communications quiz 25 points per individual/75 points per team
  1. Completed by all members
  2. Members will complete a quiz that covers basic elements important to the skill areas of:
    - a) Journalistic writing
    - b) Broadcasting
    - c) Public relations
    - d) Graphic design
    - e) News
    - f) Communication ethics
- Editing exercise 25 points per individual/75 points per team
  1. Completed by all members
  2. Members will be given a printed document that contains 25 mistakes.
  3. They will be required to use correct proofreader's marks (see Association Press Stylebook and Libel Manual). Style, grammar, punctuation and spelling mistakes will be included.
  4. Team members will NOT be able to use the style manual or dictionary during this exercise.
- Writing
  1. Completed by writing member only
  2. Writers are to write a journalistic piece based on the press packet and information that was gathered in the press conference.
  3. It should be written for an appropriate audience, have a strong focus and opening paragraph and include a headline.
  4. The final story must be completed on Microsoft Word.
  5. Members have 60 minutes to complete the practicum.
  6. The specific activity that the member will complete will be announced prior to the contest date and may include:
    - a) Press release
    - b) News story
    - c) Feature story
  7. The writers will be scored on the following criteria
    - a) Lead/Focus 15 points
    - b) Accuracy of information and quotes 15 points
    - c) Clarity and conciseness 10 points
    - d) Correct style (AP) 10 points
    - e) Depth of coverage 10 points
    - f) Header/Headline 10 points
    - g) Grammar, spelling, punctuation and word choice 10 points
    - h) Organization and format 10 points
    - i) Accomplishment of purpose 10 points
    - j) **Total 100 points**

- 1. Completed by design member only
  - 2. Each designer will use the press packet and information that was gathered in the press conference to develop a graphic design layout.
  - 3. The objective is effective communication or information sharing through visual tools.
  - 4. Members have 60 minutes to complete the practicum.
  - 5. The specific activity that the members will complete will be announced prior to the contest date and may include:
    - a) Magazine page layout
    - b) Web page layout
    - c) Electronic publication layout
    - d) Flier/poster
  - 6. Designers will be scored on the following criteria
 

a) Overall aesthetics of design	20 points
b) Technical skills specific to activity	20 points
c) Use of graphic design principles	15 points
d) Neatness and creativity	15 points
e) Choice and placement/cropping of photo(s) and graphic(s)	15 points
f) Writing and editing (specific to activity)	15 points
g) <b>Total</b>	<b>100 points</b>
- 1. Completed by electronic media member only.
  - 2. Electronic media specialists will use the press packet and information that was gathered in the press conference to develop an electronic media message.
  - 3. Members have 60 minutes to complete the practicum.
  - 4. The specific activity that the members will complete will be announced prior to the contest date and may include:
    - a) Digital news broadcast
    - b) Blog
    - c) Social media
    - d) Video
  - 5. Members will be scored on the following criteria
 

a) Effective use of medium	20 points
b) Technical skills specific to activity	20 points
c) Power of expression	15 points
d) Creativity	15 points
e) Clarity of communication (writing)	10 points
f) Organization and format	10 points
g) Accuracy of information	10 points
h) <b>Total</b>	<b>100 points</b>

- **Determining Awards**
  - Team scores will be an aggregate of all members' quizzes and individual practicum scores.
  - Gold and Silver awards will be determined by the Michigan FFA Association Executive Secretary.
- **Tie breaker**
  - Tiebreakers will be settled in the following order:
    1. Combined individual practicum rank score
    2. Combined communications quiz score
    3. Combined editing exercise scores

### **List of Additional Materials**

- In addition to these rules please review the following documents.
  - General rules governing Michigan FFA Agriculture Skills CDEs
  - Agriculture Communications CDE Practicums, for the current year
  - Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual
  - Microsoft Office computer program
  - Adobe Dreamweaver 6
  - Bivins, T. *Public Relations Writings: The Essentials of Style and Format*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition. McGraw-Hill Higher Education, ISBN 0844-20351-3
  - Harrower, T. *Newspaper Designer's Handbook*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition. McGraw-Hill Higher Education, ISBN 0-07-249291-0
  - Kalbfeld, B. *Associated Press Broadcast News Handbook*. McGraw-Hill Higher Education, ISBN 0-07-013688-2
  - Telg, R. and T. Irani. *Agricultural Communication in Action: A Hands-On Approach*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition. Cengage/Delmar Publishing, ISBN 1111317143

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