

THE PURPOSE

The Discussion Meet, at any level, is *designed to replicate a committee meeting where participants explore an agricultural topic and ways to address it*. The event is evaluated on an exchange of ideas and information on a pre-determined topic. This is not a panel symposium where 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 participant at any time.

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

1. Stimulate logical thinking and a desire for accurate information.
2. Develop a concise and convenient manner of speaking.
3. Develop the ability to listen.
4. Help the participant to overcome timidity or stage fright.
5. Assist the individual in learning to give and receive criticism in a gainful manner.
6. Teach the value of compromise.
7. Develop leaders for effective problem-solving through group discussion.

THE STRUCTURE

Beginning at the regional level, 9th to 12th grade students are randomly assigned in groups of six to eight to discuss a preselected topic. Based on the number of participants, there may be one round or several rounds to determine the top three individuals. Each region's top three individuals move on to the State preliminary rounds and compete for a spot in the High School Discussion Meet Final Round held during Michigan Farm Bureau's State Annual Meeting in November/December.

A discussion meet round at any level consists of up to eight high school students discussing a preselected topic. The discussion has three parts:

- The opening statement is **30 seconds** in length. The statement should be broad in scope, show relevancy and importance of the topic.
- The body of the discussion will be **20 minutes** in length. During the body of the discussion, first background the topic, discuss why it is an issue, come up with solutions to the issue and be sure to bring Farm Bureau into the discussion.
- The closing statement is given at the end of the discussion. Competitors will be given **one minute** of quiet time to put their closing statements together. Closing statements should summarize the discussion that took place during the body. The closing statement should not be "canned" and is one minute or less.

THE COMPETITORS

Each FFA chapter, 4-H club, and county Farm Bureau may register up to three competitors currently in 9th through 12th grade. The Michigan FFA Association regions determine which counties will compete against each other. FFA advisors serve as event hosts, while 4-H coordinators and MFB regional managers assist with securing judges.

REGION	EVENT DATE	REGISTRATION DUE DATE	TIME	LOCATION	COUNTIES IN REGION
I	11/12	11/5	5 p.m.	Vicksburg High School	Allegan, Barry, Berrien, Branch, Cass, Calhoun, Eaton, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph, and Van Buren
II	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	Hillsdale, Jackson, Lenawee, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, Washtenaw, and Wayne
III	11/13	11/6	10 a.m.	Delta College	Bay, Gratiot, Huron, Midland, Saginaw, Sanilac, and Tuscola
IV	9/28	9/20	9 a.m.	Byron High School	Clinton, Genesee, Ingham, Lapeer, Livingston, Shiawassee, and St. Clair
V	10/16	10/9	4 p.m.	Cedar Springs High School	Clare, Ionia, Isabella, Kent, Lake, Mason, Mecosta, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceania, Osceola, and Ottawa
VI	TBD	TBD	TBD	Bay Arenac Career Center	Alcona, Alger, Alpena, Antrim, Arenac, Baraga, Bay, Benzie, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Chippewa, Crawford, Delta, Dickinson, Emmet, Gladwin, Gogebic, Grand Traverse, Houghton, Iosco, Iron, Kalkaska, Keweenaw, Leelanau, Luce, Mackinac, Manistee, Marquette, Menominee, Missaukee, Montmorency, Ogemaw, Ontonagon, Oscoda, Otsego, Presque Isle, Roscommon, Schoolcraft, and Wexford

THE TIMELINE

July 1	Questions, locations & dates determined
Mid-August	Topics are released, and online registration begins
September 1 – November 15	Regional Discussion Meets, throughout Michigan
December 4	State Competition, Grand Rapids, MI

PRIZES

All regional competitors receive an appreciation gift for their participation. Competitors who place in their region will receive a state participation prize at sign in during the state competition and a \$50 cash prize. At the state level, the runner-up will receive a \$150 cash prize and plaque. The state winner will receive \$250 and a plaque. All prizes are courtesy of DTE Energy and the Michigan Foundation for Agriculture.

For the complete guidebook and contest schedule, click <https://www.michfb.com/agriculture/education/discussion-meets>
 Questions? Contact Katie Cooper, Promotion & Education Specialist, kcooper@michfb.com



2024 DISCUSSION MEET QUESTIONS

Each question has been assigned for a specific round. Prior to the regional event, competitors will be notified how many rounds will be held based on the number of registrations. During the state competition, all competitors will participate in Round One and Round Two. The overall combined top six scores will compete in the Final Round. Please prepare accordingly.

REGIONAL LEVEL QUESTIONS:

Round One Question: The landscape of American agriculture and the picture of the "typical" American farm continues to change. How can Farm Bureau learn from FFA and 4-H on how to better support and provide value to members from a broad diversity of modern agriculture and farmers and ranchers?

Round Two Question: Farmers and ranchers are reliant on multiple energy sources to run equipment, heat livestock barns and power storage and maintenance facilities. How can Farm Bureau work with energy companies, local governments, and rural communities to increase U.S. energy production, minimize loss of agricultural land and protect private property rights?

Final Round Question: Young farmers are finding they need to try new things to make their farms more successful and profitable. What are some ways these young farmers and ranchers can explore new sources of income? How can the Farm Bureau support them as they work to improve their farm and ranch businesses?

The following links provide reliable resources and information you may find helpful as you prepare:

- [American Farm Bureau Federation](#)
- [Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program](#)
- [Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development](#)
- [Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy](#)
- [Michigan Department of Natural Resources](#)
- [Michigan Farm Bureau Education & Leadership](#)
- [Michigan Farm Bureau Political Action](#)
- [Michigan Farm News](#)
- [Michigan Grown, Michigan Great](#)
- [Michigan State University Extension](#)

TOPICS: Diversity Energy Income Sources

		COMPETITORS, LISTED LEFT TO RIGHT							
COMPETITOR NAMES:									
(1) OPENING STATEMENT: (10 points) Defines problem; conveys importance and relevance; sets the stage for an interesting discussion; clear point of view; uses time wisely.									
(2) ANALYSIS OR TOPIC OR PROBLEM: (20 points) 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.									
(3) PROBLEM SOLVING AND IMPLEMENTATION: (25 points) Leader in guiding the conversation to specific and relevant solutions; has achievable plan of action; clearly defines how FB is part of the action plan.									
(4) COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE: (15 points) 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.									
(5) DELIVERY: (15 points) Interesting to listen to; animated; appropriate volume and tone; poised; uses gestures and eye contact; confident and clear.									
(6) CLOSING STATEMENT: (15 points) Shows that they have listened to the conversation; develops relevant and realistic plans; memorable; inspires confidence.									
<p><i>Total score for each competitor is to be tabulated by the judge. Any tie scores are to be broken by the judge.</i></p> <p>Total of 100 points possible.</p>		TOTAL							
<p><i>Rank competitors: highest score = 1; second highest = 2, etc.</i></p>		RANK							

JUDGE'S SIGNATURE: _____

(1) OPENING STATEMENT 10 PTS

<p>Competitor...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Clearly defines the problem.Conveys the importance and relevancy of the problem.Makes an "open" statement that leaves room for further conversation.Sets the stage for an interesting conversation with a very clear point of view.Uses their time very wisely and stays in the given time. <p>Award 7-10 points</p>	<p>Competitor...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Defines the problem.Sets the problem in context.Makes a statement that leaves some room for further conversation but could be more open.Has a general point of view.Stays in the given time. <p>Award 4-6 points</p>	<p>Competitor...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Does not address the problem – is off topic.Does not address the importance or relevancy of the problem.Makes a "closed" statement that does not allow room for further conversation.Does not seem to have a point of view.Does not finish in the allotted time. <p>Award 0-3 points</p>
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(2) ANALYSIS OF TOPIC OR PROBLEM: 20 PTS

<p>Competitor...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Identifies and addresses the causes of the problem and remains on topic.Has thoroughly researched the topic.Confidently builds on the ideas of others to contribute to a coherent analysisAsks relevant questions to vet the ideas of others.Shares relevant personal examples that add to the conversation.Helps ensure thorough analysis before moving to problem solving.Is aware of current and relevant FB policy. <p>Award 13-20 points</p>	<p>Competitor...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Identifies the causes of the problem, does not directly address them, but remains on topic.Has done research.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.Asks some questions to help vet the ideas of others.Shares relevant personal examples – maybe slightly off topic.Demonstrates knowledge of this problem but not why it exists.Is aware of current FB policy. <p>Award 6-12 points</p>	<p>Competitor...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Does not address the problem or does not remain on topic/wanders/distracts.Hasn't done much research or lacks quality facts.Doesn't build on other's ideas, only pushes their own.Doesn't ask questions to clarify other's ideas.Doesn't share relevant personal examples.Misinterprets the issue or does not display competency and therefore does not help with problem solving.Is unaware of FB policy. <p>Award 0-5 points</p>
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(3) PROBLEM SOLVING AND IMPLEMENTATION 25 PTS

<p>Competitor...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Is a leader in guiding the group and the conversation to specific and relevant solutions.Generates ideas that contribute to an achievable and specific plan of action to resolve the issue.Clearly defines how Farm Bureau is part of the action plan. <p>Award 17-25 points</p>	<p>Competitor...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Tries to help lead the conversation to address a solution but misses opportunities to collaborate with the group.Has a plan but is missing specificity.Farm Bureau is mentioned but is not a crucial piece of the solution. <p>Award 7-16 points</p>	<p>Competitor...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Instead of helping to guide the conversation to a solution, just drops data.Offers no plan for a solution or a generic plan like "tell our story" or "educate consumers."Does not identify how Farm Bureau is involved. <p>Award 0-6 points</p>
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(4) COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE:15 PTS

<p>Competitor...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is an active listener and comments on references or specific ideas mentioned by others tying them back to the bigger conversation?• Clearly shows grace, courtesy and respect to other participants.• Shows integrity especially when they do not agree with others. <p>Award 10-15 points</p>	<p>Competitor...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Competitor listens to others but does not comment specifically on their ideas or tie ideas back to the bigger conversation.• Is respectful of others.• Is not rude or defensive when they disagree with others. <p>Award 5-9 points</p>	<p>Competitor...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does not listen to others – just waits for their turn to talk.• Cuts others off or simply repeats what others have already said.• Is rude, defensive or combative when they do not agree with others. <p>Award 0-4 points</p>
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(5) DELIVERY: 15 PTS

<p>Competitor...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is interesting to listen to, animated and lively, speaks at an appropriate volume and with a professional and courteous tone.• Is poised and uses gestures and eye contact that merit respect and professionalism.• Confidently conveys thoughts and viewpoints clearly. <p>Award 10-15 points</p>	<p>Competitor...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Speaks at an appropriate volume and pace with appropriate tone.• Uses effective posture, gestures and eye contact.• Conveys thoughts and viewpoints but could seem overly rehearsed. <p>Award 5-9 points</p>	<p>Competitor...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is boring/ mumbling/ monotoned.• Slouches and does not use appropriate gestures.• Do not have eye contact.• Ideas are difficult to understand, or they are not confident in speaking. <p>Award 0-4 points</p>
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(6) CLOSING STATEMENT: 15 PTS

<p>Competitor...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shows that they have actively listened to the conversation in their summary.• Uses take away points from the discussion to develop relevant, realistic and specific action items and plans for the future.• Closing statement is memorable and inspires confidence in their ability to work toward a solution. <p>Award 10-15 points</p>	<p>Competitor...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Summarizes the conversation that happened.• Uses take-away points from the discussion to help develop a plan.• Closing statement is memorable. <p>Award 5-9 points</p>	<p>Competitor...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does not accurately summarize the conversation.• Uses memorized speech that doesn't reflect the content of the conversation.• Closing statement is forgettable. <p>Award 0-4 points</p>
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