

# AGRICULTURAL ISSUES FORUM

Revised 8/10/09

---

**Purpose:** The purpose of the Agriculture Issues Forum Career Development Event is to stimulate the study of and interest in agricultural issues among agricultural students and the "non-agricultural" public, as well as encourage local efforts by providing recognition for those who have demonstrated skills and competencies as a result of instruction in issues analysis.

**Objectives:**

- To provide an opportunity to expose a wide variety of students to the selection, research, planning and presentation of an agricultural issue.
- To acquire knowledge and skills in community leadership for present and future use.
- To become knowledgeable of and familiar with a variety of local, state, national and international issues facing agriculture.
- To understand the principles and fundamentals of agricultural issue analysis.
- To further the awareness of agricultural issues in the local community.
- To promote integration of agricultural issue analysis in local school academic subject matter areas.
- To promote career choices by providing an opportunity for individuals to become acquainted with professionals in the industry.
- To foster teamwork, leadership and communication skills.

**Guidelines:**

1. A minimum of three and a maximum of seven students who are actively participating, orally presenting and available to answer the judges' questions.
2. Each team will conduct a presentation on the issue developed and presented at the local level.
3. Eligibility of teams will be determined by local presentation of the Agricultural Issue.
4. Presentations may include official FFA dress, costumes, props, skits and other creative paraphernalia.

5. The issue will come from one of the following eight agricultural issues topics as listed in the Focusing on Agricultural Issues instructional materials:
  - A. Environmental Issues
  - B. Agricultural Technology Issues
  - C. Animal Issues
  - D. Agricultural Career Issues
  - E. Economy and Trade Issues
  - F. Agricultural Policy Issues
  - G. Food Safety Issues
  - H. Biotechnology
  
6. The Portfolio should include items described below, and will be limited to ten pages maximum **not including cover sheet**. Five copies of the Portfolio must be received by the NM State FFA Office by the posted deadline.
  - A. A maximum of two pages of the portfolio will include a summary of the issue, answering the questions that are most relevant to the participant's topic:
    - \* List course(s) in which instruction occurred.
    - \* Why is this issue important now?
    - \* What is the nature of the issue?
    - \* Who is involved in the issue?
    - \* How can the issue be defined?
    - \* What is the historical background of the issue?
    - \* What caused the issue?
    - \* What are the risks?
    - \* What are the benefits?
    - \* Is there a strong disagreement on how the issue should be solved?
  
  - B. A bibliography of all resources and references cited which may include personal interviews and other supporting material.
  
  - C. Documentation that local forums occurred such as: Eligibility Statement, Letters from organizations, news articles and / or photos.

7. Time limits: Five minutes will be allowed for set up. The presentation will be a maximum of 15 minutes in length. The presenters will receive a signal at 10 minutes, 14 minutes and at 15 minutes the time keeper will announce that time is up and the presentation will end. A maximum of 7 minutes for questions and answers will be allotted. At the end of the 7 minutes, the time keeper will announce that time is up, and questions and answers will end.
8. Questions may be asked of all individuals of the presenting team.

**Scoring:**

1. Introduction, Pro, Con and Summary (20 points each, 80 points total)
2. Overall presentation: participation of each member of the team, quality and power of the presentations, creativity, stage presence. (20 points)
3. Questions (25 points)
4. Portfolio: 10 pages maximum (three parts, 25 point total)
  - \* Summary of the Issue, 2 pages maximum (5 points)
  - \* Bibliography ( 5 points)
  - \* Documentation of local forums (15 points)
5. Judges' ranking will be used to place teams.
6. Tiebreakers: Ties will be broken based on the greatest number of low ranks. Team low ranks will be counted and the team with the greatest number of low ranks will be declared the winner. If a tie still exists, then the event superintendent will rank the team's response to questions. The team with the greatest number of low ranks from the response to questions will be declared the winner. If a tie still exists then the team's raw scores will be totaled. The team with the greatest total of raw points will be declared the winner.