

**Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation
Young Farmers & Ranchers
Discussion Meet Manual**



Revised 11/2017

LOUISIANA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION YOUNG FARMER & RANCHER DISCUSSION MEET 2018 MANUAL

The following Discussion Meet manual is for the American Farm Bureau Federation contest. The same rules, room setup, duties, etc. is followed at the state contest level. We will not have Round Robins and Sweet Sixteen. There will be two preliminary rounds with a final round of four finalists being selected from the first two rounds. There may also be other slight changes to better accommodate our state contestants.

DISCUSSION MEET MANUAL
LOUISIANA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION
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Competition Objectives

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

- Stimulate logical thinking and a desire for accurate information;
- Promote a concise and direct manner of speaking;
- Improve the ability to listen;
- Aid the participant in overcoming timidity or stage fright;
- Assist the individual in the practice of giving and receiving criticism in a helpful manner;
- Teach the value of compromise; and
- Develop leaders for effective problem solving through group discussion.

Background Information

The Discussion Meet is a competition promoted by the Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee.

Farm Bureau's strength depends on its members' ability to analyze agricultural issues and decide on solutions that best meet their needs. The competition is designed to simulate a committee meeting where discussion and active participation are expected from each committee member.

Participants build basic discussion skills, develop a keen understanding of important agricultural issues and explore how groups can pool knowledge to reach consensus and solve problems.

A successful participant is a productive thinker rather than an emotional persuader. He/she will assist the group in creating ways to implement the solutions discussed and highlight Farm Bureau's involvement in those actions/steps.

The competitors will discuss pre-selected topics using four bases for the general discussion:

- Cooperation
- Constructive Criticism
- Problem Solving
- Communication

It is recommended that parish Farm Bureaus provide an expenses-paid trip to the LFBF State Convention held in 2018 in New Orleans, June 21-June 24. Appropriate recognition will be given to all parish competitors in attendance at the LFBF State Convention.

Eligibility

- Participant shall be a Farm Bureau member between the ages of 18 and 35 in good standing with his/her parish Farm Bureau. The individual shall have reached his/her 18th birthday at the time he/she qualifies for the state competition and shall not have reached his/her 36th birthday by Jan. 31, 2019.
- Participant must be actively engaged in agriculture to be eligible.
- Participant may only compete in one state YF&R Competition per year.
- Past state YF&R Discussion Meet winners are not eligible to compete.
- Current employees of parish, state and/or American Farm Bureaus and their affiliates are not eligible to compete.
- Professional speakers are not eligible to compete. Professional speakers are those who have received a fee, royalty or honorarium for speaking (i.e., paid speaking appearances or speaking engagements) within 24 months prior to this annual competition. This excludes reimbursement for travel or expenses attendant to the appearance.
- Each parish may submit one entry to be considered for state recognition.

Helpful Hints for Competitors

- Study as much material as possible relating to the overall topic. Sources: internet, library, newspapers, magazines, Farm Bureau policies, parish, state, and American Farm Bureau publications and conversations with experts or knowledgeable people.
- Remember this is a discussion, not a debate.
- Be prepared to ask questions, state facts and opinions, and urge others to be specific.
- Be aware of the audience, but generally address the panel. Speak loudly enough to be heard by the whole audience.
- Participate whenever your contribution will further the discussion. Do not monopolize the discussion.
- The discussion should not be “conversation” or aimless talk, nor should you take the role of a persuasive speaker. Try to cooperatively shed light on the problem and tentatively retain a flexible position.
- This is not a panel symposium wherein 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 person at any time. The moderator plays an inactive role during the discussion.
- Make notes of key points as the discussion proceeds for use in summary statement.
- Use the one minute of quiet time to organize your closing statement.
- Stand and make your closing statement to the audience. Use accepted speech techniques. Stay within the time limit.

Competition Format

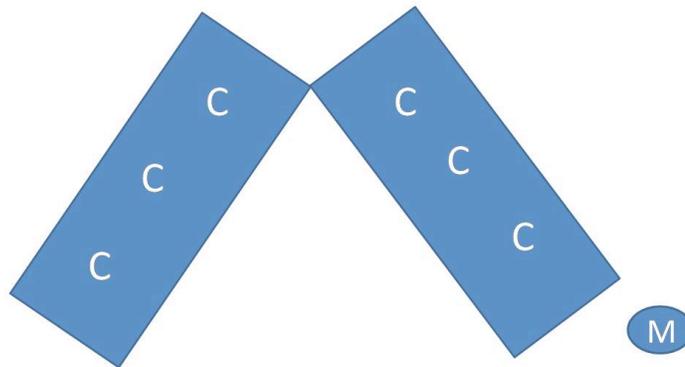
1. All competition facilitators and competitors will meet in the pre-assigned competition room 15 minutes prior to the start of the competition to receive last-minute comments by the room chair. At this time competitors will also draw for order for placement of their name tent/chair. Competitors not present at the time of the drawing will select from the remaining position. The competition facilitators are LFBF-designated room chairs and moderators.
2. Competitors may not take prepared notes of any form with them to the competition table. After all competitors have been introduced, notes may be written on the paper provided. If a note is brought to the table and is noticed by the competition facilitator, there will be a disqualification called at the end of the round by the LFBF Coordinator.
3. Discussion Meet questions will not be provided at the competition table during state level rounds of competition.
4. The room chair will call the meeting to order, announce the topic to be discussed, and introduce the timekeeper and moderator. Any competitor not present at this time will be disqualified.
5. The moderator will introduce the competitors and re-announce the topic to be discussed. He/she will give each of the competitors, in voluntary order, the opportunity to make a 30-second opening statement directed to the audience.
6. The timekeeper will flash a red time card indicating when 30 seconds has elapsed. Judges may subtract points at their discretion for competitors who abuse the time limit.
7. The moderator will then indicate the opportunity for open discussion, which will continue for a total of 25 minutes in the Round Robins and 30 minutes in the Final Four competition. The discussion should be directed to the fellow competitors.
8. The timekeeper will indicate to the moderator when five minutes of open discussion time remains. If the discussion is lagging, the moderator may close the discussion at this time.
9. The timekeeper will indicate to the moderator when 25 min. in the Round Robin and 30 min. in the Final Four competition have elapsed with a red time card. The moderator will call for open discussion to stop for one minute of quiet time, allowing the competitors to compose a closing statement.
10. The moderator will give each of the competitors, in voluntary order, the opportunity to make a one-minute closing statement directed to the audience.
11. The moderator will recognize the judges and request them to leave the room with the room chair to finalize the tabulation of their score sheets. Judges are not to confer with each other until the room chair has collected their tabulated score sheets.
12. The moderator will thank the panel and ask the audience to recognize their efforts. The moderator may then request the competitors to each discuss their personal farming/ranching operations for the audience.

Competition Structure

Competition

- All participants will compete in one of the first two rounds of the competition, known as “Round Robins.”
- The physical arrangements of the Discussion Meet rooms should provide for two tables at the front of the room facing each other and the audience. Half the participants should be seated at each table with the moderator on the side. Name cards identifying competitors should be easily visible. Cards should show only the competitor’s name, not his or her parish.

Room Layout



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x J x x x x x x x T   x x x x x x x x x x
x x x x x x x x x x   x x x x x x J x x x
x x x x x x J x x     x x x x x x x x x
    
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M = Moderator C = Competitor J = Judge T = Timer X = Audience

Flow of Competition

Generally speaking, the discussion should follow these steps:

1. State problem or need.
2. Explore, define, and understand problem or need.
3. Identify causes of problem or need.
4. Elaborate all possible alternative solutions.
5. Evaluate and compare alternatives.
6. Test and project what appears to be the best solution(s).
7. Create ways to implement the solution(s) discussed and highlight Farm Bureau’s involvement in those actions/steps.

Facilitators Roles and Responsibilities

1. Room Chair Duties

- a) Familiarize yourself with the LFBF YF&R Discussion Meet Manual.
- b) Ensure all judges are present and report any changes to the moderator.
- c) Call the competition to order at the appointed time. Introduce the timekeeper and moderator and announce the topic to be discussed.
- d) Following the discussion, Introduce and thank the judges.
- e) Escort judges to the judges' tabulating room at the end of the competition and allow them to finish tabulating and ranking the participants. Assist judges in final ranking if necessary.
- f) Ensure each competitor has been ranked in all sections of the rating sheet.

3. Moderator Duties

- a) Familiarize yourself with the LFBF YF&R Discussion Meet Manual.
- b) Become acquainted with competitors.
- c) Open the competition with the following to ensure that all understand the format:
 1. Welcome the audience.
 2. Introduce the participants from left to right by name.
 3. Announce topic to be discussed.
 4. Ask for competitors to make a 30-second opening statement in voluntary order.
 5. After the last opening statement, say "You have heard the opening statements; you may proceed with the discussion."
 6. End discussion at timekeeper's signal.
 7. Call for one-minute quiet time for the competitors to prepare their closing statements.
 8. Ask for the competitors to make a one-minute closing statement, in voluntary order.
 9. Thank the competitors.
 10. Dismiss room chair and judges for tabulation.
 11. Give the competitors the opportunity to introduce themselves and share their agriculture background.
 12. Announce time and location(s) for the next round.

Note: The moderator should not comment on the topic or encourage discussion. This is the responsibility of the competitors. However, if the discussion seems to stall, the moderator should use his/her best judgment to end the discussion when the timekeeper indicates five minutes remain in open discussion..

4. Timekeeper Duties

- a) Familiarize yourself with the LFBF YF&R Discussion Meet Manual.
- b) Go to your assigned competition room 15 minutes prior to the scheduled starting time.
- c) Meet with room chair, moderator and competitors for last-minute questions.
- d) Indicate following timing points to the moderator and competitors:

Round Robins

- The end of each 30 second opening statement. (Time elapsed - red card)
- Warning at 20 minutes of open discussion, holding the card up until all competitors have noted the warning. (five minutes remaining - yellow card)
- The end of 25 minutes of open discussion. (Time elapsed - red card)
- The end of one-minute quiet time. (Time elapsed - red card)

- The end of each competitor's one-minute closing statement. (Time elapsed - red card)

Final Four

- The end of each 30-second opening statement. (Time elapsed - red card)
- Warning at 25 minutes of open discussion, holding the card up until all competitors have noted the warning. (Five minutes remaining - yellow card)
- The end of 30 minutes of open discussion. (Time elapsed - red card)
- The end of one minute quiet time. (Time elapsed - red card)
- The end of each competitor's one-minute closing statement. (Time elapsed - red card)

5. Judge Duties

- Familiarize yourself with the LFBF YF&R Discussion Meet Manual.
- Review the discussion topics.
- Review the Rating Sheet (see page 12).
- Go to your assigned room 15 minutes prior to scheduled starting time.
 - Final Four judges are not permitted to attend any preceding rounds.
- Remain seated until your room chair calls for you to leave the room to do the final tabulating of your score sheet.
- Select winners. (see **Scoring**)
- Judges should:
 - List competitors on your Rating Sheet from left to right for ease in identification.
 - Score competitors using the Rating Sheet.
 - Total the scores.
 - There are 700 possible points.
 - Determine and record competitor ranking and ensure there are no ties in raw score or rank.
 - Sign your Rating Sheet.
- Judges should not:
 - Sit near a fellow judge.
 - Judge by applause.
 - Confer with each other until all scores are tabulated.

Scoring

The room chair will supervise the final tabulation by the judges. Judges will use the point system indicated on the Rating Sheet to assist in selecting the winners. Each judge will be instructed to total his/her Rating Sheet and rank the competitors. Each judge is to break ties that occur on his/her own score sheet. The room chair will assist the judges in determining the final ranking of each round and the final competition.

- The winner will be determined by judges' ranking, and ties will be resolved before the judges are dismissed.
 - Ties will be broken at the end of each of each round by an automatic procedure using Problem Solving and Implementation as the first tiebreaker, followed by Analysis of Topic and Cooperative Attitude. (see **Appendix A**)
 - In the event of an unsolvable tie between all three categories, total points from the judges' Rating Sheets will be used to resolve the tie. The room chair will assist with this process.
- When possible, the above procedure should be conducted in a private room with only the judges.

Round Robins

Sample rankings for the Round Robin competitions follow. (See **Appendix A & B**)

Discussion Meet Rating Sheet

Comp A Name:	Comp B Name:	Comp C Name:	In these columns, put the first and last name of the competitors according to where they are sitting using this diagram: <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;"> </div>	Comp D Name:	Comp E Name:	Comp F Name:
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(1) PROBLEM SOLVING AND IMPLEMENTATION: (200 points) Ability and judgment in seeking answers and solutions, planning and organizational understanding and the inclusion of Farm Bureau in implementing action programs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(2) ANALYSIS OF TOPIC OR PROBLEM: (150 points) Does contestant attempt to identify problem causes and remain on topic? Knowledge, extent and accuracy of facts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(3) COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE: (100 points) Listening, asking pertinent questions, airing all points of view, securing major agreement, minimizing major differences. Courtesy to other participants, encourage discussion from other participants.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			(4) DELIVERY: (100 points) Voice quality, loudness, clear enunciation, communication skills, desirable sentence structure and interesting choice of words.			
			(5) OPENING STATEMENT: (50 points) Definition of problem, importance, causes, effects, relevancy of problem.			
			(6) CLOSING STATEMENT: (100 points) Ability to summarize discussion and formulate direction for the future.			
			Total score for each contestant is to be tabulated by Judge. ← TOTAL Any tie scores are to be broken by Judge. TOTAL → Total of 700 points possible.			
			← RANK Rank contestants: 1 (highest) – 6 (lowest) RANK →			