

# **AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS**

## **Official Dress Mandatory – 4 Member Team**

### **I. Purpose**

The purpose of the agricultural communications career development event is to provide individuals with practical communications skills necessary to pursue career opportunities in agricultural communications. Public communications about agricultural products, practices and policies are essential to the future of agriculture. Students who are equipped with strong communication skills, have developed teamwork skills and who can use a variety of media to help the public understand issues related to the industry of agriculture have a bright future in the job market.

### **II. Event Rules**

- A.** Teams will consist of four members.
- B.** Participants must wear FFA Official Dress for this event.
- C.** During the practicum portion of the event, one team member will be responsible for completing a journalistic writing communication activity, one team member will be responsible for completing an opinion writing communication activity, one team member will be responsible for completing a web design activity and one team member will be responsible for completing a video production activity.
- D.** Only students are allowed in the testing, press conference, and practicum rooms.

### **III. Event Format**

By January 15th of each year, the state agricultural communications CDE provider will release event specifications for the upcoming event. The specifications will outline the specific practicum activities, rules, detailed rubric, and software to be used.

The event begins promptly at 8:00 a.m. The order of events is as follows:

1. Orientation
2. Press conference
3. Dismiss to practicums
4. Editing quiz
5. Communications quiz

### **IV. Equipment**

No equipment, other than a pen or pencil, is needed to participate in this contest, unless provider states other equipment is needed. However, in order to prepare students, it is recommended that teachers acquire the software to be used in the contest.

### **V. Activities**

#### **A. Tests**

- 1. Editing exercise – (25 points - individual; 100 points – team)**

Because editing is a critical skill for all communicators, each team member will complete an editing exercise. Each contestant will be provided a printed document that contains up to 25 style, grammar, punctuation and/or spelling mistakes. The team member will first mark if the statement is written correct or incorrect. If the statement is incorrect, when correcting the mistakes, team members will be required to use correct proofreader's marks (see Associated Press Stylebook). Team members will NOT have access to the style manual or a dictionary during this exercise.

**2. Communications quiz** - (25 points - individual; 100 points - team)

Each team member will complete a quiz that covers the content of the current Telg, R. and T. Irani. Agricultural Communication in Action: A Hands-On Approach, 1st edition. Cengage/Delmar Publishing, ISBN 1111317143 (Online versions available). Odd number years – chapters 1-9; Even number years – Chapters 10-18. Team members will NOT have access to the textbook, style manual or a dictionary during this exercise

**B. Practicums** (100 points - individual; 400 points - team)

The practicums will consist of four individual events. Each team must assign a member to one of the following areas PRIOR to arriving at the state event:

1. Video Production
2. Web Design
3. Journalistic Writing
4. Opinion Writing

All teams will meet in a designated location for an orientation and press conference. Teams will be seated by event practicum group. Each team member will receive a press packet with background information on the agricultural topic and expert to use during the event. An expert will speak on a current agricultural topic for up to 20 minutes. Students will be provided with paper to take notes if they wish. The contestants designated as writers will then be involved in a 10-minute question and answer period with the expert (speaker). The other team members may listen to the Q and A, but cannot ask questions. Each writer will stand to be recognized before asking a question. Writers may ask more than one question; however, the expert will attempt to address questions from as many different participants as possible. No recording devices of any kind will be allowed. Upon completion of the 10-minute question and answer session, participants will be dismissed to complete their assigned tasks.

**1. Web Design**

Each designer will use the press packet and information that was gathered in the press conference to develop a WordPress site. The objective is to communicate the press conference speaker's organization through appropriate design, navigation and use of provided photos and graphics. The designer may use the provided WordPress templates or customize the template. Each participant will have 90 minutes to complete the practicum.

## **2. Video Producer**

Students will be given a selection of video clips, photos, and music and will create a 60-90 second video that promotes the speaker's product or service. Students may be provided a laptop, **unless stated by the provider**, and will be working in Adobe Premier Pro. Students will need to provide their own headphones.

## **3. Journalistic Writing**

Writers are to write a journalistic piece based on the press packet and information that was gathered in the press conference. It should be written for an appropriate audience, have a strong focus and lead (opening paragraph), and include a headline. The story will then be word processed by the student on a computer and turned in to be scored. Participants will have 90 minutes to complete the practicum. The activity will rotate annually from the following:

- a. Press release (2017,2020)
- b. News story (2018, 2021)
- c. Feature story (2019)

## **4. Opinion Writing**

Writers are to write a piece that takes a position and support it with evidence based on the press packet and information that was gathered in the press conference. It should be written for an appropriate audience, have a strong focus and lead (opening paragraph), and include a headline. The story will then be word processed by the student on a computer and turned in to be scored. Participants will have 90 minutes to complete the practicum. The activity will rotate annually from the following:

- a. A blog post (250-300 words) (2017, 2020)
- b. An op-ed (500-750 words) (2018, 2021)
- c. A letter to the editor (300-500 words) (2019)

All Ag Communication activity themes will be posted on the website at: [www.texasffa.org](http://www.texasffa.org) → Events→CDE→ Ag Communications

## **VI. Scoring**

Participants will be ranked in numerical order on the basis of the final score to be determined by each judge. The criteria and points can be found on the scorecards used in the National FFA Agricultural Communications event and will be provided by January 15<sup>th</sup> each year. Note that the national scorecards are suggested by National FFA and will be used only as a basis for the scoring rubric that the Texas FFA contest will use. Due to the unique nature of the rotating practicum activities, the scorecards will be adjusted to fit the students' assigned tasks. Rubrics will be released to teachers by January 15<sup>th</sup> each year.

<b>Tests</b>	<b>200 points possible</b>
• Communications Quiz	100 (25 pts/member)
• Editing exercise	100 (25 pts/member)
<b>Practicums</b>	<b>400 points possible</b>
• Journalistic Writer Practicum	100
• Opinion Writer Practicum	100
• Electronic Media Practicum	100
• Design Practicum	100
<b>TOTAL INDIVIDUAL SCORE</b>	<b>150</b>
<b>TOTAL TEAM SCORE</b>	<b>600</b>

## VII. Tiebreakers

A. Team tiebreakers will be settled in the following order:

1. Combined individual practicum rank score
2. Communication quiz score
3. Editing exercise score

B. Individuals tiebreakers will be settled in the following order:

1. Practicum score
2. Communications quiz score
3. Editing exercise score

## IX. References

This list of references is not intended to be inclusive. Other sources may be utilized, and teachers are encouraged to make use of the very best instructional materials available.

The following list contains references that may prove helpful during event preparation:  
National FFA Core Catalog—Past CDE Material (<http://shop.ffa.org/cde-qas-c1413.aspx>)

Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual

Microsoft ® Office computer program

Adobe ® Creative Suite (most current edition)

Bivins, T. Public Relations Writings: The Essentials of Style and Format, 4th edition. McGraw-Hill Higher Education, ISBN 0-844-20351-3

Calver, P. (editor). The Communicator's Handbook. 4th edition. Maupin House, Gainesville, FL 32607 <http://www.maupinhouse.com>

Harrower, T. Newspaper Designer's Handbook, 5th edition. McGraw-Hill Higher Education. ISBN 0-07-249291-0

Kalbfeld, B. Associated Press Broadcast News Handbook. McGraw-Hill Higher Education, ISBN 0-07-136388-2

Telg, R. and T. Irani. Agricultural Communication in Action: A Hands-On Approach, 1st edition. Cengage/Delmar Publishing, ISBN 1111317143 (Online versions available)