

AGRICULTURAL ISSUES FORUM

SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY

The purpose of the Agricultural Issues Forum is to: 1) stimulate the study of and interest in agricultural issues among agriculture students and the "non-agricultural" public, and 2) encourage local efforts by providing recognition for those who have demonstrated skills and competencies as a result of instruction in issues analysis.

I. OBJECTIVES

1. Investigate a variety of local, state, national and international issues facing agriculture through classroom instruction.
2. Engage students in the selection, research, planning and presentation of a local, state, national or international agricultural issue with relevance to the local community.
3. Demonstrate through the portfolio, presentation and questioning an understanding of the principals and fundamentals of agricultural issue analysis.
4. Connect agriculture students with professionals in the industry as they research and present their forum.
5. Increase the awareness of agricultural issues at the local, state or national level through presentations of the forum.
6. Apply teamwork, leadership and communication skills for career success.

II. EVENT RULES

1. **Team make-up:** A minimum of three and a maximum of seven students who are actively participating, orally presenting, and available to answer judges' questions. One team member may serve as a non-presenting technician but must answer questions. Such participation of a technician shall not impact participation scores but shall be counted toward the total number of team members.
2. Team members must be in official dress as outlined in the Official FFA Manual but according to Texas Standards (black dress boots are acceptable) for the entire presentation. Members not in compliance will be subject to General Rule #7.
3. Presentations may include but are not limited to props, skits, other creative paraphernalia, and current technology. However, teams should not be penalized for not utilizing previously mentioned items.
4. The previously submitted and maximum ten-page portfolio is the only material that will be provided to the Agricultural Issues Forum event judges. No other materials will be given to the judges by the team(s) or contestants prior to or during the team presentation. No gifts will be allowed.
5. Guidelines of eligibility for the Agricultural Issues Forum will be consistent with other National FFA Career Development Events. Teams will be certified by respective area coordinators and Texas FFA Association.
6. A minimum of three competent and unbiased judges will be provided. They will be instructed not to take sides on the issue(s). Professors and industry representatives are recommended. There will be a minimum of five judges at the state level with three being qualified Ag Science teachers. The low and high rank that each team receives will be dropped when ranks are added to determine placings.
7. The "Statement of Originality" shall be submitted with the portfolio. The "Statement of Originality" must be signed by the agriscience teacher and each member of the team.
8. This event requires original work by the team's members and their advisor(s); thus, plagiarism is not permitted. **Plagiarism** is defined as: *Reproducing, an existing script developed by another chapter, someone else's sentences more or less verbatim, and presenting them as your own*
9. The team must submit a copy of the portfolio electronically via the judgingcard.com system as a PDF file, no later than 5:00 p.m. on the Tuesday preceding the state events. **The electronic material is**

what the judges will score – the judges will NOT be scoring any documents turned in after this deadline.

10. Audience members are not permitted to take pictures, audio or videotape any team's presentation.
11. A violation of any one or more of rules 1, 2, 4, 7 or 8 will result in disqualification upon final placing.

III. EVENT FORMAT

1. Equipment: Each team must provide all necessary equipment.
2. Each team will conduct a presentation on the issue developed and presented at the local level.
3. The issue will come from one of the following seven agricultural issue topic areas 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 Issues
 - i. Other Agriculture Issues as covered in the AFNR TEKS
4. The same agricultural issue presentation and portfolio will not be used at the state level two years in a row by the same chapter/advisor.
5. Research on the topic must be current and students must be involved in all the research of the topic and development of the portfolio.
6. The portfolio should include items described in sections a, b, and c below. The portfolio will be limited to a maximum of ten pages single sided or five pages double sided, not including cover page and statement of originality. The cover page will include: the title of the issue (in the form of a question), name, address and phone number of the chapter. A maximum of ten (10) points will be deducted for exceeding the maximum number of pages, and/or for not including the cover page, and/or statement of originality containing required information.
 - a. A maximum of two pages of the portfolio will include a summary of the issue, answering the following questions:
 - List course(s) in which instruction occurred.
 - Why is this issue important now?
 - Who is involved in the issue?
 - How can the issue be defined?
 - What is the historical background of the issue and what caused it?
 - What are the pros?
 - What are the cons?
 - Is there strong disagreement on how the issue should be solved?
 - b. A bibliography of all resources and references cited which may include personal interviews, websites and any other supporting material. Bibliography should be in APA format.
 - c. Indicate date of area competition and provide documentation that a minimum of five high quality public forums occurred prior to state portfolio deadlines. Documentation can include any of the following:
 - Letters from organizations
 - News articles – print or electronic media
 - Photos

Portfolio judges may take into consideration the quality and quantity of presentations made to audiences outside of the school. No points will be awarded for school presentations to students or

presentations to teachers. In addition, no points will be awarded for forums presented as any part of a district, area or invitational FFA competition.

High quality forums are those presentations made to community groups that would have an interest in the issue. High quality forums can also be with smaller numbers of individuals who hold elected, appointed, some other official position or position of prominence in the local community that will be making decisions on the issue. These may include, but are not limited to, civic organizations, booster clubs, people of interest, businesses of interest, elected officials, alumni and young farmers.

Low quality forums would be dropping in at a local business un-scheduled and giving a presentation to the workers or going to the home of one of the parents to make a presentation. These may include, but are not limited to, classroom presentations or presentations given to student-led organizations. Low quality forums will receive zero or minimal points.

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 and at 14 minutes. At 15 minutes, the timekeeper will announce that time is up, and the presentation will end. A maximum of five minutes for questions and answers will be allotted. Questions and answers will terminate at the end of five minutes for District, Area and State Semi-Finals. Seven minutes of questions and answers will be allotted for State Finals. Five minutes will be allowed for take down.
8. The presentations will be designed to be viewed by the judges. The audience at-large will not be of concern to the presenters.
9. The judges will ask questions of all individuals of the presenting team including the technician. Each individual is required to respond to at least one question from the judges.

IV. SCORING

1. Presentation (1000 points):
 - a. Introduction (100 points)
 - b. Pro Viewpoint (200 points)
 - c. Con Viewpoint (200 points)
 - d. Summary (100 points)
 - e. Overall presentation (50 points)
 - f. Questions (250 points total): {Quality of answers (200 points); participation by team (50 points)}
 - g. Portfolio Scorecard Total (100 points)
2. Portfolio Scorecard: (100 points)
 - a. Cover with required information (10 points)
 - b. Summary of issue (quality of information) (20 points)
 - c. Bibliography (5 points)
 - d. Documentation of local forums (15 points)
 - e. Pictures, letters, articles (25 points)
 - f. Overall portfolio: neatness, creativity, organization (25 points)
3. Prior to the event the portfolios will be judged and scored by qualified individuals using the portfolio score sheet. Portfolio scores will be averaged and supplied to the presentation judges after they have scored the presentation. Portfolio comment cards will be completed by portfolio judges and presented to the teams at the awards function. Presentation judges will be furnished with copies of the team portfolio, which they will use to formulate questions.
4. Judges' ranking will be used to place teams.

5. Participants shall be ranked in numerical order on the basis of the final score to be determined by each judge without consultation. The judges' ranking of each participant then shall be added (the low and high rank that each team receives will be dropped, provided that at least five judges are used, when ranks are added to determine placings) and the winner will be that participant whose total ranking is the lowest. Other placings will be determined in the same manner (low rank method of selection).

V. 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 question 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. Dropped ranks are excluded from consideration during tiebreakers.

VI. 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. See National CDE Rules for a list of possible references.

AGRICULTURE ISSUES STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

By signing this document, we the representatives of the _____ FFA Chapter acknowledge that the attached Agricultural Issues Forum portfolio and the event presentation are products of original research and effort by the members signed below.

The title of the presentation is:

All members of the team, including alternates must sign below. This form should accompany your portfolio.

Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources
Teacher Signature

Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources
Teacher Signature

Member Signature

Note: The statement of originality should be sent only to SHSU.
It is not necessary to submit a copy to the state office.

Ag Issues Forum

Chapter: _____

Area: _____

Judge's Signature: _____

The portfolio should include items described in Section 3a, 3b, and 3c of the guidelines, and is limited to 10 pages, single-sided (5 pages double-sided) maximum.

State-qualifying teams must submit a portfolio as a PDF file via the judgingcard.com system no later than 5:00 p.m. on the Tuesday preceding the state contest.

Portfolio Scorecard

	Possible Points	
1. Cover (required Info)	10	
2. Summary of Issue - quality and complete information (2 pages Maximum)	20	
3. Bibliography (APA format)	5	
4. Forum Documentation Page	15	
5. Pictures, letters, articles	25	
6. Overall portfolio (neatness and creativity)	25	
Subtotal	100	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deduction for exceeding the maximum number of pages and incomplete cover page (10 pts max) 	Team subtotal:	
	Deduction:	
	Team score:	

AGRICULTURAL ISSUES PRESENTATION SCORECARD

Chapter: _____

Area: _____

Judge's Signature: _____

TEAM:		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Points													
1. Introduction	100												
2. Pro Viewpoint	200												
3. Con Viewpoint	200												
4. Summary Summarize Pro Viewpoint	100												
5. Overall Presentation	50												
6a. Questions • Quality of answers (200)	250												
6b. Questions • Participation by team members (50)													
7. Portfolio Scorecard Total	100												
Total Points	1000												

Team Presentation Total:	
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Ag Issues Forum Scorecard

Chapter: _____

Area: _____

Judge's Signature: _____

Introduction (100) – (Statement of the issue; Why is this issue important?)
Pro View Points (200) – (Identification of positive points; Points Addressed are relevant)
Con View Points (200) – (Identification of negative Points; Points addressed are relevant)
Summary of viewpoints (100) – (Both pro and con viewpoints reviewed and summarized)
Overall Presentation (50) – (Participation, creativity, quality & power, clear with right pace and word pronunciation, no distractions, appropriate gestures, poised, etc.)
Questions: Quality of response (200) – (Appropriate response; Knowledge of issue)
Questions: Participation (50) – (Team members response to questions; Equal team participation; Everyone answered a question)
Portfolio (100) (See separate portfolio scorecard)
TOTAL (1000)