

**TEXAS FARM BUREAU  
YOUNG FARMER AND RANCHER  
2018 DISCUSSION MEET**

**DISCUSSION MEET MANUAL  
RULES & PROCEDURES**

# Texas Farm Bureau Young Farmer and Rancher 2018 Discussion Meet

The Discussion Meet is the presentation of well thought-out opinions and ideas for the purpose of problem solving. Five agricultural related topics are selected prior to the contest. Contestants are provided information about the topics once their entry form is submitted. The contest process is outlined below.

- The contest is conducted in panels of four or five contestants
- One of five topics is chosen for each panel and a 25 minute roundtable discussion ensues.
- The discussion is not a debate or a prepared speech, but rather an exchange of ideas and opinions in a moderated format
- See the complete Discussion Meet Manual for all processes and rules

## **Prizes and Awards**

### **Three Finalists**

1. \$500 cash (sponsored by Southern Farm Bureau Life Insurance Company)

### **State Winner**

1. ATV (sponsored by Southern Farm Bureau Life Insurance Company)
2. \$5,000 cash (sponsored by Farm Credit)
3. Expense paid trip for the state winner and spouse to compete in the National Discussion Meet during the 2019 AFBF Convention in New Orleans, LA (provided by Texas Farm Bureau)

### **National Winner**

1. Prizes representative of the AFBF Discussion Meet are also awarded (not available at time of this document creation)

**Registration Deadline:**  
**November 1, 2018**

**[Register Online](#)**

## **Competitor Qualifications**

- The Texas Farm Bureau Discussion Meet is for Texas Farm Bureau members who are interested in and/or engaged in production agriculture.
- Competitors shall be a Farm Bureau member in good standing with their county Farm Bureau between the ages of 18 and 35. They shall not have reached their 36th birthday on or before January 31, of the year in which they will compete at the AFBF Annual Meeting.
- Individuals who have competed in a previous AFBF Discussion Meet are ineligible.
- Past and present AFBF YF&R committee members are ineligible.
- Competitors must be actively involved in agriculture to be eligible.
- Professional speakers are ineligible 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.
- County, State and American Farm Bureau employees are not eligible; this also includes affiliated companies.

## Topics for 2018 Discussion Meet

1. In our modern world, the rapid dissemination of information and opinion about agriculture and food technologies can make it difficult to distinguish fact from fiction. Given these challenges, how can Farm Bureau best protect farmers' and ranchers' access to production technology options?
2. As the Voice of Agriculture, how can Farm Bureau be more inclusive of all agriculture and production practices? This includes, but is not limited to, women in agriculture, organic production, fresh produce, forestry and aquaculture.
3. Technology is one of the driving forces for innovation and advancement in agriculture. How can the industry attract the best and brightest minds from STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) into agricultural careers?
4. Money talks. How can farmers implement market trends and develop responsive business plans to generate value-added ventures and farm profits?
5. Associate members are a driver of new ideas and support. How do we create membership value and broaden the base of supporters in the Farm Bureau family?

\*These questions will be used as the AFBF Discussion Meet topics during the AFBF Annual Convention in New Orleans, LA January 2019.

## **Important Points about the Texas Farm Bureau State Discussion Meet:**

1. The information contained in this manual outlines specifics of the American Farm Bureau Discussion Meet competition in which Texas Farm Bureau competes and aligns our state contest.
2. TFB will conduct one statewide Discussion Meet contest to be held at the Texas Farm Bureau annual meeting on Saturday, December 1, 2018.
3. Four Finalist will be selected and compete in the final round on the afternoon of December 1<sup>st</sup>. The finalists will be recognized on stage Sunday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> where the winner will be announced.
4. The state winner will represent Texas at the AFBF Discussion Meet Competition in New Orleans, LA in January 2019.
5. In the event the TFB state Discussion Meet winner wins more than one TFB YF&R Award Program in the same year (either the Outstanding YF&R or Excellence in Agriculture), they will compete in the non-Discussion Meet award at the AFBF level and not the AFBF Discussion meet. The runner-up in the TFB Discussion Meet has the option to compete in the AFBF Discussion Meet. If the runner-up competes in the AFBF contest, then he/she is ineligible to compete in future TFB Discussion Meet contests.
6. Our state contest will be administered according to the rules set forth in this manual except for the county and district competitions, which TFB will not conduct.
7. Interested parties should complete the Discussion Meet Registration and Information Sheet before November 1, 2018.
8. If you wish to be notified of the AFBF sponsored training opportunities that will begin late August, please e-mail [youngfarmers@txfb.org](mailto:youngfarmers@txfb.org)
9. Discussion Meet study material, a short video of last year's AFBF finals and other contest information will be mailed to contestants after registration forms are received.

### **For more information contact:**

YF&R Coordinator: Whit H. Weems, Ed.D.

Phone: 254-399-5030

Email: [youngfarmers@txfb.org](mailto:youngfarmers@txfb.org)

# Discussion Meet Best Practices 2018

## **General Resources and Websites:**

### **Farm Bureau:**

- [American Farm Bureau Federation](#)
  - o [Issue Backgrounders](#)
  - o [Farm Bureau Advocacy Action Center](#)
- [American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture](#)

### **Government:**

- [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#)
  - o [National Institute of Food and Agriculture \(NIFA\)/Cooperative Extension Service](#)
- [U.S. Department of Labor](#)
- [U.S. Department of Education](#)
- [Environmental Protection Agency - Agriculture](#)
- [State Departments of Agriculture](#)
- [Selected Federal Agencies with a Role in Food Safety](#)
- [GovTrack.us](#)

### **Media:**

- [Farm Journal Media](#)

### **Other:**

- [American Farmland Trust](#)
- [American Lands Council](#)
- [Animal Agriculture Alliance](#)
- [Beginning Farmers](#)
- [National Agriculture in the Classroom](#)
- [Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education](#)
- [U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Alliance \(USFRA\)](#)

## Best Practices:

1. **Training calls.** All competitors are encouraged to join the training calls hosted by the AFBF YF&R committee in the fall. Specific dates and times will be announced in late summer. There will be a total of six calls and each will last one hour. The first call will cover the Discussion Meet format and tips for success and the other five calls will focus on each question. Oftentimes, the calls include industry experts, who share their expertise and provide additional resources.
2. **Utilize government research.** Search government agency websites and databases for strong statistics and data to use in your discussions. This information can be reliable and is well-researched.
3. **Learn from the best.** Reach out to former Discussion Meet and Collegiate Discussion Meet participants. Even though the discussion questions change each year, former competitors can provide valuable insight and tips on the nature of the contest. Also, reach out to YF&R staff and committee members that have familiarity on the competition to get clarification.
4. **Pros and Cons.** Review each question and create discussion points from both sides of the issue. This will not only give you greater understanding of how an issue developed, but it will prepare you to discuss potential obstacles when working to find a solution.
5. **Diversify written sources.** Besides the internet, gather resources and information from the library, newspapers, magazines, Farm Bureau policies and other agriculture publications.
6. **Real talk.** Engage in conversations with your local county Farm Bureau members, state and national representatives, lobbyists and agriculture industry employees to gather information and examples. Seek conversations with those who are not familiar with the issue to gain their perspective. Explaining the topic helps provide practice articulating what you know. As you speak, address all angles to gather additional points and as many ideas as possible.
7. **Farm Bureau history.** Take time to review county, state and American Farm Bureau history on the topic. What are our standing policies with the questions?
8. **Expert opinion.** If you don't have a personal relationship with the content of the question, find a credible source that does and get their opinion. Be prepared to cite and properly establish your source as an expert in their field.

# DISCUSSION MEET MANUAL

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## **Competition Objectives**

**Farm Bureau's strength depends on its members' ability to analyze agricultural issues and decide on solutions that best meet their needs. The Discussion Meet is an activity designed to build these crucial skills in young, active farmers and ranchers. By participating, members 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.**

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

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

## **Background Information**

- The Discussion Meet is a competition promoted by the American Farm Bureau Federation Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee.
- The Discussion Meet is designed to simulate a committee meeting where discussion and active participation are expected from each committee member.
- The competitors will discuss pre-selected topics.
- The four fundamental bases of general discussion:
  - Cooperation
  - Constructive Criticism
  - Problem Solving
  - Communication
- The discussion should not be "conversation" or aimless talk, nor should the participant take the role of a persuasive speaker. The participant should try to cooperatively shed light on the problem and tentatively retain a flexible position.
- A successful participant is a productive thinker rather than an emotional persuader. Sometimes it's reasonable to change positions whenever new information and ideas are presented.
- 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.

## **Competitor Qualifications**

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- Competitors shall be a Farm Bureau member in good standing with their county Farm Bureau between the ages of 18 and 35. They shall not have reached their 36th birthday on or before January 31, of the year in which they will compete at the AFBF Annual Meeting.
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- County, State and American Farm Bureau employees are not eligible; this also includes affiliated companies.

## **Helpful Hints for Competitors**

- Study as much material as possible relating to the overall topic. Sources: internet, library, newspapers, magazines, Farm Bureau policies, county, 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 loud enough to be heard by the whole audience.
- Participate whenever your contribution will further the discussion. Do not monopolize 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 competitive event facilitators and competitors will meet in the pre-assigned competition room fifteen minutes prior to the start of the competition to receive last minute comments by the room chairman.
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. At the point 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.
3. Discussion Meet questions will not be provided at the competition table.
4. The moderator will call the meeting to order, announce the topic to be discussed, and introduce the timekeeper. 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 20 minutes in the preliminaries rounds and 25 minutes in the Final Four competition. The discussion should be directed to the fellow competitors during open discussion.
8. The timekeeper will indicate to the moderator when five minutes of open discussion time remains in the preliminaries and in the Final Four.
9. If the discussion is lagging, the moderator may close the discussion at this time.
10. The timekeeper will indicate to the moderator when 20 min. in the prelims. and 25 min. in the Final Four competition have elapsed with a red time card.
11. The moderator will call for open discussion to stop and for one minute of quiet time allowing the competitors to consider a closing statement.
12. The moderator will give each of the competitors, in voluntary order, the opportunity to make a one-minute closing statement directed to the audience.
13. The moderator will recognize the judges and request them to leave the room with the room chairman to finalize the tabulation of their score sheets. Judges are not to confer with each other until the room chairman has collected their tabulated score sheets.
14. The next round topic to be discussed will be announced.
15. The preliminary rounds may be extended by 5 minutes if there are 5 or 6 contestants in the round.
16. 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

## Orientations

- **Discussion Meet Orientation**

- a) Held prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> Round Robin.
- b) All competitors are required to attend.
- c) Roll call of competitors.
- d) Release of Discussion Meet topic timeschedule.
  - First Round topic will be announced during the Competitor Orientation and again in competition room by Room Chair 10 minutes prior to start of First Round
  - Each subsequent round topic announced at close of prior round with the exception of the Final 4 question. The Final 4 question will be announced at the official Final 4 Announcement the morning of the Final 4.
- e) Distribute room locations.

- **Judges' Orientation**

- a) Held prior to the 1st round.
- b) Review judge's duties in **Roles and Responsibilities of Competition Facilitators** along with any announcements.
- c) Review timing sequences.
- d) Allow time for questions.
- e) Roll call of judges.
- f) Distribute competition room locations.

## Competition

- All competitors will compete in the first two rounds of the competition, known as preliminaries. Preliminaries will have four to six competitors. The top 4 competitors from the preliminaries—Based on cumulative rankings—will advance to the final four round. The four finalists will compete in the “Final Four” round to determine the winner.
- Final Four Judges are not permitted to attend any rounds preceding those in which they judge.
- 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 visible. Cards should show only the Competitor’s name, not their county.

## Room Layout



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.
7. Arrive at ways to implement the solution.

# Facilitators Roles and Responsibilities

## 1. Duties of the Competition Chairman

- a. Familiarize yourself with the Discussion Meet Manual.
- b. Conduct Discussion Meet Orientation Session at the Annual Meeting for Competitors and judges.
  1. Make introductions.
  2. Give brief explanation of Discussion Meet competition procedures.
  3. Distribute room locations.
  4. Allow time for questions.
  5. Draw and announce topics to determine sequence to be used for the competition.
  6. Announce First Round topic during Orientation.
  7. Settle any and all disputes during the competition.

## 2. Moderator's Duties

- a. Familiarize yourself with the 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 competitors 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. When alerted by timekeeper, set up five minute yellow table tent and ensure each competitor has seen it before taking it down.
  7. End discussion at timekeeper's signal.
  8. Call for one-minute quiet time used to prepare closing statements.
  9. Call for one-minute closing statement, in a voluntary order.
  10. Thank competitors.
  11. Dismiss room chairman and judges for tabulation.
  12. Announce topic for next round.
  13. Give competitors the opportunity to introduce themselves and describe their operations.
  14. Announce time of next competition.

**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 really be lagging, the moderator should use their best judgment to end the discussion early.**

### 3. Timekeeper's Duties

- a. Familiarize yourself with the Discussion Meet Manual.
- b. Go to assigned Competition room fifteen minutes prior to scheduled starting time.
- c. Meet with room chairman, moderator and competitors for last-minute questions.
- d. Indicate following timing points to the moderator and competitors as follows:

#### ***Preliminary***

1. The end of each 30 second opening statement. (Time elapsed - red card)
2. Warning at 15 minutes of open discussion. (Five minutes remaining - yellow card). Hold up card until all competitors have noted the warning.
3. The end of 20 minutes of open discussion. (Time elapsed - red card)
4. The end of one-minute quiet time. (Time elapsed - red card)
5. **The end of each competitor's one-minute closing statement. (Time elapsed - red card)**

#### ***Final Four***

1. The end of each 30-second opening statement. (Time elapsed - red card)
2. The end of 20 minutes of open discussion. (Five minutes remaining - yellow card) Hold up card until all competitors have noted the warning.
3. The end of 25minutes of open discussion. (Time elapsed - red card)
4. The end of one-minute quiet time. (Time elapsed - red card)
5. The end of each competitor's one-minute closing statement. (Time elapsed - red card)

### 4. Judges' Duties

- a. Familiarize yourself with the Discussion Meet Manual.
- b. Review discussion topics.
- c. Review Rating Sheet.
- d. Attend the Discussion Meet Judges Orientation Session.
- e. Go to assigned room ten minutes prior to scheduled starting time.
- f. Meet with room chairman and moderator for last minute questions.
- g. Judges should:
  1. List competitors on Rating Sheet from left to right for ease in identification.
  2. Score competitors using the Rating Sheet.
  3. Total the scores.
  4. **Note: There are 700 points available**
  5. Determine and record ranking.
  6. Sign Rating Sheet.
- h. Judges should not:
  - a) Sit near a fellow judge.
  - b) Judge by applause.
  - c) Confer with each other until all scores are tabulated.
- i. Remain seated until your room chairman calls for you to leave the room to do the final tabulating of your score sheet.
- j. Select winners. (See **Scoring**)

## Scoring

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

1. The winner will be determined by judges' ranking, and ties will be resolved before the judges are dismissed.
  - a) Ties will be broken at the end of each of the preliminary rounds and final four by an automatic procedure. In the event of an unresolvable tie between all three categories, total points from judges' score sheets will be used to resolve the tie. The room chairman will assist with this process.
2. When possible, the above procedure should be conducted in a private room, with only the judges and Discussion Meet chairman present.

## Discussion Meet Rating Sheet

**Participants' Names**  
(Left of Moderator)

**Participants' Names**  
(Right of Moderator)

			Total of 700 points possible.	Superior - 100 Excellent - 80 Good - 60 Fair - 40 Poor - 20			
□	□	□	(2) 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.		□	□	□
□	□	□	(4) ANALYSIS OF TOPIC OR PROBLEM: (150 points) Does a contestant attempt to identify problem causes and remain on topic? Knowledge, extent and accuracy of facts.		□	□	□
□	□	□	(1) 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.		□	□	□
□	□	□	(3) 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 problems, importance, causes, effects, relevancy of problems.		□	□	□
□	□	□	(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.		□	□	□
□	□	□	<b>← TOTAL    Any tie scores are to be broken by Judge.    TOTAL →</b>		□	□	□
□	□	□	<b>← RANK    Rank contestants: 1(highest) – 6(lowest)    RANK →</b>		□	□	□

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Room Chairman**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Judge**