

Texas Farm Bureau

**2025 Collegiate Discussion  
Meet Contest Manual**

## Collegiate Discussion Meet Registration Instructions

---

**Note:** The applicant should carefully read the Collegiate Discussion Meet Manual and verify they meet all eligibility requirements before submitting the online 2025 CDM Application.

- Applicant **is** between the ages of 18 and 35. The individual shall have reached his/her 18th birthday at the time he/she qualifies for the national competition and shall not have reached his/her 36th birthday on or before the year in which they will compete at the national AFBF YF&R Conference.
- Applicant **is an undergraduate college student** in a state with a recognized YF&R program. Undergraduate status is based on the date of the state contest (April 4, 2025).
- Applicant **is not enrolled in a graduate-level program** at the time of his or her state Collegiate Discussion Meet competition.
- Applicant has a sincere interest in the agricultural industry.
- Registration for the 2025 YF&R Spring Conference has been submitted:  
<https://my.texasfarmbureau.org/Default>
- 2025 Collegiate Discussion Meet online application form has been submitted,  
<https://forms.office.com/r/jv65dxRsmk>
- Collegiate Advisor Form has been completed and signed by the appropriate individuals and has been emailed to [youngfarmers@txfb.org](mailto:youngfarmers@txfb.org).
- Applicant has read the 2025 Collegiate Discussion Meet Manual and meets all eligibility requirements.
- See additional information and eligibility requirements within Contest Specifics page on the next page.**

Both the online application and advisor form **MUST** be submitted before:  
**11:59 p.m. on February 27, 2025.** No late registrations can be accepted.

# Collegiate Discussion Meet Contest Specifics

---

- Deadline for entry is **Friday, February 27, 2025**.
- The Collegiate Discussion Meet will take place during the YF&R Spring Conference at the Texas Farm Bureau Conference and Training Center located at 7410 Fish Pond Rd, Waco, TX 76710.
- Rounds 1, 2 and Elite 8 will be held on Friday, April 4<sup>th</sup>. The Final 4 round will be on Saturday, April 5<sup>th</sup> at the Texas Farm Bureau Conference and Training Center
- Applicant shall be between the ages of 18 and 35. The individual shall have reached his/her 18th birthday at the time he/she qualifies for the national competition and shall not have reached his/her 36th birthday on or before the year in which they will compete at the national AFBF YF&R Conference.
- Applicant must be an undergraduate college student in a state with a recognized YF&R program. Undergraduate status is based on the date of the state contest (April 4, 2025).
- Applicant shall not be enrolled in a graduate-level program at the time of his or her state Collegiate Discussion Meet competition.
- Applicant must display a sincere interest in the agricultural industry.
- Applicant may only compete in one national YF&R Competition per year.
- Past and present members of the TFB or AFBF Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee and/or their spouse/spousal-equivalent are not eligible to compete.
- Collegiate Discussion Meet participants may not compete in the YF&R Discussion Meet within the same year.
- Current employees of county, 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.

## **Topics for 2025 Texas Collegiate Discussion Meet**

---

THESE QUESTIONS ARE FOR THE **2025 TEXAS COLLEGIATE DISCUSSION MEET CONTEST ONLY**.

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. International trade is important to agriculture. We must continue working to build strong relations with existing customers while seeking out new trade partners to strengthen market stability. How can we enhance existing, and establish new and diverse foreign trading partners?
3. The decline in rural populations is accelerated by a poor farm economy. What solutions would enhance the vibrancy and economic sustainability of agriculture and rural communities?
4. How can Farm Bureau improve its effectiveness at recruiting YF&R members and increasing participation in YF&R programs?
5. Studies show more farmers and farm families are experiencing stress and mental health issues. What can farmers, ranchers and Farm Bureau do to proactively promote good mental health in both themselves and their communities?

\*\* QUESTIONS FOR THE AMERICAN FARM BUREAU COLLEGIATE DISCUSSION MEET CONTEST TO BE HELD IN 2026 WILL BE PROVIDED UPON THEIR PUBLICATION.

## **Contest Objectives**

---

Agriculture's strength depends on producers' ability to analyze problems and decide on solutions that best meet their needs. The Discussion Meet is an activity designed to build these crucial skills in young people. By participating, individuals build basic discussion skills, develop a keen understanding of important agricultural issues and explore how groups can pool knowledge to reach a consensus and solve problems.

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

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

## Background Information

---

- The Discussion Meet is a contest promoted by the Texas Farm Bureau Young Farmer and Rancher Committee.
- The Discussion Meet is designed to simulate a committee meeting where discussion and active participation are expected from each committee member.
- The contestants discuss a pre-selected topic.
- The four fundamental bases of general discussion are:
  - Constructive Criticism
  - Cooperation
  - Communication
  - Problem Solving
- 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.

## Helpful Hints for Contestants

---

- Study as much material as possible relating to the overall topic. Sources: library, newspapers, magazines, Farm Bureau policies, county, state, and American Farm Bureau publications and conversations with experts or knowledgeable people.
- The Discussion Meet should be a conflict of ideas, not personalities. **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 a summary statement.
- Use the one minute of quiet time to organize your summary statement.
- Stand and make your closing statement to the audience. Use accepted speech techniques. Stay within the time limit.

# Contest Format

---

1. All contest facilitators and contestants will meet in the pre-assigned contest room ten minutes prior to the start of the contest to receive last minute comments by the room chairman.
2. **No contestant notes** are allowed at the table prior to the moderator starting the meet.
3. The room chairman will call the meeting to order, announce the topic to be discussed, and introduce the timekeeper and moderator.
4. The moderator will introduce the contestants, in voluntary order, the opportunity to make a 30-second opening statement directed to the audience.
5. The timekeeper may stand or otherwise indicate when 30 seconds has elapsed. Judges may subtract points at their discretion for contestants who abuse the time limit.
6. The moderator will then indicate the opportunity for open discussion, which will continue for a total of 20 minutes in Round Robins and 25 minutes in the Final Four contest. The discussion should be directed to fellow contestants during open discussion.
7. The timekeeper will indicate to the moderator when five minutes of open discussion time remains in each contest. The moderator will indicate to contestants the time remaining by raising a table tent. He/She will ensure each contestant has seen the table tent before it is removed.
8. If the discussion is lagging, the moderator may close the discussion at this time.
9. The timekeeper will indicate to the moderator when 15 minutes in the Round Robin and 20 minutes in the Final Four contests have elapsed.
10. The moderator will call for open discussion to stop and for one minute of quiet time allowing the contestants to consider a closing statement.
11. The moderator will give each of the contestants, in voluntary order, the opportunity to make a one-minute closing statement directed to the audience.
12. 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.
13. The next round topic to be discussed will be announced.
14. The moderator will thank the panel and ask the audience to recognize their efforts.
15. The open discussion time may be lengthened or shortened to fit the contest format.



# Contest Structure

---

## Orientations

### 1. Discussion Meet Orientation – Via Video

- a. Orientation will be provided via email/video link.
- b. All contestants are required to watch the orientation video.
- c. All contestants are required to check in 30 minutes prior to the start of Round 1.
- d. Release of Discussion Meet topic time schedule.
  - First Round topic will be announced via email video link and then again in contest room by Room Chair 15 minutes prior to start of First Round.
  - Each subsequent round topic announced at close of prior round.
- e. Distribute contest room locations.

### 2. Judges' Orientation

- a. Held Friday, before the start of Round One, on April 5<sup>th</sup>.
- b. Review judges' duties along with any announcements.
- c. Review timing sequences.
- d. Allow time for questions.
- e. Roll call of judges.
- f. Distribute contest room locations.

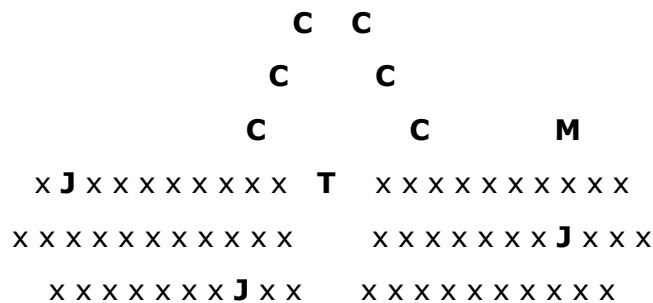
## Contest

---

1. All contestants will compete in at least two rounds of the contest, known as “Round Robins”. Round Robins will have four to six contestants. The top 8 competitors will compete in the Elite Eight round and will be placed into room assignments in the same manner as rounds one and two. The top 4 contestants based on judges scores and rankings will advance to the Final Four where the final topic will be discussed.
2. 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 in the center. Name cards identifying contestants should be visible to both the moderator and audience. Cards should show only the contestant’s name. These cards will be provided for you and distributed at orientation.

## Room Layout

---



**M** = Moderator      **C** = Contestant      **J** = Judge      **T** = Timer      **X** = Audience

## Contest Flow

---

Generally speaking, the discussion should follow these steps:

1. State problem or need.
2. Explore, define, 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.

## **2025 COLLEGIATE DISCUSSION MEET Awards Package**

---

### **Winner:**

- A \$2,500 cash award and a plaque
- TFB will pay travel expenses for the first-place winner to attend the Texas Farm Bureau Annual meeting in Arlington, Texas in December of 2025.
- TFB will pay travel expenses for the winner to compete in the American Farm Bureau Collegiate Discussion Meet Contest in February/March of 2026.

### **Runner Up:**

- A \$1,500 cash Award and a plaque
- TFB will pay travel expenses for the second-place winner to attend the Texas Farm Bureau Annual meeting in Arlington, Texas in December of 2025.

### **Remaining 2 Finalists:**

- A \$750 cash Award and a plaque

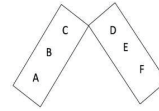
### **Contestants:**

- Students that compete in the Colligate Discussion Meet may apply for an additional \$100 reimbursement after the contest.

# Collegiate Discussion Meet Judges Sheet

Room Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Round # \_\_\_\_\_

Judge's Name: \_\_\_\_\_



In the first column, you will find the point values and descriptions. See rubric for additional detail. The total point value for each row is available for each contestant. You are not dividing the total points among contestants. **No ties.**

Columns to the right each represent a different contestant. Please fill in the first and last name of each competitor according to their seat location. Refer to the diagram for help. Put scores in the larger spaces and rank in the smaller boxes.

	Comp A Name:	Comp B Name:	Comp C Name:	Comp D Name:	Comp E Name:	Comp F Name:
(1) <b>OPENING STATEMENT:</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>10 pts.</b></span> Defines problem; conveys importance and relevance; sets the stage for an interesting discussion; clear point of view; uses time wisely						
(2) <b>ANALYSIS OF TOPIC OR PROBLEM:</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>20 pts.</b></span> Has thoroughly researched topic; builds on the ideas of others to help achieve coherent analysis; asks relevant questions; helps ensure thorough analysis before problem solving; aware of relevant FB policy	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
(3) <b>PROBLEM SOLVING AND IMPLEMENTATION:</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>25 pts.</b></span> Leader in guiding the conversation to specific and relevant solutions; has achievable and specific plan of action; clearly defines how FB is part of the action plan.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
(4) <b>COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE:</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>15 pts.</b></span> Active listener; comments on specific ideas mentioned by others and ties them back to the bigger conversation; shows grace, courtesy and respect to others; shows integrity especially when they do not agree	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
(5) <b>DELIVERY:</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>15 pts.</b></span> Interesting to listen to; animated; appropriate volume and tone; poised; uses gestures and eye contact; confident and clear						
(6) <b>CLOSING STATEMENT:</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>15 pts.</b></span> Shows that they have listened to the conversation; develops relevant and realistic plans; memorable; inspires confidence						
Total score for each contestant is to be tabulated by Judge. <b>TOTAL</b> Any tie scores are to be broken by Judge. Total of 100 points possible.						
Rank contestants: 1 (highest) through (6 lowest). <b>RANK</b>						

Judges Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Room Chair's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

## Discussion Meet Scoring Rubric

<p>(1) OPENING STATEMENT 10 pts.</p>	<p><b>Contestant...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not address the problem – is off topic.</li> <li>• Does not address the importance or relevancy of the problem.</li> <li>• Makes a “closed” statement that does not allow room for further conversation.</li> <li>• Does not seem to have a point of view.</li> <li>• Does not finish in the allotted time.</li> </ul> <p><b>Award 0-3 points</b></p>	<p><b>Contestant...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defines the problem.</li> <li>• Sets the problem in context.</li> <li>• Makes a statement that leaves some room for further conversation but could be more open.</li> <li>• Has a general point of view.</li> <li>• Stays in the given time.</li> </ul> <p><b>Award 4-6 points</b></p>	<p><b>Contestant...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearly defines the problem.</li> <li>• Conveys the importance and relevancy of the problem.</li> <li>• Makes an “open” statement that leaves room for further conversation.</li> <li>• Sets the stage for an interesting conversation with a very clear point of view.</li> <li>• Uses their time very wisely and stays in the given time.</li> </ul> <p><b>Award 7-10 points</b></p>
<p>(2) ANALYSIS OF TOPIC OR PROBLEM: 20 pts.</p>	<p><b>Contestant...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not address the problem or does not remain on topic/wanders/distracts.</li> <li>• Hasn’t done much research or lacks quality facts.</li> <li>• Doesn’t build on other’s ideas, only pushes their own.</li> <li>• Doesn’t ask questions to clarify other’s ideas.</li> <li>• Doesn’t share relevant personal examples.</li> <li>• Misinterprets the issue or does not display competency and therefore does not help with problem solving.</li> <li>• Is unaware of FB policy.</li> </ul> <p><b>Award 0-5 points</b></p>	<p><b>Contestant...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies the causes of the problem, does not directly address them, but remains on topic.</li> <li>• Has done research.</li> <li>• Addresses the ideas of others but does not build upon them – or only drops in information they learned without connecting it to previous ideas and moving the conversation forward.</li> <li>• Asks some questions to help vet the ideas of others.</li> <li>• Shares relevant personal examples – may be slightly off topic.</li> <li>• Demonstrates knowledge of this problem but not why it exists.</li> <li>• Is aware of current FB policy.</li> </ul> <p><b>Award 6-12 points</b></p>	<p><b>Contestant...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies and addresses the causes of the problem and remains on topic.</li> <li>• Has thoroughly researched the topic.</li> <li>• Confidently builds on the ideas of others to contribute to a coherent analysis</li> <li>• Asks relevant questions to vet the ideas of others.</li> <li>• Shares relevant personal examples that add to the conversation.</li> <li>• Helps ensure thorough analysis before moving to problem solving.</li> <li>• Is aware of current and relevant FB policy.</li> </ul> <p><b>Award 13-20 points</b></p>

<p>(3) PROBLEM SOLVING AND IMPLEMENTATION 25 pts.</p>	<p><b>Contestant...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instead of helping to guide the conversation to a solution, just data drops.</li> <li>• Offers no plan for a solution or a generic plan like "tell our story" or "educate consumers."</li> <li>• Does not identify how Farm Bureau is involved.</li> </ul> <p><b>Award 0-6 points</b></p>	<p><b>Contestant...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tries to help lead the conversation to address a solution but misses opportunities to collaborate with the group.</li> <li>• Has a plan but is missing specificity.</li> <li>• Farm Bureau is mentioned but is not a crucial piece of the solution.</li> </ul> <p><b>Award 7-16 points</b></p>	<p><b>Contestant...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is a leader in guiding the group and the conversation to specific and relevant solutions.</li> <li>• Generates ideas that contribute to an achievable and specific plan of action to resolve the issue.</li> <li>• Clearly defines how Farm Bureau is part of the action plan.</li> </ul> <p><b>Award 17-25 points</b></p>
<p>(4) COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE: 15 pts.</p>	<p><b>Contestant...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not listen to others – just waits for their turn to talk.</li> <li>• Cuts others off or simply repeats what others have already said.</li> <li>• Is rude, defensive or combative when they do not agree with others.</li> </ul> <p><b>Award 0-4 points</b></p>	<p><b>Contestant...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contestant listens to others but does not comment specifically on their ideas or tie ideas back to the bigger conversation.</li> <li>• Is respectful of others.</li> <li>• Is not rude or defensive when they disagree with others.</li> </ul> <p><b>Award 5-9 points</b></p>	<p><b>Contestant...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is an active listener and comments on references or specific ideas mentioned by others tying them back to the bigger conversation.</li> <li>• Clearly shows grace, courtesy and respect to other participants.</li> <li>• Shows integrity especially when they do not agree with others.</li> </ul> <p><b>Award 10-15 points</b></p>
<p>(5) DELIVERY: 15 pts.</p>	<p><b>Contestant...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is boring/ mumbling/ monotoned.</li> <li>• Slouches, does not use appropriate gestures or have eye contact</li> <li>• Ideas are difficult to understand, or they are not confident in speaking.</li> </ul> <p><b>Award 0-4 points</b></p>	<p><b>Contestant...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speaks at an appropriate volume and pace with appropriate tone.</li> <li>• Uses effective posture, gestures and eye contact</li> <li>• Conveys thoughts and viewpoints but could seem overly rehearsed.</li> </ul> <p><b>Award 5-9 points</b></p>	<p><b>Contestant...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is interesting to listen to, animated and lively, speaks at an appropriate volume and with a professional and courteous tone.</li> <li>• Is poised and uses gestures and eye contact that emit respect and professionalism.</li> <li>• Confidently conveys thoughts and viewpoints clearly.</li> </ul> <p><b>Award 10-15 points</b></p>
<p>(6) CLOSING STATEMENT: 15 pts.</p>	<p><b>Contestant...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not accurately summarize the conversation.</li> <li>• Uses memorized speech that doesn't reflect the content of the conversation.</li> <li>• Closing statement is forgettable.</li> </ul> <p><b>Award 0-4 points</b></p>	<p><b>Contestant...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summarizes the conversation that happened.</li> <li>• Uses take-away points from the discussion to help develop a plan.</li> <li>• Closing statement is memorable.</li> </ul> <p><b>Award 5-9 points</b></p>	<p><b>Contestant...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shows that they have actively listened to the conversation in their summary.</li> <li>• Uses take away points from the discussion to develop relevant, realistic and specific action items and plans for the future.</li> <li>• Closing statement is memorable and inspires confidence in their ability to work toward a solution.</li> </ul> <p><b>Award 10-15 points</b></p>

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT TEXAS FARM BUREAU**

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE @ [www.texasfarmbureau.org](http://www.texasfarmbureau.org)

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONCERNING THE  
COLLEGIATE DISCUSSION MEET CONTEST CONTACT:**

**ROGER HALL**

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF ORGANIZATION,  
LEADER DEVELOPMENT  
254-399-5021 (OFFICE)

**MCKENNA BUSH, M.S.**

YOUTH OUTREACH COORDINATOR  
254-399-5037 (OFFICE)

OR SEND EMAIL TO:

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

TEXAS FARM BUREAU  
P. O. Box 2689  
WACO, TX 76702-2689