

# **Agricultural Communications**

## A Special Project of the South Dakota FFA Foundation

### **Important Note:**

Please thoroughly read the General Rules at the beginning of this handbook for complete rules and procedures relevant to all South Dakota FFA Leadership and Career Development Events.

### **Purpose**

The agricultural communications career development event aims to excite and inspire students to develop essential skills relevant to the communications industry. Students will be equipped with strong communication skills and will have developed the ability to work collaboratively to communicate and advocate agriculture

### **Objectives**

Provide students the opportunity to develop fundamental skills for success in careers and team environments.

Employ public speaking skills to communicate an important agricultural message.

Contribute to a team through a career-based, mock situation.

### **Career Development Event Rules**

- Each team will be comprised of four members.
- It is highly recommended that participants wear FFA Official Dress for this event.
- During the event, team members will collaborate on their message, communications plan, and component parts of their plan about the press conference topic.
- Recording devices are not allowed during the press conference.
- All scores will be used to determine the total team score.

### **Technology Recommendations**

Equipment needs:

- Each school is required to have their own device. Remember to bring all power cords required for your devices. SDFFA will not provide computers for participants.
- A power supply will be available.
- Table/workspace will be provided to each team.

### **Career Development Event Format**

#### **Team Activities**

##### **1. Press Conference**

The team activities will begin with a press conference on an agricultural topic conducted by an 'expert'. All team members will receive a press packet with background information on the agricultural topic and the expert to use during the event. The press packet will be provided for download prior to the press conference.

The press conference will either be a recorded video presentation or a press conference in written article form to be read to the team. Students may not record or re-watch the press

conference nor will they be provided with the written press conference material if the latter method is chosen by the state as their method of delivery.

The press conference will feature an expert who will speak on the agricultural topic for 20 minutes. Students will be permitted to have paper to take notes during the presentation. No electronic devices of any kind, including tape recorders and cell phones, will be allowed during this portion of the event. Upon completion of the press conference, the team will be dismissed to collaborate on their message, communications plan and the component parts (see below).

All teams will upload their 4 completed products and the visuals to be used in their oral presentation (Powerpoint, Canva, Google Slides, Prezi, etc.) at the end of the allotted prep time.

The state will provide all media and press release information by October 15th. Chapters participating will use the same press conference and material for District and State level competition.

All teams will complete a 10-minute presentation to a panel of judges at the in-person state event.

## **2. News Writing (Feature Story) – 100 points/team**

Writers will write a news story for FFA New Horizons magazine (or a suitable facsimile thereof) using the provided materials and a press conference. It should be written for the target audience, have a strong focus and lead (opening paragraph) and include a headline. News writers must submit a PDF of their story for judging. Feature stories should be 350-500 words in length.

## **3. Magazine Design – 100 points/team**

Each designer will use the information that was gathered in the press conference to design a layout for FFA New Horizons (or a suitable facsimile thereof) using the text written by the news writer. Various photos, graphics, and logos will be provided for use in these layouts. Designers may use any page layout software available (i.e. Canva, Adobe Express, InDesign, etc.) The magazine designer must use the text written by the news writer. Layouts will be saved and submitted in a PDF for judging.

## **4. Video/Audio (Broadcast) Production – 100 points/team**

Each audio-visual editor will receive video and/or audio clips, photos, and/or music to create a 60- to 90-second story to post on the FFA New Horizons (or a suitable facsimile thereof) website. This can be in the form of a video, audio story, podcast or slide show. This product can be used to promote readership of the story, or it can be a supplement to what is in the written story – it is up to the team to decide what would be the best use of these resources. Students will need to provide their own headphones and software. Spotify for podcasters, Adobe Premier, Express, Rush, or Audition, Canva Video, iMovie, Movie Maker, Anchor, BounceCast or PodCastle are all acceptable software but not the only options.

To be submitted for judging, broadcast productions must be exported to the student's device in a standard format such as mp4 or mov.

## **5. Social Media Strategy – 100 points/team**

The social media strategist will develop social media posts to accompany and promote the

magazine story and video. The strategy should be for a one-week time period, involve at least three social media platforms and contain a minimum of 7 posts. Students may use any design software to create the posts. The plan must be submitted in PDF format, including screenshots, links and/or embedded images of each created post. Downloaded posts and videos may be included in the social media package.

## **6. Presentation of Communication Plan – 100 points/team**

Teams will present their message, plan, and selection of components as if presenting it to a client. This presentation should be a quick overview summary presentation of the message, reasoning, and objective of each component. All team members should participate in the presentation. Each team will be allowed up to 10 minutes to present to the judge(s) with five minutes for questions from the judges.

### **PRESENTATION COMPONENTS:**

- 1 - Provide an overview of the Communication Plan.
- 2 - Define the Central theme or controlling idea.
- 3 - Pose the main question or narrative inquiry.
- 4 - Specify the intended call to action.
- 5 - Explain the rationale and goal of the feature story, its relevance to the audience, and its alignment with the mission of the FFA New Horizons magazine.
- 6 - Explain the rationale and goals of the magazine layout, its relevance to the audience and its alignment with the mission of the FFA New Horizons magazine.
- 7 - Explain the rationale and goal of the broadcast production, its relevance to the audience and its alignment with the mission of the FFA New Horizons magazine.
- 8 - Explain the rationale and goal of the social media plan, its relevance to the audience and its alignment with the mission of the FFA New Horizons magazine.

## **Individual Activities**

### **1. Writing Mechanics Exam – 50 points/individual**

Each student will complete a 50-question multiple-choice writing mechanics exam covering general knowledge of the agricultural communications industry and editing questions. Questions may come from any section of the listed references, excluding sports guidelines. Questions that use AP Style editing marks to correct writing mistakes will also be used (see Associated Press Stylebook). Style, grammar, punctuation and spelling mistakes will be included. Team members can NOT use the style manual, a dictionary, or any reference materials during this exercise. The Writing Mechanics Exam will occur during the in-person competition.

### **Submission**

- All written materials will be submitted electronically per instructions from the State FFA Office. Those materials will include:
- Magazine design in pdf form
- News Writing Practicum in pdf form
- Video/Audio Production in mp4 or mov format
- Social Media Strategy Practicum in pdf form
- Each practicum should be named ChapterName.Practicum ie ChapterName.Magazine, ChapterName.News, ChapterName.Video, ChapterName.Social.

- Teams will upload the presentation visual they plan to use to present their materials and rationale to the judges. The presentation should be named ChapterName.Presentation - Be sure to convert presentations to PowerPoint or pdf so that judges will be able to access and review prior to presentation.
- All materials must be submitted prior to the deadline. Teams who do not submit their materials prior to the deadline will not be permitted to compete.

## Scoring

Event	Individual Points	Team Points
Tests 200 points possible		
	Writing Mechanics Exam 50	200
Team Activity—400 points possible		
Magazine Design Practicum		100
News Writing Practicum		100
Video/Audio Production Practicum		100
Social Media Strategy Practicum		100
Presentation of Communication Plan		100
Total Score Possible	200	700

## Tiebreakers

In the case of a team tie, the order to break the tie will be:

1. Combine Score of Components
2. Combine Score of Tests
3. Communication Plan Presentation Score

## References

National FFA Core Catalog – Past CDE Materials

(<http://shop.ffa.org/cde-materials-c1289.aspx>)

Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual

Bivins, T. Public Relations Writings: The Essentials of Style and Format, 4<sup>th</sup> edition. McGraw-Hill Higher Education, ISBN 0-844-20315-3

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

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

Telg, R. and T. Irani. Agricultural Communications in Action: A Hands-On Approach, 1<sup>st</sup> edition. Cengage/Delmar Publishing, ISBN 1111317143

Agricultural Communications in the Classroom Guidebook:  
[https://www.ffa.org/documents/cde\\_agcomm\\_resources.pdf](https://www.ffa.org/documents/cde_agcomm_resources.pdf)