

AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS

Sponsored by:
Department of Agricultural Education, Communications,
& Leadership
Oklahoma State University
Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources

Contest Superintendent

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Contest Details

Date: Saturday, April 26, 2008
Time: 8 a.m.
Location: Room 202, Agricultural Hall, OSU

Attention FFA Advisors:

Our goal for the Agricultural Communications Career Development Event at OSU is to showcase agricultural communications careers to as many FFA members as possible, as well as to select the team to represent Oklahoma FFA at the national competition. To attain that goal, we have made the following decisions related to the competition.

- o **Students with cell phones will be disqualified.**
- o The Agricultural Communications Career Development Event will combine scores from all four team members as the team score. We will not drop the lowest individual score in calculating team scores.
- o The 2008 OSU contest will NOT include the page layout portion of the graphic designer practicum that is included in the national contest.
- o The 2008 OSU contest will NOT include the Web design component. Therefore, the winning Oklahoma team will have to add a team member to participate at the national competition.
- o We will maintain our ranking procedure, as the National FFA is making a change to that format. The OSU guidelines mirror the national CDE for evaluation criteria.

Contest Purpose, Objectives, Rules and Guidelines

Structure

Individuals and/or teams will be eligible to participate in the Oklahoma FFA Career Development Event in Agricultural Communications. Schools may enter up to three individuals and/or one four-member team. **All participants MUST be in official FFA dress.** The four team members' score will constitute the team score. Both team and individual awards will be given. Team members and individuals will be eligible for individual awards. The top team will be eligible to represent Oklahoma in the 2008 National FFA Agricultural Communications CDE. The rest of this document identifies the components of the CDE and how it will be judged.

References: Associated Press Style Manual (available on line at most major or campus bookstores)
Agricultural Communications CDE Guidebook (download from National FFA CDE Web site.)
Writing for Agriculture (2nd edition) ISBN 0-7872-7813-0

NOTE: Agricultural teachers may pick up student critiques at the State FFA Convention media room.

I. Tests

A. Editing exercise

Because editing is a critical skill for all communicators, each participant will complete an editing exercise. They will be given a printed document that contains 25 identified sections. Students must determine whether an identified section is correct or incorrect. For the incorrect items, participants will be required to correct the mistakes using appropriate proofreader's marks (see <http://aged.okstate.edu/cde/ffa1.htm>). Style, grammar, punctuation, and spelling mistakes will be included. Participants will NOT be able to use a style manual or dictionary during this exercise.

B. Communications Quiz

Each participant will complete a quiz that covers basic elements important to the skill areas of journalistic writing, radio broadcasting, public relations writing, and graphic design. Five questions will be written for each segment, which includes broadcasting, public relations, news, visuals, and ethics of communication.

II. Practicums

The practicums will consist of four specific activities with no more than one team member per activity. Participants can participate in one of the following activities:

1. Organizing and writing a news story;
2. Organizing and writing a news release;
3. Developing and recording a broadcast news story; or
4. Preparing a graphic, editing a photo for a news story, and writing a caption for the edited photo.

Each team should assign a member to each of these activities when registering for the event.

Individuals who are not participating on teams will designate in which activity they plan to participate when they enter the contest.

All teams will meet in 202 Agricultural Hall for an orientation, the tests and the press conference. Teams will be divided so all broadcasters sit together, all news story writers sit together, all news release writers sit together and all graphic designers sit together.

All team members will be given an orientation at the beginning of the practicums to last no more than 10 minutes. Following the orientation, the press conference will be held. Each team member will receive a press packet with background information on the agricultural topic and expert, which can be reviewed for 10 minutes. The expert will speak on a timely agricultural topic for 10-15 minutes. Students will be provided with paper on which to take notes if they wish. **Students should bring their own pens or pencils.**

After the presentation, a 15-minute question-and-answer period with the expert (speaker) will be held. Upon completion of the question-and-answer session, all competitors will be allowed 60 minutes to complete their assigned tasks.

Detailed descriptions of each team member's assignment follows:

News writers

Students are to write a news story based on information gathered at the news conference. It should be written for an agricultural publication (ag producer) audience. The story should have a minimum of 250 words and follow news or inverted-pyramid style. It should have a strong focus and lead (opening paragraph). The story should provide answers to who, what, when, where, how, and why. Students also should write a headline for their story. Each writer can use notes from the press conference, the Q&A session, and from information in the press packet. Participants will have 60 minutes to complete their tasks. Students will have access to IBM-compatible computers with Microsoft Word for typing their news stories.

News release writers

Each news release writer will use the press packet and the information gathered in the press conference to write a 200- to 300-word news release. The release should be written as if it were being distributed by the expert's company or organization. They will have 60 minutes to complete the task. Students will have access to IBM-compatible computers with Microsoft Word for typing their news release.

Broadcasters

Each broadcaster will use the press packet and information gathered at the press conference to write and record a two-minute radio broadcast. The total time for the story should be as close to 2 minutes as possible; however, no penalties will apply for stories that run between 90 seconds and 2 minutes and 30 seconds. The contestant will be given 30 minutes to prepare his/her script and five questions he/she would use as follow-up to gain further information about the topic. At the end of the first 30 minutes, contestants will submit these materials and draw for recording order. Students will NOT be able to practice read scripts after the first 30 minutes until they enter the broadcast room. Once in the broadcast room, each contestant will be able to practice his/her script once and record his/her script no more than twice. The contestant will be asked to choose the recording to be judged. The student will voice the

broadcast in front of a professional broadcast microphone, and an audio technician will be present to run the production equipment.

Graphic Designers

Each designer will complete a graphic art, photo editing and photo outline writing exercise. Effective communication of information sharing through visual tools is the objective. Participants will have 60 minutes to complete their three tasks.

1. Graphic art exercise—Each student will illustrate numeric data from the press conference by creating a chart or table on graphing paper or through a Microsoft Office program. A press packet will provide the data. Students are judged on their graphic art skills, understanding and use of statistics, and creativity. Students should bring their own writing/drawing utensils if necessary. Paper and access to an IBM-compatible computer will be provided.
2. Photo editing exercise—Students will receive a variety of color photos and will be asked to select the best photo to use in a story based on the news conference. Each student should make photo-cropping suggestions by marking the photo borders with a pencil. Students are to give written reasons on why they selected a particular photo. These reasons should include the photo's best qualities, its visual appeal to readers, and how it helps communicate the story's message.
3. Photo caption exercise—Students are to write a outline (approximately 25 words) for their selected photo. Students will be judged on accuracy of information, grammar, brevity, clarity, and creativity of captions.

Overall CDE Timeline

1. Testing (30 minutes)
Communications Quiz
Editing Exercise
10 minute break
2. Practicum (1 hour and 40 minutes)
News story
Broadcast*
News Release
Graphics

Total = 2 hours 20 minutes

*Note: Changes in the broadcasting practicum will mean some students are released later than the total time scheduled.

Tie Breakers

Team tie breakers will be settled in the following order:

1. Practicum rankings
2. Quiz rankings
3. Editing exercise rankings

Individual tie breakers will be settled in the following order:

1. Practicum ranking
2. Quiz ranking

3. Editing exercise ranking

Equipment

The following equipment will be provided:

For writers and graphic designers, diskette and access to IBM-compatible computers with Microsoft Office program.

For broadcasters, sound bites from the press conference.

For graphic designers, B&W photographs, graphing paper, diskette, and access to IBM compatible computers with Microsoft Office program.

For everyone, dictionaries (may be used only during the practicums), style manuals (may be used only during the practicums), and paper.

Team Scoring

Participants will be ranked (1=first, 2=second, same scores will get the same ranking) based on their scores on both the Communications Quiz and Editing Exercise. The combined ranking scores for the Communications Quiz and Editing Exercise will be worth 25% of the final team score.

Tests

Communications Quiz Rank	12.5%
Editing Exercise Rank	12.5%
TOTAL TEST RANK WEIGHT	25%

Practicums

Participants in the practicums will be ranked (1=first, 2=second, same scores will get the same ranking) within each practicum area. The combined ranking scores will be worth 75% of the final team score. The winning team will have the lowest combined ranking scores of the team member rankings. The practicums will be judged and ranked using the following criteria.

News Stories	
Lead/Focus	20%
Organization, clarity, brevity, and conciseness	15%
Correct style (AP)	10%
Accuracy of information and quotes	20%
Depth of Coverage/Creativity	10%
Headline	10%
Grammar, spelling, punctuation, and word choice	15%
SUBTOTAL	100%
Press Releases	
Lead/Focus	20%
Organization, brevity, concise, and clarity	15%
Correct style (AP)	10%
Accuracy of information and quotes	15%
Creativity	10%

Header/headline	10%
Grammar, spelling, punctuation, and word choice	10%
Company or product information	10%
SUBTOTAL	100%

Broadcasters' recordings	
Voice quality	10%
Power of expression	10%
Lead/focus	15%
Clarity of communication	10%
Organization, concise, and brevity	10%
Creativity	10%
Accuracy of information and quotes	15%
Quality of five written follow-up questions	20%
SUBTOTAL	100%

Graphic Designer	
Overall Aesthetics of layout	25%
Use of graphic design principles	15%
Understanding and use of statistics in Informational graphic	15%
Neatness and creativity	15%
Choice, justification, placement and cropping of photo	15%
Photo caption writing	15%
SUBTOTAL	100%

Individual Scoring

Communications Quiz	12.5%
Editing Exercise	12.5%
Practicum	75%

