



Agricultural Communications

PA FFA State Convention
June 10-12, 2025

Chairs:

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Contest Overview & Rules

- Teams must consist of 4 members
- Each member should be in Official Dress. Deductions will be made for FFA Members not in complete Official Dress.
- Students must bring their own laptops/devices. ONLY a screen, projector and Jump Drives will be provided to teams for this event. Students will be given internet access.
- All participant submissions shall result from their own efforts. This competition does not permit using web-based or other artificial intelligence or editing applications.

Event Format

Teams will work together to create a media communications plan and package as if they are on FFA New Horizons magazine staff.

- During the practicum portion of the event, teams will work together to create their team's communications package. Team members will work collaboratively to create four practicum components - a feature story, a magazine layout design incorporating that story, a broadcast production piece to promote or enhance their story topic, and a social media plan to promote their story.
- Any participant possessing an electronic device during the exam is subject to disqualification.
- Recording devices are not allowed during press conferences

Contest Overview & Rules

Equipment students should bring:

- Computing equipment for each participant. It can be any combination of laptops, tablets, and/or smartphones for word processing and/or design work for creating practicum components. Remember to bring all power cords required for your devices. A power supply will be furnished.
- Pens or pencils
- Privacy screens for laptops (not required, but allowed) are permitted to protect the security of students' work/ideas
- Headphones of your preference
- Participants need to know how to upload/download materials for this contest. Additional help will not be given at the state contest

Teams will be provided with the following items:

- Table and chairs for each team of four team members in the shared team workspace
- Blank paper or notebooks
- Digital photographs/images
- Digital video files
- Digital audio files
- Information regarding press conference speaker and topic
- Dummy text
- Logos
- Any other necessary materials depending on the story topic
- Power supply for devices, etc.

Contest Overview & Rules

The following items will NOT be allowed:

- Desktop computers
- Smartwatches
- Add-on editing software such as Grammarly
- Photos and videos that were not supplied by event officials or created by the students within the contest time frame

The following activities will NOT be permitted:

- Outside assistance during the contest from any person or company
- Text messages, phone calls, emails, or other communication with anyone outside of the contest while the event is in progress
- Leaving the contest area other than a restroom break

Schedule of Events

Tuesday, June 10th

Event	Additional Notes/Info
Writing Mechanics Exam	One Exam Multiple Choice - On paper

Wednesday, June 11th

Press Conference	Teams will listen to presenters/take notes/ ask questions to prepare for practicums
Practicums: Magazine Layout Design, Broadcast Production, Feature Story, Social Media Plan, Communication Plan	Teams will have up to 3 hours to complete practicums, put together their presentation and prepare for verbal presentation to judges

Contest Scorecard

	Event	Individual Points	Team Points
1	Writing Mechanics Exam	50	200
Team Activities			
2	Magazine Layout Design		100
3	Broadcast Production practicum		100
4	Feature Story practicum		100
5	Social Media Plan Practicum		100
6	Communication Plan		100
Total Possible Score		50	700

Writing Mechanics Exam

INDIVIDUAL EVENT

50 points

Multiple Choice - On Paper

Description: Each student will complete a 50-question 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.

Resources :

National FFA Past Tests/Quizzes [HERE](#)

TEAM ACTIVITIES: *PRESS CONFERENCE*



Description: The team activities will begin with a “press conference” or “story assignment on an agricultural topic. All team members will receive a press packet with background information on the agricultural topic and the expert to use during the event. The expert will speak on the agricultural topic for 20 minutes, followed by a 10-minute question-and-answer period. Students will be provided with paper to take notes if they wish. Students’ electronic devices must remain under their chairs during this portion of the event, as note-taking by hand is an essential communication skill. Students will stand to be recognized before asking a question. They may ask multiple questions; however, the expert will attempt to address questions from as many participants as possible. No electronic devices, including tape recorders and cell phones, will be allowed during this portion of the event.

TEAM ACTIVITIES: *PRACTICUMS*



Description: Upon completion of the press conference, the team will be dismissed to a team working area to collaborate on their message, communications package, and the component parts. Students will be allowed up to **3 hours** to collaborate with their team members to determine their message, define responsibilities, complete components, and finalize their practicum elements. ALL communications plan components must be created and submitted for judging during this time. **Teams may not be in a private area** - teams might be working in a newsroom environment with other teams in the same location. Event officials will monitor the teams for outside help and have the authority to disqualify anyone breaking the rules.

Teams should allow a minimum of 90 minutes to complete the practicum components utilizing the remaining time to create and finalize their communications plan for submission. The committee may designate required and optional components.

Individual Practicums: Feature Story

Writers will write a news story for FFA New Horizons magazine using the provided materials and press conference information. It should be written for the magazine's target audience, have a strong focus and lead (opening paragraph), and include a headline. Although the news writer will provide their copy to the magazine designer for placement in their layout, news writers must also submit a PDF of their story for judging.

350- 500 words in length.

Individual Practicum: Magazine Layout Design

Designers will use the press packet and information gathered in the press conference to develop a magazine layout for FFA New Horizons using the feature story 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.) if it appropriately tells the story and represents a design in FFA New Horizons. The magazine designer must use the text written by the news writer. Layouts will be saved and submitted in a PDF for judging.

Individual Practicums: Broadcast Production

Broadcasters will receive video and/or audio clips, photos, and/or music to create a 60 to 90- second story for the FFA New Horizons website. This can be a television story, online video, radio story, podcast, or slide show. This broadcast product can be used to promote readership of the story created by their team, or it can supplement what is in the written story – it is up to the team to decide the best use of these resources. Students will need to provide their own headphones and software. Spotify for Podcasters, Adobe Premiere, Express, Rush, or Audition; Canva Video; iMovie; Movie Maker; Anchor; BounceCast; or Podcastle are all acceptable software for this practicum but are not the only available software 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

60-90 seconds long

Individual Practicum: Social Media Plan

Social media planners will develop posts to accompany and promote their team's magazine story. The strategy should be for a one-week flight, involve at least three social media platforms (such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, Snapchat, or others), and contain a minimum of seven posts.

Students may use any design software to create the posts (Canva, Adobe Express, Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign). These are all acceptable software for this practicum but are not the only software options available. 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.

Team Practicum:

Communication Plan

The team is required to prepare a 3-page Communications Plan in PDF format as if it were to be presented to a client. Creating the Communications Plan should be a collaborative effort involving all team members. The Communications Plan should address the following points:

1. Provide an overview of the Communications 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 FFA New Horizons magazine.
6. Explain the rationale and goal of the magazine layout, its relevance to the audience, and its alignment with the mission of FFA New Horizons magazine.
7. Explain the rationale and goal of the broadcast production piece, its relevance to the audience, and its alignment with the mission of 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 FFA New Horizons magazine

Practicum Submission

Each team will be given a jump drive at the contest. Each member will save their practicum to the jump drive when finished. Jump drives will be submitted to contest chairs for grading and evaluation by judges.