



Georgia FFA Association

Agricultural Communications CDE

I. OVERVIEW

A team of four members will have their skills challenged in all areas of the agricultural communications field. Team members will attend an actual news conference and then use the information gathered to complete individual practicums in web design, video production, journalistic writing, and opinion writing. Each team member will also complete an editing exercise and a general communications quiz.

II. PURPOSE

The program prepares FFA members who are planning on pursuing a degree in agricultural communications. It is designed to enable students to conquer the various situations they may encounter while advocating agriculture in the public sector.

III. ELIGIBILITY

This event is open to students in grades 9-12 who are agricultural education students and are paid members of a chartered FFA chapter. Each member of the team must be a member of the chapter registering them, and each student's name must appear on the chapter's FFA roster at least 10 days prior to competition above the chapter level.

IV. SPECIAL NEEDS REQUEST

To report any special needs or request special services for a student to compete in a Career Development Event or FFA Award area (Area or State level), it is the responsibility of the FFA advisor to provide a detailed, specific request and explanation in writing. Requests should include written documentation from the school system verifying the IEP and need being requested. Written requests must be submitted to the CDE Superintendent prior to registering for the CDE/event (at least 3 weeks prior to the date of competition).

V. EQUIPMENT

Students will be expected have a writing utensil (pencil/pen) for the quizzes, and a computer with the necessary software for their individual practicums. When/if it becomes possible for the CDE Superintendent to provide computers for each student to complete their practicums, the Superintendent will make that announcement prior to the event.

Presentations

In their presentation rooms (in both Preliminary and Finals rounds) the CDE Superintendent will provide each team with a screen, table and power supply Any additional material (projector, easel, props, etc...) will be the responsibility of the chapter/team.

Practicums

Each student will be expected to provide a laptop with the necessary software to complete their respective practicum. The CDE Superintendent will provide saving devices, digital files and photos, and other information that students will need in order to complete their practicum following the press conference.



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VI. RULES

1. The event is limited to one team per chapter at the area level.
2. The top two teams from each area will compete at the state level.
3. Each team will consist of four (4) members.
4. The Media Plan will be due to the CDE Superintendent as a PDF document no later than March 1.
5. FFA members should be in official dress at the event as outlined in the Official FFA Manual.
6. All material must be student produced and should be the work of the members of the current team.
7. The judges will be selected from a variety of print and broadcast media, agricultural producers, and other members of the agricultural communications community.

VII. EVENT FORMAT

The Area Agricultural Communications CDE will consist of a 25-question communications quiz and a 25-question editing quiz for each team member. Teams will be ranked based on total editing and communications quiz scores for all four team members.

The State Agricultural Communications CDE will include four individual practicums (one per team member), a media plan from each team, an oral presentation highlighting the team's media plan, a communications quiz and an editing quiz for all team members.

Agriculture Media Plan

Each team will play the role of communications consultants and will develop a media plan for an assigned scenario. The scenario will identify a client with a communication need and a budget. The Media Plan will be prepared and submitted via email by the March 1 deadline as a PDF document.

A media plan is a written document that describes the following:

- a. Objectives – What the group wants to accomplish with the media plan.
- b. Target Audience – Description of who the client is trying to reach, including demographic data.
- c. Strategic plan and tactics – Ways in which the objectives can be accomplished.
- d. Timeline – When the objectives will be accomplished.
- e. Evaluation – How the results will be measured.
- f. Budget – How much the plan will cost.

Media Plan guidelines

- i. Media Plan should be:
 - A minimum of 8 and maximum of 10 typed pages not including cover page, table of contents, references or appendices;
 - Double spaced with 1" margins;
 - Paginated (numbered pages not including cover page);
 - 12-point Times New Roman font (not including display text or headings);
 - Submitted electronically in PDF format to the state CDE superintendent by March 1;
 - Formatted and edited according to the Publications Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) when citing sources;



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- ii. The Media Plan must include the following sections (points will be deducted for missing or incomplete sections).
- **Cover Page**
 - Must include the title of the media plan, CDE name, state, chapter name, team member names, and year
 - May include a creative design
 - **Table of Contents**
 - **Introduction & Overview (2 pages maximum)**
 - Introduction*: a brief background of the issue/topic and a statement of the problem establishing the need for this media plan.
 - Overview*: a brief preview of what is contained in the plan and how it will benefit the client.
 - **Audience (1 page maximum)**
 - Who the client is trying to reach with the media plan.
 - The demographic characteristics of the intended audience. **Note**: teams may have a primary and a secondary audience.
 - **Strategic Plan (4 page maximum)**
 - Key messages or themes to communicate to the audience.
 - Explanation of how objectives will be met.
 - Plan to attract media attention.

A social media plan is required addressing the following:

- Social Media platforms to be used
- Plan to gain followers
- Plan to engage followers
- General idea for the messages to be posted
- One page example post must be provided as an appendix (can include Facebook posts, tweets, Instagram photos and others.)
- Content of the “About” section of pages
- Frequency of posts
- Some plans include occasional posting in the beginning and then very frequent in the end
- Timeline
- Evaluation
- Include 3 to 5 examples in the appendices

Examples of tactics include, but are not limited to, ...

- broadcast advertising
- print advertising
- press releases
- fliers
- brochure
- web site
- blogging
- displays



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- **Timeline (1 page maximum)**
 - Explanation of the duration of the plan and the timing of the media tactics.

- **Evaluation (1 page maximum)**
 - Description of proposed methods to determine if the objectives were met.
 - What are the key performances? (How will you measure that you are successful?)
 - Examples may include number of participants, impressions, likes, shares, retweets, circulation of publications, number of video views.

- **Budget (1 page maximum)**
 - Table of all costs associated with implementing the media plan.
 - Explain why you've allocated this amount of money for each activity.

- **Conclusion (1 page maximum)**
 - A final summary of key points related to the strategic plan and a statement persuading the client that the plan is a good solution to the communication problem.
 - Not a restatement of the introduction and overview.

- **References**
 - Formatted and edited according to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA)
 - Appendices/Examples
 - One page of social media posts
 - Three to five other communication examples
 - Suggestions include mock-up or example of website, links to student created video, press release, blogs, op-eds.

Appendices

- Include three to five examples in the appendices
- Examples of tactics include but are not limited to
 - Broadcast advertising
 - Print advertising
 - Press releases
 - Fliers
 - Brochure
 - Website
 - Blogging
 - Displays

NOTE: A penalty of 10% will be assessed for documents received after the deadline. If the document is not received seven days after the deadline, the team may be subject to disqualification.



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Media Plan Presentation

- a. Each team should present their media plan as if pitching it to the client identified in the scenario.
- b. The presentation should follow the structure of the written media plan.
- c. Teams are encouraged to bring examples of materials that would be used in the execution of the plan (e.g. social media, broadcast advertising, print advertising, press releases, fliers, brochures, web site, blogging, and displays).
- d. Each team member must participate in the presentation.
- e. Each team will be allowed 15 minutes to present its media plan to a panel of judges, who will play the role of the client. Five points will be deducted for each major fraction of a minute over the 15 minutes allowed for the presentation. Following the presentation, judges will be allowed five minutes to ask question.
- f. Teams will have a total of 10 minutes for setting-up and tearing-down equipment (e.g. 5 minutes to set-up and 5 minutes to tear down).
- g. Provided equipment includes an easel, screen and table. **Note:** Teams may bring additional equipment for the presentation as long as they are able to set-up and tear-down equipment in the time allotted.
- h. In the case of equipment failure, the team may be asked to move forward with the presentation. A back-up plan is recommended.
- i. Presentation flights will be determined by Area qualifying order (1 team per Area in each flight).

The Media Plan presentation will be conducted in two rounds – preliminary (2 flights) and finals (1 flight). The top four teams based on total scores from individual practicums, presentation, media plan, communication quiz scores, and editing quiz scores will advance to a final round.

Finals Round

In the final round the four teams will make another presentation. The ranking of the final four teams will be determined by greatest raw score when combining each team's editing quiz, communication quiz, individual practicum, media plan, and final presentation scores.

Individual Events

Editing Exercise (25 points/individual; 100 points/team)

Because editing is a critical skill for all communicators, each team member will complete an editing exercise. They will be given a printed document that contains 25 mistakes. In correcting the mistakes, team members will be required to use correct proofreader's marks (see Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual). Style, grammar, punctuation, and spelling mistakes will be included. Team members will NOT be able to use the style manual or a dictionary during the exercise.

Communication Quiz (25 points/individual; 100 points/team)

Each team member will complete a quiz that covers basic elements important to the skill areas of journalistic writing and graphic design. The quiz questions will come from the AP Style Guide and the other references listed. Team members will NOT be able to use the style manual or a dictionary during the exercise.

All contestants will have a maximum of one (1) hour to complete both quizzes.



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Practicums (100 points/individual; 400 points/team)

The practicums will consist of four individual events. Each team must assign a member to one of the following areas PRIOR to arriving at the event:

1. Web design
2. Video production
3. Journalistic writing
4. Opinion writing

All teams will meet in a central location for an orientation and press conference. Teams will be seated by practicum group. All team members will be given an orientation at the beginning of the practicums to last no more than 10 minutes. The press conference will be held following the orientation meeting. Each team member will receive a press packet with background information on the agricultural topic and expert to use during the event. An expert will speak on a current agricultural topic for 20 minutes. Students will be provided with paper to take notes if they wish.

After the 20-minute presentation, the non-writers will be dismissed to a different area to complete their assigned practicums. The writers will then be involved in a 10-minute question and answer period with the expert (speaker). Each writer will stand to be recognized before asking a question. Writers may ask more than one question; however, the expert will attempt to address questions from as many different participants as possible. 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 10-minute question and answer session, remaining participants will be dismissed to complete their assigned practicums.

Designer - Each designer will use the press packet and information that was gathered in the press conference. Students may be provided a laptop and will be required to develop WordPress site. The objective is to communicate the press conference speaker's organization through appropriate design, navigation, and use of provided photos and graphics. Each participant will have 90 minutes to complete the practicum.

Video Producer - Each video producer will be given a selection of video clips, photos, and music and will create a 60-90 second video that promotes the client's product or service. Students will not be recording a voice track. Participants will have 90 minutes to complete the practicum and will be working in video editing software declared by the CDE Superintendent. Students will need to provide their own headphones.

Journalistic Writers - Writers are to write a journalistic piece based on the press packet and information that was gathered in the press conference. The specific activity and details will be announced each November by the State CDE Superintendent. It should be written for an appropriate audience, have a strong focus and lead (opening paragraph) and include a headline. The story will then be word processed by the student on a computer and turned in to be scored. Participants will have 90 minutes to complete the practicum.

The activity may be chosen from the following:

- Press release
- News story
- Feature story



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Opinion Writers – Writers are to write a piece that takes a position and support it with evidence based on the press packet and information that was gathered in the press conference. It should be written for an appropriate audience, have a strong focus and lead (opening paragraph) and include a headline. The story will then be word processed by the student on a computer and turned in to be scored. Participants will have 90 minutes to complete the practicum.

The activity may be chosen from the following:

- A blog post (250-300 words)
- An op-ed (500-750 words)
- A letter to the editor (300-500 words)

VIII. SCORING

Individual rankings will be determined by individual combined scores on the editing and communications quizzes and the individual practicums.

Team rankings in the preliminary round will be determined by the greatest total score when combining each team's media plan score, editing and communications quiz scores, presentation score, and individual practicum scores. Teams will be ranked in order of total score. These rankings will be used to determine who competes in the final round.

The top four teams in the preliminary round will advance to the final round. In the final round, all four teams will make another presentation. The ranking of the final four teams will be determined by greatest raw score when combining each team's scores from the editing and communications quizzes, individual practicums, media plan, and their final round presentation. Teams in the final round will be ranked 1 through 4.

Communication Project Proposal-200 points
Communications Project Presentation-175 points
Communication Quiz (25 points/individual; 100 points/team)
Editing Quiz (25 points/individual; 100 points/team)
Individual Practicums (100 points/individual; 400 points/team)
Total Possible Points-975 points

*****See score sheets for Individual Practicums, Media Plan and Presentation on the National Agricultural Communications CDE guidelines.**

IX. TIEBREAKER

Team Tiebreaker will be settled in the following order:

1. Combined Individual Practicum Score
2. Proposal Rank
3. Presentation Rank
4. Media Plan

Individual Tiebreaker will be settled in the following order:

1. Practicum score
2. Communications Quiz score
3. Editing Quiz score



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X. AWARDS

Awards shall be determined each year by the Board of Trustees of the Georgia FFA Foundation. The event is made possible through the Georgia FFA Foundation as a special project of an industry sponsor or from the Foundation General Fund.

XI. REFERENCES

National FFA Core Catalog – Past CDE Material (<http://shop.ffa.org/cde-qas-c1413.aspx>)

Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual

Microsoft Office computer program

Adobe Creative Suite (most current edition)

Bivins, T. *Public Relations Writings: The Essential of Style and Format*, 4th Edition. McGraw-Hill Higher Education, ISBN 0-844-20351-3

Calver, P. (editor). *The Communicator's Handbook*. 4th Edition. Maupin House, Gainesville, FL 32607
<http://www.maupinhouse.com>

Harrower, T. *Newspaper Designer's Handbook*, 5th Edition. McGraw-Hill Higher Education. ISBN 0-07-249291-0

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

Agriculture Communications in the Classroom; Shannon Hartenstein, advised by Tracy A. Rutherford, Ph.D. *Agricultural Communications and Journalism*, Kansas State University on behalf of the National FFA Organization Copyright 2002, National FFA Organization. This guide can be found on the CDE webpage at https://www.ffa.org/documents/cde_agcomm_resources.pdf.