

Agricultural Communications



CDE Handbook

AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATION

1. Purpose

The purpose of the agricultural communications career development event is to provide individuals with practical communications skills necessary to pursue career opportunities in agricultural communications. Public communications about agricultural products, practices and policies are essential to the future of agriculture. Students who are equipped with strong communication skills, have developed teamwork skills and who can use a variety of media to help the public understand issues related to the industry of agriculture have a bright future in the job market.

2. Event Rules

- a. Teams will consist of four-five members.
- b. It is highly recommended that participants wear FFA Official Dress for this event.
- c. Team members will work together to prepare a written media plan prior to state FFA convention. The team will also be responsible for presenting the plan at the state event and completing individual practicums and tests.
- d. During the practicum portion of the event: one team member will be responsible for completing a web design activity, one team member will be responsible for completing a video producer activity, one team member will be responsible for completing a journalistic writer activity, and one team member will be responsible for completing an opinion writer activity. If the team has five members, two will complete one of the practicums, and the top score will count as the team's score in that practicum.
- e. Any participant in possession of an electronic device in the event area is subject to disqualification.

3. Event Format

a. Team Activities

1. Agriculture-related Media Plan (200 points/team)

a. Teams 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.

b. Theme:

Your chapter's agricultural communications committee has been approached by a benefactor of a local community garden in your state to promote the establishment/revitalization/importance of the garden in the community it serves. Your committee has the option to decide what is included in the promotion of this community garden. This promotion might include one or more of the following related to the community garden's efforts: innovative growing techniques, the community the garden serves, community engagement opportunities, events, volunteer opportunities, social functions, adult, and youth educational opportunities, etc. Please remember the plan should focus on promoting a community garden within your state.

Scenarios are based around agricultural advocacy. Teams will develop a media plan from the following rotating topics.

Tell a local FFA Story

- The focus could include one of the following subjects:
 - FFA member
 - FFA chapter
 - FFA advisor
 - State FFA association
 - FFA alumni/supporter (2023)

Advocate the industry of agriculture to consumers

- The focus could include one of the following subjects:
 - Farmer/rancher
 - Commodity
 - Farmers market
 - Community garden
 - Farm to table
 - A local opportunity for public relations not tied to FFA

c. Please reference the current event specifications on the NDSU FFA Agriculture Communication CDE webpage. www.ndffa.org/agricultural-communications

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

- i. Objectives: What the group wants to accomplish with the media plan.
- ii. Target Audience: Description of who the client is trying to reach, including demographic data.
- iii. Strategic plan and tactics: Ways in which the objectives can be accomplished. Including a social media plan.
- iv. Timeline: When the objectives will be accomplished.
- v. Evaluation: How the results will be measured.
- vi. Budget: How much the plan will cost. Teams may not go over a maximum of \$5000.
- vii. References

e. Guidelines for media plan

The media plan should be:

- i. Eight to ten typed pages not including cover page, table of contents, references or appendices.
- ii. Double-spaced with 1" margins.
- iii. Paginated (numbered pages not including cover page).
- iv. 12-point Times New Roman font (not including display text or headings).
- v. Formatted and edited according to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) when citing sources.

The media plan must include the following sections (points will be deducted for missing or incomplete sections):

1. Cover page

- a. Must include the title of the media plan, CDE name, state, chapter name, team member names and year.
- b. May include a creative design.

2. Table of Contents

3. Introduction and Overview- 2 pages maximum

a. Introduction

1. A brief background of the issue/topic and a statement of the problem establishing the need for this media plan.

b. Overview

1. A brief preview of what is contained in the plan and how it will benefit the client.
2. Including the objectives of the media plan.

4. Audience- 1 page maximum

- a. Who the client is trying to reach (target audience) with the media plan.
- b. The demographic characteristics of the intended audience.
- c. Note: teams may have a primary and secondary audience.

5. Strategic Plan- 3-4 pages maximum

- a. Key messages or themes to communicate to the audience.
- b. Explanation of how the objectives will be met.
- c. Plan to attract media attention using social media
- d. Description of how the plan will be executed.
- e. Social Media Tactic of the Strategic Plan (required addressing the following)
 1. Social media platforms to be used.
 2. Plan to gain followers.
 3. Plan to engage followers
 4. General idea for the messages to be posted.
 5. One-page example post must be provided as an appendix (can include Facebook posts, tweets, Instagram photos and others).
 6. Content of the "About" section of pages.

6. Timeline- 1 page maximum

- a. Explanation of the duration of the plan and the timing of the media tactics.

7. Evaluation- 1 page maximum

- a. Description of proposed methods to determine if the objectives were met.
- b. What are the key performances? (How will you measure that you are successful?)
- c. Examples may include number of participants, impressions, likes, shares, tweets, circulation of publications, number of video views.

8. Budget and Justification - 1 page maximum

- a. Table of all costs associated with implementing the media plan.
- b. Explain why you have allocated this amount for each activity.

9. Conclusion- 1 page maximum

- a. 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.
- b. Not a restatement of the introduction and overview.

10. References

- a. Formatted and edited according to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA).
- b. Appendices/Examples
- c. One page of social media posts
- d. Three to five other communication examples.
- e. Suggestions include mockup or example of website, links to student created video, press releases, blogs, op-eds.

11. Appendices

- a. Include three to five examples
- b. Examples of tactics include but are not limited to broadcast advertising, print advertising, press releases, fliers, brochure, web site, blogging, displays.

A media plan must be emailed by the due date specified on the ND FFA Agriculture Communication CDE webpage.

A. Media Plan Presentation (125 points/team)

- a. The team should present the 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 questions.
- f. Provided equipment includes a projector, screen, and table.

- g. Note: Teams may bring additional equipment for the presentation if they are able to set up and tear down equipment in the time allowed.
- h. In the case of equipment failure, the team may be asked to move forward with the presentation.

B. Individual Activities

1. Tests

a. 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 proofreading marks (see Associated Press Stylebook). Style, grammar, punctuation and spelling mistakes will be included. Team members will NOT be able to use the style manual or a dictionary during this exercise.

b. Communications quiz- 25 points/individual; 100 points/team

Each team member will complete a quiz that covers the content of the current Associated Press Stylebook. Questions may come from any section excluding sports guidelines. Team members will NOT be able to use the style manual or a dictionary during this exercise.

2. 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 (every year) 2. Video Producer (every year), 3. Journalistic Writer, 4. Opinion Writer. (If you have 5 members one practicum will have 2 participants with the top score of the two being used for the team score.)

All teams will meet in a central location for an orientation and press conference. 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. There will then be 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.

1. Web Design (Annual)

Each designer will use the press packet and information that was gathered in the press conference to develop a graphic design layout in a WordPress site. The objective is to communicate the press conference speaker's organization through appropriate design, navigation and use of provided photos and graphics. The designer may use the provided WordPress templates or customize the template.

2. Video Producer (Annual)

Students 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. Students may be provided a laptop and will be working in Premiere Elements (this is different from the National CDE guide). Students will need to provide own headphones.

3. Journalistic Writers

Writers are to write a journalistic piece 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 60 minutes to complete the practicum. The activity will rotate annually from the following:

- Press release (2023)
- News story
- Feature story (350-500 words)

4. 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 60 minutes to complete the practicum. The activity will rotate annually from the following:

- A blog Post (250-300 words)
- An op-ed (500-750 words)
- A letter to the editor (300-500 words) (2023)

4. Scoring

Participants will be ranked in numerical order based on the final score to be determined by each judge without consultation. The judge's ranking of each participant then shall be added, and the winner will be that participant whose total ranking is the lowest. Other placings will be determined in the same manner (low point method of selection). Weighted rank scoring will be implemented to maintain point value emphasis between individual and team events. The criteria and points can be found on the scorecards in Appendix B.

| <u>Event Points</u> | | <u>Tests</u> | |
|-------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| Media Plan Proposal | 200 | Communications Quiz | 100 (25 pts/member) |
| Media Plan Presentation | 125 | Editing Exercise | 100 (25 pts/member) |
| Practicums (400 pts possible) | | | |
| Web Design | 100 | Total Individual Score | 150 |
| Video Producer | 100 | Total Team Score | 925 |
| Journalistic Writer | 100 | | |
| Opinion Writer | 100 | | |

5. Awards

Individual

1. Individual scores will be tabulated and broken into gold, silver, and bronze award areas.
2. A top individual will be selected in each of the 4 practicum writing areas.
3. Tiebreakers will be
 - a. Practicum score
 - b. Communications quiz score
 - c. Editing Exercise scores.

Team

1. Team scores will be tabulated by adding all four team member scores and the team activity. They will be broken into gold, silver, and bronze.
2. The high team shall be eligible to represent North Dakota in the National Agricultural Communications career development event. The high team receives the Traveling Trophy and travel stipends sponsored by the ND FFA Foundation to participate in the National CDE.
3. Team Tie Breakers:
 - a. Combined individual practicum score
 - b. Proposal score
 - c. Presentation score.

6. References

www.ndffa.org/agricultural-communications

National FFA Agricultural Communication CDE Handbook.



AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA PLAN PROPOSAL SCORECARD

Name: _____ Chapter: _____ Chapter # _____

| | Possible Score | Team Score |
|--|----------------|------------|
| <p>Plan Includes all Requirements Cover page, titles and names on cover page, table of contents, does not exceed page limit, double spaced, one inch margins, page numbers, required headings (-1 point per missing item)</p> | 10 | |
| <p>Proposal is Relevant to Scenario Entire narrative focuses on addressing client's specific public communication needs.</p> | 10 | |
| <p>Executive Summary Adequately explains the plan without reading the entire document</p> | 10 | |
| <p>Introduction Provides adequate background of the issue; clearly states the problem and need for plan; describes how the plan will benefit the client</p> | 15 | |
| <p>Description of Audience Clearly describes (including demographics) who is targeted with the media plan</p> | 15 | |
| <p>Detailed Strategic Plan Clearly states objectives; explains how objectives will be met; explains why chosen mediums are appropriate to meet objectives; describes how plan will be executed</p> | 30 | |
| <p>Timeline Explains duration of plan and timing of media tactics</p> | 10 | |
| <p>Method of Evaluation Proposes methods to determine if the objectives were met</p> | 15 | |
| <p>Budget Explains all costs associated with implementing the media plan</p> | 20 | |
| <p>Conclusion</p> | 10 | |
| <p>Appendices Quality of communications documents. Three required</p> | 30 | |
| <p>Quality of writing Grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, sentence structure</p> | 25 | |
| TOTAL POINTS | 200 | |