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2017 National FFA Extemporaneous Speaking Event

PRELIMINARY A QUESTIONS

Agricultural literacy and advocacy:

1. How do we, as agriculturalists, more effectively engage with consumers to increase their understanding of livestock production and handling practices?
2. What are the different ways to continue to engage FFA members after they graduate from high school?
3. Most people are more than one generation removed from the farm. How can farmers increase the dialogue and conversations with those not familiar with those not familiar with agriculture?

Current agriculture issues:

1. As agricultural technology continues to advance, companies being innovative and developing the new technologies are threatened by consumers who question the changes. How can these companies balance the needs of agricultural and consumer concerns?
2. Colony Collapse Disorder has affected the honey bee population, and some have identified pesticides as the reason. Should pesticides be banned through legislative efforts to protect the honey bee population?
3. Is the Endangered Species Act fair to America's farmers and ranchers? Why or why not?

Advancing agriculture through agriculture science:

1. GMO seeds are safe, why are farmer losing the public relations battle over them?
2. Precision agriculture is playing an increasing role in providing farmers with tools of technology. GPS-based mapping, auto steer guidance and variable-rates for applying crop inputs have increased yields and lowered costs. Which technology do you believe is most adaptable and how would you convince a family member or neighbor to adopt the practice?
3. What can local FFA chapters do to promote the opportunities in agricultural science?

Current technology uses and applications in agriculture:

1. The average age of the American farmer continues to rise. How can we accelerate the adoption of technology, such as drone scouting, VRT nutrient application, and yield mapping, in the older generation?
2. Technology helps advance agriculture by being more efficient and eliminating intense labor. Do you think this causes a negative or positive effect on overall job growth in our economy and the agriculture industry?
3. Is it possible to balance activists' calls for slow-growing chickens with the overall topic of sustainability, which would favor breeds that grow and produce meat more efficiently?

Agrimarketing and international agriculture:

1. What role should the government play in protecting one's ability to insure their crop, at the same time continue to influence farmers to make wise decisions based on their own best practices?
2. What needs to happen for commodity prices to reach a level for producers to make more of a profit?
3. What trade agreement(s) have been most important to US agriculture?

Food and Fiber systems:

1. Many people have adopted holistic management of livestock. Do you think this is sustainable practice? Why or why not?
2. Even though farming accounts for only about one percent of the total national workforce, it is at the core of the food and fiber system. How can we more effectively communicate with the other 99%?
3. We know that consumers are moved most by hands-on experiences on the farm. How could you apply this fact or provide an experience on your farm or ranch?

PRELIMINARY B QUESTIONS

Agricultural literacy and advocacy:

1. Social media is an excellent way to teach others about ag. What are some of the most effective techniques to use to help in that education?
2. What do you think is the most effective way to educate consumers about where their food comes from? Why do you think that?
3. How would you approach and/or talk to a friend that/who passionately disagrees with modern agricultural practices?

Current agriculture issues:

1. How can the next farm bill balance the needs of specialty crop growers (fruit and vegetable, nursery, etc.) while maintaining a realistic safety net for farmers growing major commodity crops?
2. Have federal food safety laws kept pace with significant changes in food production, processing and marketing, such as new food sources, advances in production and distribution methods and the growing volume of imports?
3. Is it possible to balance the need for border security with agriculture's labor needs?

Advancing agriculture through agriculture science:

1. New technological devices like drones are used to further assist in the managing crops. With drone advances, governmental regulations have increased. In what ways has the government helped or hurt the industry by such regulation?
2. We have seen a large portion of the population ignore agricultural science with the GMO debate. How can we successfully make advances in science to drive agriculture to be efficient to continue to feed a growing global population?
3. Should consumers have the right to know how technologies are utilized to produce their food?

Current technology uses and applications in agriculture:

1. Farmers nationwide have worked hard to protect the land they farm, and in most cases, leave the land better than they found it. How can the EPA strike a balance with its function, as well as lend a less invasive relationship to the land it is constantly trying to regulate?
2. How are farmers harnessing technology to grow more with less and is the real/authentic story being shared and heard?
3. How will farmers and ranchers be using drones five years from now?

Agrimarketing and international agriculture:

1. How do trade agreements impact U.S. agricultural exports?
2. What role do international exchange programs have in advancing international agriculture?
3. How does agriculture adapt to changing regional weather patterns while still meeting market needs?

Food and Fiber systems:

1. Antibiotic use in livestock has been controversial in recent years. Should producers be allowed to continue their use judiciously, or should some type of reform take place?
2. As more food retailers impose animal production standards on their suppliers and farmers, what are some impacts of moving away from science-based standards to consumer marketing-driven standards? Is the customer always right?
3. How do you balance good stewardship with the need to earn a living from the land?

EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEAKING SEMI-FINALS QUESTIONS**Agricultural literacy and advocacy:**

1. In a society that continues to place strength on a STEM curriculum, how can we demonstrate the importance of agriculture-related occupations as part of that focus?
2. Unfortunately, in many rural areas access to fast internet connections isn't possible. What role does the government play, if any, in getting broadband access to rural areas?
3. What responsibility does the media have in understanding agricultural production?

Current agriculture issues:

1. GMOs continues to be debated in the marketplace, despite having no valid research to suggest the modern technology is harmful. Looking back on the development of this technology, how could GMOs have been presented differently resulting in a more balanced perspective?
2. What changes are needed in the 2018 Farm Bill versus the current Farm Bill and why?
3. With the current budget climate, should tax credits for wind energy be offered? Why or why not?

Advancing agriculture through agriculture science:

1. Drones aren't new technology by any means, they have been used commercially since the early 1980s. Thanks to robust investments it appears their time has arrived—especially in agriculture. With agricultural consumption increasing by nearly 70 percent over the next 30 years and extreme weather events on the rise – which issue do you believe is slowing their adaptation and why? Issues: i.e.: safety, data privacy, or insurance-coverage
2. What research areas in agriculture science should be encourage to ensure food supply grows with population?
3. How can consumers determine the validity of science utilized in the news?

Current technology uses and applications in agriculture:

1. What role should the government play in providing regulations in agricultural advances, yet protecting the public from everyday agricultural uses?
2. Finding skilled labor can be difficult. What are some of the ways you see technology helping labor scarcity? Are there advantages or disadvantages?
3. Sustainable agriculture integrates three main goals-environmental health, economic profitability, and social and economic equity. In today's farm economic climate, which of these is most important to remaining sustainable?

Agrimarketing and international agriculture:

1. What long-term impact of opening beef trade with China do you see for American farmers and American consumers?
2. The Fair Farmer Practice Rule, known as the GIPSA rule, was developed to provide fairness to producers when marketing their products. However, it has received significant opposition. How will this impact producers if this rule is enacted?
3. What influence will global consumers have on the way producers market their crops?

Food and Fiber systems:

1. Livestock operations within the U.S. at times may upset those whom live close simply by the nature of the job of raising animals. Imagine being confronted by a consumer whom demands that livestock shall be raised outside the country to protect our best interest such as water quality, and land; what would your response be protecting the right to farm locally?
2. How does America address the significant proportion of illegal workers harvesting high-value products without interrupting the supply chain and raising food prices?
3. The farm crisis of the 1980's illustrates how specific economic events can impact the food and fiber system. Do you feel with low commodity prices and the economy in its current state that a negative impact may occur in the food and fiber system in America in the next few years?

EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEAKING FINALS QUESTIONS

Agricultural literacy and advocacy:

1. Recently, there have been instances of large organic producers failing to comply with organic standards. How is the public perception of agriculture impacted when a producer is non-compliant with current industry standards?
2. With more than 190 out of 435 members of Congress representing urban constituents, how can agricultural and rural development issues be successfully implemented as law?
3. Farmers are a vital part of the food chain, but many foodies discount their effort and role in putting food on the table. What can farmers do to engage consumers who are disinterested in their role in food production?

Current agriculture issues:

1. What type of tax reform would be most beneficial to America's farmers and ranchers?
2. What is the importance of balancing agriculture as a bipartisan issue in a time of deep political divide?
3. Absence labeling in the marketplace: is it more about transparency for consumers or fear-based marketing?

Advancing agriculture through agriculture science:

1. Farmers utilize many advance systems in their operations. What is one invention that you think could revolutionize production agriculture?
2. How can companies focused on innovation and on providing the "next big thing" continue to advance, yet share or align with stakeholders on mutual goals?
3. Biotech crops are grown globally by 18 million farmers, 90 percent of whom live in developing countries. Consumers still have distrust for GMO crops, how can we satisfy the demands of our trading partners while providing the products they desire?

Current technology uses and applications in agriculture:

1. Agricultural technology has evolved to collecting real-time farm data, but there is a concern about who should have access to those data. How should farm data be controlled?
2. Is it appropriate for regulators to use drones to monitor compliance of farmers and ranchers? Why or why not?
3. It has been predicted that in vitro meat will be financially viable in 2027. Do you think in vitro meat will affect the livestock market positively or negatively?

Agrimarketing and international agriculture:

1. Does it make more sense for the U.S. to negotiate numerous bilateral trade agreements, or to work toward developing a different regional solution?
2. Production economics, marketing, and policy development each acknowledge the existence of international agriculture trade, but they largely ignore the analytical challenge of understanding the behavior of international markets. What one area do you feel is most important to international agriculture trade for America?
3. The Food and Agriculture Organization says that "The road to resilience is paved with good governance." What does good governance look like for supporting agricultural resilience?

Food and Fiber systems:

1. Shifts in consumer incomes, demographics, lifestyles, and perceptions of health and diet all play into the stability of the food and fiber system. Which of these areas is being changed or altered the most today and why?
2. Why is it important in the next farm bill to maintain the tie between the farm program and food assistance/nutrition programs?
3. Regulations that govern land use penalize farmers more than any other sector. How would you advocate for incentives as an alternative?