

**2013 National FFA Extemporaneous Speaking CDE
Topics – Preliminary Round 1**

Agriscience and Technology:

1. What are the positives and negatives of software-driven/mechanical labor versus human labor?
2. How has the increase in smart phone usage among farmers and ranchers helped or hindered their operations and our industry?
3. Describe some precision agriculture practices and their impacts on the entire farm structure, from animal and crop production to business management.
4. Many of today's consumers want food to be produced the way it was when their grandparents were kids. How would it affect the industry, and ultimately consumers, if producers were required to revert to pre-1950 production practices?

Agrimarketing and International Agriculture:

1. Developing better trade relations with which country/countries would have the biggest impact on the agriculture industry?
2. What advantages/challenges do you see for agriculture producers as more countries are eager to receive American products internationally?
3. What are the pros and cons of developing relations internationally in regards to international trade?
4. How should organic and conventional agriculture be promoted without negativity to either one?

Food and Fiber Systems:

1. Imagine you could design a new USDA program to educate the American public about all of the steps involved in moving an agricultural product from the farm to the consumer. How would you connect the steps from the farm to the plate for a person who knows nothing about farming?
2. The demand for organic products is growing each day in the United States. How would you explain the relevance and safety of conventionally-grown products in our increasingly organic-minded society?
3. What part does production agriculture play in our food and fiber system? What other industries provide input and output for production agriculture in the food and fiber system?
4. What new law or regulation needs to be passed in the next year to ensure the continued success of agriculture?

Urban Agriculture:

1. How does the urban rooftop gardening trend affect full-time rural farmers?
2. How can we use social media and new technology to connect farmers with the urban population?
3. How do we as agricultural producers partner with cities in promoting traditional/sustainable agriculture?
4. What role can urban agriculture play in helping to eliminate food deserts across the country? How can traditional agriculturalists assist in that effort?

**2013 National FFA Extemporaneous Speaking CDE
Topics – Preliminary Round 2**

Agriscience and Technology:

1. What new technological advancement(s) do you see as most important to the future of production agriculture?
2. What are some of the major changes agriculture has experienced in the use of science and technology in your lifetime?
3. How have recent advancements in agriculture technology reduced the need for outside labor on farms?
4. How has the agriculture industry capitalized on the benefits of technology?

Agrimarketing and International Agriculture:

1. How can the U.S. government act to expand access to the growing demand for food in developing countries in a manner that will benefit U.S. farmers and ranchers?
2. Is it to America's benefit to help other countries advance their agriculture practices, and how does this play a part in the U.S.'s international ag relations?
3. Is our food and fiber system a vital part of our national security? Why or why not?
4. How can we as individuals improve public awareness of agriculture?

Food and Fiber Systems:

1. What is a sustainable food and fiber system? Does our current food and fiber system meet this definition? Why or why not?
2. Agriculture spending is a controversial topic with the public, who view it as the government subsidizing "big ag." In reality, food assistance and nutrition programs account for about three-quarters of the Agriculture Department's budget, with only one-fourth of spending used as a safety net for agriculture. How can we as agriculturalists help the public understand the extent to which the industry provides for those in need?
3. When are government regulations necessary in agriculture? What are the positive and negative effects of having these regulations?
4. When the term agriculture is used, the public often focuses on food production. Explain the fiber component of the agricultural industry and its impact on the industry and American public.

Urban Agriculture:

1. Is urban agriculture beneficial enough that our government should get involved in preserving urban ag lands for projects such as community gardens and open spaces? Why or why not?
2. What resources and programs exist, or need to be developed, for beginning farmers and ranchers in urban areas?
3. When urban agriculture encroaches on already established agriculture entities, what measures should be taken, if any, to protect the rights of the traditional farmer to continue to work on his/her farm?
4. What can be done to encourage young farmers and ranchers to return home to the farm if it means living in a rural area that does not provide the same amenities (education, health care, technology) as a metropolitan community?

**2013 National FFA Extemporaneous Speaking CDE
Topics – Semi-Final Round**

Agriscience and Technology:

1. If you could design an app to either (a) educate non-farmers on the importance of farming; or (b) for farmers to use on the farm; which would you design, why and what functionality would the app have for users?
2. Are genetically modified (GM) crops safe for human consumption and how do we answer the safety concerns of consumers?
3. Given the technological advancements over the past 20 years, how can agricultural producers incorporate technology to increase production efficiency to feed a growing global population?

Agrimarketing and International Agriculture:

1. Do you believe the government should get involved in the farm markets and futures? How does this affect the free market system? Would the agriculture market be better off without government intervention by letting the free market system work?
2. What is the best approach for handling negative agriculture campaigns from activist groups such as the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), and anti-GMO groups?
3. People are becoming more and more interested about where their food comes from and how it is raised. Why is this important for both American agriculture and international trade?

Food and Fiber Systems:

1. How do decisions made by grocery stores or fast-food establishments about food labeling and promotion affect producer and even consumer decisions?
2. How does the food and fiber system contribute to the American economy? What would be the impact if the system were to fail?
3. Agricultural literacy is key in assuring the future of our industry. How could you explain to a student how their food goes from farm to fork?

Urban Agriculture:

1. Farms often have undesirable smells, sounds and sights. How can we help people in urban areas better understand the benefits of having a thriving farm in their community?
2. It is difficult for the American public to accept farmers as business people. How can we couple our traditional, salt-of-the earth image with one of being tech-savvy business entrepreneurs that will resonate with urban consumers?
3. What is the impact of local co-ops and community gardens on commercial agricultural producers?

**2013 National FFA Extemporaneous Speaking CDE
Topics – Final Round**

Agriscience and Technology:

1. How can the food and fiber sector of the U.S. economy be strengthened by technology (i.e. farm machinery, chemical production, processing, transportation, and retailing)?
2. Farmers and ranchers are often viewed in a negative light because of the misconceptions about modern agriculture technology and science use. How can we help address the public's concerns in a way that will alleviate fears and yet help everyone understand the advances needed in ag technology and science?

Agrimarketing and International Agriculture:

1. If you could give any advice to U.S. trade negotiators, what would it be?
2. What role should agritourism play in educating consumers about food, fuel and fiber?

Food and Fiber Systems:

1. Briefly identify and discuss one thing (socioeconomic, economic, etc.) that you think will significantly affect the food and fiber system in the next few years.
2. With the world's population expected to double by 2050, what changes need to be made to the current food and fiber system in order to feed so many people?

Urban Agriculture:

1. How can traditional family farmers and ranchers embrace the enthusiasm of the "grow local" movement and appeal to more urban city dwellers?
2. Do programs like the Edible Schoolyard and other urban school gardening/farming curriculum truly educate children about agriculture, or do a disservice to America's agriculture industry? Explain.