



WI State FFA CDE Handbook

Forestry CDE

Revised Fall 2025

Purpose

The Forestry Career Development Event (CDE) requires students to demonstrate their skills in diagnosing forest disorders, identifying tree species, managing forests and forest inventory, and applying approved silviculture practices. Participation in the event offers students experience relevant to a career choice in forestry and natural resources.

A team event for four students, this CDE provides recognition for those who have demonstrated skills and competencies resulting from forestry instruction in the agricultural education classroom and field. The team portion of the event calls on students to respond to a forest management scenario with problem solving using forestry skills and tools to measure trees and calculate yield. Team members contribute individually by completing a general forestry knowledge exam, which includes rounds of identification practicums (trees, disorders, and equipment).

Skills learned from this event range from forestry equipment identification to calculating a forest business management problem to prepare students for a variety of careers in forestry and natural resources.

Event Rules

The complete rules, policies and procedures relevant to all Wisconsin FFA Career Development Events (CDE) and Leadership Development Events (LDE) may be found in the Guide to CDE and LDE Policies and Procedures.

- Teams will consist of four members and all 4 scores make up the team score.
- All teams **MUST** compete at a regional live qualification contest (UW-River Falls Ag-Tech Day, Mid-State Tech, or Fox Valley Tech). The top 20 teams from the 3 regionals will advance to the State CDE.
- Teams advancing to the State CDE will be selected from the top teams in regional qualification contests.
- State CDE: All teams are expected to be checked-in prior to the contest start time of 8:00 a.m. at the UW-Aboretum (1207 Seminole Highway -, Madison, WI). The state contest takes approximately 3-4 hours to complete.
- Regional CDE: Regionals are shorter due to time constraints of the larger events of which they are a part. The start/end time and event duration will be specific to each event.
- All members of the team will participate in general knowledge, identification, and other practicums.
- Outdoor “dress for the weather” clothing is needed. Contestant dress is “school appropriate;” official FFA dress is NOT required. Closed-toe shoes/boots are required.

Event Format

Contest Components

The contest is organized into 2 exams: a written exam conducted inside and a field exam conducted outside. The contest will be conducted regardless of weather. Contestants are advised to bring jackets, rain gear and adequate footwear.

Note: The regional tests will be shorter due to time constraints.

1) Indoor Written Exam – Individual

- General Knowledge and Forest Business Management: Format of the exam will be mostly multiple choice, but may also include true/false, and short answer. Individuals should be prepared to answer questions related to the objectives of the event listed above.
 - Expect questions that will require knowledge of forestry-related calculations such as per-acre, per-total area, and per-event values based on typical forestry measurements (e.g., total board feet, seedling survivability, total planting cost per acre, etc.).
 - Expect questions about tree ID, equipment ID, and forestry health/disorders ID. Tree identification will focus primarily on the Wisconsin-specific tree identification list (p. 5-6) found in [Forest Trees of Wisconsin: How to Know Them](#), a DNR publication, AND a [list of invasive Wisconsin plants](#). Forestry health/disorders will focus on a [Wisconsin-revised list](#) reflecting ID most relevant to Wisconsin. The forestry equipment ID list is identical to the national CDE event. Both adapted lists are modeled from the National CDE Handbook.

2) Field Exam – Team

- Each team will be asked to conduct an inventory of a forest plot. This section of the exam may include some or all of the following skills: establishing a plot of given area or radius, compass and pace, tree identification, tree measurement [DBH, merchantable height, board foot or cord volume].
- Students should know how to use the following tools: magnetic compass, prism or angle gauge, cruising stick or Biltmore stick with hypsometer, DBH tape, and clinometer, with the purpose of measuring and calculating basal area and volume of wood in a stand of trees.
- The merchantable height hypsometer measurement will be to the nearest 1/2 log (8 feet) for saw log and nearest stick for pulpwood. Volume tables will be provided for both saw timber and pulpwood.
- Some questions may include photos, identification materials, and math problems.
- Answers will need to be recorded on the scantron or provided answer sheet.

Equipment

Teams are expected to bring two #2 pencils, clip board, all-weather clothing, basic calculators, and compass (One Silva Ranger compass or one of comparable quality, for each four-person team). Basic calculators are permitted but not required.

Any participant in possession of an electronic device (besides simple calculator) during any portion of the contest is subject to disqualification.

Regional Scoring (approximate point values)

Note: The State CDE event has more time and will be worth more points.

| PHASE of REGIONAL CDE EVENT | Individual Points | Team Points |
|---|-------------------|-------------|
| 1) Indoor General Knowledge Exam (individual) | 80 | 320 |
| 2) Outdoor Event (team) | 0 | 50 - 100 |
| TOTAL | 320 | 370 - 420 |

TIEBREAKERS:

| TEAM | Individual | |
|-----------------------------|--|--|
| 1 st Tie Breaker | TEAM Field Score | Knowledge Exam Score |
| 2nd | Cumulative Team Score of **Theme Section from Knowledge Exam | Score on the **Theme Section from Knowledge Exam |
| 3 rd | Cumulative Team Knowledge Exam Scores | Tree ID |
| 4th | Cumulative Team Tree ID | Tree Disease ID |

Awards

Team trophy for the Wisconsin State Winning team (state CDE)

Trophy for the top placing individual (state CDE)

Possible cash awards (none at this time)

The highest placing team will advance to the National FFA Forestry CDE Event.

Resources and References:

Visit the Forestry CDE Webpage

Forestry Study Resources for CDE

Suggested References

ALL LEAF Professional Development opportunities: To add to your Forestry Education Toolbox-
<https://cnroutreached.asapconnected.com/#CourseGroupID=36996>

Contact LEAF Staff with your forestry education questions:

- Steve Schmidt - steve.schmidt@uwsp.edu
- Heather Phelps - LEAF Kits program - heather.phelps@uwsp.edu