AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS

***Event location rotation (starting in 2026)**

2027 - BMCC 2028 - OSU 2029 - TVCC 2030 - TBD 2031 - BMCC

The Agricultural Communications Career Development Event (CDE) aims to excite and inspire students to develop essential skills relevant to the communications industry. Students will be equipped with strong communication skills and will have developed the ability to work collaboratively to communicate and advocate agriculture.

This team CDE challenges students to communicate effectively while advocating to consumers about agriculture and telling the FFA & Agriculture story. Students will use a variety of media in their plans—social media, broadcast and print advertising, press releases, fliers, brochures, blogging, displays and more.

Communication, collaboration, creativity and presentation skills are important to event success. Students also learn a variety of technical skills such as journalistic and opinion writing, website design, video production, social media and more.

ALIGNMENT TO AFNR CONTENT STANDARDS & OREGON EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

- Employability 01. Adhere to workplace practices
- Employability 02. Exhibit personal responsibility and accountability
- Employability 03. Practice cultural competence
- Employability 04. Demonstrate teamwork and conflict resolution
- Employability 05. Communicate clearly and effectively
- Employability 06. Employ critical thinking to solve problems
- Employability 07. Demonstrate creativity and innovative thinking
- Employability 08. Demonstrate fluency in workplace technologies
- Employability 09. Plan, organize, and manage work
- Employability 10. Make informed career decisions
- ABS.05.03. Performance Indicator: Assess marketing principles and develop marketing plans to accomplish AFNR business objectives.
- CS.01.01. Performance Indicator: Examine issues and trends that impact AFNR systems on local, state, national and global levels.
- CS.02.02. Performance Indicator: Examine the components of the AFNR systems and their impact on the local, state, national and global society and economy.
- CS.04.02. Performance Indicator: Assess the natural resource related trends, technologies and policies that impact AFNR systems.
- CRP.01.02 Performance Indicator: Evaluate and consider the near-term and long-term impacts of personal and professional decisions on employers and community before taking action.
- CRP.02.01. Performance Indicator: Use strategic thinking to connect and apply academic learning, knowledge and skills to solve problems in the workplace and community
- CRP.02.02. Performance Indicator: Use strategic thinking to connect and apply technical concepts to solve problems in the workplace and community.
- CRP.04.01. Performance Indicator: Speak using strategies that ensure clarity, logic, purpose and professionalism in formal and informal settings.
- CRP.04.02. Performance Indicator: Produce clear, reasoned and coherent written communication in formal and informal settings.
- CRP.04.03. Performance Indicator: Model active listening strategies when interacting with others in formal and informal settings.
- CRP.05.01. Performance Indicator: Assess, identify and synthesize the information and

resources needed to make decisions that positively impact the workplace and community.
- CRP.05.02. Performance Indicator: Make, defend and evaluate decisions at work and in the community using information about the potential environmental, social and economic impacts.
- CRP.06.01. Performance Indicator: Synthesize information, knowledge and experience to generate original ideas and challenge assumptions in the workplace and community.
- CRP.06.02. Performance Indicator: Assess a variety of workplace and community situations to identify ways to add value and improve the efficiency of processes and procedures.
- CRP.07.01. Performance Indicator: Select and implement reliable research processes and methods to generate data for decision-making in the workplace and community.
- CRP.07.02. Performance Indicator: Evaluate the validity of sources and data used when considering the adoption of new technologies, practices and ideas in the workplace and community.
- CRP.08.01. Performance Indicator: Apply reason and logic to evaluate workplace and community situations from multiple perspectives.
- CRP.08.03. Performance Indicator: Establish plans to solve workplace and community problems and execute them with resiliency.
- CRP.11.01. Performance Indicator: Research, select and use new technologies, tools and applications to maximize productivity in the workplace and community.
- CRP.12.01. Performance Indicator: Contribute to team-oriented projects and build consensus to accomplish results using cultural global competence in the workplace and community.
- CRP.12.02. Performance Indicator: Create and implement strategies to engage team members to work toward team and organizational goals in a variety of workplace and community situations (e.g., meetings, presentations, etc.).

RULES AND REGULATIONS

1. Each chapter is allowed one A team and one B team
2. The event will consist of a four-member team.

EVENT FORMAT

During the practicum portion of the event, teams will work together to create their team‘s communications package. Team members will work collaboratively to create four practicum components - a feature story, a magazine layout design incorporating that story, a broadcast production piece to promote or enhance their story topic, and a social media plan to promote their story.

Any participant possessing an electronic device during the exam is subject to disqualification.

Recording devices are not allowed during the press conference.

EQUIPMENT

Equipment students should bring:

• Computing equipment for each participant. It can be any combination of laptops, tablets, and/or smartphones for word processing and/or design work for creating practicum components. Remember to bring all power cords required for your devices. A power supply will be furnished.
• Pens or pencils
• Privacy screens for laptops (not required, but allowed) are permitted to protect the security of students‘ work/ideas
• Headphones of your preference equipped with a microphone.

Teams will be provided with the following items:

• Table and chairs for each team and four team members in the shared team workspaces
• Blank paper or notebooks

- Digital photographs/images
- Digital video files
- Digital audio files
- Information regarding press conference speaker and topic
- Dummy text
- Logos
- Any other necessary materials depending on the story topic
- Power supply for devices, etc.

The following Items will NOT be allowed:

- Desktop computers
- Smartwatches
- Add-on editing software, such as Grammarly
- Photos and videos that were not supplied by contest officials or created by the students within the contest time frame

The following activities will not be permitted:

- Outside assistance during the contest from any person or company
- Text messages, phone calls, emails, or other communication with anyone outside of the contest while the event is in progress
- Leaving the contest area other than a restroom break

INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES

Writing Mechanics exam (50 points/individual; 200 points/team)

Each student will complete a quiz that covers general knowledge of the agricultural communications industry and questions covering editing. Questions will come from the last three years of national tests. Team members may 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.

TEAM ACTIVITIES

1. Press Conference

   The team activities will begin with a “press conference” or “story assignment on an agricultural topic. All team members will receive a press packet with background information on the agricultural topic and the expert to use during the event. The expert will speak on the agricultural topic for 20 minutes, followed by a 10-minute question-and-answer period. *Students will be provided with paper to take notes if they wish. Students’ electronic devices (including smart watches) must remain off and put away during this portion of the event, as note-taking by hand is an essential communication skill.* Students will stand to be recognized before asking a question. They may ask multiple questions; however, the expert will attempt to address questions from as many participants as possible. **No electronic devices, including tape recorders, cell phones, computers, and smart watches will be allowed during this portion of the event.**

   Upon completion of the press conference, the team will be dismissed to a team working area to collaborate on their message, communications package, and the component parts.

   Students will be allowed up to 3 hours to collaborate with their team members to determine their message, define responsibilities, complete components, and finalize their

practicum elements. **ALL communications plan components must be created and submitted for judging during this time.** Teams will not be in a private area - teams will be working in a newsroom environment with other teams in the same location. Event officials will monitor the teams for outside help and have the authority to disqualify anyone breaking the rules. Teams should allow a minimum of 90 minutes to complete the practicum components utilizing the remaining time to create and finalize their communications plan for submission. The committee may designate required and optional components.

2. **Practicums – Communication Plan Components (100 points/component = 400 points/team)**

   The practicums will be completed by four individuals working together in a team setting.

   - **Feature Story (100 points):** Writers will write a news story for FFA New Horizons magazine using the provided materials and press conference information. It should be written for the magazine's target audience, have a strong focus and lead (opening paragraph), and include a headline. Although the news writer will provide their copy to the magazine designer for placement in their layout, news writers must also submit a PDF of their story for judging. Feature stories should be 350-500 words in length.
   - **Magazine Layout Design (100 points):** Designers will use the press packet and information gathered in the press conference to develop a magazine layout for FFA New Horizons using the feature story text written by the news writer. Various photos, graphics, and logos will be provided for use in these layouts. Designers may use any page layout software available (i.e., Canva, Adobe Express, InDesign, etc.) if it appropriately tells the story and represents a design in FFA New Horizons. The magazine designer must use the text written by the news writer. A two-page spread layouts will be saved and submitted in a PDF for judging.
   - **Broadcast Production (100 points):** Broadcasters will receive video and/or audio clips, photos, and/or music to create a 60 to 90-second story for the FFA New Horizons website. This can be a television story, online video,radio story, podcast, or slide show. This broadcast product can be used to promote readership of the story created by their team, or it can supplement what is in the written story – it is up to the team to decide the best use of these resources. Students will need to provide their own headphones and software. Spotify for Podcasters, Adobe Premiere,Express, Rush, or Audition; Canva Video; iMovie; Movie Maker; Anchor; BounceCast; or PodCastle are all acceptable software for this practicum but are not the only available software options. To be submitted for judging, broadcast productions must be exported to the student's device in a standard format, such as mp4 or mov. Students are allowed to use recording devices/microphones to add sound to their broadcast and/or social media campaigns.
   - **Social Media Plan (100 points):** Social media planners will develop posts to accompany and promote their team‘s magazine story. The strategy should be for a one-week flight, involve at least three social media platforms (such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, Snapchat, or others), and contain a minimum of seven posts. Students may use any design software to create the posts (Canva, Adobe Express, Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign). These are all acceptable software for this practicum but are not the only software options available. The plan must be submitted in a single PDF format, including screenshots, links and/or embedded images of each created post. Downloaded posts and videos may be included in the social media package.Students are allowed to use recording devices/microphones to add sound to their broadcast and/or social media campaigns.

3. **Presentation of Plan**

   The team is required to prepare a 3-page Communications Plan in PDF format as if it were to be presented to a client. Creating the Communications Plan should be a

collaborative effort involving all team members. The Communications Plan should address the following points:

1. Provide an overview of the Communications Plan.
2. Define the central theme or controlling idea.
3. Pose the main question or narrative inquiry.
4. Specify the intended call to action.
5. Explain the rationale and goal of the feature story, its relevance to the audience, and its alignment with the mission of FFA New Horizons magazine.
6. Explain the rationale and goal of the magazine layout, its relevance to the audience, and its alignment with the mission of FFA New Horizons magazine.
7. Explain the rationale and goal of the broadcast production piece, its relevance to the audience, and its alignment with the mission of FFA New Horizons magazine.
8. Explain the rationale and goal of the social media plan, its relevance to the audience, and its alignment with the mission of FFA New Horizons magazine.

SCORING

Event	Individual Points	Team Points
Tests - 200 Points Possible		
Writing Exam	50	200
Team Activity - 400 Points Possible		
Magazine Layout		100
Broadcast Production		100
Feature Story		100
Social Media Plan		100
Communications Plan		100
Total Score Possible		700

Scorecards from National FFA will be used. The can be found here:
https://ffa.app.box.com/s/jraa5i7wdf9r16dubvl911eb9gt018dw/file/1488335535688

Tie Breakers

A. Team tie breakers will be settled in the following order:
   1. Communication Plan
   2. Combined score of components
   3. Combined Score Writing Mechanics Exam

References

Other sources may be utilized, and teachers are encouraged to use the best instructional materials available. The following list contains references that may prove helpful during event preparation.

• National FFA CDE Page — Past CDE Material (FFA.org/Ag Communications/Event Resources/Past Test & Practicums)
• Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual
• Microsoft® Office computer program
• Telg, R., Irani, T., Kent, K., & Lundy, L. (Eds.) (2022). Agricultural and Natural Resources Communications. Free online textbook. https://anrcommunications.org