



**WI State FFA CDE
Handbook: Agricultural
Communications
Revised Spring 2026**

Purpose

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

Event rules

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

- Teams will consist of four members.
- It is highly recommended that participants wear FFA Official Dress for this event.
- During the practicum portion of the event, one team member will be responsible for completing a social media design practicum, one team member will be responsible for completing a broadcast production practicum, one team member will be responsible for completing a journalistic writing practicum and one team member will be responsible for completing a blog writing practicum.
- All members of the team will participate in a general knowledge quiz.

- Electronic devices are not permitted during the general knowledge quiz.

Event format

All teams will meet in a central location for an orientation followed by the press conference. Teams will be seated by practicum group.

10 minutes	Orientation	Full team	Listen
20 minutes	Press Conference	Full team	Listen + take notes
Non-writers will be dismissed to complete their assigned practicums.			
10 minutes	Press Gaggle (Q+A Portion)	Journalistic writer + Blog writer	Take notes + ask questions

90 minutes	Practicum*	Social media designer	Develop a social media page. Create three posts based on the press conference and/or group practicum.
90 minutes	Practicum*	Broadcast Production	Create a 90 -second audio or video news package following a one-on-one, 2-minute interview with the guest.
90 minutes	Practicum*	Journalistic writer	Write a press release based on the information provided during the press conference.
90 minutes	Practicum*	Blog writer	Write a blog that takes a position and supports it with evidence based on information provided during the press conference.
All participants will take a comprehensive quiz.			
60 minutes	Comprehensive quiz	Full team	Each team member will complete a quiz that covers grammar, content editing, and general communications knowledge.

*All team members will be given an orientation at the beginning of the practicums to last no more than 10 minutes.

Equipment

Needed: Students must provide pens, pencils, and paper or notebooks. For practicums, contestants must bring a laptop or other internet-enabled device. Laptops will **not** be provided by the contest host. WiFi is available. Students must have their choice of editing software downloaded onto their computer, phones, or other devices to record audio or video. See more information on software options below.

Team activities

Press conference and press gaggle (Q&A)

An expert will speak on a current agricultural topic for 20 minutes. All students should participate in the press conference by actively listening and taking notes. For the next 10 minutes, journalistic and blog writers should aim to ask one question at a minimum during the Q&A portion of the press conference, otherwise known as a press gaggle. 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.

Individual activities

Practicums *(100 points/individual; 400 points/team)*

The practicums will consist of four events. Each team member should prepare to complete one of the following practicums:

- Social media design
- Journalistic writing
- Blog writing
- Broadcast production

Participants may talk to team members to help generate ideas and get feedback, but all work must be their own.

Social media designers

Each designer will create a social media page using a platform of their choice (i.e. Facebook, Instagram, X, etc.). The designer will create three posts on that platform: a post about the press conference, a post promoting a team member's content, and a post with a graphic that enhances a key topic from the speaker.

Journalistic writers

Journalists will write a press release on their laptops based on the information gathered in the press conference. The press release should be written using Associated Press (AP) style and will be evaluated for its content, format, organization, grammar, spelling and punctuation. (Minimum of 500 words).

Blog writers

Bloggers will write a piece on their laptop that takes a position and supports it with evidence based on the information gathered in the press conference. It should have a clear audience, a strong focus and lead, and include a headline and headers. (Minimum of 300 words).

Broadcasters

Participants will be given 2 minutes for a one-on-one interview with the guest following the press gaggle. They will create a **90**-second audio or video broadcast using the interview with the guest. Students will need to provide their own headphones and software. Software options include but are not limited to: Spotify for Podcasters, Adobe Premiere, Express, Rush, or Audition; Canva Video; iMovie; Movie Maker; Anchor; BounceCast; or Podcastle. To be submitted for judging, broadcast productions must be exported to the student's device in a standard format, such as .mp3, .mp4 or .mov. Participants will be judged on the production quality, engagement, informative content, creativity, and delivery of their message.

Please note: You may be the first or the last participant to have 2 minutes with the guest, meaning you may not have the full 90 minutes to edit audio or video. Use your time wisely before the conversation to create a production plan in order to have a streamlined interview that requires less editing.

Comprehensive quiz

Each team member will complete a quiz that covers grammar, content editing and general communications knowledge.

Each participant will be given a multiple-choice test with 50 questions focused on writing style, grammar, punctuation and spelling. It will also cover general knowledge of the agricultural communications industry. Questions may come from any section of the listed references excluding sports guidelines. The AP Stylebook should be leveraged as rule sourcing. Team members will NOT be able to use the style manual or a dictionary during this exercise. Participants will have 60 minutes to complete the quiz.

Scoring

Event	Individual Points	Team Points
Quiz – 200 points possible		
Comprehensive quiz	50	200
Individual Activities – 400 points possible		
Social media design practicum	100	100
Press release writing practicum	100	100
Blog writing practicum	100	100
Broadcast production practicum	100	100
Total score possible	150	600

Tiebreakers

Team tiebreakers will be settled in the following order:

1. Combined individual practicum rank score
2. Combined communications quiz score

Individual tiebreakers will be settled in the following order:

1. Practicum score
2. Communications quiz score

References

This list of references is not intended to be all-inclusive.

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

- Wisconsin FFA CDE page
- National FFA CDE Page — Past CDE Material (FFA.org/Ag Communications/Event Resources/Past Test & Practicums)
- Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual
- Bivins, T. Public Relations Writings: The Essentials of Style and Format, 4th edition. McGraw- Hill Higher Education, ISBN 0-844-20351-3
- Telg, R. and T. Irani. Agricultural Communication in Action: A Hands-On Approach, 1st edition Cengage/Delmar Publishing, ISBN 1111317143 (Online versions available)