

# Guidebook

*AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM*

## PREPARING FOR A FUTURE IN THE AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY



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# Introduction

## *AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM*



Agricultural communicators play a vital role in the world of agriculture. Representing agriculturalists across the world, these individuals possess the skills to effectively communicate agricultural messages to publics involved and not involved in agriculture. Because a large percentage of the population lacks agricultural understanding, it's important for agricultural communicators to provide timely, accurate information on current issues and events.

As agricultural issues become prominent targets in the media, the need for effective agricultural communicators continues to grow. In this guidebook, materials are provided for basic training in communications and journalism. FFA members may find materials helpful in preparing to participate in the National FFA Agricultural Communications Career Development Event.

Whether FFA members are interested in pursuing a career in agricultural communications and journalism or are just looking to build additional communications skills, participating in the agricultural communications CDE proves to be an educational experience to build on.

# History

## AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

### FACTS

- The first agricultural journals began in Europe during the 1800s .
- The first agricultural journalism course was offered in 1905 at Iowa State University.
- Today, *Successful Farming* and *Farm Journal* are considered the largest agricultural publications, based on circulation.

### EUROPE INFLUENCES U.S. AGRICULTURE

Early forms of agricultural communications consisted of farmers passing information on by word of mouth. Most of this information originated in Europe, as did the first ag publications, which appeared in the United States during the early- to mid-19th century.

### AGRICULTURAL SOCIETIES FORM

Following the European trend, agricultural societies formed in the U.S. in the late 1700s. Prominent members included Benjamin Franklin, George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. Societies provided their members with access to their libraries, which contained books, magazines and newspapers of agricultural nature that were difficult for the public to obtain. In addition, societies provided publications that featured practical farming information.

### AGRICULTURAL JOURNALS GAIN POPULARITY

While popularity of society publications dwindled, many society contributions began appearing in agricultural journals. In the early 1800s, leading journals included *American Farmer*, the *Plough Boy* and the *New England Farmer*.

While agricultural journals grew in number and popularity, many early agricultural editors lacked training and experience in agriculture. Over time, they developed practical agricultural knowledge, but still lacked scientific understand-

ing. In addition, editors found it difficult to make a profit on agricultural journals and struggled to find successors to carry on the publications.

Regardless of the obstacles early agricultural journalists faced, agricultural publications grew in popularity during the 1840s and 1850s. The publications grew large enough to become independent of the agricultural societies. In return, state agricultural societies began their own publications, and magazines developed strong ties with U.S. colleges. Even before the birth of land-grant colleges, college professors and scientists were writing for the agricultural publications.

### TECHNOLOGY SIMPLIFIES PRINTING

Later in the 19th century, technological innovations eased publication production. Steam-driven, cylinder presses replaced labor-intensive, hand-powered, flatbed presses. While the steam-driven, cylinder presses were much faster than flatbed presses, the new presses lacked quality. Stereotyping, or casting printing plates from molds, solved quality problems. Paper costs were driven down when a process to produce paper from wood pulp was invented. Thus, technology allowed publishers to print at lower costs and increased reliability in distribution.

### RADIO

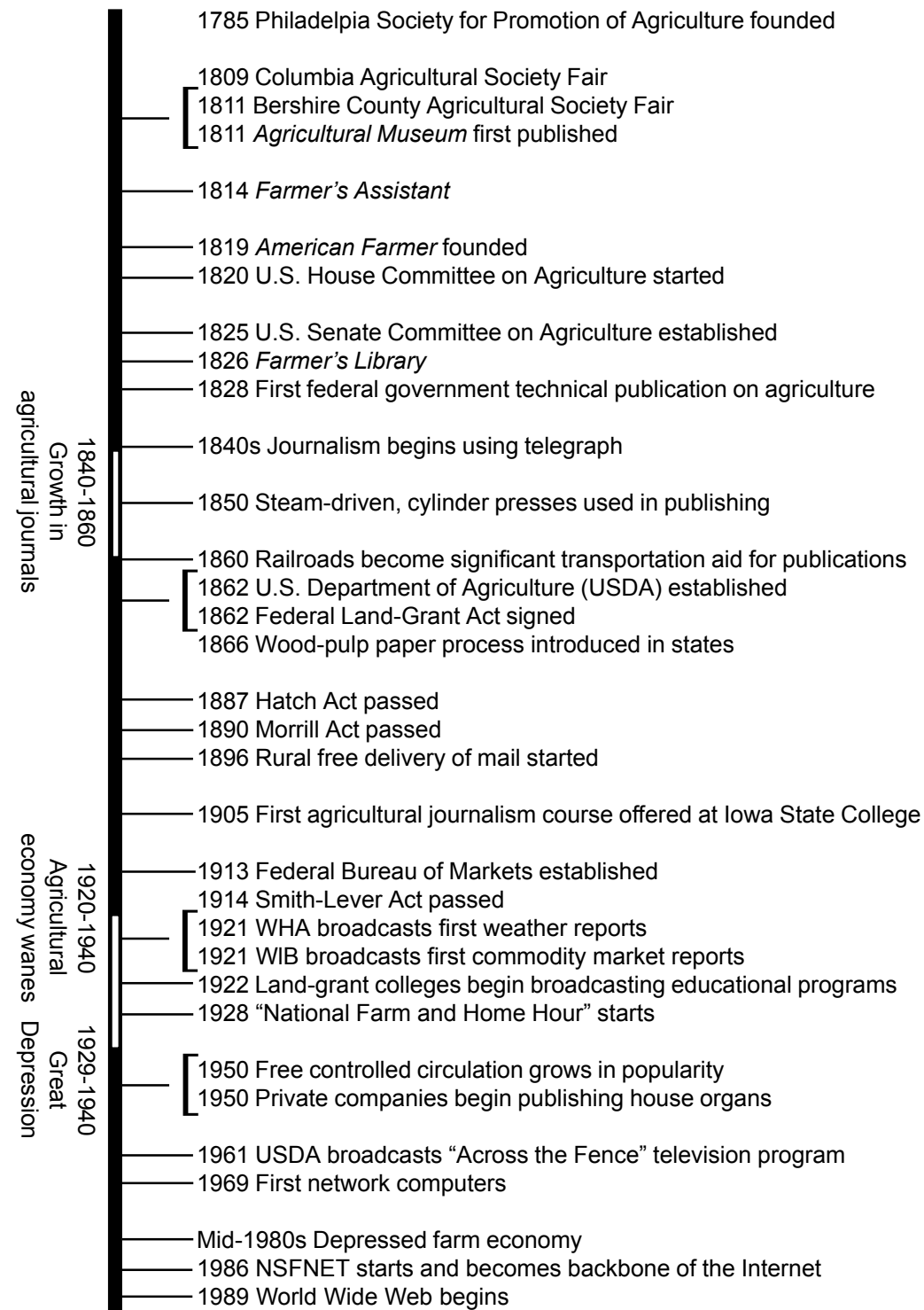
Agriculture faced difficult times from 1920 to 1940. As the Great Depression devastated the national economy, agricultural information became more valuable to farmers. Much of this information was delivered via radio, which was also a common source of entertainment and timely information on weather and markets.

Prior to radio, farmers relied on newspapers and telephones for weather information; the reports were slow and vague. While the Navy attempted to monopolize radio waves for defense purposes in the early 1900s, the USDA was interested in broadcasting for farmers. Herbert Hoover, then secretary of commerce, stated that no use of radio, except for military purposes, should supersede the use for agriculture. In 1921, WHA in Madison, Wisc., first broadcast weather reports, spurring the widespread use of radio for agricultural benefit. In 1923, 117 general broadcasting stations and 27 naval stations were broadcasting daily weather reports.

Farmers were also interested in market reports. The first station to broadcast market reports was WLB, part of the University of Minnesota, in February of 1921. By early 1922, 35 other stations had quickly followed suit. By 1925, more than 500,000 farmers were able to receive market information via radio reports, and by 1926, 500 stations were reaching one million farm families.

# History

## AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM



Timeline of major developments in American agricultural communications:  
1785-1989 (Boone, 2000).

# Careers in Ag Communications

## AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM



*"Agricultural Communications is a wonderful career choice for creative, curious people who are committed to promoting public understanding of food, agricultural and environmental issues."*

**- MARK TUCKER, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATION, OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

The opportunities are endless for careers in agricultural communications and journalism. Future agricultural communicators will be faced with a broad spectrum of career opportunities, with an even more extensive range of job responsibilities.

Preparation for a career in agricultural communication should include a solid collegiate experience with course work in the arts, sciences, and agriculture. Many agricultural journalism programs combine agriculture course work with journalism course work. This experience, although demanding, prepares the agricultural communicator with the expertise necessary for a future with broad demands.

### COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Students interested in studying agricultural communications should possess basic skills in:

- Writing
- Editing
- Project management
- Problem solving
- Critical thinking
- Listening
- Marketing
- Public speaking
- Visual communication (photography, photo editing, design, and graphic composition)

It is also helpful to have a:

- Strong background in science
- Basic knowledge of economic concepts and issues and how they affect the agricultural industry

### AGRICULTURAL KNOWLEDGE

Because agriculture is a very diverse, applied science and business, agricultural communicators may have knowledge of:

- Production agriculture
- Horticulture
- Soil science
- Hydrology
- Forest ecology
- Food science
- Milling
- Or any other agricultural fields

# Careers in Ag Communications

*AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM*

## CAREER CLUSTERS

- Agricultural and Forestry Production Professionals
- Communication and Education Specialists
- Management and Financial Specialists
- Marketing, Merchandising, and Sales Representatives
- Scientists, Engineers, and Sales Representatives
- Social Service Professionals

## SUPERVISED AGRICULTURAL EXPERIENCE (SAE) OPPORTUNITIES

- Working at the media and public relations booth at your county fairgrounds
- Setting up agricultural displays and creating brochures
- Conducting media interviews
- Preparing and editing news releases
- Shadowing a public relations firm employee
- Developing an FFA newsletter or website
- Writing articles promoting agricultural literacy

## PROFICIENCY AWARD AREAS

Agricultural Communications

## CAREERS

With so many career opportunities, agricultural communicators can choose to pursue almost any job they want. Possible careers include, but are not limited to:

- Newspaper Reporter/Editor
- Magazine Writer/Editor
- Advertising Account Executive
- Public Relations Coordinator
- Marketing Representative
- Television Producer/Director
- Videographer
- Agricultural Information Specialist
- Agricultural Journalism Educator
- Free-Lance Writer/Editor
- Agricultural Photojournalist
- Radio/Television News Reporter
- 4-H and Youth Extension Agent
- Advertising Sales Representative
- Public Relations Executive
- Director of Communications
- Business Communicator
- Web Designer
- Research and Extension Agent
- Environmental Public Relations Professional
- Science Editor
- Farm Broadcaster



# The Writing Process

## AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM



### WRITING TIPS

- **Discover the story's focus.** Write one sentence summarizing what the story is about.
- **Outline your story.** Using key words, ideas and quotes from notes.
- **Catch the highlights.** List the most important points of the story; use them to guide organization.
- **Quickly write and revise a first draft.** Cut all unnecessary quotes, words and repetitive transitions.
- **Read your story aloud.** Locate typos, clumsy phrases and poor rhythm, and revise accordingly.

Each writer has their own unique way of creating a story. Whether your method is organized or informal, concrete or abstract, what matters is that you find what works best for you. It's important to try to write the best story possible with the information you've gathered, while efficiently managing your time.

Some writers prefer to use the FORK method of organization to organize their stories before and while they write.

**F**= Focus  
**O**= Order  
**R**= Repetition of key words  
**K**= Kiss off

### Focus

The focus is crucial in maintaining organization. Without a focus, your story rambles. Your lead should concentrate on the focal point, and all other information should relate to it. *Keep in mind:* information in your notes that does not relate to your focus should not go in the story.

To find the focus of your story, try writing a headline or telling a friend. This forces you to consider the content of your story. If you had only a few words to express the main point, what would they be?

Another focus-finding technique many professionals use is the "stoplight technique." Imagine that you're at a stoplight and you have only a few seconds to tell your story before the light changes. In those brief moments, you'll probably express the focus without even knowing it.

### ORDER

As you go over your notes, highlight information you plan to use. Then, on a separate piece of paper, write key words or phrases to help remind you of the items you want to use. Finally, put them in order to ease organization in your story. You can always change the order once you begin writing if you dislike your initial plan.

Consider whether graphics, statistics or other visuals will accompany your story. Avoid redundancy by not repeating information shown in visuals, unless the information is crucial to understanding the story. In this case, leave the information in the text, as well as the visual.

### REPETITION OF KEY WORDS

This technique creates smooth transitions and builds bridges from one concept to the next. As you write, look at the last sentence in each

paragraph and find a key word that will lead you to the next paragraph. Good transitions make stories more readable.

### KISS OFF

The kiss-off technique helps eliminate confusion in writing. It organizes information by using sources in blocks instead of sporadically throughout the story. For example, when more than one source or concept is included in a story, use each only once or in consecutive paragraphs. Don't jump back and forth unless there are three or fewer sources or concepts.



# Basics of Journalism

## AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

### BASIC AP WRITING STYLE

**Commas:** In a simple series, do not place a comma before a conjunction.  
*During practice, the team worked on shooting, free throws and defense.*  
*The party guests could have cookies, cake or ice cream.*

**Quotes:** (see “Writing Quotes” section of guidebook)

### NAMES AND TITLES

**Titles:** Capitalize only formal titles used before a person’s name.  
*Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow President Sue Smith called the meeting to order.*

**Lowercase:** Lowercase and spell out titles when:

They are not used with the name of a person.  
*The president addressed the press.*  
*The reverend gave a sermon.*

The title is set off by commas.  
*The president, Suzie Smith, addressed the press.*  
*James Jones, the reverend, gave a sermon.*

**Courtesy titles:** In general, avoid using courtesy titles such as *Miss, Mr., Mrs. or Ms.* before a person’s name. *Suzie Smith*, not *Ms. Suzie Smith*

**Formal titles:** Formal titles should be capitalized when they are used directly before a name.  
*Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman addressed the press.*  
*Sen. Sam Brownback spoke to campaign supporters.*

**Abbreviated titles:** Capitalize and abbreviate the following:  
*Sen., Rep., Lt. Gov., Gov., Dr.*  
Spell out all other formal titles. Doctor should only be used to address medical doctors or veterinarians, not educational professionals such as professors.

### NUMBERS

**Numbers 1-10:** Spell out whole numbers below 10. Use figures for 10 and above.  
*There were three red cars and two blue cars.*  
*There were 15 students in the class.*

**Large numbers:** If spelling out large numbers, use hyphens to connect words ending in “y” to other words.  
*One hundred fifty-five, Two thousand three hundred seventy-six.*

**Sentence start:** Numbers at the beginning of a sentence should be spelled out unless they represent a calendar year. It may be better to rearrange the sentence.  
Wrong: *685 students transferred to the college in 1998.*  
Right: *In 1998, 685 students transferred to the college.*  
Right: *1998 showed a drop in enrollment.*

# Basics of Journalism

## AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

### NUMBERS (CONT.)

**Casual uses:** Casual expressions should be spelled out.  
*Thanks a million. She drove three quarters of a mile.*

**Figures or words:** *First* through *ninth* should be spelled out when indicating sequence in time or location.  
*Second base, the Fifth Amendment, she was third in her class.*

Use figures for *10th* and above.  
*11th place, 98th percentile.*

When forming names with numbers in a sequence, use *1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th*, etc.  
*1st Ward, 7th Fleet, 1st Sgt.*

### ABBREVIATIONS

**States:** When writing full addresses with ZIP codes, use the two letter abbreviation in parentheses. In all other instances, use the following state abbreviations:

Ala. (AL)	Mont. (MT)
Alaska (AK)	Neb. (NE)
Ariz. (AZ)	Nev. (NV)
Ark. (AR)	N.H. (NH)
Calif. (CA)	N.J. (NJ)
Colo. (CO)	N.M. (NM)
Conn. (CT)	N.Y. (NY)
Del. (DE)	N.C. (NC)
Fla. (FL)	N.D. (ND)
Ga. (GA)	Ohio (OH)
Hawaii (HI)	Okla. (OK)
Idaho (ID)	Ore. (OR)
Ill. (IL)	Pa. (PA)
Ind. (IN)	R.I. (RI)
Iowa (IA)	S.C. (SC)
Kan. (KS)	S.D. (SD)
Ky. (KY)	Tenn. (TN)
La. (LA)	Texas (TX)
Maine (ME)	Utah (UT)
Md. (MD)	Vt. (VT)
Mass. (MA)	Va. (VA)
Mich. (MI)	Wash. (WA)
Minn. (MN)	W.Va. (WV)
Miss. (MS)	Wis. (WI)
Mo. (MO)	Wyo. (WY)

These basic journalism rules can be found in *The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual*.

# Grammar and Usage

## AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

"The difference between the right word and the nearly right word is the same as that between lightning and the lightning bug."

-MARK TWAIN

### COMMON GRAMMAR AND USAGE ERRORS

**Affect:** Active verb, action

**Effect:** Noun, end result

Ex. Failing your test will *affect* your grade.

The *effect* on your grade will be poor.

**A lot:** Always two words

**Alright:** Not a word. Use two words, all right, to mean okay.

Ex. It is not *all right* to use *alright*.

**Among:** Used with more than two items

**Between:** Used with only two items

Ex. The weed was *between* two rocks.

The reward was divided *among* four people.

**Anxious:** Worried

**Eager:** Excited, looking forward to something

Ex. He was *anxious* to hear the results.

She was *eager* to start her new job.

**As, as if, as though:** Introduce sentence or clause with verb

**Like:** Means "similar to," use only to compare nouns or pronouns

Ex. As I said, she writes *like* a professional.

It looks *as if* she will study journalism.

**Bad:** Adjective that modifies noun

**Badly:** Adverb that modifies verb

Ex. Don't feel *bad* if you make a mistake.

Don't behave *badly* anymore.

**Between you and I:** Never use I

**Between you and me:** Between is a preposition, a pronoun must follow

Ex. The secret is *between you and me*.

**Can:** Capable of doing something

**May:** Permission, chance to do something

Ex. You *may* take only two cookies.

He *can* run the 100 meter dash.

**Complement:** To complete

**Compliment:** To flatter or praise

Ex. He received a *compliment* about his tie.

The tie will *complement* the suit.

**Currently:** Now

**Presently:** Soon

Ex. He is *currently* working for the newspaper.

He is *presently* writing a feature story.

**Farther:** Distance

**Further:** Length of time, quantity or intensity

Ex. How much *farther* is it to Tulsa?

He gave the idea *further* thought.

**Feel:** State of being or sense of touch

**Think or believe:** Thought or belief

Ex. I *feel* like going for a walk.

I *believe* in freedom of speech.

**It's:** It is

**Its:** Possessive, belonging to it

Ex. *It's* the cave that is *its* home.

**Lose:** To misplace, to have something lost

**Loose:** Not tight

Ex. His pants are too *loose*. He might *lose* them.

**Than:** Comparison

**Then:** Time

Ex. Back *then*, cars were more expensive *than* wagons.

**Their:** Belonging to them

**There:** Where, a place

**They're:** They are

**Your:** Belonging to you

**You're:** You are

### GRAMMAR AND USAGE TIPS

# Editing

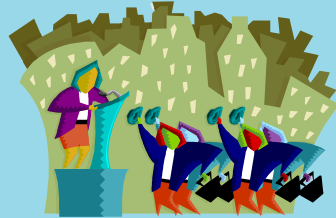
## AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

Use the following Associated Press editing marks when proofreading stories.

¶	TOPEKA (Kan.)--State legislators met	indent for paragraph
	ruled in favor of Jones.	paragraph
	The case was	
	in the museum.	no paragraph
	The workshop allowed participants to	
	The [Smith] [Suzie] supporters rallied at	transpose
	the project could take up to <u>fifty</u> years	use figures
	There were 9 students in the class	spell out
	Abilene, <u>Kansas</u> is the hometown of	abbreviate
	traveling to the mountains of <u>Colo.</u>	don't abbreviate
	president bush said it was his duty to	uppercase
	Due to lack of rainfall, / There is a shortage	lowercase
	The student thanked every one for their	remove space
	a lot of time was spent completing the	insert space
	showed a decrease in <del>January</del> spending	retain
	However, Janet set <sup>an</sup> example for others.	insert word
	In accordance with the <del>th</del> law, the judge	delete

# Interviewing Techniques

AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM



- **Introduce yourself** and briefly state your purpose. Be friendly and begin with general conversation.
- **Control the interview.** Don't interrupt, but avoid letting your source ramble when you want to move on.
- **Ask background questions.** Get the history of the issue, if applicable.
- **Use a conversational tone.** Let the interview flow naturally.
- **Ask about pros and cons.** Request that your source discuss both sides of the issue.
- **Restate information** in your own words and ask your source if you have the correct interpretation.
- **Verify information**, even if you know the answer.
- **Use the silent treatment.** Pause between questions to let the source elaborate.
- **Ask for additional resources.** Are there other individuals your source recommends you speak to?
- **End on a positive note.** Thank your source and ask if you can call back if you have further questions.

An effective journalist gathers information based on accuracy, fairness, newsworthiness and potential to make a readable story. An interview with a credible source allows journalists the opportunity to gain such information through personal conversation. Journalists must be able to generate the appropriate questions and present them to the source to gain the information they need.

## PLANNING THE INTERVIEW

- *Conduct background research.* Familiarize yourself with the topic and source.
- *Plan an interesting question to start your interview.* Find an interesting question or approach.
- *Call to request the interview.* Immediately state your name and purpose. Ask what time would be convenient.
- *Identify what kind of information you hope to get from the source.* Briefly explain your purpose when you call for an interview and schedule a convenient time and location to conduct the interview.
- *Plan your questions.* Write all the questions you want to ask. Mark the ones that obtain the most crucial information for your story and ask them first.
- *Dress appropriately.* If you are interviewing people in formal business settings, dress as though you worked there. If you are interviewing in a casual setting, dress casual, but not too casual.

## CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW

Two types of interview questions are used: closed-ended and open-ended.

**Closed-ended questions** elicit brief, specific facts. These questions obtain basic information, such as name and title, yes or no answers, and answers to some of the who, where and when questions.

**Open-ended questions** elicit quotes, elaboration or longer responses. Follow up your closed-ended questions with open-ended ones, such as why and how.

# Taking Notes

## AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM



Journalists rely upon their notes for the basis of a story. Without detailed notes, important information may be left out. Skilled journalists can distinguish between what's important and what's not and know how to choose what to write down.

**Be prepared:** Bring extra pens, pencils and paper.

**Concentrate:** Listen for good quotes and critical information. Write rapidly. Don't think about your next question while writing other important information.

**Use key words:** When you're not worried about recording a direct quote, write down a few key words to remind you of facts and statements. The better your memory, the fewer full sentences you need in your notes.

**Develop shorthand:** Abbreviate as often as possible.

**Slow the pace:** When you're writing down a quote, slow the pace of the interview by pausing to finish writing before asking the next question.

**Request repetition:** Ask your source to repeat quotes or facts you missed. Even if the quote isn't worded exactly as before, it's better than trying to go off fragments, and the new quote might even be better. When people have a chance to think, they often state things more clearly.

**Make eye contact:** Look at your source during the interview, even while you're taking notes. Practice writing without looking at your notebook.

**Give praise:** If your source gets nervous as you write, ease their concern with sincere praise, such as "That's interesting" or "Tell me more." It also gives you more time to write.

**Mark in margins or notebook covers:** When you hear something that prompts another question in your mind, jot it down immediately. Don't forget to take notes on your observations, too.



**Verify vital information:** Get the exact spelling of names and titles. If you ask at the end of the interview, you can also ask for a phone number or e-mail address in case you need more information.

**Double-check:** Restate facts and main ideas. Make sure you have everything you came for.

**Be open-minded:** Don't limit your notes to one concept, even if you already have an idea for the story when you start the interview. Story angles can change at any time during an interview. Make sure you record enough information to deal with changing the story's focus, if needed.

**Mark important information:** During the interview, put stars or other shapes you'll recognize next to important information or quotes. After the interview, take time to highlight the most important information. This may lead to finding a good lead or story focus.

**Save your notes:** Date your notebooks and save your notes in case any questions arise. Most editors advise saving them for a few weeks after the story is published.



# Writing Quotes

## AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

### WHEN TO USE A QUOTE

#### Use a quote if it:

- Is interesting and informative
- Backs up the lead
- Reveals the source's opinions or feelings
- Is very descriptive or dramatic
- Expresses strong reactions from a source
- Conveys dramatic action
- Uses first-person singular or plural pronouns (I, we, us) in a source's comments

#### Avoid using a quote that:

- Is boring or the information is factual and disputable
- Isn't clearly worded
- Doesn't relate directly to the focus and supporting points in your story
- Is accusatory in nature

Good quotes back up the lead and allow the reader to hear the speaker. They also add drama and interest. However, it's important to recognize the difference between when a quote is appropriate to use and when it is boring and redundant.

### WRITING QUOTES

Observe the following guidelines when writing quotes:

- **Always put commas and periods *inside* the quotation marks.**

"There are no exceptions to the rule," the professor said.

Comma is inside quotation marks

- **Question marks, periods and other punctuation marks go *inside* the quotation marks if the punctuation refers to the quoted material.** Otherwise, they go outside the marks.

He asked, "When does the semester end?"

Speaker is asking a question in the quote

Who said, "I hope it ends soon"?

Writer is asking who the speaker is

- **Each new speaker must be quoted in a separate paragraph.**

"Never place quotes from two speakers in the same paragraph," Professor Smith said.

Start a new paragraph for each new speaker

"Even if it's short?" Sarah Jones said.

"Yes, even if it's short," Smith said.

- **Don't attribute a single quote more than once.** If you have two quoted sentences from the same speaker in the same paragraph, you need only one attribution.

Use only one attribution for the speaker

"You must study your Associated Press Stylebook," the professor said. "You will have a test Tuesday on material in the first 30 pages."

- **Attribution in the middle of a quote is acceptable, but not preferable, if it interrupts the thought.**

Avoid interrupting the thought

"It isn't the best way," he said, "to use a direct quote. But it is all right if the quote is very long. However, it's better to put it at the end of a complete sentence."

- **When continuing a quote from one speaker into another paragraph, don't use closing quotation marks after the first paragraph.** Put quotation marks at the beginning of the next quote, and attribute the quote again in the second paragraph.

1st attribution

Jerry Jones said, "I regret the fact that we had to make such a difficult decision. We feel it was the best for all parties involved.

"We do believe that some good will come of this action," he added.

2nd attribution, same speaker

# Writing Quotes

## AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

- **Don't string together quotes from different people.** Place the attribution at the end of the quote in most cases. But when quoting from a new speaker immediately after the previous one, introduce the new speaker in a new paragraph with a transition.

“It was a great experience to attend the National FFA Convention this year,” Riverbend FFA member Sarah Smith said.

Brad Barker, senior Riverbend FFA member, attended the convention for the first time this year. “We earned the opportunity to attend the convention by selling fruit to community members,” he said. “The profits helped fund our trip.”

Barker sold over \$1000 worth of fruit to Riverbend FFA supporters.

- **Quotes within quotes require a *single* quotation mark, followed by a double quotation mark.**

“I can still remember the day he said, ‘I’m going to run for a state FFA office,’” she said. “He definitely worked his hardest to achieve his goal.”

- **Avoid long explanations for the quote.** If the quote isn’t clear, paraphrase.

*Unacceptable:*

When asked how he discovered his current position with Agri-Commerce, Jones said, “I learned about their internship opportunities on the National FFA website.”

*Acceptable:*

“I learned about their internship opportunities on the National FFA website,” Jones said when asked how he discovered his current position with Agri-Commerce.

- **Limit the use of partial quotes.** Too many partial quotes make a story choppy and readers wonder what was left out.

*Unacceptable:*

Jones said he sees the organization as “weak and unorganized” and “challenged with problems they could have avoided with adequate management.”

*Acceptable:*

“I see the Country Clutter organization as weak and unorganized,” Jones said. “They have been challenged with problems they could have avoided with adequate management.”

# Ethics

## AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

*"Ethics in ag communications is the foundation upon which a journalist rests his or her word. A journalist's work should be free of undue influence from interested parties, and an ag journalist must likewise be fair in reporting about groups or individuals who may have different views or opinions. For an audience to trust a journalist's work, that work must be fair and accurate. Maintaining an ethical approach to sharing information with audiences is vital."*

**-MATT SNYDER, @GRICULTURE ONLINE,  
INTERACTIVE FEATURES EDITOR FOR SUCCESSFUL FARMING ONLINE**

As a communicator, writing an ethical and accurate story is crucial. Every mistake jeopardizes not only your personal credibility, but also the credibility of your organization or firm.

Agricultural communicators are no exception from ethical dilemmas. They must also be mindful of ethics and accuracy as they promote the industry. Because many agricultural issues may often be misunderstood, it is critical that agricultural communicators represent agriculture in a favorable, ethical and accurate fashion.

Newspapers often print corrections to maintain credibility with their readers. While errors are corrected, not all readers will view the updated information. To avoid this problem, it is **very important** to double-check facts, names and other information with sources before publishing.

### MORAL REASONING

To justify their decisions, journalists must choose from several methods. In most ethical dilemmas, editors and reporters discuss the issue and the consequences of publication before making the decision. They evaluate how newsworthy a story is and whether the public really needs the information.

The process of moral reasoning can be broken into three steps:

1. **Define the ethical dilemma.** Consider all potential issues that may arise from publishing the story or photograph.
2. **Examine all alternatives.** Whether you choose to publish, not publish, or wait for a while until you get more information before publishing, it is important to research your options; you may even discover a better one.
3. **Justify your decision.** Weigh the advantages and disadvantages of publication. Consider how relevant or important the story is to the public.

Journalists should also consider these questions before making decisions in ethical dilemmas:

- Why am I concerned about this story, photo or graphic?
- What is the news? What good would publication do?
- Is the information complete and accurate, to the best of my knowledge?
- Am I missing an important point of view?
- What does my reader need to know?
- How would I feel if the story or photo were about me or a member of my family?
- What are the likely consequences of publication? What advantages or disadvantages may result?
- What are my alternatives?
- Will I be able to clearly and honestly explain my decision to anyone who challenges it?



### ETHICS CHECKLIST

#### Check information.

Pay close attention to names, dates, times, places and other critical information.

#### Verify information

**with sources.** Not only will they usually be appreciative to verify information before it is published, but it also allows them to update information before the story hits the press.

# Broadcast

## AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

### BROADCAST TIPS

- Use a conversational tone.
- Use short sentences; one idea per sentence.
- Use active voice.
- Give attribution first. Tell who said what before telling what was said.
- Read your copy aloud before you present it on the air.

Broadcasters must focus on not only on writing a news story, but also delivering it. It's important to consider what's vital in a story. People only have one chance to hear what you say.

### BROADCAST STORY STRUCTURE

**Lead:** Get to the point. Listeners should know what's going on by the the second or third sentence. Most broadcast leads tell who, when and where.

**Body:** Identify the focus. Support with facts or quotes from sources. Limit transitions by keeping a natural flow from one point to the next. There's not enough time for redundant or wasted words.

Typical body formats follow these suggestions:

- |               |    |                      |
|---------------|----|----------------------|
| 1. Problem    | or | 1. Present           |
| 2. Background |    | 2. Past (background) |
| 3. Solution   |    | 3. Future            |

**Ending:** Most endings include a summary, plan for future action or additional resources, such as where to go for more information.

### WRITING A BROADCAST STORY

**Keep stories simple:** Most listeners will change channels or stations if they aren't interested in what you have to say. Use short sentences and write in active voice. Passive voice adds many unnecessary words and is less appealing to listeners.

**Avoid extreme detail:** It's not necessary to list the names, ages and addresses of *all* people involved in the story, just the important ones. Use caution when determining what's necessary and unnecessary. Ensure that you have provided enough information for the audience to understand what's being said.

**Repeat important information:** Not all listeners will hear the story from start to finish. Work the subject of the story into later sentences to update listeners who might have just tuned in.

**Avoid long introductions to sentences:** Keep it simple. Listeners will lose interest or become lost in the story if it's too wordy.

**Omit needless words:** Leave out words such as *that*, *which* and *who*. Keep writing tight.

**Limit use of numbers:** Numbers are difficult to listen to. Use percentages to give comparisons when possible. Round off numbers, especially if they are large.

### PRESENTING A BROADCAST STORY

**Use a conversational tone:** Don't be too casual, but be personable. Listeners are seldom interested in a broadcaster who is dull or annoying. Pronunciate words and speak slowly enough that listeners can understand what's being said.

# Graphic Design

## AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM



Graphic designers often design magazine spreads, brochures, posters, newsletters, displays and other forms of visual communication. Knowing what formats and techniques best convey the message is critical in creating a successful design.

Usually, attention isn't drawn to the design of a page unless there's something wrong with it. Good design doesn't call attention to itself because it presents the information in an easy, readable fashion while looking pleasing and attractive. The best way to learn design is to study layouts used in magazines, newspapers, displays, brochures, posters, etc.

While graphics are key elements in communication, it's important to *keep it simple*. Focus on the objectives of your message.

### THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER:

- Who is my audience?
- What needs to be heard?

Your visual effects should *support*, not mask, the message of your design.

## PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN

### Balance

Imagine a line bisecting a page either vertically or horizontally. Elements on either side of the line should equal. Good balance can be symmetrical or asymmetrical. Symmetrical balance has a pattern mirrored on either side of the imaginary line. Asymmetrical balance uses the visual mass of objects on the page to balance each side.

### Proportion

Proportion is the spatial relationship between each design element. We visually compare the relationship of each element's area, size, weight and location to all other elements on the page. To create good proportion, use the golden mean. The golden mean divides a page into thirds. The middle section, or mean, is a good place to put your most important visual element to keep it in proportion with the rest of the page.

### Contrast

Otherwise known as emphasis, contrast refers to the dominant focus or element on a page. Elements that stand out because they are darker, larger or more interesting are the focal point of your design. All good designs should have a focal point that stands out on the page.

### Unity

All elements should work together to create a harmonious whole without seeming jarring or out of place.

### Repetition

Also known as sequencing, repetition refers to creating a pattern or line for our eye to follow by repeating or sequencing objects, such as images, lines or text characters.

### White space

White space is the use of open space. Open space consists of areas not filled with text or graphics. Good use of white space creates a sense of openness. Remember, too many elements on a page can create confusion and detract from the overall visual appeal of the page.

# Graphic Design

## AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

### WRITING PHOTO CAPTIONS

According to Associated Press (AP) style, photo captions follow this formula:

- **First sentence:** Describes what the photo shows, in present tense, and states where and when the photo was taken.
- **Second sentence:** Gives background on news and shows significance of photo.

*Try to keep captions to no more than two concise sentences and include only relevant information.*

A standard AP caption looks like this:

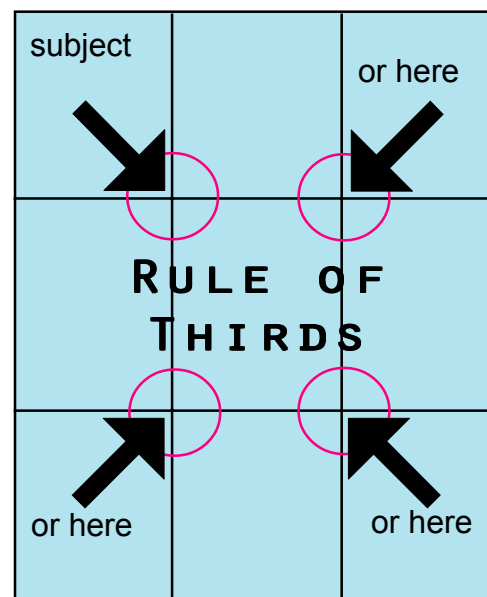
Riverbend FFA members serve chicken to community supporters at their annual barbecue, Friday, April 20. FFA members sold over 400 meal tickets as part of their activities fundraiser.

### EDITING PHOTOS

Good photographic composition involves a pleasing selection and arrangement of subjects within the picture. Follow these simple rules of composition when editing photos.

#### RULE OF THIRDS

Imagine the photograph is divided into thirds horizontally and vertically. Good photo composition suggests that photo subjects should be placed at or near the intersections of these lines. Avoid placing objects directly in the center. Photos with centered subjects tend to be more static and less interesting than photos with off-centered placement.



#### LINES

Lines can add dynamics to photos. They usually lead into the photo and provide a path for the eye to follow to the main subject.

#### BALANCE

Good balance depends on the arrangement of shapes, colors or areas of light and dark that complement one another so that the photo looks balanced, not lopsided. Balance can be symmetrical or asymmetrical.

#### FRAMING

Frame the center of interest with objects in the foreground. Framing gives the picture a feeling of depth. Common framing elements include tree branches, buildings, shadows, etc.

#### SIMPLICITY

Simplify photos by selecting uncomplicated backgrounds, avoiding unrelated subjects and moving in close. For a more dynamic center of interest, place it slightly off center.



# Photo Concepts

*AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM*



## LINES



## FRAMING

RULE OF  
THIRDS



## BALANCE

THIRDS

# Designing Visual Aids

## AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

### USING VISUAL AIDS

Graphics help convey and support information, as well as provide ease of reading. Keep these tips in mind when designing visual aids:

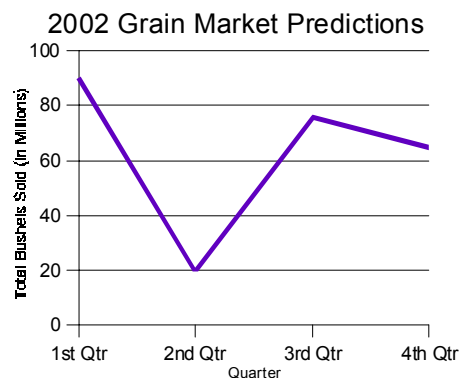
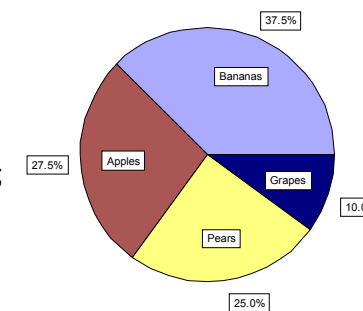
- Use charts to emphasize essential elements and data
- Ensure the numeric scale accurately conveys data
- Clearly label charts and graphs
- Use simple titles and short axis labels
- Use a clearly defined legend

### TYPES OF CHARTS AND GRAPHS

**Pie charts** help readers visualize a whole and the proportion of its components. These charts are useful in showing percentages. To arrange a pie chart:

- Arrange the largest portion to begin at the 12 o'clock position;
- Include a description and the percent of the total with each segment;
- Group a number of small components in one segment to avoid clutter;
- Make sure all segments total 100 percent;
- And type labels horizontally outside the segments.

Percentage of Total U.S. Fruit Produced in Florida



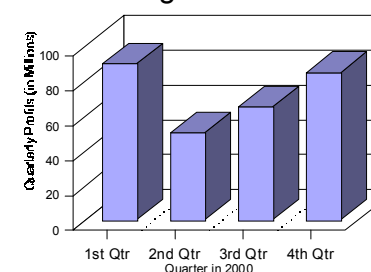
**Line charts** show changes in quantitative data over time. They do not show precise data, but give an impression of a trend or movement. To arrange a line chart:

- Indicate the time variable on the horizontal axis;
- Indicate the quantity variable on the vertical axis;
- And clearly label the scale used, ex. millions, tons, days, dollars, etc.

**Bar charts** use horizontal bars or vertical columns to compare information. When constructing a bar chart:

- Start with graph paper or draw a grid to mark off segments before making the first column or bar; and
- Arrange horizontally if there are long titles to allow ease of reading.

2000 Ag Tech Profits



# News Writing

## AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

### THE 5 WS AND H OF NEWS

A good news story answers the questions of:

- Who?
- What?
- Where?
- When?
- Why?
- How?

Journalistic writing differs significantly from traditional writing. Journalists and other communicators use different styles, rules and guidelines when writing for newspapers, magazines or other companies.

### MAKING NEWS READABLE

Most readers skim the newspaper for information they feel is important or that interests them. If a message is to be heard, communicators must write it in a way that the topic captures and holds the reader's attention.

#### Use short sentences

News stories with sentences that average less than 15 to 20 words per sentence are considered easy reading. Sentences longer than 30 words are difficult to understand. Keep your sentences short and use punctuation, such as periods, dashes and colons to break up long sentences.

#### Use short paragraphs

Keep paragraphs short. Vary their length from a few words to an average of three sentences. Readers are less likely to read long paragraphs.

#### Use easy words

Use short, simple words in place of longer, many-syllable words with the same meaning. When a technical or difficult word must be used, explain it as simply as possible.

### Personality

Use names of subjects and quotes to give the news story more human interest.

### Active verbs

Active verbs keep the story moving and grab the reader's attention more than "to be" verbs, which show little action.

### Use inverted pyramid style

Because most people read headlines and maybe the first paragraph or two of stories that catch their eye, it's important to place the most important facts in the first paragraph. Editors edit stories to make them fit available space, usually chopping from the bottom. If there's essential information at the bottom of the copy, it might not make it into print. News writers often use the inverted pyramid style.

# News Writing

AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

## ANATOMY OF A NEWS STORY

### THE HEADLINE

A headline tells the reader what the story is about. A headline should be written as if it were a sentence **very briefly** summarizing the content of a story. Do **not** capitalize each word and do not punctuate with a period.

### THE LEAD

The lead, or first paragraph, is the most important part of a news story. It should contain the most vital information in the story. Leads usually answer who, what, when, where, why and how questions. The lead is an important attention-getter, using striking statements, quotations, questions, and other noticeable lures to catch interest in readers. A lead should be about one or two sentences in length.

### THE BODY

The lead should be supported with backup information in the body. Backup information should contain statements or quotes that explain the key point. What impact does the news have on readers? Where did the information come from? What is the background behind the story? These questions should be answered in the body.

### THE ENDING

End with a plan for future action, a statement or quote that summarizes, but doesn't repeat previous information. End when there is no more news to reveal.

# Press Release

## AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

*"The farther we, as a country, are from the agricultural industry, the more the agricultural industry needs to help the public understand how agricultural products are produced and managed. This is where public relations and agricultural communications can make a significant difference in everyone's daily lives."*

**-MICHELLE O'MALLEY, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, A.Q. MILLER SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATIONS, KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY**

### Organization Name on Letterhead [Heading information can be single-spaced]

**For Immediate Release**      Contact: Name, title  
Date of release                      Phone number  
Story by [optional]                  Fax number  
E-mail address

NEWS RELEASE  
[Leave about 2 inches before headline]

### HEADLINE

[Double-space body copy]

**DATELINE**--[Location for the origin of the release (in capital letters, plus a dash, followed by the first line of the lead)]

**Lead:** Preferably start with some hard-news lead, especially on releases for news events or announcements.

**Body:** Write tightly. Limit copy to one page if possible, no more than two. If you have two pages, write **--MORE--** at the end of the first page and number the pages.

**Ending:** As part of the ending, you could tell where more information is available, such as graphics as Web sites.

--30--, --End--, or # # #

Organizations and companies often hire public relations experts to help get their message to the press. These public relations employees provide the publicity material, including press releases, to newspapers and other media channels.

Press releases follow a format similar to news stories, but come from the company or organization's viewpoint.

Press releases often include:

**Headings:** In the top left corner of a press release, write the date and author of the release. On the other side give contact information.

**Headline:** About two inches below the heading, include a headline in all capital letters.

**Dateline:** Write the location (city, state) of the story in all capital letters, followed by a dash.

**Lead:** Get to the point quickly. If your news angle is strong, use a summary or impacting statement as your lead. If you're using a feature story angle, use softer techniques.

**Body:** Back up the lead with a quote or supporting facts, including who, what, when, where, why and how. If you're promoting an event, be sure to include the date, time and location. Consider this: If you were buying the product, attending the event or seeking information about the company, what questions would you have? Answer them quickly.

**Ending:** Keep it simple. Press releases may conclude with facts or basic information about price or other sales information. End the release with --30--, --End--, or # # #. If you must add a second page, write **--MORE--** at the end of the first page and number your pages.

**Boilerplate:** At the bottom of a press release, many writers include a boilerplate. It should contain background information about the company or organization for which the press release is being written. The boilerplate for a press release written by a representative of the National FFA Organization would look similar to this:

FFA is a national youth organization of 455,306 student members preparing for leadership and careers in the science, business and technology of agriculture with 7,226 local chapters in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. FFA strives to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for **premier leadership, personal growth and career success** through agricultural education. Visit [www.ffa.org](http://www.ffa.org) for more information.

# Designing a Website

*AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM*

## DESIGNING A CHAPTER WEBSITE

With the many design tools available, creating a chapter website can be easy. Many html editors and page layout programs are available for experienced users, while beginners can develop Web pages with more user-friendly design sites online.

Online sites provide step-by-step instruction and sometimes offer free design programs to download. Many offer free Web hosting, design templates, multimedia features and other add-on features.

Ready to get started? Try out these free sites.

### ★★★ <http://www.homestead.com>

Easy-to-use design program is a free download. Offers extensive Web feature options including multimedia animation, polls, chat rooms, banners and animations, 3-D text, photo editing tools and more

### ★★★ <http://www.geocities.yahoo.com>

Design pages online with PageBuilder. Offers many add-on features including guest books, animation, multimedia, clip art, weather, games, news headlines, visitor counters, etc. Also provides automatic site statistics.

### ★★ <http://www.tripod.com>

Online Trellix Site Builder provides professional-looking templates or lets you design your own. Offers add-ons including maps, counters, weather, guestbooks, etc. Even allows you to create your own FFA chat room.

To have your chapter Web page listed on the National FFA chapter homepage index, visit <http://www.ffa.org/chapters/index.html>. Contact your state FFA office or Web page for more information on getting connected statewide.

★ Sites rated by usability.

## WEBSITE FEATURES

- Calendar of chapter events
- Officers and advisors
- Scrapbook
- Honors and awards received by chapter members
- Alumni recognition
- Link to National FFA web page <http://www.ffa.org>
- Member roster
- Audio clips of chapter news stories
- National FFA theme song



# Flyers and Brochures

*AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM*



Promoting your FFA chapter's community activities using brochures and posters not only provides great exposure, it boosts community participation and support for your chapter. It also allows students interested in communications to gain hands-on experience in advertising and public relations. Many software programs provide easy step-by-step instruction in creating brochures and posters. Choose an upcoming event for students to publicize using flyers or brochures.

Many computer programs offer a wide variety of design layouts, graphics, tips and templates. They also allow the user to start from scratch with their own design.

Popular programs include:

- The Print Shop
- Microsoft Publisher
- Corel Draw
- Adobe PageMaker
- QuarkXpress
- And many others

# Radio Broadcasts

## *AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM*

Hit the airwaves! While students are preparing for the FFA Agricultural Communications CDE, encourage them to contact local radio stations. Whether they arrange for a tour of the station or get to read their stories on air, it's great experience for student broadcasters.

Most small-town and agricultural radio stations are usually willing to work with FFA members. Encourage students to make the contacts and organize planned broadcast activities with the help of the radio station.

### **BROADCAST IDEAS**

- Record public service announcements about FFA during National FFA Week.
- Broadcast commercials and announcements about upcoming FFA-sponsored community events and fundraisers.
- Spend a day with a broadcaster and arrange to read the daily news, weather or farm reports.
- Tour the radio station.
- Have students use tape recorders to record news stories. Play back and evaluate based on content, tone, voice, etc.

# Mock Communications CDE

## *AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM*



Students can prepare to participate in the Agricultural Communications CDE by participating in a mock CDE.

Arrange for an interesting community member or local agriculturalist to speak to students in a press conference setting. Consider choosing an individual who has had a unique experience with agriculture, uses sophisticated technology, raises specialty crops or livestock or is a prominent figure in the agricultural industry. Remember to plan ahead, especially if the speaker has a busy schedule.

Contact the speaker ahead for details to complete a press packet. The press packet should include background information about the speaker, including education, experience, current occupation, hometown, etc. If possible, obtain quotes from the speaker on his or her chosen topic to include in the press packet. Ask for photographs, if available, for use in graphic design exercised. Photocopy and return them to the speaker promptly.

Students participating in the mock CDE should choose or be assigned to a practicum area: broadcast, graphic design, press release or news story. Follow the CDE guidelines included in this guidebook.

If desired, consult a journalism or English instructor for evaluation of mock CDE practicums.

A mock CDE can be very useful in gaining experience and allowing students to participate for fun in a non-competitive manner.

### **IDEAS FOR SPEAKERS**

- Prepare two CDE participants at once. Have a prepared public speaking or extemporaneous student act as the speaker for the mock press conference.
- Ask students to attend presentations of local speakers at community meetings, university events or banquets.

# Local Newspapers

## *AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM*

Get published! Gain community exposure by submitting stories to local newspapers.

As students prepare for the Agricultural Communications CDE, it's good practice to write numerous news stories and press releases. These stories can also be sent to local newspapers for publication.

Most local newspapers will try to publish student-written news. Newspapers will use student stories to fill space, if needed. However, most student stories are not a high priority, so if a story is publicizing a future event, be sure to submit the story well ahead of time.

Be sure students have included their name and FFA chapter on their stories. Newspapers will sometimes, but not always, include the student writer's name with their published story.

Students can gain confidence and practical writing experience while providing publicity for their FFA chapter.

Great ways to get involved:

- Offer to write press releases for other club or school events.
- Write stories about annual banquets, state or national conventions. Include who the speakers were, what local chapter members won awards, members elected to office and special guests.

# Instruction Manuals

## *AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM*

Allow students to share their agricultural experiences and knowledge with others by having them write instruction manuals. Student-written instruction manuals can be excellent teaching tools and prompt students to use their communication skills to get a message across.

Consider that each student has something unique to share with other students. By writing an instruction manual, they can provide step-by-step instruction in a single process.

Have students imagine that their audience knows nothing about the subject. How will they explain it to someone who has never had the same experiences?

### **POSSIBLE TOPICS**

- Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) program
- Hobbies
- Agriculture class
- Planning fundraising activities
- Planning annual banquet
- Applying for college
- Applying for a job
- Filling out FFA degrees, proficiency and other award applications

# Basic AP Style Quiz

*AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM*

Follow the directions for each section. Write your answers in the space provided or make appropriate editing marks.

**Show the correct placement of commas in the sentence.**

1. FFA members participated in career development events including agricultural mechanics floriculture and agricultural communications.

**Rewrite the sentence and show proper capitalization.**

2. riverbend ffa president suzie smith called the meeting to order.

---

**Abbreviate the following titles.**

3. Doctor Jeff Jordan, professor of economics

---

4. Lieutenant Doug Daniels

---

5. Governor Greg Graves

---

6. Representative Samuel Sawin

---

7. Doctor Luke Lyons, veterinarian

---

**Rewrite the following sentences show the correct use of numbers.**

8. There were 3 red cars and 2 blue cars.

---

9. In 1998, six hundred eighty-five students transferred to the college.

---



# Basic AP Style Quiz

AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

**Revise the sentence to avoid starting with a number.**

10. 791 FFA members attended the April leadership conference in Omaha, Neb.

---

**Show proper punctuation and quotation marks in the following sentences.**

11. I am very honored to receive this award she said

12. Our chapter's success is due to the great community support we receive Riverbend FFA Advisor Tim Thompson said We appreciate all that they do for us

13. FFA members have shown that they possess the skills to be great leaders They know the value of hard work and dedicate themselves and their time to something they truly enjoy Conner County FFA President Suzanne Strunk said

**Abbreviate the following state names in AP style.**

Example: Michigan = Mich., *not* MI

14. Kentucky \_\_\_\_\_

17. Maryland \_\_\_\_\_

20. Rhode Island \_\_\_\_\_

15. Georgia \_\_\_\_\_

18. California \_\_\_\_\_

21. West Virginia \_\_\_\_\_

16. Illinois \_\_\_\_\_

19. Missouri \_\_\_\_\_

22. Pennsylvania \_\_\_\_\_

**Spell out or convert into figures.**

23. 155

---

24. Two thousand three hundred and seventy-six

---

25. 689,374

---

# Grammar and Usage Quiz

*AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM*

Follow the directions for each section. Write your answers in the space provided or circle the appropriate answer.

**Circle the correct word in each sentence.**

1. Shelly asked, "(Can, May) I be excused from the meeting tomorrow?"
2. How much (further, farther) is it to Dallas?
3. The snacks were divided (among, between) six students.
4. I am afraid that I will (loose, lose) the ticket before I get to the show.
5. The blue car is more expensive (than, then) the black car.

**Rewrite the following sentence to show the correct grammar usage. If the sentence is correct, write a C in the blank.**

6. She spends alot of time at the recreation center.

---

7. The dog slipped it's collar off and ran away.

---

8. Their going to the circus next weekend.

---

9. Can you tell me where you're house is?

---

10. The storm is not expected to affect the Pawnee City area.

---

# Ag History Quiz

AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

1. Agriculture in the United States was influenced by what continent?
  - a. Asia
  - b. Australia
  - c. Europe
  - d. South America
2. The first agricultural journals began in the:
  - a. 1700's
  - b. 1800's
  - c. 1900's
  - d. None of the above
3. Which of the following was not a leading agricultural journal in the early 1800's?
  - a. *American Farmer*
  - b. *The Plough Boy*
  - c. *New England Farmer*
  - d. *Successful Farming*
4. The introduction of what technological innovation simplified printing in the 19th century?
  - a. Flatbed presses
  - b. Cylinder presses
  - c. Paper presses
  - d. None of the above
5. The first agricultural journalism course was offered in 1905 at what Big XII University?
  - a. Kansas State University
  - b. University of Oklahoma
  - c. University of Nebraska
  - d. Iowa State University
6. During the Great Depression, farmers received most of their information by:
  - a. Newspaper
  - b. Radio
  - c. Television
  - d. All of the above
7. Based on circulation, which of the following is NOT one of the largest agricultural publications today?
  - a. *Successful Farming*
  - b. *Farm Journal*
  - c. *Western Horseman*
  - d. None of the above

# Ag History Quiz

*AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM*

8. What military force attempted to monopolize radio waves for defense purposes in the early 1900s?
- a. Army
  - b. Navy
  - c. Marines
  - d. Air force
9. Early agricultural societies provided members with access to their libraries, which contained:
- a. Books
  - b. Magazines
  - c. Newspapers
  - d. All of the above
10. As agricultural publications grew large enough to break away from agricultural societies, some of the early writers included:
- a. College professors and scientists
  - b. Local newspaper editors
  - c. College students
  - d. Secretary of Agriculture

# Answers to Quizzes

## *AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM*

### **BASIC AP STYLE QUIZ**

1. FFA members participated in career development events including ag mechanics, floriculture and ag communications.
2. Riverbend FFA President Suzie Smith called the meeting to order.
3. Doctor Jeff Jordan, Professor of Economics  
(Only medical doctors are abbreviated.)
4. Lt. Doug Daniels
5. Gov. Greg Graves
6. Rep. Samuel Sawin
7. Dr. Luke Lyons, DVM
8. There were three red cars and two blue cars.
9. In 1998, 685 students transferred to the college.
10. Answers may vary. Possible answers include:  
  
In April, 791 FFA members attended the leadership conference in Omaha, Neb.  
  
There were 791 FFA members in attendance at the leadership conference in Omaha, Neb.
11. "I am very honored to receive this award," she said.
12. "Our chapter's success is due to the great community support we receive," Riverbend FFA Advisor Tim Thompson said. "We appreciate all that they do for us."
13. "FFA members have shown that they possess the skills to be great leaders. They know the value of hard work and dedicate themselves and their time to something they truly enjoy," Conner County FFA President Suzanne Strunk said.

# Answers to Quizzes

*AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM*

## **BASIC AP STYLE QUIZ (CONT.)**

- |          |            |           |
|----------|------------|-----------|
| 14. Ky.  | 17. Md.    | 20. R.I.  |
| 15. Ga.  | 18. Calif. | 21. W.Va. |
| 16. Ill. | 19. Mo.    | 22. Penn. |

23. One hundred fifty-five

24. 2,376

25. Six hundred eighty-nine thousand, three hundred seventy-four

## **GRAMMAR AND USAGE QUIZ**

1. May
2. Farther
3. Among
4. Lose
5. Than
6. She spends a lot of time at the recreation center.  
(A lot should be written as two separate words.)
7. The dog slipped its collar off and ran away.  
(*Its* shows ownership of the collar, *it's* stands for *it is*.)
8. They're going to the circus next weekend.  
(*Their* shows ownership of something, *They're* is the abbreviation for *They are*.)
9. Where is your house?  
(*Is* is a preposition, sentences should never be ended with a preposition.)
10. Correct



# Answers to Quizzes

*AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM*

## **AG COMMUNICATIONS HISTORY QUIZ**

1. C

2. B

3. D

4. B

5. D

6. B

7. C

8. B

9. D

10. A

**FFA Agricultural Communications CDE**  
**Practice Editing Quiz**

Contestant Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Score: \_\_\_\_\_  
FFA Chapter/State: \_\_\_\_\_ Contestant No.: \_\_\_\_\_

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oct. 25, 2000

**Grain Growers Prefer Market Flexibility Over Storage Loans**

With a bin-busting yield looking more and more likely, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has launched a program to help farmers build more grain storage. The new farm storage facility loan program, established on May eleventh, grants seven-year, low-cost loans to farmers to help build or upgrade commodity storage and handling facilities.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

The exact interest rate is set according to the month that the loan application is approved, and remains fixed for the term of the loan. The June rate was 6.625%. USDA officials said that the program is intended to provide loans for conventional facilities designed to store wholegrain. The loan can cover drying equipment and grain handling equipment, as long as it is affixed to the site.

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

- more-

The comment period on the new program extends to June 10, and some farmers have asked for portable drying equipment to be covered as well.

5. \_\_\_\_\_

The first loan applications were taken May 30. Producers must remit a \$45, non-refundable application fee at the time they apply for the loan.

6. \_\_\_\_\_

They then must wait for loan approval before sight preparation or foundation work can begin. However, there is an exception for producers who started to build storage between Feb. 2 and May 30. Despite already starting construction, they remain eligible for the loans.

7. \_\_\_\_\_

The program also calls for an attorney's title opinion or title insurance; an environmental evaluation; a 25% down payment; and Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) requires first lien position on the real estate for any loan that exceeds \$50,000.

8. \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_

These requirements have not played well with farmers, says Fred Stemme, director of communications for the Missouri Corn Growers Association. "This is a long list of concerns that many farmers tell me makes the program essentially unworkable."

10. \_\_\_\_\_

USDA pushed for the program because low commodity prices and growing demand for specialty crops is driving farmers to seek additional, and often separate, storage arrangements. Producers who are unable to store their crops often utilize loan deficiency payments available at the time of harvest, but this measure often precludes them from holding off marketing the grain for a more favorable price.

11. \_\_\_\_\_

12. \_\_\_\_\_

"To get the best price for their crop, farmers need marketing flexibility," says USDA secretary Dan Glickman. "On-farm storage gives farmers the control they need to segregate their crops and decide when to sell them."

13. \_\_\_\_\_

- more-

The loan program undertaken by the CCC aims to expand on-farm storage capacity by more than 750 million bushels over the next five years. Offering the same interest rate as charged on comparable Treasury securities during the month the loan is approved, savings for a farmer on the construction of a 15,000-bushel grain bin could total up to \$3,840 when compared with financing through the commercial bank route.

The USDA initiative stems from an analysis conducted by the Farm Service Agency that reported the utilization of on-farm and commercial storage rose to 95% of capacity last year from 79% in 1996. And while grain production rose nearly 8% between 1996 and 1998, to 15 billion bushels from 14 billion, storage volume plunged 79.5 million bushels, or nearly 1% of space available nationwide.

Emergency storage requests by warehouses with CCC uniforms grain storage agreements increased to 238.1 million bushels last year from 192.3 billion in 1998. Randy Gordon, vice president of communications and government at the National Grain and Feed Association (NGFA), anticipates strong interest in the program from the producer side as well as potential benefits to bin manufacturers. who may gain additional business as more farmers take advantage of the low interest rates.

Still, if not monitored properly, on-farm storage may bare adverse consequences, warned Gordon. "One of the problems in the past was that this led to some building of on-farm storage facilities that were not necessary," he said. "It encouraged farmers to store their grain while the market was telling them to sale. Several studies also indicated that some of the grain that came out of these bins was not as good in quality as it should be."

14. \_\_\_\_\_

15. \_\_\_\_\_

16. \_\_\_\_\_

17. \_\_\_\_\_

18. \_\_\_\_\_

19. \_\_\_\_\_

20. \_\_\_\_\_

21. \_\_\_\_\_

22. \_\_\_\_\_

23. \_\_\_\_\_

Gordon indicated the NFGA is in the midst of preparing comments 24. \_\_\_\_\_  
to USDA suggesting the possibility of a lease arrangement. He hopes the  
loan program may extend to country elevators that build extra bins on  
their own property and lease the space to a group of nearby producers. In  
turn, the elevator would assume the obligation for the quality of the grain. 25. \_\_\_\_\_

-30-

FFA is a national youth organization of 453,902 student members preparing for leadership and careers in the science, business and technology of agriculture with 7,220 local chapters located in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. FFA strives to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education. Visit [www.ffa.org](http://www.ffa.org) for more information.

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1. **I, Agriculture**

2. **I, 11** \_\_\_\_\_

The exact interest rate is set according to the month that the loan application is approved, and remains fixed for the term of the loan. The June rate was 6.625%. USDA officials said that the<sup>#</sup> program is intended to provide loans for conventional facilities designed to store wholegrain. The loan can cover drying equipment and grain handling equipment, as long as it is affixed to the site.

3. **C** \_\_\_\_\_

4. **I, whole grain**

The commment period on the new program extends to June 10, and some farmers have asked for portable drying equipment to be covered as well.

The first loan applications were taken May 30. Producers must remit a \$45, non-refundable application fee at the time they apply for the loan. They then must wait for loan approval before sight preparation or foundation work can begin. However, there is an exception for producers who started to build storage between Feb. 2 and May 30. Despite already starting construction, they remain eligible for the loans.

The program also calls for an attorney's title opinion or title insurance; a environmental evaluation; a 25% down payment; and Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) requires first lien position on the real estate for any loan that exceeds \$50,000.

These requirements have not played well with farmers, says Fred Stemme, director of communications for the Missouri Corn Growers Association. "This is a long list of concerns that many farmers tell me makes the program essentially unworkable.

USDA pushed for the program because low commodity prices and growing demand for specialty crops is driving farmers to seek additional, and often separate, storage arrangements. Producers who are unable to store there crops often utilize loan deficiency payments available at the time of harvest, but this measure often precludes them from holding off marketing the grain for a more favorable price.

"To get the best price for their crop, farmers need marketing flexibility," says USDA secretary Dan Glickman. "On-farm storage

5. I, comment

6. C

7. **I, site preparation**

8. I, an

9. C

10. C

11. I, are

12. I, their

13. I, Secretary



gives farmers the control they need to segregate their crops and decide when to sell them.”

The loan program undertaken by the CCC aims to expand on-farm storage capacity by more than 750 million bushels over the next five years. Offering the same interest rate as charged on comparable Treasury securities during the month the loan is approved, savings for a farmer on the construction of a 15,000-bushel grain bin could total up to \$3,840 when compared with financing through the commercial bank route.

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Still, if not monitored properly, on-farm storage may (bare) adverse consequences, warned Gordon. “One of the problems in the past was that this led to some building of on-farm storage facilities  
-more-

14. **I, program, CCC,**

15. \_\_\_\_\_ **C** \_\_\_\_\_

16. \_\_\_\_ **I, stems** \_\_\_\_

17. \_ **I, 8 percent** \_\_\_\_

18. **I, CCC uniforms\_**

19. \_\_\_\_\_ **C** \_\_\_\_\_

20. **I, manufacturers,**

21. \_\_\_\_ **I, bear** \_\_\_\_

22. \_\_\_\_\_ **C** \_\_\_\_\_

that were not necessary,” he said. “It encouraged farmers to store their grain while the market was telling them to sale. Several studies also indicated that some of the grain that came out of these bins was not as good in quality as it should be.”

23. I, sell

Gordon indicated the NFGA is in the midst of preparing comments to USDA suggesting the possibility of a lease arrangement. He hopes the loan program may extend to country elevators that build extra bins on their own property and lease the space to a group of nearby producers. In turn, the elevator would assume the obligation for the quality of the grain.

24. I, NGFA

25. C

-30-

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**National FFA Agricultural Communications CDE**  
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**FFA National Agricultural Career Show Going  
Strong at Thirty-five**

Louisville, Ky. -- The FFA National Agricultural Career Show is celebrating its 35 <sup>th</sup> year as the largest youth career show in the United States. Currently underway at the Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center, the show runs through Friday, October 27. More than 50,000 FFA members, parents and advisors are expected to visit 360 exhibitors representing industry, agricultlure, education, military and fundraisers. Among the diverse ranks of show participants this year are new 77 exhibitors.	1. _____
	2. _____
	3. _____
	4. _____
	5. _____
	6. _____
	7. _____
Exhibits range from traditional agriculture and business stalwerts, such as machinery manufactures to specialty suppliers and emerging e-commerce firms. Handson opportunities for show attendees	8. _____
	9. _____

- more-

abound. From changing tires on an official Nascar racecar to scaling a rock climbing wall, intriguing possibilities for the adventurous are abundant. For the more grounded types, "millionaire" game shows, shooting ranges, and fitness challenges have appeal.

Students are also exposed to the latest science, business and high-tech advancements. Exhibitors spend time with students helping them learn about current developments in varied areas ranging from hydroponic gardening to computer simulations.

Educational venues occupy a large portion of the tradeshow floor. Colleges, universities and trade schools offering an enormous array of choices attract many college-bound students. In addition; many vendors target the teachers and advisors in attendance, with the latest curriculum and technology offerings.

Thirtynine vendors were recognized during the 2000 show for their outstanding support of the show with 12 exhibitors receiving plaques for 20-plus years of participation. Two groups, the Associated Equipment Distributors Foundation and the National Association of Agricultural Educators, hold the distinction for having participated all 35 years of the shows existence. The FFA National Agricultural Career Show brings together current industry leaders with those of the future.

10. \_\_\_\_\_

11. \_\_\_\_\_

12. \_\_\_\_\_

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14. \_\_\_\_\_

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16. \_\_\_\_\_

17. \_\_\_\_\_

18. \_\_\_\_\_

19. \_\_\_\_\_

20. \_\_\_\_\_

###

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2. \_\_\_\_\_C\_\_\_\_\_

Among the diverse ranks of show participants this year are new 77 exhibitors.

3. \_\_\_\_\_C\_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_C\_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_C\_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_I\_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_I\_\_\_\_\_

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8. \_\_\_\_\_I\_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_I\_\_\_\_\_



- more-

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10. \_\_\_\_\_C\_\_\_\_\_

11. \_\_\_\_\_C\_\_\_\_\_

12. \_\_\_\_\_I\_\_\_\_\_

13. \_\_\_\_\_I\_\_\_\_\_

14. \_\_\_\_\_C\_\_\_\_\_

15. \_\_\_\_\_C\_\_\_\_\_

16. \_\_\_\_\_I\_\_\_\_\_

17. \_\_\_\_\_I\_\_\_\_\_

18. \_\_\_\_\_I\_\_\_\_\_

19. \_\_\_\_\_C\_\_\_\_\_

20. \_\_\_\_\_I\_\_\_\_\_

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<b>Distinguished Service Citations Presented</b>	1. _____
<b>At 73<sup>rd</sup> National FFA Convention</b>	
LOUISVILLE, Ky. — The Distinguished Service Cita-	2. _____
tion was presented at the 73 <sup>rd</sup> National FFA Convention, Oct	3. _____
26, to three companies and organizations providing out-	
standing service and opportunities to the National FFA Or-	
ganization.	
Recipients of 2000 Distinguished Service Citations in-	4. _____
clude Ford Motor Company Fund of Dearborn, Mich.; Penn-	
sylvania Department of Agriculture of Harrisburg, Pa., and	5. _____
Tractor Supply Company of Nashville, Tenn.	
Companies and organizations showing exemplary sup-	
port to FFA and agricultural education recieve the Distin-	6. _____
guished Service Citation in distinct appreciation from the	
National FFA Organization.	

-more-



Ford Motor Company Fund has been a supporter of the National FFA Foundation for fifty-two years. Through it's partnership with Ford Motor Company and Ford dealers, the Fund is the largest contributor to the National FFA Scholarship Program, providing more then \$400.000 in scholarships for the 2000-2001 school year. The Ford Motor Company Fund is also the original sponser of the National Agriscience Fair program. Education remains a top priority for the Ford Motor Company Fund and is an important part of the company's legacy of corproate citizenship. Not only does the Ford Motor Company Fund continue to provide sponsorship dollars, but its employees provide insight and direction in the areas of technology, the environment and education for FFA.

Members of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture have worked for many years to encourage agricultural education and FFA by working closely with the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Secretary of Agriculture Samuel Hayes and his staff have provided resources, meeting locations, agriculture knowledge, industry insight ,and overall support for FFA in Pennsylvania on all levels. A collaborative partnership has developed between the Department of Agriculture, Department of Education and FFA that will continue to strengthen agricultural education and FFA throughout the state for many years.

Tractor Supply Company is in its 16<sup>th</sup> year of sponsorship with the National FFA Foundation and has had four executives served on the Foundation Sponsors' Board. In

addition to investing more than four-hundred thousand dollars during its sponsorship period. TSC helped start the Job Interview Career Development Event, invested in the "I Believe in the Future" capitol campaign, started a scholarship endowment and is participating in the convention shopping mall. They have also provided insight for the FFA Branding study by providing an industry perspective. TSC has a excellent understanding of agricultural education and works to promote FFA through their stores and employees.

FFA is a national youth organization of 455,306 student members perparing for leadership and careers in the science, business and technology of agriculture with 7,226 local chapters in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. FFA strives to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing there potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education. Visit [www.ffa.org](http://www.ffa.org) for more information.

###

- 18. \_\_\_\_\_
- 19. \_\_\_\_\_
- 20. \_\_\_\_\_
- 21. \_\_\_\_\_
- 22. \_\_\_\_\_
- 23. \_\_\_\_\_
- 24. \_\_\_\_\_
- 25. \_\_\_\_\_

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**Distinguished Service Citations Presented**  
**At 73<sup>rd</sup> National FFA Convention**

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — The Distinguished Service Citation was presented at the 73<sup>rd</sup> National FFA Convention, Oct. 26, to three companies and organizations providing outstanding service and opportunities to the National FFA Organization.

Recipients of 2000 Distinguished Service Citations include Ford Motor Company Fund of Dearborn, Mich.; Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture of Harrisburg, Pa., and Tractor Supply Company of Nashville, Tenn.

Companies and organizations showing exemplary support to FFA and agricultural education receive the Distinguished Service Citation in distinct appreciation from the National FFA Organization.

1. \_\_\_\_C\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_C\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_I\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_I\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_C\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_C\_\_\_\_

-more-

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7. C

8. I

9. I

10. I

11. I

12. C

13. C

14. I

15. C

16. C

17. I

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###

18. \_\_\_\_ I \_\_\_\_

19. \_\_\_\_ I \_\_\_\_

20. \_\_\_\_ I \_\_\_\_

21. \_\_\_\_ I \_\_\_\_

22. \_\_\_\_ C \_\_\_\_

23. \_\_\_\_ I \_\_\_\_

24. \_\_\_\_ I \_\_\_\_

25. \_\_\_\_ C \_\_\_\_

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Two FFA Chapters Recognized as 2000 Models of  
Innovation

LOUISVILLE, KY.-- The Perrydale FFA Chapter of 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
Amity, Ore., and Ravenna FFA Chapter of Ravenna,  
Neb., were named the top FFA chapters in the Na-  
tional Chapter Awards program during the 73<sup>rd</sup> Na-  
tional FFA Convention, Oct. 25-28. The National 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
Chapter Award program recognizes chapters that  
have created and completed a program of activities  
encompassing student, chapter and community de- 3. \_\_\_\_\_  
velopment. Chapter compete for the top three Na- 4. \_\_\_\_\_  
tional Chapter Awards in Student Development,  
Chapter Development and Community Development,  
known as the Models of Innovation. 5. \_\_\_\_\_  
Because of their outstanding achievements, the  
Ravenna FFA Chapter won the 2000 Models of Inno-  
vation Award in Student Development. The student  
development division of the National Chapter pro

-more-

gram emphasizes activities in leadership, healthy lifestyles, scholarship, career development and supervised agricultural experience programs.

6. \_\_\_\_\_

The Ravenna FFA Chapter, led by advisor Kent Zeller, has a membership of 68. Throughout the year, the chapter members attends leadership conferences, conventions and the Leadership Academy. Ravenna students also traveled to Lincoln, Neb.; to visit with Nebraska senators and participated in workshops and "mock" activities to involve them in the law making process.

7. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_

The achievements of the Perrydale FFA Chapter helped guide them to win the 2000 Models' of Innovation Award in Chapter Development. This division recognizes an FFA chapter's effort to increase participation and recruitment of members, improve the financial health of the organization and promote the FFA through public relations and member networking. Progressive projects such as the pancake feed, canned food and clothing drive and the Oklahoma relief project also earned the Perrydale FFA Chapter the Models of Innovation Award in Community Development. This Division recognizes FFA chapter's efforts to develop economic activities that improve the community's financial health, preserve natural resources, promote citizenship and increase agricultural awareness.

10. \_\_\_\_\_

11. \_\_\_\_\_

12. \_\_\_\_\_

13. \_\_\_\_\_

14. \_\_\_\_\_

The Perrydale FFA Chapter has a membership



of 78 and is led by advisor Kirk Hutchinson. To earn the	15. _____
chapter development award, the chapter heeld an	16. _____
“Agriculture Olympigs,” which promoted agriculture and	
leadership skills among students. The event involved more	17. _____
than 300 community members and 75 % of the school	
student body. For the past 16 years, they have also held a	
corn feed, which is prepared by the chapter and served to the	18. _____
community. For the community development area, the	
chapter had a free pancake breakfast open to the public. The	
Oklahoma relief project was initated by the chapter and	19. _____
involved the entire school and community to provide	
immediate aid to victims of the Oklahoma tornado. The	20. _____
chapter adopted five families and provided them with kitchen	
and bathroom products as well as clothing.	
The three National Chapter Award winners were named	21. _____
Models of Innovation for their efforts in promoting a positive	
image of the FFA and its members. Cargill and the National	22. _____
FFa Foundation General Fund sponsored the National Chapter	
Awards program.	
FFA is a national youth organization of 455,306 student	
members preparing for leadership and careers in the science,	23. _____
business, and technology of agriculture with 7,226 local	
chapters in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.	
FfA strives to make a positive difference in the lives of	24. _____
students by developing their potential for <b>premeir</b>	
<b>leadership, personal growth and career success</b> through	25. _____
agricultural education. Visit <i>www.ffa.org</i> for more information.	

###

**National FFA Agricultural Communications CDE  
Editing Quiz**

Contestant Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Score: \_\_\_\_\_

FFA Chapter/State: \_\_\_\_\_ Contestant No.: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Twenty-five words or phrases are underlined in the news release below. Some are correct and others contain errors. Indicate in the spaces to the right if the words or phrases are correct ( **C** ) or incorrect ( **I** ). If they are incorrect, correct them using standard editing marks or other clear marks indicating your edits. You may find errors related to grammar, punctuation, word usage, spelling or other Associated Press Stylebook issues.

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Two FFA Chapters Recognized as 2000 Models of  
Innovation

LOUISVILLE, KY.-- The Perrydale FFA Chapter of Amity, Ore., and Ravenna FFA Chapter of Ravenna, Neb., were named the top FFA chapters in the National Chapter Awards program during the 73 <sup>rd</sup> National FFA Convention, Oct. 25-28. The National Chapter Award program recognizes chapters that have created and completed a program of activities encompassing student, chapter and community development. Chapter compete for the top three National Chapter Awards in Student Development, Chapter Development and Community Development, known as the Models of Innovation.	1. ____ <b>C</b> ____
Because of their outstanding achievements, the Ravenna FFA Chapter won the 2000 Models of Innovation Award in Student Development. The student development division of the National Chapter pro	2. ____ <b>I</b> ____
	3. ____ <b>C</b> ____
	4. ____ <b>I</b> ____
	5. ____ <b>I</b> ____

gram emphacizes activities in leadership, healthy lifestyles, scholarship, career development and supervised agricultural experience programs.

6. \_\_\_\_ I \_\_\_\_

The Ravenna FFA Chapter, led by advisor Kent Zeller, has a membership of 68. Throughout the year, the chapter members attends leadership conferences, conventions and the Leadership Academy. Ravenna students also traveled to Lincoln, Neb, ~~to~~ visit with Nebraska senators and participated in workshops and "mock" activities to involve them in the law making process.

7. \_\_\_\_ C \_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_ I \_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_ I \_\_\_\_

The achievements of the Perrydale FFA Chapter helped guide them to win the 2000 Models ~~of~~ of Innovation Award in Chapter Development. This division recognizes an FFA chapter's effort to increase participation and recruitment of members, improve the financial health of the organization and promote the FFA through public relations and member networking. Progressive projects such as the pancake feed, canned food and clothing drive and the Oklahoma relief project also earned the Perrydale FFA Chapter the Models of Innovation Award in Community Development. This ~~D~~vision recognizes FFA chapter's efforts to develop economic activities that improve the community's financial health, preserve natural resources, promote citizenship and increase agricultural awareness.

10. \_\_\_\_ I \_\_\_\_

11. \_\_\_\_ C \_\_\_\_

12. \_\_\_\_ C \_\_\_\_

13. \_\_\_\_ I \_\_\_\_

14. \_\_\_\_ C \_\_\_\_

The Perrydale FFA Chapter has a membership

of 78 and is led by advisor Kirk Hutchinson. To earn the chapter development award, the chapter heeld an "Agriculture Olympigs," which promoted agriculture and leadership skills among students. The event involved more than 300 community members and 75% of the school student body. For the past 16 years, they have also held a corn feed, which is prepared by the chapter and served to the community. For the community development area, the chapter had a free pancake breakfast open to the public. The Oklahoma relief project was initated by the chapter and involved the entire school and community to provide immediate aid to victims of the Oklahoma tornado. The chapter adopted five families and provided them with kitchen and bathroom products as well as clothing.

The three National Chapter Award winners were named Models of Innovation for their efforts in promoting a positive image of the FFA and its members. Cargill and the National FFa Foundation General Fund sponsored the National Chapter Awards program.

FFA is a national youth organization of 455,306 student members preparing for leadership and careers in the science, business, ~~and~~ and technology of agriculture with 7,226 local chapters in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

FfA strives to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premeir **leadership, personal growth and career success** through agricultural education. Visit *www.ffa.org* for more information.

15. C

16. I

17. I

18. C

19. I

20. C

21. C

22. I

23. I

24. I

25. I

# CDE Format

## AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

### EQUIPMENT

Equipment provided for the agricultural communications CDE includes the following:

**For team proposal presentation:**

- Overhead projector
- Slide projector
- Easel
- VCR/TV monitor

**Note:** Teams may bring additional equipment for proposal presentation as long as they are able to set up and tear down equipment in the time allowed for the presentation.

**For practicums:**

- PC computer with Microsoft Office suite and Corel WordPerfect suite
- Tape recorder
- Cassettes
- Photographs (5 x 7 prints in color or black and white)
- Wax pencils
- Rulers
- Paper
- Colored pencils/markers
- Blue-line grid paper

### TEAM ACTIVITIES

**Communications Project Proposal**

Each team will prepare a communications project proposal for their chapter. The proposal will explain the communications activities planned to publicize an event/issue.

**Communications Project Presentation**

Each team will present their communications project proposal to a panel of judges. Use of Microsoft PowerPoint, slides, video and overhead projections may be useful in illustrating main points.

### INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES

**Editing Exercise**

Each team member will complete an editing exercise. Using proper editing marks, participants will be asked to find and correct 25 mistakes in the given story. Style, grammar, punctuation and spelling mistakes will be included. *Use of style manuals and/or dictionaries is not allowed during this exercise.*

**Communications Quiz**

Each team member will also complete a quiz covering the basic elements of journalism. There will be five questions from each of the following areas: broadcasting, public relations writing, news writing, graphic design and communication ethics. *Use of style manuals and/or dictionaries is not allowed during this exercise.*

**Practicums**

Each team should assign one member to each of the following activities PRIOR to arriving at the agricultural communications CDE: news writing, press release, broadcast, graphic design.

# CDE Format

## AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

### PRESS CONFERENCE

All teams will meet in a central location for an orientation and press conference. Participants will be divided so that all broadcasters sit together, all press release writers sit together, all news writers sit together and all graphic designers sit together. All members will be given an orientation at the beginning of the practicums to last no more than 10 minutes.

Following the orientation, a press conference will be held. Each team member will receive a packet with background information on the agricultural topic and expert to use during the event. An expert will speak on a timely agricultural topic for 20 minutes. Students will be provided with paper to take notes. After the presentation, the broadcasters and graphic designers will be dismissed to a different area to complete their assigned tasks.

News writers and press release writers will then be involved in a 10-minute question and answer period with the speaker. All news writers and press release writers may take notes during the question and answer period; however, only the news writers will be allowed to ask questions. Each news writer will stand to be recognized before asking a question. More than one question may be asked; however, the speaker will attempt to address as many different participants as possible. *Tape recorders will not be allowed during this portion of the event.*

Upon completion of the question and answer session, the news writers and press release writers will be dismissed to a computer room to complete their assigned tasks.

### PRACTICUM AREAS

#### News Writers

Participants will write a news story based on information gathered at the press conference. The story should be written for an agriculture producer audience.

The news story should:

- Have a minimum of 250 words and follow news or inverted pyramid style
- Have a strong focus and lead
- Provide answers to who, what, when, where, why and how
- Have a headline

Participants should use information found in the press packet and notes from the press conference and the question and answer session. Each participant has 60 minutes to complete the task. Stories will be typed on a computer, printed out and turned in to the CDE official to be scored. Judging will be based on written communication skills, accuracy, organization, style, creativity and grammar.

#### Press Release Writers

Each press release writer will use the press packet and information gathered in the press conference to write a 200- to 300-word press release (excluding words in the header). The release should be written as if it was being distributed by the expert's company or organization. Participants will type the release on a computer, print out and turn it in to be scored. Each writer has 60 minutes to complete the task.

#### Broadcasters

Each broadcaster will use the press packet and information gathered in the press conference to write and carry out a two-minute radio story. The message should be suitable to be aired on a radio station. After the participant has developed their script, they will use a tape recorder to record their story. The tape will be

# CDE Format

## *AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM*

### **Broadcast (cont.)**

turned in for scoring upon completion. Students may be able to listen to their recording prior to turning it in if time allows. All tape recorders will be identical; therefore, recording quality will not be a factor in scoring.

Broadcasters will also develop and turn in five written questions they would have asked the speaker if they were given the opportunity to do so in the press conference. Each participant has 60 minutes to complete the tasks.

### **Graphic Designers**

Each designer will complete exercises in graphic art development, photo editing, photo caption writing and overall layout. Their goal is to obtain effective communication through the use of visual tools.

Participants have 60 minutes and access to spreadsheet and graphic software to complete the following tasks:

#### ***Graphic art exercise***

Using a computer, each student will create a chart or graph illustrating numeric data gathered from the press conference. A press packet (including press release and data) is provided for each artist. Judging is based on graphic art skill, understanding and use of statistics and creativity.

#### ***Photo editing exercise***

A variety of 5" x 7" inch prints in black and white or color will be provided. Each participant will be asked to select the best photo to use to accompany a story based on the information provided in the press conference. Photo-cropping marks should be clearly marked on photo borders with a wax pencil.

#### ***Photo caption writing exercise***

Participants will be asked to write a two-line caption (approximately 25 words) for the photos they select in the photo editing exercise. Judging will be based on accuracy of information, grammar, brevity, clarity and creativity of captions.

#### ***Layout exercise***

Using the blue-line grid paper provided, participants will create a two-page magazine spread with a headline and the photos and graphic they have created. "Dummy text" will be provided.

### **SCORING** (See scoring section of guidebook.)

### **TIEBREAKERS**

1. Team tiebreakers will be settled in the following order:
  - a. Proposal score
  - b. Practicum scores
  - c. Presentation score
2. Individual tiebreakers will be settled in the following order:
  - a. Practicum score
  - b. Quiz score
  - c. Editing exercise score

### **AWARDS**

Awards will be presented at an awards ceremony and are presented to teams and individuals based upon their rankings. Awards are sponsored by cooperating industry sponsors as special projects and/or by the general fund of the National FFA Foundation.

# Scoring

## AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

### SCORING

#### Communications Project Proposal

Rationale	25
Objectives of project	25
Target audiences to address	20
Key messages	15
Media selection	20
Budget	10
Evaluation criteria	15
Grammar, punctuation, spelling, style	20
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>150</b>

#### Communications Project Presentation

Professionalism	10
appearance (official dress, poise, and posture, attitude/confidence, demeanor, ethical concerns)	
Knowledge of subject	15
Power of expression	10
directness, sincerity, emphasis	
Verbal skills	40
verbal communication with judges	
grammar, voice (quality, pitch, articulation, pronunciation, force)	
Questions and answers	50
ability to answer questions on the presentations asked by judges	
indicating originality, familiarity with subject and ability to think quickly	
Supporting evidence	10
examples that document the materials used to develop project	
Creativity and innovation	15
<b>PRESENTATION TOTAL</b>	<b>150</b>

#### Tests

Communications Quiz	100
(25 points per team member)	
Editing Exercise	100
(25 points per team member)	
<b>TEST TOTAL</b>	<b>200</b>

#### Total Team Score Possible

Practicum scores	400
Communications project proposal	150
Project presentation	150
Test scores	200
<b>CDE TOTAL POSSIBLE</b>	<b>900</b>

#### Practicums

##### News Story

Lead/focus	20
Organization, brevity, conciseness and clarity	15
Correct style	10
Accuracy of information and quotes	20
Creativity	10
Headline	10
Grammar, punctuation, spelling, word choice	15
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

##### Press Release

Lead/focus	20
Organization, brevity, conciseness, clarity	15
Correct style	10
Accuracy of information and quotes	15
Creativity	10
Header/headline	10
Grammar, spelling, punctuation, word choice	10
Company or product information	10
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

##### Broadcast

Voice quality	10
Power of expression	10
Lead/focus	15
Clarity of communication	10
Organization, conciseness, brevity	10
Creativity	10
Accuracy of information and quotes	15
Quality of five written follow-up questions	20
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

##### Graphic Design

Graphic art skill	20
Understanding and use of statistics	15
Creativity	15
Photo editing	20
Reasons (critical thinking)	15
Photo caption-writing	15
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

#### TOTAL PRACTICUM SCORE

400



# CDE Rules

## *AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM*

At the national level, the following rules apply:

1. **Team Make-up-** Participation in the event will require a four-member team.
2. Participation is limited to one team per state.
3. Eligible participants in the National FFA Agricultural Communications CDE will be students who are regularly enrolled in agricultural education during the calendar year, have a planned course of study or who are still in high school but may have completed all the agricultural education courses offered. When selected, participants must be active members of a chartered FFA chapter and the National FFA Organization.
4. Members representing a state association may participate in the National FFA Agricultural Communications CDE only once.
5. A participant shall be in official FFA dress in each event.
6. The event will include both written and oral communications presentations.
7. All material will be student produced and verified by the state FFA executive secretary and/or the state FFA advisor in each state.

State and district rules may vary. Contact your state FFA association for more details.

# Proposal

## *AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM*

*"No matter what area of communication you are working in, you have to have a plan. You need to identify objectives, create a mix of media outlets based on the audience and create a budget. The proposal and presentation give students the opportunity to plan a project from start to finish."*

- RICKY TELG, UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA,  
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION

Proposals are written suggestions to solve problems, provide services or sell a product. They identify and explain background information, a problem and a proposed solution. Proposals incorporate information from surveys, interviews, observations, experiments and research from print and electronic sources.

### **TITLE PAGE**

A title (or cover) page should give the title of the communications proposal, state, chapter name, team member names and date.

### **BODY**

#### **Introduction or background**

The first paragraph should briefly explain the reasons for writing the proposal. Most importantly, the reader's interest should be captured. The introduction should be informative, yet persuasive.

- Explain how the proposal originated  
Why did you pick this project and where will it take place?
- Identify questions to be answered  
Objectives of the project
- Identify the purpose of the proposal  
What is the project going to accomplish?  
Description of target audience — Who are you trying to reach?
- Include sources and methods of disseminating information  
Key messages or themes targeted at the audience  
Description of what kind of media will be used to carry out project, including brochures, newspapers, signs, radio, etc.
- Incorporate timeline and budget  
Budget to produce and place communications materials

#### **Discussion of findings**

This section will usually be divided into major headings and subheadings. Information should be objective. Avoid using first-person pronouns such as *I* or *we*. Tables, charts and graphs may be included to illustrate findings.

- Summarize findings  
How will you decide if the project has accomplished the stated objectives?

#### **Summary, conclusions and recommendations**

Summarize data presented and end with conclusions drawn from research analysis. Review major findings and answer questions.

### **SUPPLEMENTARY PARTS**

Include a bibliography listing all sources used in the proposal. If surveys, other reports, or graphs and tables were used, include them in an appendix.

# FFA News Writing

*AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM*

## NEWS WRITING GUIDELINES

- Students are to write a news story based on information gathered at the press conference.
- The story should be written for an agricultural publication (agricultural producer) audience.
- Include name, contestant number and chapter name in **top right-hand corner** of every page.
- Number each page.
- The story should have a minimum of 250 words.
- Follow inverted pyramid style.
- Story should have strong focus and lead (opening paragraph).
- Story should provide answers to who, what, when, where, why and how.
- Write a headline for the story.
- Participants can use notes from press conference, question and answer session and from press packet.
- Participants have 60 minutes to complete their task.
- Judging is based on written communication skills, accuracy, organization, style, creativity and grammar.

# FFA Broadcast

*AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM*

## BROADCAST GUIDELINES

- Each broadcaster will use press packet and information gathered in press conference to write story.
- Participants will carry out a two-minute radio broadcast suitable to be aired on a radio station or radio network.
- After the broadcaster has developed the story, he or she will use a standard cassette and tape recorder to “broadcast” the story. The cassette with the recorded broadcast will be turned in for evaluation.
- All tape recorders will be the same; therefore, recording quality will not be a factor in the evaluation process.
- Each participant will develop and turn in five written questions that he or she would have asked the speaker if they were given the opportunity to interview them during the press conference.
- Write name, contestant number and chapter name on cassette with ink.
- Quotes from the speaker will be provided to insert into broadcast. The duration of each quote is listed next to the quote number. During recording, you do not need to repeat quote. Say “Insert quote number one here” at the desired point in broadcast.

## EXAMPLE QUOTES

### Quote 1 - 10 seconds

“Competition is no longer limited to local, state or even U.S. markets. Today, you’re competing in a world marketplace and must ask yourself... ‘What do I need to do to be successful in the future?’”

### Quote 2 - 5 seconds

“Successful farmers of the future will consider farming as a true business and not a birthright.”

### Quote 3 - 15 seconds

“In the past, farmers who possessed production skills were successful. That’s not necessarily the case in our environment today. Future farmers must not only be excellent production managers, they also need to excel as general managers and risk managers.”

### Quote 4 - 5 seconds

“Successful young farmers will use electronic commerce in buying inputs, marketing products, managing cash flow and arranging financing.”

# FFA Press Release

*AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM*

## PRESS RELEASE GUIDELINES

- Participants will use information from press packet and press conference to write press release.
- The press release will be 200 to 300 words.
- Include name, contestant number and chapter name in **top right-hand corner** of every page.
- Number each page.
- The press release should be written as if the speaker's company or organization was distributing it.
- Participants have 60 minutes to complete their task.
- Include contact information at the top of the page. Write "Contact B. Jones for more information."
- Include information your organization in the last paragraph (boilerplate) of the press release.

FFA is a national youth organization of 455,306 student members preparing for leadership and careers in the science, business and technology of agriculture. The National FFA Organization has 7,226 local chapters in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. FFA strives to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for **premier leadership, personal growth and career success** through agricultural education. Visit [www.ffa.org](http://www.ffa.org) for more information.

# FFA Graphic Design

*AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM*

## GRAPHIC DESIGN GUIDELINES

- Each participant will complete a graphic art, photo editing and photo caption writing exercise.
- The objective of this area is to provide effective communication or sharing of information through visual tools.
- **Graphic art exercise:** Using the information provided in the press conference and press packet, each participant will create a chart or table on a computer illustrating numerical data from the press conference. Participants are judged on their graphic art skill, understanding and use of statistics and creativity.
- **Photo editing exercise:** Participants will receive a variety of black and white photos in 5 x 7 prints. They should select the best photo to use in a story based on the news conference and make photo-cropping suggestions by marking photo borders with a wax pencil. Each participant should provide three written reasons why they selected their chosen photo. Reasons should include the photo's best qualities, its visual appearance to readers and how it helps communicate the story's message.
- **Photo caption writing exercise:** Participants will write a two-line caption (approximately 25 words) for their selected photo. Judging will be based on accuracy of information, grammar, brevity, clarity and creativity of captions.
- **Lay out exercise:** The completed graphic art, photo and caption should be laid out on the blue-line grid paper provided. Participants will create a two-page magazine spread about the press conference. It is encouraged to develop a headline and incorporate the "dummy" text provided.

# FFA Proposal

*AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM*

## PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

- The proposal should be a maximum of 12 double-spaced typed pages on 8.5" by 11" white bond paper with 1" margins and 12-point Times News Roman or Times font.
- Staple the proposal in the upper left-hand corner. DO NOT bind or place in folders, special binders or covers.
- A cover page should give the title of the communications proposal, state, chapter name, team member names and date.
- **The communications project proposal should include the following sections:**
  - Rationale for selecting the project, including background information that helps provide judges with understanding of project and situation or locale where it will be implemented (Why did you pick this project and where will it take place?)
  - Objectives of the project (What is the project going to accomplish?)
  - Description of target audience (Who are you trying to reach?)
  - Key messages or themes targeted at the audience (What is the main point of the project?)
  - Description of what kind of media will be used to carry out project, including brochures, newspapers, signs, radio, etc.
  - Budget to produce and place communications materials
  - Criteria upon which project will be evaluated (How will you decide if the project has accomplished the stated objectives?)

# FFA Proposal

*AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM*

**COMMUNICATIONS PROJECT PRESENTATION**

Each team will present their communications project proposal to a panel of judges. The presentation should follow the segments of the proposal but also should include materials prepared during the execution of the proposal. These could include brochures, newsletters, news releases, photos, graphics, videos, radio broadcasts, etc.

Each team member must participate in the presentation. See the agricultural communications CDE format for list of provided materials and equipment for presentation.

**TOPICS FOR COMMUNICATIONS PROPOSAL**

The communications project proposal and presentation will be based on the same topic. Teams will choose a topic based upon a theme of topics provided by the National FFA Agricultural Communications CDE. The topics for coming years rotate and are as follows:

Years	Theme	Potential Topics
1999, 2003	Existing chapter activity	PALS, SAE, activity banquet, Food For America, etc.
2000, 2004	Innovative agricultural practices, management or marketing tools	Financial risk management using options and/or futures, efficient water use with irrigation systems in your county, rotational cropping systems for pest control, sustainable agriculture, etc.
2001, 2005	Localized national events	National Agriculture Week, Earth Day, Vocational Education Week, National FFA Week, etc.
2002, 2006	Agriculture or consumer issues	Water quality in your county and agricultural stressors, safe food handling in the home, safe agricultural practices at harvest, promoting agricultural literacy, etc.



# FFA Stylebook

## AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

The National FFA Organization follows the Associated Press (AP) stylebook; however, the FFA Style guide takes precedence over AP style in *FFA-related writing*. Additional standards will be set as new words, phrases and acronyms are adopted by the organization.

**Acronyms:** On first reference, the full phrase is always used and the acronyms and abbreviations are included in parentheses. On second reference, only the acronym or abbreviation is needed. The exception to this rule is the use of “FFA,” which is acceptable because the organization is no longer referred to as “Future Farmers of America.” Do not use periods within acronyms or abbreviations.

Advanced Leadership Development Conference	ALD
American Agricultural Editors’ Association	AAEA
American Association for Agricultural Education	AAAE
Agricultural Relations Council	ARC
Career Development Event	CDE
Experiencing Discovery, Growth and Excellence	EDGE
International Leadership Seminar for State Officers	ILSSO
Local Program Success	LPS
Made for Excellence	MFE
National Agri-Marketing Association	NAMA
National Association of Agricultural Educators	NAAE
National Association of Agricultural Journalists	NAAJ
National Association, Supervisors of Agricultural Education	NASAE
National Young Farmer Educational Association, Inc.	NYFEA
National Leadership Conference for State Officers	NLC SO
National Council for Agricultural Education	The Council
National Postsecondary Agricultural Student Organization	PAS
New Farmers of America	NFA
Partners in Active Learning Support	PALS
State Presidents’ Conference	SPC
Supervised Agricultural Experience Program	SAE
Washington Leadership Conference	WLC
World Experience in Agriculture	WEA

**Advisor:** Always **advisor**, not **adviser**. The proper term for the agriculture instructor when he or she is performing FFA-related responsibilities.

**Agricultural or agriculture:** When used as an adjective (e.g., describing something), the term “**agricultural**” is appropriate (ex. **agricultural** education). When used as a noun, the term “**agriculture**” is correct. **Note:** always use **agriculture** teacher/instructor (the teacher isn’t **agricultural**, they’re human! They *teach* agriculture courses).

Ex. The **agricultural** industry encompasses more than 300 careers.  
There are more than 300 careers in the industry of **agriculture**.

**Agriculturist or agriculturalist:** Someone who works in the agricultural industry. **Agriculturalist** is preferred to **agriculturist**.

**Agricultural education:** Term used in reference to the instructional program which includes FFA. Replaces the term “vocational agriculture” in most instances. Do not use “agriculture” education.

**Agriculture:** Do not abbreviate to the slang term, “ag,” when referring to the industry. The term “food, fiber and natural resources industry” is also acceptable.

# FFA Stylebook

## AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

**Affiliate:** Term used in reference to local alumni groups. It should be capitalized only when used as part of a proper noun.

Ex. The Denmark FFA Alumni Affiliate

Local FFA alumni affiliates should submit dues by Oct. 15.

**Agriscience:** Term for common use in reference to curriculum or career areas. Do not hyphenate.

Ex. Steve McCallion teaches bioengineering and genetics in his agriscience classes.

**Agriscience Teacher of the Year program:** *Agriscience Teacher of the Year program* is the official name. IT may be *agriscience program* or *agriscience winner* in second reference.

Ex. Linda Rist was named the Agriscience Teacher of the Year.

**Alumni:** National FFA Alumni Association on first reference. Second reference should be FFA Alumni. States may be referred to as New Jersey FFA Alumni or New Jersey Alumni. The term “alumni” can be used to designate all past members of the FFA rather than just those who are dues-paying members of the FFA Alumni; it is a generic, not specific, term.

*Alumna:* Female former member

Ex. Sally Smith, Chapman FFA Alumna, received her American FFA Degree.

*Alumnus:* Singular former member, either male or female

Ex. John Jones, Chapman FFA Alumnus, spoke at the banquet.

*Alumni:* Multiple former members

Ex. Chapman FFA Alumni held their monthly meeting May 1.

**Awards:** Set styles for some of the many FFA awards include:

VIP Award

Honorary American FFA Degree

American Star in Agribusiness

Distinguished Service Citation

American Star Farmer

National Chapter Award

**Band, chorus and talent:** Should be written as follow in first reference:

National FFA Band

National FFA Talent

National FFA Chorus

In second reference, abbreviate.

Ex. The National FFA Band is terrific. The national band members love music.

**Board of directors:** Never capitalize board of directors or board of trustees when they stand alone.

Ex. The national organization is headed by a board of directors.

Capitalize them when linked with the organization’s name.

Ex. The National FFA Board of Directors met in January. The board passed a motion to...

**Capitalization:** Capitalize formal titles only when the title appears before a name. Lowercase mere job titles when standing alone or set off by commas. Do not capitalize formal titles after names.

Ex. National FFA Advisor Larry Case

Larry Case, national FFA advisor

The national FFA advisor was gone for the day.

Avoid unnecessary capitalization. Use the following rules:

- Capitalize only proper names of a specific person, place or thing.
  - Capitalize titles, programs, awards, etc., only if they include the organization’s name or acronym (FFA).
- Ex. 2000 National FFA Convention, national convention

# FFA Stylebook

## *AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM*

**Career development events:** Should be written as follows:

National FFA Floriculture Career Development Event  
floriculture career development event

**Note:** In this case, as with all FFA programs, the use of “FFA” determines if the name is capitalized in “body copy.”

He participated in the career development event.

**Chapter:** Capitalize the word chapter only when used with the name of a specific FFA chapter.

Ex. The Salinas FFA Chapter is one of the several FFA chapters participating in NLCSO.

**Colors:** Do not capitalize FFA colors. Colors should be written as national blue and corn gold.

**Convention:** Refer to the annual meeting of FFA as 2001 National FFA Convention in first reference; the national FFA convention or national convention on second reference. Do not capitalize national convention unless accompanied by the specific year or convention number. Using the convention number is also acceptable in first reference but the other form is preferable, especially to external audiences.

Ex. The 74th National FFA Convention  
2001 National FFA Convention

**Courtesy titles:** Do not use Miss, Mr., Mrs. or Ms. in first reference. Use first and last name in first reference and only the last name in second reference.

Ex. Jane Smith from Centerville, Iowa, won the \$100 prize. Smith, a sophomore, will use the cash for a vacation.

An exception may be in feature writing for members, where we tend to refer to students by their first names and teachers by courtesy titles and last names.

**Dash:** When using a dash, do not place a space on either side.

Ex. The award was given--and surely earned--by a deserving team.

An endash (regular hyphen) should be used for hyphenated words and to indicate ranges/

Ex. January 2-8; 6-8 grades; self-esteem

**Degrees:** FFA degrees should be written as follows:

Greenhand FFA Degree  
Chapter FFA Degree  
State FFA Degree  
American FFA Degree  
Honorary American FFA Degree

**Divisions:** There are four divisions in the national organization composed of the various teams. The divisions are Business Development, Information Services, Educational Programs and Foundation.

**Departments:** FFA does not have departments, it has teams. Please see Teams entry.

**FFA'er:** Whenever possible, refrain from using FFA'er when referring to an FFA member. Never use FFA'er in headlines. It is acceptable for minimal use in body copy under very informal circumstances. FFA member is more appropriate.

**FFA's:** Avoid making FFA possessive. Rather than “FFA's new programs,” use “the new FFA programs.”

# FFA Stylebook

*AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM*

**FFA Week:** Should be written as follows:

FFA Week or National FFA Week

**Food For America:** The program to teach young people about food. Do not abbreviate.

**Foundation:** In news releases, always mention the National FFA Foundation when referring to a sponsored project, activity or award.

Ex. The State Presidents' Conference is sponsored by CHEVY TRUCKS as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

Use the phrase "sponsored as special project of the National FFA Foundation" or an approved variation thereof.

On first reference, use the following terms:

National FFA Foundation

National FFA Foundation Sponsors' Board

National FFA Foundation Executive Council

On second reference, use these terms:

FFA Foundation or foundation

foundation sponsors' board

foundation executive council of executive council

**Fund raising:** When used as a noun or verb, do not hyphenate.

Ex. Fund raising by the National FFA Foundation supports National FFA programs and activities.

When used as an adjective or adverb, hyphenate.

Ex. The fund-raising event was a success.

**High school agriculture:** Use "high school agriculture" only when referring to programs specifically for high school students (middle schools may feel left out). When referring to the instructional program, use the term "agricultural education." Because of the narrow images associated with the word "vocational," we only use it when talking specifically about U.S. Department of Education projects or people.

Ex. Coleman Harris is a program specialist, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, USDE.

**Inservice:** May be used as an adjective with a noun such as training, education, workshop, etc. It may not stand alone. Do not hyphenate.

**Instructor:** The individual in charge of an agricultural education program. He or she is **not** the "FFA teacher."  
(*see advisor*).

## Internet terms:

**download:** copying a document from the Internet to a personal computer

**e-mail:** electronic mail, can be a noun or verb

**homepage:** a company or organization's domain on the Web.

National FFA Organization's homepage, <http://www.ffa.org>

**Internet:** the global computer network, 'net for short, capital "I"

**online:** on the Internet, on an electronic network

**website:** same as homepage

**World Wide Web:** the commercial part of the Internet, Web for short

# FFA Stylebook

## AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

**Junior, Senior:** Abbreviate *Jr.* and *Sr.* only with full names. Do not precede by a comma.

Joseph P. Kennedy Jr.

The notation *ii* or *2nd* may be used if it is the individual's preference. Note, however, that *II* and *2nd* are not necessarily the equivalent of junior. They often are used by a grandson or nephew. If necessary to distinguish between father and son in second reference, use the *elder Smith* or the *younger Smith*.

**Money:** \$6, not \$6.00

**Names:** After first reference in all hard news stories or press releases, use only the subject's last name. In feature stories, it is acceptable to use the subject's first name.

**National advisor:** Larry D. Case is the national FFA advisor. In first reference, it may be National FFA Advisor Larry D. Case. In educational context, it may be Larry D. Case, Ed.D., but it is not Dr. Case. In second reference, it is national advisor or simply Case.

**National FFA Organization:** Refer to the organization by the acronym. For further clarification, "formerly Future Farmers of America" may be used but only parenthetically.

Ex. The National FFA Organization (formerly Future Farmers of America) is located in Indianapolis, IN.

\*(Please refer to section 2: How to explain the FFA name.) Express as the organization on second reference.

**New Farmers of America:** Former organization for African American males. The correct way of expressing its relationship with FFA is that it was incorporated into FFA in 1965.

**Nonmember:** Not hyphenated unless a proper noun.

Ex. Nonmember Jane Smith attended the informational meeting about joining FFA.  
H.O. Sargent Non-Member Award

**Officers:** Refer to the national FFA officers as follows:

Trent McKnight, national president

National FFA President Trent McKnight

Lowercase officers when they stand alone.

Ex. The national president spoke at the banquet.

Do not hyphenate vice president.

The year may be used if the story is about a former officer.

Ex. 1998-99 National FFA President Lisa Ahrens

**Plurals:** Use an apostrophe to indicate singular item or ownership.

NLCOS means more than one NLCSO

NLCSO's identifies something at a specific conference.

Ex. Perry had been chosen as his NLCSO's conference speaker.

**Publications:** FFA publications should be written as follows:

*FFA Advisors Making a Difference*

*FFA New Horizons*

*UPDATE*

*FFA Today*

*Proceedings*

*National FFA Blue- apparel catalog*

*National FFA Gold- award and supply catalog*

# FFA Stylebook

## *AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM*

**Proficiency awards:** Proficiency awards should be written as follows:

National FFA Agricultural Communications Proficiency Award  
national agricultural communications proficiency award

**Program:** When referring to the activities conducted by FFA members as part of their Supervised Agricultural Experience Program, not project. Projects have definite beginnings and endings. Programs have definite beginnings but are continuous and evolve throughout the time a student is enrolled in an agricultural education program.

**Program of Activities:** Activities specified by the three standing committees which are to be accomplished by the local chapter, district, region, or state association. It is not referred to as “Program of Work.”

**Regions:** Do not capitalize FFA regions. They are not necessarily geographic regions. Ohio is in the eastern region, but is generally considered a state in the Midwest.

Ex. The central region had 258 American FFA Degree recipients this year.

Capitalize only when part of a title.

Ex. Central Region Vice President Leslie Small

**SAE:** The acronym for “supervised agricultural experience.” Defined as the individualized experience program designed in cooperation with the student, parents, agriculture instructor and, in some cases, employers, to provide each student the opportunity to practice, in as near a real life situation as possible, that which has been learned in the classroom. Correct use is supervised agricultural experience program (SAE).

**SCANS:** Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills. This is a Department of Labor report.

**School-to-Career:** A national education initiative stressing connections between schools and careers. In “school-to-career language” FFA key components are: school-based or contextual learning--classroom/laboratory instruction; work-based learning--SAE; a connecting activity--FFA.

**Spaces:** Use two spaces between sentences for correspondence (letters, proposals, reports, memos, internal documents) and one space for printed materials (newsletters, brochures, manuals). Use two spaces after a colon but do not capitalize the word following a colon unless it begins a complete sentence.

**Star awards:** Stars are named, not awarded.

Ex. Michael Springer was named American Star Farmer.

Chapter Star Farmer

State Star Farmer

American Star Farmer

Chapter Star in Agribusiness

State Star in Agribusiness

American Star in Agribusiness

**Teams:** The National FFA Organization is composed of seven teams. These are not to be called departments.

Student Services Team

Ventures Team

Finance

Information Technology Team

Teacher Services Team

Distribution Resources Team

Human Resources and Membership Team

Communications Resources Team

# FFA Stylebook

*AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM*

**Time:** 6 p.m., not 6:00 p.m.

**Video titles:** Italicize.

Ex. *Make it Happen* is a video about recruitment.

**Vocational:** Because of the narrow images associated with the term “vocational,” we only use it when talking specifically about U.S. Department of Education projects or people.

Ex. Coleman Harris is a program specialist, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, USDE.

**Website:** Use as one word.

**Young Farmer:** Always capitalize “Young Farmer” when referring to members of the National Young Farmer Educational Association (lowercase when referring to farmers under 12 years of age).

**Zip codes:** Use two spaces between state and zip code. Use zip + four whenever possible.

Ex. Indianapolis, IN 46268-0960

# Additional Resources

## *AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM*

Check out these websites for more information on journalism and agriculture:

### **PURDUE UNIVERSITY**

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu>

Includes online writing lab, handouts for students and teachers, workshops and presentations and links to other internet resources

### **NEWS DESIGN FOR STUDENTS**

<http://www.ndfs.org>

Includes design tips, case studies and weekly e-mail highlights

### **PUB ROW**

<http://www.pubrow.com>

Hosts messages boards where students can exchange ideas

### **AMERICAN SOCIETY OF NEWSPAPER EDITORS**

<http://www.asne.org/kiosk/careers/jcartxt.htm>

Provides resources for students preparing for a career in journalism, includes tips on setting educational goals, job hunting, future of journalism and where to go for more information

### **HIGH SCHOOL JOURNALISM**

<http://www.highschooljournalism.org>

Supplies resources for students, teachers, guidance counselors and editors, includes interviews with professionals, lesson plans, journalism scholarships, journalism quizzes

### **POYNTER.ORG**

<http://www.poynter.org/Research/index.htm>

Offers wide range of resource files including broadcast, copy editing, education/training, photojournalism, ethics, online journalism, interviewing, daily newspapers, reporting, writing and editing and youth and the media

### **NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL'S ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH CENTER**

<http://www.nsc.org/ehc/journ.htm>

Provides environmental journalism resources including reporting guidebooks on various topics

### **UNIVERSITY OF IOWA**

<http://bailiwick.lib.uiowa.edu/journalism>

Includes links to various resources including gender and race issues, news sources, online journalism magazines and teaching resources

### **SUCCESSFUL FARMING**

<http://www.successfulfarming.com>

Provides news in agriculture

### **NATIONAL FFA ORGANIZATION**

<http://www.ffa.org>

Includes FFA news and resources for students, advisors and alumni



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