

# Agricultural Communications CDE

(rev. Dec 2020)

## Purpose

The purpose of the agricultural communications career development event is to provide individuals with practical communications skills necessary to pursue career opportunities in agricultural communications. Public communications about agricultural products, practices and policies are essential to the future of agriculture. Students who are equipped with strong communication skills, have developed teamwork skills and who can use a variety of media to help the public understand issues related to the industry of agriculture have a bright future in the job market.

## Eligibility

The participant must be an active member of a chartered Delaware FFA Chapter and enrolled in grades 9, 10, 11, or 12. Only those students participating on the winning team from grades 9-12 will be selected to compete at the National Convention in the same year of competition.

## Event Procedures

1. Teams will consist of four members.
2. Participants should wear FFA Official Dress for this event.
3. The winning team at the state level will work together to prepare a written media plan prior to national FFA convention. The team will also be responsible for presenting the plan at the national event and completing individual practicums and tests.
4. During the practicum portion of the event, one team member will be responsible for completing a web design activity, one team member will be responsible for completing a video production activity, one team member will be responsible for completing journalistic writing activity, and one team member will be responsible for completing an opinion writing activity.
5. **Participants will not be allowed to possess any personal electronic devices (i.e. cell phones, smart watches, air pods, etc) other than those approved by event officials. Participants who possess personal electronic devices without prior approval of the event officials will be disqualified from the event.**

## Event Format

### A. Equipment

1. Needed: Students must provide computers, pens and pencils.

Provided: Specialized equipment listed below

a. For team presentation (Nationals Only): Easel, projector screen and table.

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

b. For practicums: printer, blank paper, recorder, digital photographs, dummy text, logos and any other necessary materials.

### B. Individual Activities

#### 1. Tests

- a. Editing exercise- 25 points/individual; 100 points/team  
Because editing is a critical skill for all communicators, each team member will complete an editing exercise. They will be given a printed document that contains 25 mistakes. In correcting the mistakes, team members will be required to use correct proofreading marks (see Associated Press Stylebook). Style, grammar, punctuation and spelling mistakes will be included. Team members will NOT be able to use the style manual or a dictionary during this exercise.
- b. Communications quiz- 25 pts/individual; 100 points/team  
Each team member will complete a quiz that covers the content of the current Associated Press Stylebook. Questions may come from any section excluding sports guidelines. Team members will NOT be able to use the style manual or a dictionary during this exercise.

#### 2. Practicums- 100 points/individual; 400 points/team

The practicums will consist of four individual events. Each team must assign a member to one of the following areas PRIOR to arriving at the event:

1. Web Design
2. Video Production
3. Journalistic Writing
4. Opinion Writing

All teams will meet in a central location for an orientation and press conference. Teams will be seated by practicum group. All team members will be given an orientation at the beginning of the practicums to last no more than 10 minutes.

The press conference will be held following the orientation meeting. Each team member will receive a press packet with background information on the agricultural topic and expert to use during the event. An expert will speak on a current agricultural topic for 20 minutes. Students will be provided with paper to take notes if they wish. After the 20-minute presentation, the non-writers will be dismissed to a different area to complete their assigned practicums.

The writers will then be involved in a 10-minute question and answer period with the expert (speaker). Each writer will stand to be recognized before asking a question.

Writers may ask more than one question; however, the expert will attempt to address questions from as many different participants as possible. No electronic devices of any kind, including tape recorders and cell phones, will be allowed during this portion of the event. Upon completion of the 10-minute question and answer session, remaining participants will be dismissed to complete their assigned practicums.

#### **Web Designer**

Each designer will use the press packet and information that was gathered in the press conference to develop a WordPress site. The objective is to communicate the press conference speaker's organization through appropriate design, navigation, and use of provided photos and graphics. The designer may use the provided WordPress template or customize the template. Each participant will have 90 minutes to complete the practicum.

**Video Producer**

Students will be given a selection of video clips, photos, and music and will create a 60-90 second video that promotes the client's product or service. Students will not be recording a voice track. Participants will have 90 minutes to complete the practicum. Students may use Adobe Premiere Pro, Movie Maker, or Filmora. Students will need to provide their own headphones.

**Journalistic Writers**

Writers are to write a journalistic piece based on the press packet and information that was gathered in the press conference. It should be written for an appropriate audience, have a strong focus and lead (opening paragraph) and include a headline. The story will then be word processed by the student on a computer and turned in to be scored. Participants will have 90 minutes to complete the practicum. The activity will rotate annually from the following:

- News story (2021)

**Opinion Writers**

Writers are to write a piece that takes a position and support it with evidence based on the press packet and information that was gathered in the press conference. It should be written for an appropriate audience, have a strong focus and lead (opening paragraph) and include a headline. The story will then be word processed by the student on a computer and turned in to be scored. Participants will have 90 minutes to complete the practicum. The activity will rotate annually from the following:

- An op-ed (500-750 words) (2021)

**Mini Media Plan**

The team will be required to create a small part of the media plan prior to state convention. The media plan will be turned in on March 1, 2021. The mini media plan will include the cover page, introduction, and overview. The winning team will be responsible for completing the rest of the media plan for national convention.

**Mini Media Plan Requirements****a. Cover Page**

Must include the title of the media plan, CDE name, state, chapter name, team member names, and may include a creative design.

**B. Introduction and Overview –Two pages maximum****Introduction**

A brief background of the issue/topic and statement of the problem establishing the media plan, and the objectives of the media plan.

**Overview**

A brief preview of what is contained in the plan and how it will benefit the client.

The specific scenario for the media plan will vary each year.

## Scoring

Participants will be ranked in numerical order on the basis of the final score to be determined by each judge without consultation. The judge's ranking of each participant then shall be added, and the winner will be that participant whose total ranking is the lowest. Other placings will be determined in the same manner (low point method of selection). Weighted rank scoring will be implemented to maintain point value emphasis between individual and team events. The criteria and points can be found on the scorecards.

Event	Points
<u>Tests— 200 points possible</u>	
Communications Quiz (25 pts/member)	100
Editing Exercise (25 pts/member)	100
<u>Practicums— 400 points possible</u>	
Opinion Writer Practicum	100
Journalistic Writer Practicum	100
Video Production Practicum	100
Web Design Practicum	100
<u>Mini Media Plan</u>	30
<b>Total individual score possible</b>	<b>150</b>
<b>Total team score possible</b>	<b>630</b>

## Tiebreaker

- A. Team tiebreakers will be settled in the following order:
1. Combined individual practicum rank score
  2. Proposal rank
- B. Individuals tiebreakers will be settled in the following order:
1. Practicum score
  2. Communications quiz score

## Awards

Awards will be presented to individuals and/or teams based upon their rankings at State Convention. The winning team will represent Delaware at that year's National FFA Convention to compete in the National FFA Ag Communications CDE.

## References

This list of references is not intended to be all-inclusive. Other sources may be utilized, and teachers are encouraged to make use of the very best instructional materials available. The following list contains references that may prove helpful during event preparation.

National FFA Core Catalog—Past CDE Material (<http://shop.ffa.org/cde-qas-c1413.aspx>)

*Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual*

Microsoft ® Office computer program

Adobe ® Creative Suite (most current edition)

Bivins, T. *Public Relations Writings: The Essentials of Style and Format*, 4th edition. McGraw-Hill Higher Education, ISBN 0-844-20351-3

Harrower, T. *Newspaper Designer's Handbook*, 5th edition. McGraw-Hill Higher Education. ISBN 0-07-249291-0

Kalbfeld, B. *Associated Press Broadcast News Handbook*. McGraw-Hill Higher Education, ISBN 0-07-136388-2

Telg, R. and T. Irani. *Agricultural Communication in Action: A Hands-On Approach*, 1st edition. Cengage/Delmar Publishing, ISBN 1111317143 (Available in October 2011)

## 2021 Agricultural Communications CDE Media Plan Scenario (From Nationals)

**2021 Agricultural Communications CDE Media Plan Scenario** -Teams will play the role of communications consultants and will develop a media plan for the assigned scenario.

**Your chapter's Ag Communication Committee has been approached by your State FFA Association to help tell the story of a local FFA advisor. The story needs to be one that builds awareness, encourages agricultural advocacy, and promotes FFA engagement to a diverse audience group. You are responsible for selecting an FFA advisor from your state to promote/recognize via various media outlets. Your committee has the option to decide what is included in your media plan about this advisor. Your plan might include, but is not limited to, focusing on one or more of the following attributes of the chosen advisor: innovative program or teaching techniques; service/leadership in local communities or the state; providing a unique solution to a problem facing students/teachers in the community; a commitment to agricultural education; etc. Please remember that the plan should also focus on highlighting and promoting not only the advisor, but also agricultural education programs and/or the agricultural industry to audiences within your state.**

### Important Notes for the Delaware CDE

-The media plan cover page, introduction, and overview will be due on March 1, 2021. All other components of the media plan only need to be completed by the winning CDE Team. There will be NO Media Plan Pitch at the Delaware State Convention. Example media plans can be found at [www.ffa.org](http://www.ffa.org).

### 2021 Agricultural Communications CDE Practicums Web Design

- Activity: Web Design
- Software allowed: Word Press

Specific technical skills for practicum:

- Overall Attractiveness of Site
- Technical skills specific to activity
- Use of design principals
- Neatness and creativity
- Choice and placement of photo(s) and graphic(s)
- Usability and navigation

Using the press packet, information gathered in the press conference, and images from the CD create a possible web page that promotes the expert's company or organization. The designer may use the provided WordPress templates or customize the template.

### Video Producer

- Activity: Promotional video
- Software allowed: **FILMORA so (Following same regulations/parameters outlined by Nationals)**

Specific technical skills for practicum:

- solid promotional value
- tells a story
- Use of provided materials
- Quality of video editing
- Creativity
- Stayed within time limit

Using information from the press conference as well as a selection of video clips, photos, and music students will create a 60-90 second video that promotes the client's product or service. Students will not be recording a voice track, they will only be using the provided materials to create the video.

### Journalistic Writer

- Activity: Press Release
- Software Available: Microsoft Word

Specific Technical Skills for Practicum:

- Lead/focus
- Accuracy
- Clarity and Conciseness
- Correct Style(AP)
- Depth of Coverage
- Header/headline
- Grammar, spelling, punctuation, word choice
- organization and format
- accomplishment of purpose

**Using the press packet, and information gathered during the press conference compose a news story. The news story should be 300-350 words (12 point Times New Roman, double spaced) excluding the words in the header. AP Style should be followed while composing the news story, and should include a header (title), and the date. The news story should include only the facts of the press conference.**

### Opinion Writer

- Activity: A Blog Post
- Software allowed: Word Processor (Microsoft Word or Mac Pages)

Specific Technical Skills for Practicum:

- Lead/Focus
- Accuracy
- Clarity
- Correct Style (AP)
- Takes a position supported with evidence
- Header/headline
- Grammar/Spelling/Word Choice
- Organization
- Accomplishment of Purpose

**Using the press packet and information gathered from the press conference; create a 500-750 word op-ed writing piece. An Op-Ed piece is an opinionated writing piece from someone other than the editor of the publication (opposite of an editorial). The writer should take a stance and express their opinion about the press conference. They should use facts from the press conference to support their opinion. The op-ed should have a strong focus and lead (opening paragraph) and include a headline.**

**Agricultural Communications CDE Scorecard**

**Journalistic Writing Practicum**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Chapter:** \_\_\_\_\_

**State:** Delaware

**Member #:** \_\_\_\_\_

	High 5-4 points	Middle 3-2 points	Low 1-0 points	Weight	Total Points
Lead/focus				x 3	
Accuracy of information and quotes				x 3	
Clarity and conciseness				X 2	
Correct style (AP)				X 2	
Depth of coverage				X 2	
Header/headline				X 2	
Grammar, spelling, punctuation and word choice				X 2	
Organization and format				X 2	
Accomplishment of purpose				X 2	
<b>TOTAL POINTS (100 POINTS POSSIBLE)</b>					

**Agricultural Communications CDE Scorecard**

**Opinion Writing Practicum**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter: \_\_\_\_\_

State: Delaware

Member #: \_\_\_\_\_

	Possible Score	Member Score
Lead/focus	15	
Accuracy of information and quotes	15	
Clarity and conciseness	10	
Correct style (AP)	10	
Takes a position that is supported with evidence	10	
Header/headline	10	
Grammar, spelling, punctuation and word choice	10	
Organization and format	10	
Accomplishment of purpose	10	
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	<b>100</b>	

**Agricultural Communications CDE Scorecard**  
**Web Page Design Practicum**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Chapter:** \_\_\_\_\_

**State:** Delaware

**Member #:** \_\_\_\_\_

	Possible Score	Member Score
Overall attractiveness of site (color, font choice, readability, font size consistent)	20	
Technical skills specific to activity • Outlined in event specifications	20	
Use of design principles	15	
Neatness and creativity	15	
Choice and placement of photo(s) and graphic(s)	15	
Usability and navigation of site (links work, files named properly, links show up)	15	
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	<b>100</b>	

**Agricultural Communications CDE Scorecard**

**Media Plan Pitch Practicum**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter: \_\_\_\_\_

State: Delaware

Member #: \_\_\_\_\_

INDICATOR	Very strong evidence of skill is present 5-4 points	Moderate evidence of skill is present 3-2 points	Strong evidence of skill is not present 1-0 points	Points Earned	Weight	Total Score
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examples are vivid, precise and clearly explained.</li> <li>Examples are original, logical and relevant.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examples are usually concrete, sometimes needs clarification.</li> <li>Examples are effective, but need more originality or thought.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examples are abstract or not clearly defined.</li> <li>Examples are sometimes confusing, leaving the listeners with questions.</li> </ul>		X 5	
Confidence in speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Speaks very articulately.</li> <li>Never has the need for unnecessary pauses or hesitation when speaking.</li> <li>Speaks at the right pace to be clear.</li> <li>Pronunciation of words is very clear and intent is apparent.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sometimes speaks articulately.</li> <li>Occasionally has the need for a long pause or moderate hesitation when speaking.</li> <li>Speaks at the right pace most of the time, but shows some nervousness.</li> <li>Pronunciation of words is usually clear, sometimes vague.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rarely articulate.</li> <li>Frequently hesitates or has long, awkward pauses while speaking.</li> <li>Pace is too fast; nervous.</li> <li>Pronunciation of words is difficult to understand; unclear.</li> </ul>		X 3	
Being detail-oriented; provide details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is able to stay fully detail-oriented.</li> <li>Always provides details which support the issue to communicate the key concepts of the plan; is well organized.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is mostly good at being detail-oriented.</li> <li>Usually provides details which are supportive of the issue to communicate the plan; displays good organizational skills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has difficulty being detail-oriented.</li> <li>Sometimes overlooks details that could be very beneficial to the issue; Not enough detail provided lacks organization.</li> </ul>		X 3	
Speaking unrehearsed and natural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Speaks unrehearsed with comfort and ease.</li> <li>Is able to speak effectively without losing focus and with organized thoughts and concise answers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Speaks unrehearsed mostly with comfort and ease, but sometimes seems nervous or unsure.</li> <li>Is able to speak effectively, has to stop and think and sometimes gets off focus.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shows nervousness or seems unprepared when speaking unrehearsed.</li> <li>Seems to ramble or speaks before thinking.</li> </ul>		X 3	

(con't)

**Agricultural Communications CDE Scorecard**

**Media Plan Pitch Practicum (con't)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter: \_\_\_\_\_

State: Delaware

Member #: \_\_\_\_\_

*Media Plan Pitch – Presentation Scorecard continued*

INDICATOR	Very strong evidence of skill is present 5-4 points	Moderate evidence of skill is present 3-2 points	Strong evidence of skill is not present 1-0 points	Points Earned	Weight	Total Score
All team members participated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All team members took an active role in the presentation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two to three team members took an active role in the presentation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One team member took an active role in the presentation.</li> </ul>		X 3	
Use of visual aids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visual aids add clarity and support what is being said during the presentation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visual aids add some clarity and support to what is being said during the presentation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visual aids add little to no clarity and support to what is being said during the presentation.</li> </ul>		X 3	
Media plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key elements of the media plan are clearly communicated.</li> <li>Strong understanding of chosen media is present.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key elements of the media plan are vaguely communicated.</li> <li>Vague understanding of chosen media is present.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key elements of the media plan are not communicated.</li> <li>Little to no understanding of chosen media is present.</li> </ul>		X 3	
Questions and answers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is able to correctly respond to judges' questions.</li> <li>Answers show familiarity with subject matter.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is somewhat able to correctly respond to judges' questions.</li> <li>Answers show vague familiarity with subject matter.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is unable to correctly respond to judges' questions.</li> <li>Answers do not reflect any familiarity with subject matter.</li> </ul>		X 12	
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>						

**Agricultural Communications CDE Scorecard**

**Media Plan Practicum**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Chapter:** \_\_\_\_\_

**State: Delaware**

**Member #:** \_\_\_\_\_

	Possible Score	Team Score
<b>Plan Includes all Requirements</b> • Cover page, titles and names on cover page, table of contents, does not exceed page limit, double spaced, one inch margins, page numbers, required headings (-1 point per missing item)	10	
<b>Proposal is Relevant to Scenario</b> • Entire narrative focuses on addressing client's specific public communication needs.	10	
<b>Overview (Executive Summary)</b> • Adequately explains the plan without reading the entire document.	10	
<b>Introduction</b> • Provides adequate background of the issue; clearly states the problem objectives and need for plan; describes how the plan will benefit the client.	15	
<b>Description of Audience</b> • Clearly describes (including demographics) who is targeted with the media plan.	15	
<b>Detailed Strategic Plan</b> • Clearly states objectives; explains how objectives will be met; explains why chosen mediums are appropriate to meet objectives; describes how plan will be executed. Clearly states and explains social media plan tactics.	30	
<b>Timeline</b> • Explains duration of plan and timing of media tactics.	10	
<b>Evaluation</b> • Proposes methods to determine if the objectives were met.	15	
<b>Budget</b> • Explains all costs associated with implementing the media plan.	20	
<b>Conclusion</b>	10	
<b>Appendices</b> • Quality of communications documents. (Three required)	30	
<b>Quality of writing</b> • Grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, sentence structure.	25	
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	<b>200</b>	

**Agricultural Communications CDE Scorecard**

**Team Scorecard**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Chapter:** \_\_\_\_\_

**State:** Delaware

	Possible Score	Team Score
<b>Practicum Scores</b>	<b>300</b>	
<b>Test Scores</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communications Quiz – 75 pts. (25pts/member)</li> </ul>	<b>150</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mini Media Plan</li> </ul>	<b>30</b>	
<b>Total Possible:</b>	<b>480</b>	