



Discussion Meet and Collegiate Discussion Meet Best Practices 2018

General Resources and Websites:

Farm Bureau:

- [American Farm Bureau Federation](#)
 - o [Issue Backgrounders](#)
 - o [Farm Bureau Advocacy Action Center](#)
- [American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture](#)

Government:

- [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#)
 - o [National Institute of Food and Agriculture \(NIFA\)/Cooperative Extension Service](#)
- [U.S. Department of Labor](#)
- [U.S. Department of Education](#)
- [Environmental Protection Agency - Agriculture](#)
- [State Departments of Agriculture](#)
- [Selected Federal Agencies with a Role in Food Safety](#)
- [GovTrack.us](#)

Media:

- [Farm Journal Media](#)

Other:

- [American Farmland Trust](#)
- [American Lands Council](#)
- [Animal Agriculture Alliance](#)
- [Beginning Farmers](#)
- [National Agriculture in the Classroom](#)
- [Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education](#)
- [U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Alliance \(USFRA\)](#)

Best Practices:

1. **Training calls.** All competitors are encouraged to join the training calls hosted by the AFBF YF&R committee in the fall. Specific dates and times will be announced in late summer. There will be a total of six calls and each will last one hour. The first call will cover the Discussion Meet format and tips for success and the other five calls will focus on each question. Oftentimes, the calls include industry experts, who share their expertise and provide additional resources.

2. **Utilize government research.** Search government agency websites and databases for strong statistics and data to use in your discussions. This information can be reliable and is well-researched.
3. **Learn from the best.** Reach out to former Discussion Meet and Collegiate Discussion Meet participants. Even though the discussion questions change each year, former competitors can provide valuable insight and tips on the nature of the contest. Also, reach out to YF&R staff and committee members that have familiarity on the competition to get clarification.
4. **Pros and Cons.** Review each question and create discussion points from both sides of the issue. This will not only give you greater understanding of how an issue developed, but it will prepare you to discuss potential obstacles when working to find a solution.
5. **Diversify written sources.** Besides the internet, gather resources and information from the library, newspapers, magazines, Farm Bureau policies and other agriculture publications.
6. **Real talk.** Engage in conversations with your local county Farm Bureau members, state and national representatives, lobbyists and agriculture industry employees to gather information and examples. Seek conversations with those who are not familiar with the issue to gain their perspective. Explaining the topic helps provide practice articulating what you know. As you speak, address all angles to gather additional points and as many ideas as possible.
7. **Farm Bureau history.** Take time to review county, state and American Farm Bureau history on the topic. What are our standing policies with the questions?
8. **Expert opinion.** If you don't have a personal relationship with the content of the question, find a credible source that does and get their opinion. Be prepared to cite and properly establish your source as an expert in their field.