



National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs (England & Wales)

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Guidelines for National Brainstrust Competition

OBJECTIVES

- To speak to an audience
- To express one's thoughts and views clearly on a given subject
- To create entertaining discussion

CHAIRMAN

1 PREPARATION

- Come prepared with postcards and pen
- Ensure you choose questions to suit your panel
- Select questions that provide adequate scope for discussion
- Make a list of as many salient points as possible to support both sides of the discussion
- It is advisable that the question you intend putting to your panel first, is the one which they will feel most comfortable answering

2 PERFORMANCE

- Await Judges' signal before commencing
- Formally introduce yourself and the team
- Sit up smartly in a business-like way and be pleasantly in charge of the team and the audience
- Read the question clearly and meaningfully
- Ideally, each member should be asked to speak first on one of the questions
- Allow 5 minutes (approx) per question (including your summary) and 5 minutes for your introduction and closure of the meeting
- Ensure no individual dominates the discussion. Try not to over-dominate yourself
- Do not allow any panel member to 'dry-up'; bring in another panellist if this happens
- Try to listen carefully to what members are saying
- Make notes as the discussion proceeds
- Prompt the team and keep them on the subject
- The introduction, summaries and conclusion should be addressed to the audience. Make summaries brief and to the point
- Stand to introduce the team and when closing the meeting
- Formally conclude the meeting

PANEL

- Long speeches are not desirable
- Look at, and speak mainly to the audience
- Avoid the use of abbreviations that the audience may not understand
- Ensure that your comments relate to the question
- Avoid total agreement – some discord promotes discussion
- Use humour – but not to excess

TEAM - OVERALL

- Approach and leave the stage in a quiet and orderly fashion
- Sit facing the audience (**NOT** to each other) and about 2 feet apart
- Sit upright, but not too rigidly and be interested in the proceedings
- Avoid undesirable mannerisms, e.g. excessive hand gestures
- Speak loudly and clearly and in such a way that you appear to be talking to each other and every person in the audience
- Look tidy – appearance counts
- Don't forget – all the rules for good public speaking apply
- Keep discussion lively to keep the audience interested – each member must be careful to stay with same line of argument throughout

TRAINING

- Read the papers
- Practice with current affairs questions:-
 - Agriculture
 - Rural issues
 - Social issues

SPECIAL NOTES FOR JUDGES

The end of the competition is always hectic and time is very limited for all concerned. There will not usually be time or a need, therefore, to quote from lengthy prepared notes. However, the following may be helpful:-

- Comment and criticism from judges should be constructive
- Whilst it is probably unwise to mention particular participants by name when offering criticism, there is no harm in doing so when referring to good points
- Judges can offer to see individuals after the competition to discuss their performance
- To avoid time consuming repetition and possibly confusion, it is probably best that only one judge comments on the performance of participants, whilst the other announces the results
- Make notes of particular points as the competition progresses, because of time limitation at the end. Ensure timing is correct.

Competitions Department

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