

## **CDE/LDE Coaching Guide**

### **Teaching the Content**

The first step in CDE success is teaching the related content in the classroom. Good teaching leads to at least three things

1. Students are motivated to learn in class which helps with student engagement and behavior issues.
2. The local contest provides a chance for students to apply what they have learned in class and helps them retain content.
3. The teacher has to spend less time outside of class preparing students for the event.

Depending on the course, the CDE or LDE involved, and the school schedule, the technical content related to the CDE or LDE may be taught over a period of a few days or the entire class. For example, livestock evaluation might be a two week unit within an animal science course while a Small Power Equipment course might go on for a semester or year.

Decisions on what technical content to teach should be based on the Kentucky End of Program Standards, local industry needs, and the teacher's professional judgment. Depending on a number of factors, the teacher may or may not teach all technical content related to the CDE/LDE. For example, a teacher might not teach every component of the Forestry CDE prior to holding a local contest.

### **Choosing the Team Through a Local Contest**

A local contest should be held to choose the team that will represent the chapter at the regional or state level. In many cases, the local contest may also serve as the unit test grade for the portion of the class related to the event. In other cases, the local contest may be a combination of several summative assessment grades given throughout the course.

In any case, students should be made aware of the guidelines for the local contest and how the winners will be chosen. It is critical that every student in the course believes that he or she has the chance to do well in the local contest and to be chosen to represent the chapter. The more that students buy in to local contests the more that they will engage in the learning process in class.

It is generally a good idea to choose four team members and two alternates. Teachers may choose to tell the students who the top four are or just choose six and then let practices determine the top four. Not telling students who the alternates are pushes all of them to continue working, I wait until last practice before the contest before choosing the alternates.

The winners of the local contest should be announced in class and recognized at the next FFA meeting. A certificate given at the meeting (or some other form of recognition) can help raise the level of importance that students place on the local contest.

## Preparing for the Regional or State Event

Once the local winners are chosen, it is important to begin preparing for the regional or state contest. Time should be set aside to work on each element of the contest at the next level. For example in Agricultural Sales, time would need to be spent on preparation for the exam, research on products and compiling product binders, the team sales component, and individual selling.

## General Coaching Tips

1. Begin by reading the CDE/LDE guidelines on [www.kyffa.org](http://www.kyffa.org) making note of each component of the event and what is required in that component.
2. Print score sheets/rubrics and use these as you practice with students. For CDEs that utilize a bubble sheet, take time to go over this with students and print copies to use in practice.
3. Utilize the CDE/LDE resources that are available for events on [www.kyffa.org](http://www.kyffa.org) National FFA also has CDE/LDE resources at [www.ffa.org](http://www.ffa.org) and other states may have resources as well- particularly old exams and practicums.
4. If an event is being hosted at the regional level, reach out to the person in charge with any questions you have.
5. Ask teachers who have done well in the event in the past for tips and tricks. (If you don't know who the experts are, feel free to ask the State Staff to suggest people to contact.) You can even schedule time and go for a visit.
6. Ask community members who work in the field to assist in preparing your team. A local cattle farmer may be able to teach your students many things about feeder cattle that you don't know yourself. Most community members are glad to assist and actually take it as a compliment to be asked to help.
7. Ask teachers/administrators to help students prepare. English teachers are good resources to review written submissions while math teachers may be able to assist with formulas or calculations. Administrators are often good resources to listen to student presentations and give feedback. (This can build or improve a relationship with a teacher or administrator who does not understand or appreciate FFA so there can be multiple benefits.)
8. After the event, review contest results to see how your students performed. Compliment them on what they did well on and ask questions about areas that need improvement.
9. If possible, volunteer to assist with the event and take notes on how the event is run.
10. Ask event officials for copies of materials including scenarios and exams. Start a file of these materials and use them to help future teams.
11. Success in CDEs and LDEs takes time and work by the students and the advisor.
12. You don't have to be good at everything. Work to get better at CDEs that most closely relate to the content you teach and that most closely aligns to industry needs in your area.
13. Students who do well in events spend time studying and preparing independently. Good coaches give students "homework" to do between practices. Quizlet and other similar sites can help students use their time at home productively.

14. Plan to use practice time wisely. If you have an hour to practice, start on time and end on time. Practice should be organized, challenging and informational. It should provide the individuals an opportunity to see where their strengths are and where they need to focus improvements. You as the advisor have to make sure team practice is meeting the needs of the group. Don't rush it, let them soak it in. Individuals feeling left behind or overwhelmed are not productive. You have to learn their pace and give yourself enough time to do so. This changes year to year.
15. If you have students (or former students) who were successful in an event in the past, they can serve as peer mentors for the current group of students.

### **Agricultural Communications**

- When completing the media plan, be sure that it has all components that are mentioned in the guidelines and that headings line up with areas that are scored in the rubric.
- Be sure that the media plan lines up with the guidelines for formatting, font, etc.
- All students attend the press conference together and then develop a separate piece based on the information given. The information used in each practicum varies some, so be sure to target to the audience or group.

### **Agricultural Issues Forum**

- Quality local forums are key to success in this event. Schedule these to take place before May 10.
- The idea of this event is to present a complete picture of an issue. Having both sides represented in the presentation is critical to a good score.
- Response to questions can make or break a team in this event. Ensure that your students are familiar with the topic, that they know how to listen carefully to questions, and that they give measured, accurate responses.

### **Agricultural Mechanics**

- Study the old material on [www.kyffa.org](http://www.kyffa.org).
- This event has a different theme each year. Themes and descriptions of themes can be found at [www.kyffa.org](http://www.kyffa.org)
- Utilize the resources sent out prior to the state CDE.
- This CDE very much requires students to apply math skills. Normally formulas are provided, so knowing how to plug information into the formula to reach a solution is important.
- Electric motors are part of nearly every theme in this event. Knowing the parts of an electric motor and being able to interpret the tag on a motor is incredibly important in years when this is included.
- Students should be prepared to read and interpret a diagram or owners manual.

### **Agricultural Sales**

- Agricultural Sales can be taught as a 2-4 week unit in nearly any course. From a teaching perspective, it may be best to have students pick a product that they are interested in selling as opposed to using the state product. Once your team is selected those students can dig into the regional product.
- Purchase one copy of each of the resource books listed on [www.kyffa.org](http://www.kyffa.org) in order to teach correct content for the exam
- The team portion is not a “team sale”... it is the team working together to make a plan for the individual sale. Students often have trouble grasping this concept.
- Pay close attention to rubrics.
- Sending students with a “sales blank” can help them write down the sale and possibly close the sale with the customer judge.

- In the individual sales component, judges should take on one of the buyer profiles listed in the team activity. Students need to identify this and sell to this need. For example a homeowner with no knowledge of chainsaws will need a different sales pitch than a logger with 30 years experience cutting trees.
- Student binders should contain sales brochures and other product information.
- Connecting students with actual sales people for the product can be a huge benefit to students and a way to connect your program to employers and industry professionals.

### **Agriculture Public Speaking**

- Speeches must be more specific than the theme.
- Generally speaking, speeches that have a unique take on the subject will pique the interest of the judges.
- If possible, personal experience should be included in the speech. Even if the student is not directly familiar with the topic, they can interview a person who is so that they can give specific examples.
- The rubric favors a speech that is rehearsed but not memorized. A conversational tone will go a long way with judges.
- Be prepared for questions. If a student spends 2-3 months researching a topic and preparing for a speech, they should be able to answer most questions related to the topic.

### **Agronomy**

- Students who do well in this event are those who are willing to study for the ID portions.
- Crop ID, Weed ID, and fertilizer problems are fairly easy to teach in class. You may teach some insect ID in class but not at the depth necessary to do well in the contest. After your team is chosen you will need to dig into this deeper.
- The UK Entomology Department sells insect ID kits- these are very helpful in preparing a team for the contest.
- Contest resources including an exam blue print are available at [www.kyffa.org](http://www.kyffa.org)

### **Conduct of Chapter Meetings**

- Students have to do well in opening and closing ceremonies in this event.
- Be sure that every team member is familiar with moving each of the possible motions.
- Remember that the main motion is not assigned to a team member in this event. Someone has to be prepared to move the motion.
- This event almost always uses a primary amendment as one of the motions on the event card.
- Discussion is critical. Teach students how to give good debates and how to vary the debates between team members. Teams should avoid “beating dead horses” in debate. Once everything has been said that can be said about something it is best to move on.
- Develop several sets of event cards for this event that you can use in practice. You can develop event cards that just tell each person what to do and then a separate list of main motions.

- Be sure that students understand various FFA programs that could be in a main motion (Project Pals, Food for America, Missions Conference, Agriscience Fair, etc.)

### **Dairy Cattle Evaluation**

- Exam resources are usually sent out in early summer. The exam is administered as a multiple choice test with four options per question.
- Use Ky FFA CDE Resources as well as National FFA CDE Resources.
- Reasons scores are critical to success in this event. Students should know terminology and incorporate this into their reasons.
- The exam is mostly Virginia Tech Dairy Quiz Bowl questions. Check out <https://www.youth.dasc.vt.edu/quiz-bowl.html> for resources.
- Attending local and district dairy shows is a great opportunity to practice with your team. Team members (and the advisor) can learn a lot from listening to the judge place classes and give reasons.

### **Employment Skills**

- Employment Skills can be taught as a 2-3 week unit in basically any class. Student interviews can count as the final exam for the unit and serve as your local contest to determine who will advance to the regional level.
- A good resume and cover letter is very important. Have several individuals review the resume and cover letter including English teachers, Career Counselors, etc).
- The resume and cover letter should target a job that the student is currently qualified for. If the student has specific work experience related to the job they are applying for this can be helpful to them throughout the process.
- Make sure that your students know specifically the rubrics for the interview and the initial contact phone call.
- The initial contact is like a screening interview with fairly general questions. The goal of the student is to secure an in person interview. The in person interview tends to have more specific/deeper thinking questions.
- The National FFA rubrics as they have very specific information on them that can be used to help students prepare and learn to interview.
- Practice interviews with school administrators and local employers are great to help students prepare for regional and state competition.
- Practice answering questions that have students give examples of skills. "Tell me about a time when ....."

### **Extemporaneous Speaking**

- The list of Extemporaneous Speaking topics is published on [www.kyffa.org](http://www.kyffa.org) no later than January 1 of each year.
- A student should assemble resources for each of the Extemporaneous topics.
- Students will draw three topics and select one to write their speech about.
- Students who have personal knowledge of topics or an interesting take on topics tend to stand out among the competition.
- Students should be prepared for questions that may be fairly specific.

### **Farm Business Management**

- The state CDE is a multiple choice exam related to farm business management.
- Students should know terms, formulas, and concepts related to farm business management. To teach this well, you probably need to buy a textbook that includes this information.
- Students will be given some scenarios and have multiple questions related to them.
- Being able to work math problems based on scenarios is important.
- The old exam on [www.kyffa.org](http://www.kyffa.org) follows the same basic format of what students will see each year.
- John Deere has some farm management resources that tend to cover some of the material that is on the exam.

### **Floriculture**

- To win this contest students must know the ID. Lots of teams get caught up in the design of the arrangement but spend more time in floral identification.
- Pictures are helpful in ID in this contest more so than others since blooms are more distinctive. However, you can't beat a good wholesale florist that will let you browse their cooler.
- Study Georgia Ag Ed resources to prepare for the general knowledge exam and the problem solving (math) components.
- Practice making the arrangement within the time limit.

### **Food Science**

- You will not do a team activity at the state contest. However, that is probably the easiest part to teach in class for a unit to get kids excited about it.
- Follow the resources that are posted on the Kentucky FFA website for the state contest. UK will follow these guidelines fairly closely.

## Forestry

- Utilize released resources from National FFA for written exam and some rotational practicums.
- Virginia Tech Dendrology page is key to tree identification.
- Youtube has great resource videos to help with most practicums.
- Be cautious of google, several images will not be what they are labeled.
- Use forestry suppliers website and catalog for tool ID.
- UK has great resources for wood ID from the Robinson Center in Jackson.
- Utilize local KY Division of Forestry or National Forest staff, most are willing to help.

## Horse Evaluation

- Livestock Judging.com is a huge benefit for practice judging classes. I highly recommend getting a subscription to this website for horse judging as well as other Judging content.
- The most important thing in judging any class with a pattern is that they correctly perform the pattern.
- University of KY and the American Quarter Horse Association both have very good Horse Judging Manuals online. If you contact the AQHA they will send you some hard copy manuals.

<http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agcomm/pubs/asc/asc118/asc118.pdf>

<https://ng.aqha.com/documents/82601/1589238/AQHA+Judging+Manual.pdf/6ef89bf9-a111-7d95-2448-7f7af8c3815f>

## Land Judging

- Your local NRCS office can help you get some soil cores to practice with.
- “Land Judging in Kentucky” is available on [www.kyffa.org](http://www.kyffa.org) This is a great teaching reference and the place to begin.
- Teach the components of the scorecard in class and then combine with field practice.
- Forestry Suppliers is a great resource for tools. To teach this well you need the following tools:
  - Clinometer/Laser Slope Finder
  - Soil Probe- 24” window is nice, I like the 1 1/8” diameter probe to get a bigger core, EZ out makes it nice to be able to get the complete core out.
  - Plastic step in fence posts or wire flags are easy to use for slope and boundaries.
  - 100 ft tape for measuring the slope out



## **Livestock Evaluation**

- Reasons are normally given in one of the cattle classes.
- Students who know how to grade feeder cattle will place much higher than those who don't. Just knowing how to mark feeder cattle grades on the card will improve your score significantly. (ICEV Subscription is the best for this)
- Reasons- Know terminology and talk terminology.
- Students need to Study Ky 4H Skillathon to prepare for the exam portion.  
<https://afs.ca.uky.edu/4h-youth/meat-animal/livestock-skillathon>
- Use Ky FFA CDE Resources as well as National FFA CDE Resources
- Practice Classes on Livestock Judging Pro or [livestockjudging.com](http://livestockjudging.com)
- Plan a workout at a local farm.
- The Bowling Green Livestock Expo (usually early August at WKU) is a great opportunity to "tune up" your team before the state contest.

## **Marketing Plan**

- Choosing a good product or business to develop a marketing plan for is an important first step in doing well in this event. Local businesses tend to be a good option for this and student run businesses can be a good option as well.
- A marketing plan must include data. A survey of potential customers is a good way to get baseline data about the business or product. The survey needs to be representative of the target market and have a decent response rate to mean anything. Surveys are easy to do through Google Forms and can be promoted through parents or school social media. (Note- you don't need data from someone four states away so try to get local responses.) Data should drive what is in the plan you present.
- Follow all guidelines in the rubric for the marketing plan.
- The marketing plan should pertain directly to the business/product in question. Try not to add distractions. For example, if the business is selling wreaths at Christmas don't talk about fall arrangements.
- A good presentation always helps. Professional looking graphics can make the presentation pop. Remember that the students are presenting the plan and trying to convince the judges to hire them to market the product.
- Be prepared for specific questions related to the marketing plan.
- Get someone who is good at marketing/sales/numbers to go through the plan to look for any information that seems odd or out of place.

## **Meats Evaluation**

- Print the bubble sheet and have students practice marking it.
- If students know how to do yield and quality grade they will be far ahead of the competition. Yield and quality grade are done on photos of ribeyes. Download some online to practice with.
- For placing classes, there is often a close top pair and a close bottom pair. (It is hard to get four pork loins that look vastly different.)
- Typically students place a class of T-bone steaks, a class of pork loin chops, a class of sirloin tip roasts, and a class of Boston butts. This could change subject to availability.
- ID is huge.
  - Students should understand that a cut may look a little different at Wal-Mart than at Kroger or in slides.
  - Students mark whether the cut is beef, pork, or lamb, then mark the primal cut, then the retail cut. Students who memorize the code instead of the name of the cut can mark the card faster.
  - There are usually a few “give me” cuts in ID, several medium difficulty, and a few hard ones. Teaching students how to differentiate between similar cuts is very important

## **Milk Quality and Products**

- You will not do a team activity or CMT's at the state contest.
- Follow the resources that are posted on the Kentucky FFA website for the state contest. UK follows these closely.
- This is a very expensive contest to train teams for.
- This is a good resource to get started with <https://dairyfoods.wisc.edu/assets/ffa/milk.htm>

## **Nursery**

- Plant material for this event normally comes from Wallitsch Nursery in Louisville. Even if it's just once, a trip to Wallitsch is worthwhile. They typically have 3/4ths of the plants on the plant list.
- Team members should be familiar with common construction formulas such as area and volume. They should also know conversions such as cubic feet to cubic yards and square feet to square yards. Be sure they understand why they divide by 27, multiply by 9, etc. When they understand why they're doing what they're doing, the formulas are easier to remember.
- Team members should bring engineer and architect scales to the contest and know how to use them. The state contest is usually 1/8th scale but I always have my kids bring both scales just in case a 1/10th scale is slipped in there.
- Diseases and disorders are multiple choice in the state contest. The specimens to be identified are from the National FFA diseases and disorders list, but they are not presented like plant ID and chosen from the list. Instead, each specimen is presented with a sheet that has multiple choices.

### **Parliamentary Procedure**

- Practice quality debates that have varying opening and closing statements to prevent all debates from sounding the same. (debate examples are @ [www.kyffa.org](http://www.kyffa.org))
- All students need to be able to move all motions
- Might be helpful to start all practices with a small test about various motions.
- Keep a chart to ensure all students demonstrate all abilities in practice.
- The advisor should develop several sets of event cards to use in practice.

### **Poultry**

- You will not do a team activity at the state contest.
- Remember it is during Murray's Field Day, so sometimes it can be a little hectic, which is just reality, not anything negative against Murray State.
- Follow the resources that are posted on the Kentucky FFA website for the state contest. It's what Murray will follow.
- This is a very easy contest to teach in class and then allow the best students to move on to the state competition.

### **Prepared Public Speaking**

- Pick a good current topic and avoid topics about FFA
- Have many volunteers listen to the speech and ask the student questions
- Have English teachers read and critique the manuscript especially when specific formatting is required like it is at the National level.

### **Record Keeping**

- Students need to know how to create a State Degree application.
- Students must be familiar with an SAE project and the AET program. I would recommend that if YOU (the teacher) do not know how to correctly enter information into AET, spend some time familiarizing yourself with it.
- Utilize the CD created by Jeff Hayes to assist with teaching the curriculum and coaching the CDE team.
- AET how to videos are available in the Kentucky Agricultural Education Shared Folder.
- Old exams are available at [www.kyffa.org](http://www.kyffa.org) The exam very much follows the same format from year to year.

### **Small Power**

- Teach the content in class. Spend just as much time in the classroom as you spend in the shop. In order to do well at this contest, you need to instruct the students on the science behind small engine operation, and not just turning wrenches.

### **Veterinary Science**

- Team members will need to be comfortable with medical math and have time to study a lot of different topics. You will need a veterinary professional to help with the skills, unless you already have that knowledge.
- Drill the skills with them talking thru the steps
- Have the team make quizlets or other study materials to work on ID.
- There are many youtube videos, quizlets and kahoots already made as well as other states (such as Arkansas) that have their tests available online to download.

### **Welding**

- Students should be prepared to perform the welds outlined in the CDE guidelines using the metal and electrodes outlined.
- Have students practice on different welders in your shop- some run a little hotter than others so being able to figure that out in the contest helps.
- Process and safety matter- teach students safety and be sure they follow all procedures.
- Clean welds score better- be sure students know how to clean welds and make them look as good as possible.

### **Wildlife**

- Antler scoring comes from the Boone and Crockett Website [https://www.boone-crockett.org/scorechart/add/whitetail\\_deer](https://www.boone-crockett.org/scorechart/add/whitetail_deer)
- YouTube is a great source for Deer Aging using jaw bones.
- All bird calls come from [www.Allaboutbirds.org](http://www.Allaboutbirds.org)
- The contest uses a combination of photos, models, and items for identification.