

Illinois Association of Vocational Agriculture Teachers

Agricultural Sales CDE

Contest Superintendent - **Becky Freed, Prairie Central**

IAVAT CDE Committee Members - **Mike White, PBL & Noelle Coronado, CHSAS**

Hosts - **Theresa Meers, Parkland CC**

Jenni Fridgen, Parkland CC

Purpose of the Event

The purpose of the Agricultural Sales Career Development Event is to evaluate and demonstrate skills that are essential for an individual to be successful in the agricultural sales field. The process of selling agricultural products is essential for production and marketing of agricultural products.

Objectives

The objectives are to develop the skill sets necessary for students to be successful in sales. These would include the following:

1. Develop verbal, written and interactive communication skills.
2. Demonstrate skills to build rapport with customers.
3. Discuss features and benefits of a product.
4. Identify potential customer objections.
5. Demonstrate knowledge of proper product use.
6. Introduce the product to prospective customers.
7. Develop a sales call that determines and addresses customers' needs and objections.
8. Attempt to close the sale by asking for customer's buying decision.
9. Identify and demonstrate the use of questions throughout the sales process.
10. Develop active listening skills.

A. General Information

1. **Team:** This Career Development Event is restricted to the top three winning teams of each district Agricultural Sales Career Development Event. However, no school may have more than one team compete at the state Agricultural Sales Career Development Event. The District events are restricted to the top two winning teams of each Section.

A team shall consist of *four* (4) members. All four scores will count toward the team total. A school may compete with less than four participants, but is only eligible for individual awards.

2. **Awards:** All scores will be added to calculate the team score. Individual awards will be based upon the total of the Written Exam and the Individual Sales Activity scores. An individual award will be awarded from each judging room.

3. **Miscellaneous:**

- a. The event host will select 2-4 products within the same line to be sold during the team and individual activities (ex: If selling a John Deere mower, there may be a push mower option, a small riding mower option, and a large commercial zero-turn riding mower option). Product information will be announced 90 days prior to the event.
- b. No one will be allowed to observe any presentation.

5. **Registration:** This event shall be open to 3 qualifying schools per district.

Pre-registration for this career development event is expected by a deadline to be announced on the *Ag Ed Listserve*. Entry fees are not refundable.

6. **Tie-Breakers:** In the event of team ties in the Agricultural Sales CDE, the team with the highest team activity score will be ranked higher. If the tie cannot be broken using the team activity score, then the total individual sales activity scores will be used. If a tie still exists, the total written exam scores will be used to break the tie.

In the event of individual ties in the Agricultural Sales CDE, the highest individual sales activity score will be used to break the tie. If the tie cannot be broken using the individual sales activity score, the highest written exam score will be used. If a tie still exists, the highest team activity score will be used to break the tie.

7. **Additional Information:** Refer to the current National FFA Career Development Events manual.

B. Career Development Event Format

The career development event shall consist of three parts: 1) Written Exam - 50 points, 2) Team Activity - 150 points, and 3) Individual Sales Activity - 150 points.

C. Career Development Events Divisions

1. Written Exam: (50 points)

The written exam is designed to evaluate an individual's knowledge of sales skills. The listed resources will be used as a basic resource but the questions will be generated based on basic sales concepts.

- a. Team members will work individually.
- b. The test will consist of 25 multiple-choice or True/False questions.
- c. Thirty minutes will be allotted to complete the Written Exam, with each question worth two points for a total of 50 points.

2. Team Event: (150 points)

- a. Each participant will be allowed to bring a one-inch binder to the team activity containing the provided product information and any other information gathered by the participant.
- b. Team members will work together to demonstrate teamwork and group dynamics, problem solving, data analysis, decision making and oral communications.
- c. The following information will be provided to the team at the event as if they were a group of salespeople working together to develop the pre-call planning prior to conducting a sales call.
 - Product information (before event)
 - Profiles of **one or two** different customers
- d. The team will be provided with paper and writing utensils. No presentation equipment such as laptops, flipcharts or dry erase boards will be allowed.
- e. The team will then develop the **pre-call plan** (for the product(s) provided prior to the event) necessary to sell the product(s) in a face-to-face sales call. **This pre-call plan should include:**
 - Potential questions to build rapport for the scenario
 - Common interests that team members have with the customers
 - Identify questions that help determine the wants and needs of the customer
 - Identify active listening skills or techniques for determining needs and wants
 - Identify and match potential needs and wants of the customer to the products' features and benefits
 - Identify potential objections of the customer
 - Identify potential concerns of the customer

- f. Teamwork and involvement of team members will be judged during this event. Students are expected to justify their decisions based on selling principles.
 - g. The team will be given fifteen (15) minutes to analyze the information and prepare to answer questions about the pre-call plan. The team will be judged using the team preparation rubric found at: https://www.ffa.org/SiteCollectionDocuments/cde_agsales.pdf.
 - h. At the conclusion of the fifteen (15) minutes, team members will move to a different room and have an additional 15 minutes to individually answer questions from the judges and they will answer without assistance from their team members. The team will be judged using the team questions rubric found at: https://www.ffa.org/SiteCollectionDocuments/cde_agsales.pdf.
 - i. Each portion of the team event will occur in a separate room and be scored by 1-3 judges.
3. **Individual Sales Activity: (150 points)**
- a. Information and product(s) from the team activity will be used in the individual sales activity.
 - b. The Individual Sales Activity will be conducted after the Team Activity.
 - c. Participants will directly sell the product(s) to judge(s).
 - d. The judge(s) will NOT fit one of the customer profiles identified in the team pre-call planning activity. One or two different customer profiles will be used for the individual sales presentation. Students will have 5 minutes to look at customer profile before sales pitch.
 - e. The judge(s) will act as a real customer which may include not buying the product. Participants will have to establish rapport with the customer and ask probing questions to ensure they meet the customer's needs and clarify customer information as a part of the sales call.
 - f. Participants are allowed to use their one-inch product information binder during individual activity.
 - g. Participants will have twenty (20) minutes to interact with the judge(s).
 - h. Official FFA dress is required.
 - i. The Individual sales call rubric found at: https://www.ffa.org/SiteCollectionDocuments/cde_agsales.pdf will be used to score this portion of the event.

E. Recommended 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. Make sure to use discretion when selecting website references by only using reputable, proven sites. The following list contains references that may prove helpful during event preparation. The most current edition of resources will be used.

- Past CDE materials and other resources are available by logging in to: FFA.org
- ProSelling: A Professional Approach to Selling in Agriculture and Other Industries, W. Scott Downey, ISBN-13: 978-0978895211
- Professional Selling, Rebecca L. Morgan, ISBN 0-931961-42-4
- Sales Training Basics, Elwood N. Chapman, ISBN 1-56052-119-8
- Closing, Virden J. Thorton, ISBN 1-56052-318-2

- Ditzenberger and Kidney, *Selling-Helping Customers Buy*, South-Western Publishing Company, Cincinnati, Ohio 1992, 1-800-543-7972, ISBN 0538605316.
- *Understanding Ag Sales*, FFA.org

ITCS Instructional Materials, University of Illinois, 1401 S. Maryland Dr., Urbana, IL 61801.
U6026a Marketing Products and Merchandise in Agricultural Businesses: A Guide for Making Personal Sales Unit (revised)

A catalog of instructional materials is available from ITCS Instructional Materials at <https://pubsplus.illinois.edu/>. To place an order please call 1-800-345-6087, fax your order to 217-333-3917, or email pubsplus@illinois.edu

Instructional Materials Service, Texas A&M University, F.E. Box 2588, College Station, Texas 77843-2588.

8746 Agriscience 312, *Personal Skill Development in Agriculture*

Ditzenberger and Kidney, *Selling-Helping Customers Buy*. South-Western Publishing Company, Cincinnati, Ohio. 1986.

To order: 1-800-543-7972 - Stock number: S-20

Samson and Little, *Advertising Planning and Techniques*. South-Western Publishing Company, Cincinnati, Ohio. 1985.

To order: 1-800-543-7972 - Stock number: D-20

Agricultural Business Sales and Marketing, Curriculum Guide, Instructional Materials Laboratory, University of Missouri, Columbia. 1989.

To order: 1-800-669-2465; Instructional Materials Laboratory, 2316 Industrial Drive, Columbia, Missouri 65202. Student handout available.

Samson and Little, *Visual Merchandising - Planning and Techniques*. South-Western Publishing Company, Cincinnati, Ohio. 1985.

To order: 1-800-543-7982 - Stock number: D-21

Sales and Service, Mike Martin, Ditzenberger and Kidney.

Brown and Kirkwood, *Developing the Agricultural Sale Professional* (video tape series), Farm Credit Services, St. Paul, Minnesota. 1990.

To order: 1-612-221-1458; Farm Credit Services, Education Training Department, 375 Jackson, St. Paul, Minnesota, 55102.